

## Vedanta Darshanam

Salutations to all.

We are in a world where everything is moving very fast. One day we find a normal road and the next day there is a highway built on the road. One day one technology is hot and the very next day another technology has replaced the old technology. Thus in all fields, we find the world moving very fast. It is thus very tough to catch up with the world. All our time goes in trying to catch up with the world.

Though we might succeed in catching up with the world still it doesn't lead us anywhere as the world again changes. Until and unless we realize the world to be temporary and sorrowful in nature, we will be experiencing nothing but sorrow alone constantly in the world. Not only that we don't get happiness from the world but failure in catching up with the world leads to sorrow alone at all times.

In such a world it is important to find out the real source of happiness and strive to progress towards this real source of happiness. The first step in spirituality is realizing that the world is temporary and sorrowful. Until this realization dawns, we will not be able to progress towards the goal of moksha characterized by complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss. Constantly a sadhaka should analyze the world of experiences and strengthen the conviction that the world is temporary and sorrowful. Then the next step of progressing towards the goal of moksha through gaining of knowledge will be possible.

It is only through knowledge that a person is able to attain the ultimate goal of life as ever rejoicing in bliss. This knowledge isn't knowledge of the world or like any knowledge of the world; instead it is knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures. Scriptures alone are the ultimate proof for Brahman as they are without any author (they are ever-present); they are also faultless and have been tested time and again by various realized masters.

If we are able to follow the path set by the scriptures, then we will ourselves be able to realize the truth propounded in the scriptures here and now itself. But for this, we have to develop at least a basic foundational knowledge of Vedanta. This is what is striven to be achieved through this magazine where the system of Vedanta is explained in simple terms.

Vedanta is one system which will be more and more appealing the more and more one learns it. Eventually a person will find himself unable to get away from Vedanta as it will become one's own very life or implementation (nature or natural). When Vedanta is naturally implemented in life then a person will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss. It is this sorrow-less blissful state that is being sought out by each and every person in the world. Since this blissful state of moksha is only possible through Vedanta, therefore we should strive to implement Vedanta now itself. The very moment is not with us and anything can happen later. Therefore this very moment itself we should strive to learn and implement Vedanta so that our life will be filled with bliss here and now itself. If we start now, we will be able to attain the blissful state of moksha in this very birth itself.

May we all strive to learn and implement Vedanta through remembering at all times that one Brahman alone exists so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

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## Upanishad Vivaranam

### Mundaka Upanishad – 1-1-7

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च

यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।

यथा सतः पुरुषात् केशलोमानि

तथाऽक्षरात् संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥७॥

yathorṇanābhiḥ sṛjate gr̥hṇate ca  
yathā pṛthivyāmoṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti |  
yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni  
tathā'kṣarāt sambhavatīha viśvam ||7||

Even as the spider brings out and weaves web; even as herbs come out of earth; even as hair comes out of the body of a sentient person, similarly this entire world comes out of the Akshara (Brahman).

### The world - analysis

The world is what we constantly experience each and every moment. Whatever is the matter of experience has to be analyzed thoroughly for knowledge. Knowledge of anything when incomplete leads to sorrow and when complete leads to eternal bliss. Previously we saw the question of the disciple to the guru as to teach him that by knowing which everything becomes known – this itself shows the importance of knowledge. Knowledge puts an end to all seeking and thereby a person will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

With respect to the world, we experience nothing but sorrow and sorrow alone. This is because the world is constantly changing. Such a constantly changing world will only lead to sorrow – only that which is changeless and eternal can lead to eternal bliss. But unaware or really not concentrating or focusing on the temporary and sorrowful nature of the world, we expect happiness from the world. This expectation leads to seeking from one or the other thing in the world (thing can be objects or people). This seeking leads to only sorrow but then since the world is composed of infinite objects (and people) therefore our attention goes from one object to another. That which temporarily gives us happiness we stick on to it until it leads to sorrow (which it definitely will, eventually). Thus going from one object to another (hopping) we experience only sorrow in this life. Life itself is for a short period of

time in this particular body. When the time comes for this body to be renounced, we give it up. Since desires are still pending in the mind therefore we take yet another birth. In the next birth also the same seeking of happiness from the external world of objects continues. The result is, like the previous birth, failure alone. Therefore continues the cycle of birth and death. From one birth to another to another to another a person goes seeking happiness but getting nothing other than sorrow.

Ancient seers analyzed this world and termed it as anitya and asukha or temporary and sorrowful. But then they didn't stop with this. If anything appears as existing (even if changing constantly) it can only appear in something which is real. Thus there needs to be a real entity based on which the world appears as existing. Using a little different logic also we can come to this conclusion – anything changing requires a changeless substratum; any effect which appears as existing and changing requires a cause. The pot that we see is an effect (as it is changing) and it comes from the cause of mud. The gold ornaments are effect and they come from the cause of gold. Similarly we can find out the cause of anything that is an effect (effect is characterized by appearing as existing and constantly changing).

The world which is an effect also requires a cause from which it has come. This causal analysis is essential in order to reach the changeless entity in which the changing world appears as existing (like the pot appears as existing in the cause of mud).

Causes are of two types – material cause and efficient cause. Taking the example of pot which is an effect, it has two causes. The material cause is the mud – the material from which the effect is created; generally the material cause is an insentient entity (having no consciousness or independent existence of its own). The efficient or sentient cause of the pot is the potter – the potter uses mud in order to create the effect of pot. In the case of the effect of gold ornaments, the material cause is gold and the efficient cause is the goldsmith.

So with respect to the world, what is the material and the efficient cause?

As we have seen earlier, only Brahman existed before creation – there is no different or apart from Brahman. Thus we cannot have the two causes of material or insentient and efficient or sentient (due to one Brahman alone existing).

Thus Brahman is said to be both the material and the efficient cause of the world (abhinna nimitta upaadaana kaarana). Before we enter into analysis of how Brahman can be both material and efficient cause, we need to briefly look into the various creation philosophies accepted by various darshanas.

### Creation theories

Similar to the various creation theories postulated by scientists, there are also different creation theories accepted by various systems of philosophy or darshanas. We can drill it down into just two theories of aarambhavaada and parinaamavaada. Aarambhavaada is the theory of starting of creation. According to this theory, Ishwara as the efficient cause created the world out of its material cause – the world always exists but before creation in an unmanifest state. This unmanifested world is manifested with help from Ishwara as efficient cause. Thus the entire world is newly created though it was present before as well.

The parinaamavaada says that there is no new world created. The world existed before and got changed as the world we currently perceive. The sentient being is called as Purusha and insentient objects are part of Prakriti – Prakriti is the source of the insentient objects and Prakriti gets modified into the world we currently see. Here also it is sort of manifestation of the unmanifest world but it is not through a new creation (or creating new objects) but through a change or modification. The best example for this is the creation of curd from milk. When milk is churned, curd is created. Curd though was present in unmanifest form in milk, it is not something newly created but milk itself gets modified or changes into curd.

Let's try to analyze these two creation theories with respect to Vedanta. Vedanta says that before creation only one Brahman existed – nothing different from him existed. If only Brahman existed, then it means that both material and efficient cause are the same. As per aarambhavaada, a new world has to be created by the efficient cause of Ishwara or Brahman. But there is nothing apart from Brahman for the world to be created by an unaffected and different Brahman. Thus aarambhavaada doesn't explain the creation of the world. For parinaamavaada, modification leads to the world. Now what gets modified? It cannot be Brahman for Brahman is eternal – that which changes is temporary and non-eternal. Therefore Brahman cannot change into this world. If it isn't Brahman who changes into the world, it should be something else. But since only Brahman exists, there is nothing other than Brahman to get modified. Thus parinaamavaada also doesn't explain the creation of the world.

These two common theories of creation therefore fails to explain creation of the world. Vedanta uses the vaada or theory of vivarta in order to explain the world. Vivarta means appearance in something else. The common example is that of snake seen in rope. The snake is not really created in the rope but the rope appears as the snake. In the same way, the entire world isn't created in Brahman or out of Brahman but it just appears in Brahman. Put in other words, Brahman appears as the entire world. Such appearance doesn't harm Brahman in any way as appearance is just an illusion and not real. Even the snake appears in the rope what exists is the unaffected rope. Similarly even when the world appears in Brahman, what exists is unaffected and non-dual Brahman alone.

Vedanta gives the analogy of dream world in order to explain the current waking world. A person goes to bed to sleep and thereby he sees a dream. The entire dream world appears very real and everything happens inside the dream world (the dreamer is also present in the dream world). But suddenly the dreamer wakes up to realize that there never is any dream world and there never was and never will be any dream world. The entire dream world appeared in the dreamer; the dreamer became the entire world though the dreamer is unaffected by whatever happens in the dream world. In the same way, this entire world that we currently perceive is just an illusion in Brahman. Whatever exists is Brahman and Brahman alone. The moment a person wakes up from this long dream of ignorance, the person will realize that only Brahman exists and there is no world at all possible in Brahman.

Empirically Vedanta, thus, accepts the theory of vivarta or appearance as the creation theory but ultimately no-world-created is the theory accepted. If we analyze as to how the world can appear in Brahman, we will be totally puzzled. Brahman is eternal and blissful in nature whereas the world is temporary and sorrowful in nature. Both are contrary like light and darkness. So how can the world appear in Brahman? Even if by some way we are able to explain as to how the world can appear in Brahman, the next question will be as to why the world is created. Though scriptures initially say that it is Brahman's iccha or desire – why would Brahman desire? Desires are created due to imperfections. Since non-dual blissful Brahman alone exists at all times, what desire can it have? Even if Brahman has desires, how can they even exist as Brahman alone exists. Thus logically we will have to conclude that ultimately there is no world at all created.

If there is no world created, then why explanation of creation?

This is in order to explain the appearing world to initial sadhakas. It is very tough to accept that the appearing world doesn't exist at all. Any sadhaka will get confused and will not be able to accept that the world we currently experience isn't created at all. Therefore initially the world is explained as born out of Brahman – this taking-birth is just appearance in Brahman as Brahman himself becomes the entire world.

This concept that Brahman himself becomes the entire world is valid empirically as the world of names and forms is just an illusion in Brahman. The world is just appearance in Brahman by Brahman alone. Anything that we perceive in the world exists and is shining as light falls upon it – therefore it is Existence and Consciousness in nature. The world also gives temporary happiness – therefore Brahman is present as the essence of the world. Then why does the world lead to sorrow? Because of names and forms. When names and forms are considered as real, then Brahman's bliss is limited by names and forms. As a result bliss is not experienced only temporary happiness is experienced from the world. The moment a sadhaka progresses in the spiritual path, he will learn that there is no world at all created and world is just an illusion of names and forms. Thereby through piercing the names and forms (knowing them to be just illusions), the person will be able to see everything as Brahman. Thereby the person will ever rejoice in bliss in contemplation and abidance in non-dual blissful Brahman which alone exists at all times.

#### Creation of world - analogies

Empirically Brahman became the entire world of names and forms as Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the world. Even when the world is created, Brahman still exists as unaffected essence or substratum of the world even as the dreamer exists as unaffected substratum of the dream world. Thus there is no harm in accepting that Brahman himself became the entire world that we are currently perceived (empirically as ultimately only Brahman exists).

Many people aren't able to apprehend the two levels of empirical and ultimate. It is well understood through the analogy of dream. While dreaming, the dream world appears very real but just is the dreamer becoming the entire dream world. But after waking up, the dream world doesn't even exist – it is foolish to say, after waking up, that the dreamer became the dream world as there never is or was any dream world at all. Similarly when we perceive this world, it is just appearance in Brahman or Brahman becoming the entire world



– this is empirical level when the world is accepted as temporarily existing. But ultimately Brahman cannot become the world or any world cannot appear in Brahman – therefore only Brahman exists, there is no creation at all happening.

The Upanishad gives three analogies to explain as to how the entire world has come out of Brahman or akshara – akshara is that which is immutable or changeless. From such a changeless entity, the changing world can only be an appearance (or illusion as no real changing world can appear in the changeless entity).

It can be argued as to how the same Brahman can be both material and efficient cause of the world. This is answered through the analogy of a spider creating a web. Unlike the example of creation of pot where the material cause of mud is different from the efficient cause of potter, here the material cause of the spider's web is the spider and the efficient cause is also the spider alone. Thus one Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause of the world. It shouldn't be argued that one entity cannot be both sentient and insentient in nature as there is no creation at all happening in Brahman but the world is just an appearance in Brahman (the Upanishad itself will tell later that whatever exists is Brahman and Brahman alone).

Brahman by being blissful in nature doesn't have any desire or selfish motives; but the spider has selfish motives. It creates the web for its own individual purpose. If we say that Brahman creates the world for his own enjoyment then Brahman would be sadistic as majority of people suffer alone in the world. The Upanishad answers this through the second analogy of herbs being created out of earth. From Earth, herbs or herbal plants or vegetables are created. These are created not for Earth's benefit but for the benefit of other beings who get nourished by eating them as food. Earth isn't benefitted at all by the herbs created out of it. Similarly Brahman creates the entire world but Brahman isn't benefitted at all by the world – or Brahman doesn't create the world out of himself for selfish motives.

It can be argued that insentient earth creates insentient herbs but Brahman is sentient and therefore the insentient world cannot be created from sentient Brahman. The Upanishad answers this through the third analogy of hair growing in the body. A sentient being has hair growing out of his body at all times. The being is sentient or has sentience but insentient hair grows from his body. In the same way, the insentient world is created from sentient Brahman.

Through these analogies, the Upanishad answers all logical arguments against the world being created out of Brahman. It should constantly be remembered while learning the Upanishads or anything about creation that empirically the world is just an appearance in Brahman (like water in desert or dreamer in dream world) but ultimately there is no world at all created as Brahman and Brahman alone exists. The moment this ultimate truth that only Brahman exists is forgotten, that very moment we will get into arguments with duality. Wherever duality is there, so many possibilities are there – therefore so many theories or concepts will come into picture and none of them will lead us to eternal bliss – all of them will lead us to sorrow and sorrow alone.

Instead of forgetting the ultimate truth that Brahman alone exists, we should constantly remember that the entire world is just an appearance in Brahman and Brahman alone exists at all times. Through constant remembrance of this truth we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss (through realization of Brahman as our very nature of Consciousness).

May we all strive to remember that the entire world is just an appearance in Brahman and Brahman alone exists so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Gitaamritham

### Bhakti Yoga

We saw the Lord saying in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> sloka that those who worship the form-Lord will also be taken to the formless-Lord or the state of moksha by the Lord himself as they have surrendered unto the Lord (or their minds have merged unto the Lord).

Since the Lord has explained about form-devotion and formless-devotion and that both lead to moksha or attaining the Lord, is there something that can be commonly explained? We always look for generalization of things rather than explaining things differently or specifically for multiple people (or sets or groups of people). This applies to devotion as well – devotion which leads to moksha can also be generalized which is what the Lord gives in this very important sloka.

### Sloka 8 – Way to attain the Lord

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥८॥

mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya |  
nivasisyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ ||8||

8. Fix your mind unto me and your intellect (as well) unto me; thereafter you will attain me alone, there is no doubt in this.

### Devotion – a revisit

This chapter titled bhakti yoga or the yoga of devotion starts with Arjuna asking as to whether form-devotion is greater or formless-devotion is greater. The Lord rather than directly answering Arjuna's question defined devotion very beautifully as fixing the mind unto the Lord, being ever steadfast in the Lord and considering the Lord as the ultimate goal of life. The Lord thereby explained that those who worship the formless-Lord or Brahman directly attain the Lord as they are focusing on their very nature to be the Lord.

But focus on the attributeless Brahman isn't very easy for majority of people as there is focus on one's own body. The moment we think ourselves to be the body, we will expect the Lord also to have a body or a form. Thereby we will not be able to conceive a Lord who is

without any form or attributes. Therefore it is essential initially for a sadhaka to assume a form for Ishwara. When focus is completely directed towards this form, then the entire world of duality will slowly cease to exist. Instead of seeing the entire world, the bhakta will start seeing it as Ishwara. Instead of hearing duality, everything will be heard as praises or names of the Lord. Instead of performing dual actions, everything will be an offering unto Ishwara. Thus everything will be filled in and out with Ishwara. Thus through a form, the formless all-pervasive non-dual Brahman will be easily attained.

The world we experience poses a very strong obstacle with respect to the mind of a person. Attachments and aversions which have been added on for many births will be sticking on to the mind and it will be very tough indeed to destroy it directly. Instead of destroying these attachments and aversions, the attachment towards the Lord will replace these in the mind. Through choosing a form that appeals to one's tendencies, a person will be slowly able to get attached to the form rather than to the entire dual world. Thereby, as explained earlier, eventually the bhakta's mind will be filled in and out with Ishwara.

Whether one takes up form-devotion or formless-devotion, whether one is guided by oneself or guided through Ishwara, the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss or moksha will be attained through devotion.

It is very important to summarize devotion and define devotion in such a way that it caters to both form and formless. Such very clear definition is required in a world where duality finds its place everywhere. Such duality though appeals to each and every person in the world still distracts a person from being focused. When we get into a coffee shop like Starbucks, there will be hundreds of choices available. Instead of just drinking something to quench one's thirst, a person will be thinking over as to what to drink; through continuous practice of visiting the coffee shop, latent tendencies are developed. And these tendencies get strengthened by further visits. Thereby a person instead of getting rid of duality and likes-dislikes or attachments-aversions in the mind, keeps on adding to duality. The more duality the mind is focused on, the more sorrowful it will become.

Sankara thus says in Bhaja Govindam that how will not a person who has viraaga or detachment be happy? A person who has nothing at all will be very happy indeed as possessions keep on adding to our sorrows (knowingly or unknowingly). In the yati or kaupina panchakam, Sankara beautifully explains as to how blissful the state of a person

will be who has nothing but just a loincloth alone. This doesn't mean that we have to renounce everything and wear just a loincloth. Attachments are always problems – attachments are caused out of likes and dislikes which themselves are caused out of duality or dual vision in the mind. If a person is able to get rid of duality in the mind through focus on non-duality, then such a person is equivalent to wearing a loincloth or possessing nothing – therefore such a person will not have any sorrows and will ever rejoice in bliss.

Explaining the same thing in different ways or providing different paths will only confuse and hence the Lord defines bhakti in just two aspects or conditions. This definition caters to each and every person in the mind, irrespective of whether one follows form-worship or formless-worship, devotion or knowledge, action or sanyaasa etc. This definition also is the direct way to moksha or attaining Ishwara or Brahman – since each and every person in the world, knowingly or unknowingly, is seeking this ultimate goal of life of moksha therefore this definition should be understood, learnt and implemented (in order to make one's life fulfilled here and now itself).

#### External world of objects

Before getting into the definition of bhakti (or summarization of bhakti by the Lord) it is important to analyze the entire spectrum of experience so that we will be able to slowly go from duality to non-duality (as to how to go from duality to non-duality, we will be able to understand only through this analysis).

When we talk about analysis or objects, the first thing that comes into picture is the entire world of objects. The objects are made of the five primal elements of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether or Space. Each and every object or vishayaa is made up of these five elements in varying proportions. Depending on the main element or the element which is present in maximum, the quality or attribute of the object is. Objects primarily made up of earth are hard whereas those made up of water as soft or liquid like.

These objects cannot be grasped within the sense organs and hence these objects are called sense objects (objects grasped by sense organs). Sense organs are ten in number – five organs of perception and five organs of action. The five organs of perception are those of Smell, Taste, Sight, Touch and Sound. The five organs of action are hands, legs, mouth, excretion and organ of reproduction. These ten organs are required or essential in order to

grasp objects of the world – this means that without these organs, objects cannot be perceived or any actions performed with respect to them.

Thus it wouldn't be wrong to say that indriyas or sense organs stand one level above the sense objects. But sometimes we find that having sense organs isn't enough. It should be remembered that sense organs aren't the mere openings that we find in the body – for example, a person has the opening of eye but still may not be able to see. Sense organs aren't gross but subtle power working through the various openings in the body. Though sense organs are present at many times, we still don't perceive sense objects. For example, one busy day we are walking from our building to the canteen for food and later our friend says that he was passing by at that time but we didn't pay any notice to him. Our eyes were open and focusing on our friend but still we didn't see our friend. Why? Because sense organs cannot work of their own – they are not their own bosses. They are controlled by the mind. When the mind isn't focused or concentrating on objects, then the sense organs will not perceive or grasp objects. Therefore for sense organs to properly act, the mind is required as the mind gives instructions to the sense organs as to what to do and what not to do, what to concentrate or focus on and what not to.

Therefore we can say that greater or higher than the sense organs is the mind which controls the sense organs and thereby perceives the external objects (leading to sensual pleasures). But is the mind owner of itself? Definitely no as the mind only gets into diverse thoughts (pros and cons). Judgements are not possible with respect to the mind. The mind requires the intellect in order to make judgements or decisions. Decision making is the skill of the intellect and without it, the mind just goes behind whatever it perceives. Therefore we sometimes say to our friends or youngsters that you have no intellect hence you got into wrong places or actions in the world (thereby leading to your own downfall – like getting into addictions of smoking, drinking, drugs etc.). Thus intellect is much higher or greater than the mind.

Is the intellect the highest? Definitely no as the intellect also is insentient like the mind, sense organs and objects. It is only due to the sentient Self that the intellect gets sentience or power to live and act. Thereby the sentience spreads to the mind, sense organs and the entire world of sense objects. There is nothing beyond the Self as the self-sustaining by being Consciousness in nature. Consciousness is the light of all lights and it doesn't require any other light for its existence because it is self-existing in nature. It itself existing, it

illuminates everything that appears as existing. This is similar to the dreamer who illuminates the entire dream world but doesn't require anything in the dream world for his illumination (he illuminates himself and illuminates the entire dream world).

Consciousness or the Self is the ultimate and beyond the sense objects, sense organs, mind and intellect. Generally majority of people are only focused on the sense objects – they don't even realize that there are sense organs helping in perception of the sense objects. So how will they be able to realize the Self?

Now what has Self got to do with Ishwara and bhakti?

Self is none other than Ishwara of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. Therefore the Lord says in many places of Gita that I am residing in the heart of all beings or I am the Self of all beings. There are no many selves in the world – there is only one Self which appears as many in different intellects. Even as one Sun appears as many in the reflections of water kept in different pots, similarly one Ishwara appears as many in the different adjuncts of intellect. Self or Ishwara alone is real so the moment we understand that adjuncts are unreal, then what remains behind is one non-dual Self or Ishwara alone.

The external world of sense objects cannot be controlled directly; sense organs also cannot be controlled as they don't have any say in whatever they are doing. But control is there for the intellect and the mind. The intellect determines as to what is to be done and what is not to be done; the mind then follows the determination of the intellect. Thus we find that businessmen who have their intellect convinced and focused on the notion that money is everything will always be thinking about money in their mind (and the way to attain money). The same applies for any walk of life. Whatever is there in the intellect and the mind will get reflected outside as well.

If the mind and intellect focus on the dual world, then sorrow alone will be result as duality will lead to likes-dislikes which in turn will lead to happiness-sorrow and since happiness is short-lived, it is sorrow all-through being caused. Knowing this truth, wise people should train the intellect and the mind to focus away from the dual world.

What can be focused on other than the dual world?

Focus should be on the non-dual reality of Lord. This is what the Lord explains in this sloka – devotion or bhakti is when the mind and the intellect are fully focused on the Lord and the Lord alone at all times.

#### Fixing the intellect on the Lord

As explained earlier, whatever the intellect determines, the mind follows or obeys. Therefore those who just try to do dhyana should first try to gain determination of the intellect – then dhyana will easily happen. Without determining that the Lord is the ultimate goal of life if we do dhyana, such dhyana will be short-lived and will not lead to the goal of moksha (instead it will only be another addiction or another problem-causing entity). Fixing the intellect on the Lord is nothing but asserting the intellect that the Lord alone is real and that everything is just an illusion of names and forms on the Lord.

Even if we aren't able to convince ourselves that the entire world is just an illusion we should convince ourselves of the truth that the world is temporary (or constantly changing) and therefore sorrowful in nature. Such a sorrowful world will only lead to sorrow and therefore we should divert ourselves away from the world or any goal that focuses on the world. When we remove the entire world, what remains behind is the cause-substratum of the world (the witness-experiencer of the world) as the Lord. Therefore through the intellect we should gain the conviction that the goal of life is nothing but the Lord alone (this is the same as mentioned by the Lord in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sloka as considering the Lord as the ultimate goal of life).

Any goal other than the Lord will not lead to eternal bliss and will only lead to sorrow. Therefore such goals though might be required to be followed from the worldly perspective, they shouldn't gain highest priority. Even as we do normal activities like eating, drinking etc. similarly such activities can happen in the world but the ultimate goal of life should always be the non-dual reality of Lord.

Finding fault in the world (it being sorrowful in nature) and knowing the ever-present changeless Lord to be blissful in nature is true determination of the intellect. If such determination or conviction is gained, automatically we will find the mind and the sense organs focusing on the Lord alone at all times. Though conviction is very tough indeed to attain, it can easily be attained and strengthened through repetitive analysis. There are many works that focus on this aspect of analysis of the sorrowful nature of the world and



non-dual reality of Lord alone being real. Such mananaatmaka or reflective work should be learnt and repeated in the mind over and over again until conviction is very strong.

How can we know when conviction is very strong?

Conviction is very strong when there is no deviation whatsoever from the conviction. Even if the entire world is offered to us, we should be able to easily reject it remembering that the Lord alone is blissful in nature. Such a person alone has got strong conviction and therefore moksha is very near to him. It cannot be thought or argued that such conviction can never be attained in life as we find such conviction being present in Rama of Yoga Vasishtha and Nachiketa or Katha Upanishad. If such puranic figures aren't considered real, then we can find such conviction in Swami Vivekananda and masters like Ramana Maharshi and others show that it is very easy to attain such conviction. Any wise person will easily be able to attain conviction that the Lord alone is real and the entire world of names and forms is sorrowful in nature.

#### Fixing the mind on the Lord

Depending on the strength of the conviction in the intellect, the mind will focus on the Lord (automatically or with appropriate strength). Though many want to become rich, the conviction isn't strong in many and therefore their mind doesn't dwell upon it or work upon it. Thus very few alone are able to become rich in life. Similarly though conviction that the world is sorrowful and Lord alone is real and blissful is there, depending on the strength of the same, very few alone are able to focus on the Lord through their mind.

Focusing on the mind is nothing but always thinking about the Lord. Whatever happens, one should think about the Lord (one thinks about that which one is convinced about, hence the necessity of gaining conviction on the Lord in the intellect). Irrespective of wherever we are and whatever we are doing, our mind constantly focus on the Lord (or think about the Lord). We can consider this like a background process running in our mind – this process constantly thinks about the Lord. Though the external world is perceived and actions are performed constantly, still this process is always focusing on the Lord. Since the Lord is remembered as real and the entire world is remembered as just an illusion or dream or drama, therefore this process has the highest priority. Irrespective of external conditions or situations or environment, the mind is constantly focusing on the Lord alone.

This constant thinking of the Lord in the mind is called as ananya chintanam. Though by definition it means that there is no other thought than that of the Lord, it just means that the thought of the Lord is constantly there and everything else comes and goes (and no importance is given to anything else as everything else other than the Lord is remembered to be temporary, unreal and sorrowful). The more and more one concentrates on the Lord, the more and more one will get rid of sorrows and will rejoice in bliss.

Though it isn't very easy to remember the Lord at all times in our mind, with conviction and practice it will be very easy indeed. Even as once we develop strong love towards somebody or something we will be effortlessly thinking about it in the mind, similarly once we develop conviction and love towards the Lord, we will be able to effortlessly think about the Lord in our mind.

### Intellect and Mind

Both the intellect and mind are required in order to constantly focus on the Lord at all times. Moksha is ever contemplating on the Lord as the non-dual reality behind the entire illusory world of names and forms. Mind thinks about the Lord and the intellect asserts the Lord alone to be real. In a way, true devotion thus is filled with both bhakti and jnaana. Bhakti is remembrance of the Lord and jnaana is remembering the Lord to be non-dual in nature.

When both are there, then such a person will attain the Lord very soon itself as whatever is there in the intellect and the mind, so will become the person. Since we are constantly focused on the dual world therefore we consider ourselves to be changing and sorrowful. The moment our focus shifts from the external world to the non-dual reality of Lord, that very moment we will find ourselves ever rejoicing in bliss here and now itself.

The Lord's definition of bhakti thus is the direct and the simplest way to attain Lord or the ultimate goal of life of moksha. Once the intellect and the mind are focused on the Lord, that very moment we will be able to attain the blissful Lord. We can know that we have attained or realized the Lord when we are able to remain without any sorrow and are able to ever rejoice in bliss.

As explained earlier, though it might appear to be very tough indeed to implement remembrance of the Lord as the non-dual reality behind the world it is very easy indeed if we are able to fix our intellect and mind on the Lord. The more and more conviction grows

about the temporary-sorrowful world and blissful nature of the Lord, the more and more the mind will focus or contemplate on the Lord. The more and more one contemplates on the Lord, the more and more one progresses towards realization of the Lord.

It is definitely possible to realize the Lord here and now itself because our very nature is that of the Lord. Though only very few know their very nature of Lord, ultimately the Lord alone exists of the nature of Consciousness that pulsates inside us as I-exist, I-exist. Nothing apart from the Lord exists – since our very nature is that of Lord, therefore we can realize the Lord here and now itself. The goal of life itself is put an end to the cycle of birth and death through realization of the Lord. This can be achieved here and now itself by simply remembering the Lord as the non-dual reality behind the world at all times.

Though remembrance of the Lord is very simple indeed, it is not that easy for initial sadhakas and therefore we will see next month as to how the compassionate Lord provides simple alternatives or ways to implement remembrance of the Lord (if we aren't able to directly remember the Lord).

May we all strive to fix the mind and intellect on the Lord through constant contemplation on the Lord as the non-dual substratum of the world so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Prakarana Prakaashah

### Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam - 6 – Analysis of deep sleep and proof of Self

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात्

सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।

प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥६॥

rāhugrastadivākarendusadr̥śo māyāsamācchādanāt  
sanmātraḥ karaṇopasaṁharaṇato yo'bhūtsuṣuptaḥ pumān |  
prāgasvāpsamiti prabodhasamaye yaḥ pratyabhijñāyate  
tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idaṁ śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||6||

Even as the Sun appears to be covered by Rahu, similarly though by nature Existence yet appearing to be veiled by Maya, when all equipments are resting, one who exists as pure existence in the state of deep sleep and after waking up one who recognizes that he was earlier sleeping (or ignorant), unto Such a Dakshinamurthy of the nature of Guru my prostrations.

#### Brahman (Atman) – the ultimate reality

Though the entire world of duality appears very real yet ultimately what exists is the non-dual reality of Brahman alone. This is clearly proven through scriptures, logic and one's own very experience. Scriptures say that before creation, Brahman alone existed one without a second. This means that creation is just an illusion of names and forms in Brahman. Thus what exists at all times is Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. That Brahman is the cause of the world is easily known through the existence and consciousness of the world. Such a Brahman by being the cause of the world is the substratum of the world which is just an illusion in Brahman (even as any changing entity is just an illusion in its changeless substratum). Duality also cannot really be proven through logic. Wherever we have multiple entities it has to be explained as to what is the relation between both – this relationship cannot really or fully be explained. Relativity is only possible when there is an absolute entity. Thus duality is only possible when there is a non-dual entity in which duality appears as an illusion. Experience also proves that one Consciousness alone exists. Everything else comes and goes whereas Consciousness alone exists at all times. This Consciousness isn't different from Brahman but of the very nature of Brahman (Brahman being Consciousness in nature). Though it might appear that we all

don't experience our very nature of Consciousness, it is that which pulsates constantly inside as I-exist, I-exist.

Thus scriptures, logic and experience prove that Brahman alone exists as the ultimate reality behind the empirical reality of the world. Only fools will run behind world and worldly pleasures considering them to be real. Wise people will strive to realize their very nature of Brahman through understanding of the temporary and sorrowful nature of the world.

How can we find out Brahman?

Though Brahman is proven through the scriptures, scriptures use the analysis of the three states in order to point out to Brahman.

#### Brahman – known through the three states

Brahman is that which exists at all times. Since it is impossible to measure "all time" therefore we can take up a sample time which is a day or 24 hours. In these 24 hours, we experience three states (irrespective of whether we are a jnaani or an ajnaani – irrespective of all distinctions). The first is the waking state where the entire waking world composed of gross objects is experienced. Here everything is seen as real and experience also appears as very real. As a result of experience of the external gross world, we experience happiness and sorrow. Since happiness is short-lived therefore the waking state only gives us sorrow. The second is the dream state – here we are sleeping and experiencing an entire world created by the mind. The dream world is similar to the waking world – an entire world of experience is experienced while sleeping. Though nothing is really happening, everything appears very real until we wake up from dream. The entire dream world is just an illusion in the dreamer who himself became or appeared as the entire dream world. Though the waking world appears different from the dream world, it is similar alone. When we are experiencing both, they appear very real but once we wake up from it we realize that it doesn't exist at all and just is an illusion. Needless to say, both contradict each other – waking world isn't there in dream and dream world isn't there in waking. The third state is where everything including the mind is resting. Therefore there is no experience whatsoever – except after waking up a person realizes that he slept blissfully but he didn't know anything (ignorance veiling everything). In this state of deep sleep where neither gross objects nor subtle dream objects are experienced, all the equipments are resting but still "I" am there.

In these three states there are two "I"s experienced. One "I" is the ego which is constantly changing and clinging unto the world and its objects. This ego I identifies itself with the waking world, dream world and ignorance (as sleeping) in the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. But it is impossible for a changing entity to link these three diverse states. It is only possible to link these three diverse states if there is a common I who experiences these three states. This common I is the Self which is a mere witness of the three states. This "I" or Self is that which illumines the three states. But in the waking and dream state it is not possible to find out this Self as there is the Ego I posing as the real I and the entire world of duality is perceived (either in gross or subject). The only way to find out the Self is through the state of deep sleep.

In the deep sleep state, everything including the Ego is sleeping and hence after waking up, the ego says that "I didn't know anything". But if the ego didn't know anything then how can it say that I slept blissfully? If the ego was sleeping there is no bliss possible for it but still bliss is experienced in the deep sleep state. This bliss that which instigates or inspires people to sleep daily. Irrespective of where one is or what one is doing, everybody sleep daily because they experience bliss in this deep sleep state. The bliss in this state is incomparable to the short happiness experienced from the waking and dream world.

Where from bliss is experienced?

Bliss is experienced from the Self.

Since the Self is present as witness of all three states, why isn't bliss experienced in the waking and dream state?

Bliss is experienced when the Self is realized as the substratum of duality. Or in other words, when duality ceases to exist then the bliss of the Self is experienced. In the waking and dream state, duality exists and therefore the Self is not realized. But in the deep sleep state, everything except the Self are resting – thus bliss of the Self is experienced.

This doesn't mean that duality has to end in order to experience the bliss of the Self. Duality doesn't really exist for it to end. What is required is jus knowledge that duality is just an illusion. The moment a person asserts duality to be unreal, that very moment the person will experience the Self and the bliss of the Self.

The deep sleep state thus shows us as to how to realize the Self and ever rejoice in bliss. Though it appears very simple to implement the knowledge that duality is just an illusion, it is very tough due to the attraction that duality exerts on the Ego and the ego's strength to not vanish itself (and convincing a person that it is the true I).

A person who learns the shastras or analyzes the three states will very easily be able to get rid of the ego and duality through considering them as unreal. Thereby such a person will very easily be able to abide as the Self and ever rejoice in bliss.

If the Self or Brahman alone exists at all times, then why am I not experiencing this bliss? This is called ignorance. Ignorance veils the Self and therefore the Self is not known. As a result the dual world superimposes itself on the Self or appears in the Self – the world is thereby considered real and since it constantly changes, therefore it only leads to sorrow constantly for a person. Ignorance can only be removed through knowledge even as darkness can only be removed through light. Knowledge is as found in the scriptures. Though logic and experience can be used to gain conviction of knowledge, since these depend from individual to individual (one may have stronger or more logical intellect than another) therefore it is important to focus on the scriptures. The scriptures also have been tested time and again by various masters. If we have faith and are able to follow the path set by the scriptures then we will be able to realize our very nature of Self here and now itself (this means that scriptures are verifiable by anybody).

Mere scriptures will not give us full faith or conviction in the intellect. Therefore it is essential to analyze the truth propounded in the scriptures through logic and experience. We should just remember that scriptures are primary source of knowledge and logic-experience just asserts whatever is being mentioned in the scriptures (secondary alone).

Through knowledge we will be able to get rid of ignorance and thereby we will be able to realize our very nature of blissful Self. Knowledge is the three of sravana, manana and nididhyaasana. Sravana is listening to the scriptures with focus on the non-dual reality of Brahman. Manana is reflecting on whatever has been learnt using logical methods, as per the scriptures. Nididhyaasana is constantly contemplating on the truth that Brahman alone exists and the entire world is just an illusion in Brahman.

### Ignorance and its veiling

Where from ignorance comes? If Self or Brahman alone exists, then how can ignorance veil it?

Ignorance doesn't really veil the Self as ignorance itself doesn't exist – whatever exists is one Brahman and Brahman alone. Even as there is nothing called darkness there is nothing called ignorance. But even as darkness is experienced (in absence of light), similarly ignorance is experienced directly by an ignorant person. But the moment we try to find out proofs for darkness or ignorance, we will not succeed (as they aren't real). Unreal ignorance (when experienced) appears to veil the Self (there is no real veiling of the Self possible as Self alone exists and Self is Consciousness in nature – Consciousness is the light of all lights and hence can never be veiled). This seemingly veiling by ignorance has to be removed through knowledge that there is no ignorance and one Conscious Self alone exists.

Vedanta gives different analogies to show as to how ignorance seemingly veils the Self, all the while the Self remaining exactly as itself (without any change whatsoever). Dream clearly gives us a perspective as to how this is possible. In dream, we experience a lot but all those experiences don't affect the dreamer even little. While experiencing dream alone, they appear as very real. But once the dreamer wakes up then he realizes that there never was any dream world and only I became or appeared as the entire world – the real unaffected "I" appeared as veiled in the dream world but it wasn't veiled at all – it was present at all times. Similarly in this waking world, we find ourselves immersed and getting affected by activities but all the while "I" as the Self remains unaffected. There is no veiling by ignorance also possible for the Self as the Self alone exists, one without a second. There is nothing apart from the Self for it to be veiled. Even if illusory entities appear in the Self still the Self cannot be veiled for it is light or Consciousness in nature. Self appearing as veiled by ignorance is just an illusion. A sadhaka has to, through knowledge, remove this notion that the Self is veiled. Thereby the Self appears as ever-shining and ever-unaffected.

Hastamalaka gives the beautiful analogy of clouds and sun to illustrate this ever unaffected state of the Self. On a cloudy day we find that the Sun is covered by the clouds. As a result it appears as if the Sun is not present at all. Just because we don't see the Sun or its rays doesn't mean that the Sun isn't there. Sun is ever-present and throwing its rays to the entire world but the clouds make it appear as if Sun is not there. They cover the Sun and when they vanish, we find the Sun again. Really what is happening is veiling of the Sun by the clouds – this is just a perspective vision as the Sun, being the light of entire earth,



cannot be veiled by anything (real or unreal). In the same way, the Self appears as veiled by ignorance. This veiling is just an appearance or perspective vision as really there is no veiling at all possible. At all times the Self shines are pure Consciousness or "I". There is no time when "I" is not present. Thus veiling is just an appearance – once knowledge dawns about our very nature of Conscious Self, then the Self is realized never to be veiled again.

Here Sankara uses the analogy of rahu or the shadowy planet which temporarily veils the Sun. Really speaking, at that time as well Sun is shining – just that we aren't in its path and therefore we find as if the Sun is being veiled. Similarly at all times the Self is shining – just that we don't realize its existence (as a result of ignorance).

It can be argued that there is nothing experienced in the deep sleep state and therefore "I" or the Self ceases to exist in that state. Sankara answers this by saying that the Self is present even in the deep sleep as after waking up we recognize ourselves as having slept blissfully. Such recognition is only possible if "I" was present in the deep sleep state. This "I" is present in both the deep sleep state and the waking state. Though the Ego I was sleeping in the deep sleep state, the Self was ever awake as it is the mere witness of the three states.

As a result of recognition or pratyabhijnaa we can say beyond doubt that the Self existed in the state of deep sleep (though appearing as sleeping). The Ego I that sleeps in the deep sleep state is nothing but an illusion in the real Self. Due to superimposition, the Self I appears as sleeping in deep sleep state and after waking up recognizes himself as having slept. Thus the Self exists in all the three states.

This existence of the Self in the three diverse and contrary states is our real nature of witness-hood or illumination of everything. It is this state of the Self that is called the fourth state or the state of turiya. Ultimately or really speaking there is no fourth state as the Self alone exists but when talking with respect to the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep state, the Self is in the fourth state. The Self's continuous existence isn't a state at all but it is the substratum or non-dual reality behind everything that appears as existing (objects).

It is due to the Guru's grace that we are able to learn the shastras. And when we learn the shastras we find that "I" am not the changing Ego that goes from one of the three diverse

states to another; instead we realize our very nature of being the witness Self, that Self which alone exists at all times.

The three states themselves are possible only as a result of the witness Self – the moment we realize our very nature of this witness Self, that very moment all sorrows will end (as everything apart from the Self is known to be just an illusion in the Self) and we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss (as the Self is non-dual blissful Brahman). Through analysis of the three states and one's very nature of being the substratum of duality (through pratyabhijna and sushupti or deep sleep state), we will easily be able to abide as the Self at all times. Thereby our life will become blissful here and now itself (life will be fulfilled instantly).

May Dakshinamurthy as Brahman or Self, the basis of the three states, make us realize our very nature of Consciousness that pulsates inside as I-exist, I-exist at all times so that by getting rid of all sorrows we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Madhuraamritham

### Hanuman Chalisa - 6

संकर सुवन केसरीन्दन ।

तेज प्रताप महा जग बंदन ॥६॥

saṅkara suvana kesarīnandana |  
teja pratāpa mahā jaga bandana ||6||

You are the incarnation of Siva and son of Kesari. Your luster and great valor is famous and everyone in the world respects you as a result.

### Avatara - incarnation

Avatara or incarnation is a word that has been misunderstood by a lot of people. This was the case in ancient times and even today as well the tradition of misunderstanding continues. Truly speaking the entire world is an incarnation of Ishwara or Brahman – that Ishwara or Brahman who is the cause of the world. By being the uncaused caused of the world, one without a second, Brahman is also the substratum of the world. This is because the world is changing therefore such a changing world cannot really come from changeless Brahman except for being an illusion in the substratum of Brahman even as the illusory dream world appears in the dreamer and illusory snake appears in the rope. Thus the scriptures say that this entire world is just an appearance in one Ishwara or Brahman.

Therefore everything that we see in the world is an incarnation of Ishwara in one or the other way. Some people are able to realize their nature of Ishwara and others aren't. Those who are able to realize their nature will not become egoistic and find themselves different or distinct or superior to others; instead they find the entire world to be that one Ishwara. Therefore they are able to ever rejoice in bliss in vision of oneness in the entire world while performing activities externally like any worldly person.

Hanuman is the best example for each one of us. Each one of us has different capabilities inside but these are hidden and not revealed. What is required is to reveal our inner capabilities by getting rid of ignorance. Ignorance is not knowing the ultimate reality of Ishwara as pervading the entire world and therefore as our very nature of Consciousness. Hanuman didn't know his own powers – he had tremendous strength yet such strength

wasn't fully known by even himself. And when such strength was known and demonstrated (like in the case of trying to catch Sun), it was of no purpose to himself or others. We find in each one of us the same thing happening – either we aren't aware of our infinite capabilities or without knowing it we use our capabilities in a wrong and foolish way, thereby leading to sorrow for ourselves and others.

If we just look around we will find how all sorrow is caused by our own very actions of either ignorance or arrogance born out of ignorance (humility will arise when a person gains knowledge and removes ignorance as then everything is seen as one ultimate Ishwara). Even as Hanuman was able to get rid to ignorance, we also will be able to get rid of ignorance and arrogance as well.

What is the way to get rid of ignorance?

There is no other way to getting rid of ignorance than knowledge even as light alone can get rid of darkness.

If it is argued that karma can get rid of ignorance then it is easily proven wrong as karma is born out of desires and desires are born out of ignorance (ignorance of our very nature of perfect and complete Ishwara). If we are the perfect and complete Ishwara, then what can actions achieve? Nothing at all but that doesn't mean that we can get rid of actions as the world is a world of actions; therefore actions have to be performed but remembering the world to be just a drama in which we are enacting a role. Karma due to being born out of ignorance cannot get rid of ignorance. Therefore ignorance can only be got rid of through knowledge.

Knowledge starts with seeking of Ishwara. Until we seek Ishwara we cannot know Ishwara. Seeking Ishwara is thus the very first step to knowing Ishwara. We seek Ishwara only when we know that we are missing something – this something that we are missing is eternal bliss and as a result we experience sorrow. Therefore a person should seek Ishwara knowing that I am not blissful and am experiencing sorrow.

It is very tough indeed to seek somebody as we generally think of ourselves as complete and self-sustained. Great courage is needed to seek somebody knowing that we are missing something which we can get through seeking the other person. Of course there are the other extreme people who seek somebody or the other for everything. In Hanuman's case

we find that Hanuman sought out Rama the moment he saw Rama. He realized his own limited-state and realizing that Rama is the embodiment of eternal bliss, he sought out Rama.

True bhakti thus starts with knowledge about the sorrowful state of the world and the blissful state of Ishwara. Such a person starts seeking Ishwara, not externally but internally in the mind. True bhakti is where a person is filled in and out with thoughts of Ishwara. Such a true bhakta has no individual existence but he is as good as Ishwara – in his very presence, Ishwara can be directly perceived. Thus many people are attracted to true bhaktas of Ishwara as in their presence, blissful Ishwara can be felt.

When we look at examples of mahatmas, they are nothing at all with respect to physical or intellectual talent or worldly achievements; for example, Ramana Maharshi wore just a loin cloth and was only staying in Tiruvannamalai. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa wasn't learned at all and looked like a rugged person. Mata Amritanandamayi Devi looks fat, dark and has learnt only till the 3<sup>rd</sup> standard. Still these masters have and are being sought out by mahatmas. Though people sought out Steve Jobs when he was alive, he will definitely be not sought out after a few decades. But great realized masters are being sought out even now (after centuries of their lives on earth). This is because in their very presence, Ishwara can be directly and intuitively experienced. Though many will not agree that Ishwara can be perceived, Ishwara is perceived just as bliss or peace. In the entire world only Ishwara is eternal and changeless – therefore wherever we find bliss, it is only due to Ishwara. If this bliss is unconditional and gives us immense peace then definitely we are in the presence of Ishwara or a devotee of Ishwara.

Though avatara purushas are living embodiments of Ishwara, we can experience Ishwara even in the presence of great devotees like Prof. Balakrishnan Nair, Nochur Venkatraman and Swami Tejomayananda. Such devotees are Ishwara alone as their mind is filled in and out with Ishwara.

Hanuman through seeking out Ishwara was able to fill his mind in and out with Ishwara. Therefore Hanuman is a true incarnation of Ishwara whether it be Siva or Vishnu. The scriptures say that he who is Siva alone is Vishnu and he who is Vishnu alone is Siva. Hanuman himself says that by my essence, I am Rama alone.

A way to find out incarnations is with respect to the actions they perform. Their actions will have vast effect and huge reach (beyond imagination). This will not be the case with jeevan muktas or realized beings. The difference between jeevan muktas and avataras are only with respect to external actions – internally both are one Ishwara alone. As explained earlier, the entire world is Ishwara's avatara alone. We don't have to keep in mind the difference with respect to actions of avataras and jeevan muktas. We should just remember that everything is filled in and out with Ishwara – therefore whatever is present is Ishwara alone.

It is this vision of oneness of Ishwara as pervading the entire world that makes us realize that we are avataras of Ishwara.

What can avataras do?

Avataras can do the impossible and unimaginable. Avataras demand respect from the entire world – not due to their individual state but due to their oneness with Ishwara or realization of Ishwara.

Ishwara is the source and substratum of the entire world and hence he controls the entire world. There isn't anything that cannot be controlled by Ishwara. Therefore those who are one with Ishwara (avataras) can accomplish anything and everything in life. We can easily find this in the various puranic stories about Krishna and others. We can also see this in the lives of masters like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi, Sadguru Mata Amritanandamayi devi etc. All these masters are able to accomplish what no normal person in the world can accomplish. Though we find that Microsoft, Google, Facebook etc. have started from nothing and achieved great heights in life, it is just with respect to one part of life but mahatmas are able to change life itself in whole.

When we go for tours of AMMA (Sadguru Mata Amritanandamayi Devi) we hear stories about how people's lives are totally changed as a result of AMMA. I once met a very young person who was working as a waiter in a café. Before meeting AMMA he was totally into addictions of drugs, liquor etc. but after meeting AMMA, he was a totally changed person. Not only that his addictions were totally stopped he also became more joyous and blissful. That this total change can be created by just meeting of a master itself explains the greatness of masters – what years of rehabilitation cannot do is achieved through just association with great masters.

Hence our scriptures explain the sloka of mookam karoti vaachalam or that a dumb person starts talking like a poet and a lame person climbs the mountain when there is grace of Ishwara present with him. Kalidasa was a living example of how a dumb person became one of the greatest poets in history. The great Adi Sankara traveled across the length and breadth of the entire world. Swami Vivekananda was able to swim in the ocean towards the Vivekananda rock in Kanyakumari. All these are feats that no normal person can even dream of achieving.

What is important for sadhakas to remember from the various miraculous deeds performed by mahatmas is that great masters have the capability to enlighten us and take us to the goal of moksha here and now itself. Such masters mere presence is enough to make us ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself. So what would be the state when we are able to surrender unto such masters?

Though we all are essentially Ishwara or non-dual Brahman still we are unable to apprehend our very nature; in order for us to realize our very nature of Brahman we need a master. Hanuman was divine incarnation of Siva yet he didn't know his own power. It was only when he met Rama that he realized his own real nature and therefore was able to perform miraculous deeds effortlessly. Such deeds didn't raise his ego as he was realized, not just a magician who gets magical powers of the world. Without knowledge, magical powers will only boost the ego and lead to downfall of oneself. With knowledge there is no seeking of magical powers but they will be available to us whenever we need them (and they will only be used for the benefit or welfare of the entire world). Hanuman never used his powers for himself; instead he used the powers in order to help Rama and others around him.

Like Hanuman, we will also be able to realize our very nature and perform good deeds for the benefit of the entire world if we are able to surrender unto the master of Rama or Ishwara. Surrender is as simple as just remembering that Ishwara alone exists here – the entire world is just an illusion of names and forms in Ishwara. It is very simple indeed to understand this as we daily experience the state of dream where an entire world appears as existing but is just an illusion in one dreamer. Similarly the entire world that we currently experience is just an illusion in one Ishwara. The more and more we remember this ultimate truth, more and more blissful we will become. Thereby we will find our lives being filled with bliss at all times.

When a person realizes his very nature of Ishwara, then the entire world will be serving the person in one or the other way. This is what Tulasidasa says here that the entire world respects Hanuman. Respect isn't something that is even being sought out by Hanuman or other bhaktas. They are able to just abide as Ishwara at all times and thereby are ever rejoicing in bliss. Since they have attained the ultimate goal of life as ever rejoicing in bliss, therefore they don't need anything else in life – no name or fame or money or wealth or anything else can please such people. They will never fall for any of this as they are ever rejoicing in bliss in contemplation of Ishwara who alone exists here as their very nature of pure Consciousness.

May we all, like Hanuman, surrender unto the ultimate reality of non-dual Ishwara so that we are able to get rid of all sorrows and are able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

May we all strive to worship Hanuman so that like Hanuman we will also be able to ever remember Ishwara in our mind thereby putting an end to all sorrows and ever rejoicing in bliss here and now itself.



## Praadeshikam - I

### Hari Naama Keerthanam – 6

Sreemoolamaaya prakritinkalthudangi  
 Jananaanthyatholam paramahaamaaya thante gati  
 Janmangalum pala kazhinjaalumillavadi  
 Karmatthinum parama naaraayanaaya namaha

Starting with Prakriti and continuing from one birth to another, this is gati (birth and death) of the big mahaamaaya; even after many births, there is still no dearth for karma, O Narayana prostrations unto you.

### Brahman – the ultimate reality

Generally we consider whatever we are perceiving now to be real and reality status is given to the same. But real is only that which never ceases to exist. This means that real is that which is never changing; as that which changes is subject to birth and death. The entire world that we currently perceive is constantly changing and hence cannot be real. But there needs to be real entity in order for something which isn't real to appear as if real. The snake seen in the rope requires rope as a real substratum (from empirical viewpoint) and the water seen in desert requires water as a real substratum. Similarly this entire changing world requires a changeless substratum for its very existence. This changeless substratum has to be the cause of the world for the world appears in it and therefore the world comes from it and will merge unto it after destruction.

This cause of the world is termed in the scriptures as Brahman and is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is non-dual in nature as there is nothing apart from it. The three differences of internal, similar entities and dissimilar entities aren't there in Brahman. Brahman is without parts and therefore internal differences aren't there (only that which has parts like tree, body etc. have internal differences – Brahman is without parts as anything with parts is changing and non-eternal). There is nothing like Brahman for then there would have to be determined relation between Brahman and like-Brahman entity. This relation would mean that both are relative and therefore changing or unreal. And it is also easier or simpler to accept that there is one Brahman alone (instead of accepting two Brahman). Scriptures also say that Brahman is one alone, nothing like it. Thus Brahman is devoid of differences between similar entities. Now is there a possibility of a dissimilar entity

(or anything apart from Brahman)? Definitely no for Brahman is the cause of the entire world of duality. Therefore there is nothing apart from Brahman similar or dissimilar. Thus all differences are negated in Brahman which means that Brahman alone really exists.

Scriptures say Brahman alone existed before creation but does this mean that Brahman alone exists during creation as well?

Definitely yes. That which doesn't exist before creation and after creation but appears as existing is just an illusion in its substratum. Thus the world is just an illusion in Brahman. Scriptures give the example of gold ornaments, iron pieces and objects made of mud to illustrate this.

There are various gold ornaments like gold chain, gold necklace, gold ring etc. All of these appear as different from one another but essentially they are gold alone. The differences are mere names and forms in gold. Thus a wise person realizing that everything is gold alone isn't affected when one name-form dies and another is created. Similar is the case with objects made of iron and mud. This entire world is also same alone. The entire world is just names and forms in Brahman. Whatever exists is pure Existence, Consciousness and Bliss – names and forms make it appear as if they are real but essentially Brahman alone exists.

A gold buyer gets affected by the names and forms – thereby chooses appropriate ornaments according to his liking. He also gets affected when one ornament is destroyed and another is created. But the goldsmith is unaffected at all times as he knows that all ornaments are mere names and forms in gold – whatever exists is gold and gold alone. Therefore when a person goes to buy a new ornament or to mend an old ornament, the goldsmith is ever the same (unaffected). In the same way, a jnaani or realized master is unaffected at all times when names and forms of the world are created or destroyed as he knows that whatever exists is Brahman and Brahman alone. But normal people, not realizing this truth, consider names and forms to be real. As a result, they get affected time and again with respect to names and forms.

Do such fools get eternal bliss in life?

They don't get as they are focused on illusory names and forms which will come and go. Thereby through not focusing on the real eternal entity of Brahman, they experience only sorrow at all times.

What creates names and forms in Brahman?

Names and forms are not at all created but they are mere appearances due to ignorance (considered as real). Even when they appear as existing, they don't exist and whatever exists is the underlying essence of Brahman alone.

### Maya – creator of names and forms

Though ultimately names and forms don't exist at all, they appear as existing for an ignorant person who requires it to be explained. Many people lack trust or faith and therefore need things to be explained clearly and logically. Scriptures take such people also into consideration and being the most logical system ever, they also explain everything from an empirical viewpoint.

The world of names and forms are created out of Maya or Prakriti – the insentient power of Ishwara or Brahman. If it be questioned as to whether Brahman can have such a power of Maya, then the answer is that anything is possible for Brahman as Brahman alone exists as the non-dual reality. Even as a great magician can use his magic in whatever way he wishes, similarly Brahman also can make appear any world due to his power of Maya or Prakriti.

Is this power of Brahman real?

Maya or Prakriti isn't real as it is insentient in nature. It is just assumed in order to explain the external world of names and forms. Names and forms cannot appear out of nowhere and they cannot appear in Brahman automatically as Brahman is beyond any duality. Therefore an illusory power termed as Maya is assumed for Brahman and this power is associated with creation of names and forms or the entire world itself.

Here this power of Maya is termed as Mahaamaya or big Maya. We find many magical or miraculous things in the world itself. There are magicians who perform feats like making Taj Mahal itself vanish for a period of time. There are also yogis who perform miraculous feats like being at two places in one time, making objects appear out of nowhere etc. All such deeds are themselves Maya or illusions. Though they may be real from worldly perspective still they are illusions making it appear very normal (though aren't normal at all). If such magic in the world itself appears great, what to talk about the magic of the entire world?

The entire world appears out of nowhere; though the world is constantly changing still it appears as if changeless and very real. Moreover we find that the world follows laws and rules. Though laws and rules of nations are easily broken, laws and rules of the entire world is never broken. Sometimes when we face natural calamities we then understand the power of Prakriti or the power of Maya. This power is a majestic power beyond even our imagination. Sankara says in Maya Panchakam that this power deludes even the well-learned scholar who is able to preach the scriptures many times in his life – and it doesn't delude the scholar eventually but instantly. Thus this power is a great power and called Mahaamaya.

What happens in the creation of this power of Maya?

Birth and death happens. Names and forms constantly change and therefore take birth and die. Everything that is part of Prakriti undergoes birth and death. There obviously has to be a time of rest for creation itself therefore during such times, beings go back to Prakriti and are in an unmanifest or dormant state. After a while, they spring up again from Prakriti. Krishna says in Gita thus that the entire world appears from Prakriti and then merges into Prakriti – this chain goes on and on without any end at all.

There are only two entities that are beginningless – one is Brahman for it isn't created and second is any illusion (like the world) as it just appears in a real substratum. Brahman is endless but an illusion though appearing as endless is with ends alone. The world thus though appearing as taking birth and dying over and over again has an end.

How do we know the world has an end?

The world is changing and illusory, therefore it has an end like water seen in desert or the dream world. Any illusion though appearing as beginningless has an end when knowledge dawns. Knowledge about the world's changing and illusory nature will lead to the knowledge of its substratum of eternal Brahman. This knowledge puts an end to the illusion even as knowledge of the substratum of desert puts an end to the illusion of water seen in it.

If knowledge easily puts an end to the illusion of the entire world, then why do we still find people suffering in the world?

Krishna says in Gita that out of thousands of people only few strive for moksha (liberation from the illusion of the entire world). And out of these striving people, fewer are those who

realize Brahman in essence. Thus we rarely find people who are able to put an end to the illusion of the entire world.

### Actions – never-ending

One of the main reasons why majority of people aren't able to seek moksha is focus on karma or action. Since this world is filled with karma and called karmabhoomi, therefore majority of people think that karma is inevitable. Though it is true that karma is inevitable, yet people think that doing karma alone will take us to moksha (the state of bliss).

Karma or actions are born out of desire, the highest of desire being desire for eternal bliss or perfection. Desire itself is born out of ignorance as we are ignorant of the truth that one Brahman alone exists. Karma being born, indirectly, out of ignorance cannot get rid of ignorance. Thus many people who try to attain perfection through karma end up in misery alone. It doesn't matter whether they are doing selfish actions or selfless actions – whether actions in the world or actions in an ashram. All actions will only add up to ignorance and therefore will never lead us to moksha.

The simplest way to understand this is to try to perform an action and see if we can put an end to action. Actions, as explained earlier, are born out of desires. Desires can never be ended through actions (enjoyment). Manu thus says that trying to put an end to desires by enjoying it is like trying to extinguish fire by pouring ghee into it – fire will not be extinguished, instead it will burn more vigorously. The more one performs actions, the more one will want to perform actions (similar actions).

Thus when we meet old people who were actively involved in charitable activities, we will find as to how discontent they are with their life itself. Though they were able to perform a lot of service to the entire world, they are still sad that many people are still suffering in the world. Prof. Balakrishnan Nair beautifully says that such people will be giving up their life thinking about suffering people – therefore they will have to take birth either as suffering people or as taking care of suffering people. One birth ended with doing service to suffering people and the next birth continues with the same action. So is there any progress whatsoever? Definitely no. The person does actions over and over again, the same actions as well.

Thus a sadhaka needs to understand clearly that actions can never be ended. They will go on and on without any end at all. Through more performing of actions, more will be nourished in the mind and more will be performed. When more actions cannot be performed with this body or equipments, then it is renounced and the next body is taken up. This is called death and a new birth. Many births and deaths go on without cessation of action – forget cessation of action, the thirst for more and more action doesn't even get reduced.

If actions can never be ended, then what can be done about them?

First thing is to know that actions will never end (the thirst for actions as well). Remembering this one should seek knowledge that will put an end to all desires and ignorance. Knowledge is as simple as remembering that one Brahman alone exists and the entire world is just an illusion of names and forms in Brahman. Through this knowledge a person will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times therefore putting an end to the need to perform actions.

Does this mean that actions will not be performed by jnanis?

Jnanis also will perform actions as this world is karmabhoomi and nobody can remain even for a moment without performing actions. Everybody performs actions based on their latent tendencies. A normal person performs actions and is affected by the results of actions. If good results, he will be happy and if bad results he will be sad. Thus he gets whirled between happiness and sorrow through actions. But a jnani remembers that the entire world is an illusion – this means that actions in the world are like actions in dream or actions in a drama. Even as an actor portrays his role to perfection while remaining unaffected at all times (through remembrance that the entire drama is just an illusion) similarly a jnani remains unaffected at all times while performing actions in the world. Thus though performing actions, a jnani is ever blissful at all times.

The ultimate goal of life is to ever rejoice in bliss while living in the world itself. Though the world is just an illusion in one Brahman, it is still pervaded in and out with Brahman. Therefore through knowledge a person will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times even while experiencing the illusory world. Sankara says in his Gita bhashya that a jnani is like a person who knows that there is no water in desert but still might run behind water like any other person.

Like a worldly person, the jnani also will be performing activities and appearing to get affected with the activities (getting into happiness and sorrow). But the jnani is just playing his role to perfection, externally appearing to be affected like a normal worldly person while internally ever rejoicing in bliss at all times.

Though it might appear to be very tough to implement this in life, it is very easy if we remember the ultimate truth that one Brahman alone exists here. A person who has the strong desire to get rid of sorrows experienced in the world and ever rejoice in bliss will be able to remember this knowledge at all times. Through knowledge a person will develop true love and passion towards Brahman or Ishwara. This passion itself will make the person ever remember the object of love of Brahman. Thus through remembering at all times that one Brahman alone exists, the person will be able to get rid of all sorrows soon itself.

Many times people loosely talk about grace of Ishwara. Ishwara's grace, as AMMA says, is like the rays of Sun which is always present. But if we close the windows and doors of a house, then it will appear as if Sun is impartial and not throwing its light upon us. Once we open the windows and doors, we will be able to experience the ever-present rays of the Sun. Similarly Ishwara's grace is always present in the entire world as Ishwara pervades the entire world as its substratum. But if we close the doors and windows of our heart then we will not be able to perceive the ever-present grace of the Lord. The moment we open our heart, we will be able to find the ever-present grace of the Lord.

How can we open our heart?

Heart is opened through the faith and conviction that one Ishwara alone is present here. Once we start seeing the entire world as filled in and out with the Lord, then we will be able to perceive the grace of the Lord through fulfillment of all our desires with respect to the world. Initially this is achieved through offering all activities unto the Lord – we may not know who the Lord is and his glories but still if we are able to offer all activities unto a powerful Lord who is above us (and can protect us) then eventually the Lord himself will take us from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge. As the Lord promises in Gita, his devotee never perishes as the devotee is remembering the eternal reality of Lord.

Only a person who sees illusions will perish – a person who sees only the non-dual reality of Lord (or at least sees the non-dual reality of Lord amidst the illusory worldly experiences)

will never perish as he is holding onto the reality. Through holding onto the Lord, such a person eventually will be able to see the Lord as present everywhere.

Through offering actions unto the Lord and performing them while remembering the entire world to be filled in and out with Ishwara, a sadhaka will very soon itself be able to get rid of all sorrows and ever rejoice in bliss. All it requires is the strong desire to get rid of sorrows and ever rejoicing in bliss (and the knowledge of the temporary and sorrowful nature of the world).

May we all strive to ever remember the Lord as the underlying substratum of the illusory world so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.



## Praadeshikam - II

### **Kanda Shashti Kavacham - 5**

*Vaasavanmarugavarugavaruga  
 Nesakuramagalnaivaivaruga  
 Aarumugampadaithaayavaruga  
 neeRidumvelavannittamvaruga  
 sirakirivelavanseekiramvaruga  
 sarahanabhavanaarsadudhiylvaruga  
 Please come, O son in law of Indira!  
 Please come, O heart stealer of lady of the mountain  
 Please come, O Lord with six faces  
 Please come, O Lord who holds the sphere  
 O SaravanaBhava, Please come quickly*

Attaining Moksha is the Ultimate Goal of human and in order to reach the goal of moksha we need to have constant remembrance of the Lord so that we remain in the path of moksha with focus and without any obstacles. Isvara is the controller and protector of the entire world and hence it is important to surrender to the Lord because only Lord can help us overcome all obstacles. It may not be possible for everyone to think about the Lord who is formless and all-pervading and hence the formless Isvara is given a form by the devotee. The devotee thus using the form develops focus on the Lord and thereby moves ahead in the spiritual path.

Lord is always of the nature of Anandam and hence whenever there is thought of Lord there will be Anandam. The thought of Lord can be entertained in the mind in various ways like japa, dhyana, bhajana or sravana etc. When the thought of Lord is not there in the mind, that is the time when the person will be vulnerable to sorrow and suffering. That is the biggest obstacle for a person to forget to keep the Lord in the mind. Lord is the only real entity in the world. Lord exists everywhere except in the mind of the person. Since the mind is mostly out of our control, and hence it is not so easy to keep the Lord in the mind. Therefore, we need the help from the Lord in order to keep Lord in the mind. Since we find it difficult to bring Lord in our mind, we request Lord to come to our mind.

Here the poet is describing the Lord in various ways and then requesting the Lord to come. There are various ways to make the mind think about the Lord. Mind normally would grasp those forms that are pleasing and attractive. The form of Lord Muruga is always considered as a very attractive form and hence it would be easier to remember such a form. Also, other way to remember Lord is through the qualities of the Lord. Lord Muruga is considered to have six faces, thus he has the name Shanmukha. When we remember the Lord with six faces in our mind, the Lord will keep a check on the six enemies of Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada and Matsarya. These 6 are considered as enemies because they make us forget the Lord and thus takes us away from the path of Moksha. We may not even try to remove these 6 enemies from our mind. When we think about Lord Murugawith six faces, the Lord would remove these six enemies and thereby protects us from obstacles that could make us forget the Lord.

No one want to experience sorrow for long time. Naturally, everyone wants to get rid of sorrow right away. Everyone, when given a chance, would be happy to postpone a sorrow, but no one would want to experience sorrow and postpone happiness. If we understand that the sorrow we are experiencing in this world is because of not remember the Lord in our mind, when would we want the Lord to come to our mind. Naturally, we would want the Lord come to our mind as soon as possible. The level of intensity the devotee has regarding remembering of the level, would determine how sooner the devotee would get rid of the sorrow and experience the Anandam of the Lord.

*Rahanabhavasrararararara*

*Rihanabhavasriririririri*

*Vinabhavasharahanaveeranamonama*

*Nibhavasharahaniraniraniranna*

*Vasrahanabhavarugavaruga*

*O RahanaBhavasrarararararara*

*O Rihanabhavasriririririri*

*O vinabhavasharohana, the great warrior, my prostrations*

*O NibhavaSharahaniraniraniranna*

*O vasrahanabha, please come!*

In these lines, the poet interplays the letters of Saravanabhava. Saravanabhava is a six letter word when written in Tamil. The letters are intermixed in different ways in these lines.

Although, we may not get the literal meaning of these, sometimes when great mahatmas are in the state of Anandam of the Lord, they write whatever comes to their mind to make it poetical and also in way of expressing their unspeakable Anandam. The important point is to understand that remembering the Lord would give joy that cannot be expressed in words. There is no happiness that can equal the joy that is obtained from the thought of the Lord. Will the external problems get removed when we think about the Lord in our mind? External problems may get removed or may not. Lord is the controller of the entire world and hence Lord would see to that the devotees are protected from dangers and other problems. But we don't have any control over any of the external problems and resolutions. It may happen or it may not happen and it is not possible to also understand why these are happening. But when we have Lord in our mind, Lord will take care that we are not affected by the external situation. If there is Lord's thought in our mind, there will be steadiness in our mind and we may even be able to handle the situation much better. When our mind is resolved regarding the agitations of the external situation, there will be peace and happiness in the mind which is the effect of keeping the Lord in our mind.

We will continue the work in the next edition.

## **Sadhana Samkshepa**

### **Sadhana**

Acharyas say that without means we cannot achieve any goal in life. The means to achieving anything is generally termed as sadhana and the goal is termed as sadhya. Here we are concerned only with that sadhya which is real – the only real entity in the entire world is the non-dual reality of Lord or Brahman. Thus realization of our very nature of Brahman is the sadhya that is concerned with us. And sadhana thus is that which will take us directly or indirectly towards the goal of moksha or sadhya.

Before getting into analysis of what are the sadhanas for moksha it is important to understand as to what is moksha. Unless moksha is clearly understood, we will not be able to understand the means to moksha.

Moksha is nothing but realization of the non-dual reality of Brahman as pervading the entire world as pure Consciousness that pulsates inside us at all times as “I-exist, I-exist”. In order to realize Brahman, it is required to get rid of ignorance as ignorance is that which makes our very nature of Self or Brahman unknown (or forgotten). Really speaking, at all times we all are Brahman and Brahman alone exists but this truth is somehow forgotten. The reason is ignorance. Ignorance is like darkness, just a matter of experience but not withstanding logic or any other proof. Ignorance has to be removed by a person who experiences it directly. The way to remove ignorance is knowledge alone even as darkness can be removed only through knowledge.

Any other means than knowledge just sets the stage for knowledge to dawn and put its effect of removal of ignorance. This has to be constantly remembered by all sadhakas – the scriptures repeat again and again that karma or any other means cannot lead to moksha but knowledge and knowledge alone can lead to moksha (as bandha is created due to ignorance when our very nature is that of ever-liberated Self or Brahman).

Though knowledge is the direct way to moksha, it is impossible to gain knowledge unless the foundation is set. Foundation is with respect to the mind. We can say that two qualities of the mind are required in order for knowledge to dawn in it and lead to moksha here and now itself. One is purity of mind and other is concentration of the mind. Without these two, knowledge will not be established in the mind (and therefore moksha will not happen).

### Three steps to moksha

We can say that there are three steps to moksha – first is purity of mind, second is concentration of mind and third is knowledge dawning in the mind.

A mind which has so many thoughts in them and many of these thoughts bad in nature (not for one's own benefit or for the benefit of others) is impure in nature (as thoughts are impure). Such a mind doesn't do oneself good and others good as well. Thus no good results are possible for such a mind. Similar to purity of minds, it is also required to have concentration of mind so that there are no distractions and focus is there. Though thoughts may be less in a mind, if the mind is not focused on the object or goal then there will be no good results from the mind.

A mind filled with a lot of thoughts is like a room full of objects – nothing can be found or used from the room. Now if the room has nothing in it but no one object sticks in the room for a period of time, then also the room will be useless. Thus it is essential to have purity and concentration of the mind first before getting into knowledge.

When worldly goals require focus on the goal, then what to talk about knowledge which goes against our experience of duality? More focus is required for that mind which is trying to imbibe knowledge of the scriptures. Therefore it is essential initially to perform sadhanas that help in gaining purity and concentration of the mind and then progress unto knowledge.

The Vedas are split into three parts of karma khanda where actions or rituals are explained, upaasana khanda where means of meditation are explained and lastly jnaana khanda where knowledge is being explained.

The sadhanas with respect to karma khanda leads to purity of mind and upaasana khanda leads to concentration of mind. Purity is achieved through actions that are performed as an offering unto Ishwara. Though actions can be any actions, still it is better initially to perform those actions where Ishwara's thoughts are more present (like japa, puja etc.). Concentration of mind is achieved through bhajans and dhyaana where total focus is on Ishwara and nothing else.

Nishkaama karma – purity of mind

Purity of mind is achieved through nishkaama karma or actions performed without desire for its fruits. Generally all actions are performed desiring some fruit in mind. This leads to impurity of the mind wherein the mind gets attached and averted to objects; also latent tendencies are created due to performing the same action(s) over and over again. The moment actions are offered unto Ishwara and performed as a puja, that very moment there is no desiring for its fruit. Thus there is no tainting of the mind by actions. Thus the mind becomes pure (attains purity). Such a pure mind is devoid of many thoughts and therefore is eligible to get into the next step of concentration of the mind.

That mind which thinks lot of thoughts in the mind will not be able to gain any concentration. Such people thus though might sit for dhyaana will not be able to do any real dhyaana (as their mind cannot focus at all – not even for few moments). It is only through gaining purity of mind that the mind will slowly be able to concentrate on one object (of focus).

Dhyaana – concentration of mind

Dhyaana is the simplest way to attain concentration of the mind. Only after attaining purity of mind can a person gain concentration (gradually). Dhyaana is sitting with eyes closed and the mind focusing on one object. This object can be of the external world or one's own conception in the mind or even nirguna Brahman (Ishwara pervading the entire world). Many sadhakas find it very easy to gain concentration of mind through atma vichaara during dhyaana (trying to find out "Who I am" through neti neti or "not this, not this entire world" analysis). As Patanjali puts forth beautifully in the Yoga Sutras, it doesn't matter what is the object of meditation but what matters is that a person should choose that object on which one's mind can concentrate (that which is liked by the mind will be easily concentrate upon by the mind).

Through more and more dhyaana, concentration of the mind will be gained and strengthened. Thereafter such a mind can focus or concentrate on any object in the world.

Jnaana – leading to moksha

A mind that is pure and concentrated when gained knowledge will be able to abide on that Self which is all-pervasive and Consciousness pulsating inside as I-exist, I-exist. Jnaana isn't knowledge gained from books or words of people but it is from the scriptures alone.

This is because scriptures alone are faultless and have been tested and verified by realized masters in the past (and will be in the future as well). Instead of going behind words of people, a sadhaka should gain knowledge of the scriptures. It is only through knowledge of the scriptures that a person gains knowledge of Brahman and thereby attains realization.

Knowledge further can be split into the three steps of sravana, manana and nidhidhyaasana. Sravana is listening of the scriptures with focus on non-dual reality of Brahman. Manana is reflecting on whatever has been listened previously (in sravana). Nidhidhyaasana is contemplation on the ultimate reality of Brahman (always remembering that I am Brahman and Brahman exists here pervading the entire world of names and forms).

May we all through learning and implementation of the scriptures realize our very nature of Brahman so that we may put an end to all sorrows and rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## **Acharyasmrithi**

### **Appayya Dikshitar**

There are 33 crore devatas mentioned in our scriptures. These various devatas are in order for people to find a suitable devata of their liking. Whatever one likes, one will think about it or contemplate on it. That which one doesn't like will not be thought at all. The ultimate goal of life is realization of one's own very nature of Brahman or Ishwara of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is not possible to realize Ishwara unless we contemplate on Ishwara. Contemplation on Ishwara is only possible when we choose a particular form that appeals to our mind.

Though Ishwara or Brahman is essentially formless, still (as the Lord says) it is tough for normal sadhakas to contemplate on something without form when they themselves think that they are the form (associated or identified with the body). Therefore using a form that appeals to our mind is important. Hence the various devatas depending on one's own mental state or preference.

Even though different forms are accepted in the scriptures, still they all stand for the one non-dual reality of Brahman. It is only when we forget this truth that we will get into attachments and aversions with respect to various devatas. Instead of remaining focused on our ista devata while remembering that all devatas stand for Brahman and are mere names and forms of Brahman meant for contemplation or focus on Brahman (in order to realize Brahman), many people just focus on the differences and as a result constant fighting between followers of one devata with another starts. Such fights have happened in the past and there was a time few centuries ago when this fight between followers of Siva and Vishnu was at the peak. It was during this time that we find the great Advaitin and Siva bhakta of Appayya Dikshitar taking advent on earth.

There are many masters who create a very strong effect based on their lives and their works even after many centuries of their time. Such a master is Appayya Dikshitar.

### From Advaita family

Appayya Dikshitar's father Rangaraajadhwari wrote a commentary on the Brahma Sutra. Thus we find that Dikshitar was from an advaita family – needless to say, in ancient times everybody knew the scriptures and were followers of the one of the many main systems of



Vedanta. Unlike the vaishnavite systems which focused more on the dualistic systems, Appaya Dikshitar was a Siva bhakta and hence followed the Advaita philosophy.

But this doesn't mean that he wasn't a staunch siva bhakta. Such masters like Appayya Dikshitar focused not on the various forms but on the truth behind forms. Though they had an ista devata and thereby wrote works on the ista devata, still they were focused on non-dual or nirguna Brahman alone (not forgetting the ultimate truth that whatever exists is one Brahman and Brahman alone).

The various works written by Dikshitar on Siva are not just good but very beautiful. These works don't deviate from Advaita but while sticking on to Brahman, they glorify Siva. This is very similar to the various works of Sankara in which various deities are extolled (without forgetting or deviating from non-dual Brahman).

It is important for all sadhakas to remember that the ultimate goal of life is non-dual reality of Brahman (realization) and that ultimately Brahman alone exists though empirically duality appears as very real. Even as the dream world appears very real while experiencing it but is known to be unreal after waking up, similarly this waking world also appears very real while experiencing but it is known as unreal after waking up from this long dream of ignorance (through knowledge of the scriptures with focus on non-dual reality of Brahman).

Great masters like Appayya Dikshitar, though being Siva bhaktas (or any othe bhaktas), were ever focused on Brahman and therefore their words and life itself is spent with focus on Brahman (rather than on various forms of deities).

#### Reminding of Advaita

Since during that time fight between Vishnu bhaktas and Siva bhaktas was a lot, therefore Appayya Dikshitar wrote a lot of works extolling the glories of Siva. In this process his attention slowly started deviating from core advaita. That this master had the talents to write on advaita was found by another great master of Nrsimhaashrama. He reminded Dikshitar about his father's focus on Advaita and thereby told him to write a commentary on the Bhamati sub-school of Advaita Vedanta.

Bhamati is a commentary on Sankara's Brahma Sutra Bhashya by Vachaspati Mishra. This was further commented upon by Amalananda in his Vedanta Kalpataru. Appayya Dikshitar

wrote a further commentary on the Kalpataru titled Parimala. No less than Gauda Brahmaananda (who wrote the Gauda Brahmaanandi on Advaita Siddhi) has said that Vedanta is learning of the five works of Brahma Sutra, Sankara Bhashya, Bhamati, Kalpataru and Parimala.

Parimala is also a special work in that in this Dikshitar supports the views of Sankara at all places. In few places, Bhamati differs from Sankara and this was supported by Kalpataru. But that Sankara's views aren't wrong has brought out by Dikshitar. Thus Dikshitar, standing true to Sankara, supported Sankara's views at all times.

The scriptures would have been inaccessible to us and their true meaning would have been lost if not for the great master of Sankara. It is only through Sankara's bhashyas that we are able to understand almost-tough-to-crack interpretation of the scriptures. Though there have been masters before and after Sankara who have provided various interpretations of the scriptures, they all don't remove all contradictions of the various scriptural statements and they don't get rid of the contrary-ness we find with scriptures, logic and experience. It is only Sankara who explained the truth of non-dual Brahman with respect to scriptures, logic and experience. Thus going against Sankara is unwarranted and will only lead to sorrows for an individual. Dikshitar by being a true advaitin stuck to Sankara.

#### Margabandu stotra

As mentioned fight between Vaishnavites and Saivites was at its peak during Dikshitar's time. So once Vaishnavites took it as a task to eliminate Dikshitar. They lured Dikshitar from his house on the pretext of the King calling upon him. Dikshitar realizing that it was a trap, came out of his house composing the margabandu stotra. While on the way to the King, all the people who were kept to kill him fell dead and Dikshitar was protected by Siva himself.

To this day anybody who needs protection from enemies just need to chant this stotra and enemies as well as all obstacles will be removed instantly.

#### Sanskrit scholar

More than today, those days there were many scholars well versed in Sanskrit. But still, we find in Dikshitar's work he being a true scholar of all aspects of Sanskrit. Not just vocabulary but with respect to poetry as well, Dikshitar's scholarly nature is found in his various works

(where he has used many chandas). In one of his work which is a summary of the Brahma Sutras, Dikshitar himself says that he has used different chandas or metres. Generally we find only poets, like Kalidasa, using different metres for their work. But Dikshitar wrote his works in different metres while still remaining focused on the concepts of Vedanta (thus linking both knowledge or jnaana and Sanskrit grammar).

### Illustrious disciples

Any great master is generally known through the great disciples he creates (or the disciples he helps become masters themselves). In this aspect, Dikshitar had the disciple of Bhattoji Dikshitar who wrote the siddhanta kaumudi which is an elaborate analysis of Panini's Vyaakarana sutras but re-arranged on the basis of various topics of discussion. Bhattoji Dikshitar's disciple varadaraja wrote the laghu siddhanta kaumudi which is the most used grammar text of today.

Only a true realized master will be able to create masters out of normal people in the world. Though everybody is Brahman still the capability of guiding other disciples is only possible for few people who are able to through the grace of Guru and Ishwara realize their very nature of non-dual reality of Brahman.

### A great yogi

A yogi is one who as a result of realization of the non-dual reality of Brahman is able to perform miraculous deeds in the world – this means that they cannot be judged in the same way as we judge normal people of the world. Yogis through their abidance in Brahman are able to perform deeds which aren't possible for normal people.

Though there are different versions of various stories of Dikshitar demonstrating his yogic power, this one version is the most popular. Once the king visited Dikshitar at which time he was suffering from strong fever. The king was shown into the room with Dikshitar. Dikshitar sat on the left of the King while on the King's right was just a cot which was constantly shaking or jumping. The king couldn't help but notice this. After the discussion with Dikshitar was over, the king asked as to why the cot was constantly jumping. To this Dikshitar replied that he had fever but it is not right to not meet the king therefore he transferred his fever to the cot. When the king questioned as to why he couldn't permanently transfer fever to the cot, Dikshitar replied that it isn't dharma as one has to

experience whatever one is supposed to experience. Using yogic powers for one's own benefit isn't good and such powers should only be used for the welfare of the entire world.

### Chaturmatasangraha

There are a little more than hundred works of Dikshitar but worth mentioning are few of the works. This work is a very special one in that it is split into four parts – each part is named as different work and deals with a different system of philosophy. Thus the four main systems of Advaita, Vishistaadvaita, Dvaita and Sivaadvaita have been explained through commentaries on Brahma Sutra by Dikshitar.

The work by itself is split into prose and poetry but very simple in nature (though high-level with respect to grammar). Sadhakas who wish to understand the various systems of Vedanta would do good to learn this simple work of Dikshitar.

### Sivaadvaita

Nilakanta wrote a commentary on the Brahma Sutras based on Saivism. It was Dikshitar who through writing a sub-commentary on the same harmonized this system with Advaita. Thus even today we find that Saivism comes very close to Advaita Vedanta (with very few differences alone) unlike the Vaishnavite systems which differ a lot from Advaita Vedanta.

### Siddhantalesasangraha

This definitely can be called a masterpiece of Dikshitar. This is a work that summarizes the various tenets of Advaita Vedanta as per the various works of acharyas till the time of Dikshitar. Put in current day terminology, this is an encyclopedia of the various views of Advaita Vedanta. Sadhakas would do good to learn this work in order to understand the various concepts of Advaita Vedanta used in order to answer various logical faults raised by other systems of Vedanta.

It is impossible to summarize the lives of masters like Appayya Dikshitar and similarly it is impossible to even give tidbits of their works. But what has been tried to achieve here is just evoke devotion and interest in sadhaka's mind with respect to Dikshitar so that his works will be learnt and thereby sadhakas will be able to quickly progress towards the goal of moksha.

May we all offer prostrations unto the great master of Dikshitar so that through learning of his works we will be able to put an end to all sorrows and will be able to, through realization of Brahman, ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

अप्पय्यदीक्षितं नित्यं वन्दे योगविदां श्रेष्ठः ।

मार्गप्रदायको ज्ञानी सर्वतत्त्वसुवेत्तारः ॥

appayyadīkṣitam nityam vande yogavidām śreṣṭhaḥ |  
mārgapradāyako jñānī sarvatattvasuvettārah |

I prostrate always Appayya Dikshitar who is great among yogis, a jnaani providing the path towards moksha and one who knows well all the tattvas (all darshanas).

## Vedanta Pariksha

This month all questions are on various vedanta acharyas (and their works).

- 1) Who is the first acharya to have written a complete bhasya or commentary on the Brahma Sutras?
  - a) Madhvacharya
  - b) Bhaskaracharya
  - c) Sankaracharya
  - d) Ramanujacharya
- 2) Who wrote the commentary titled Vedanta Saara on the Brahma Sutras?
  - a) Madhvacharya
  - b) Bhaskaracharya
  - c) Sankaracharya
  - d) Ramanujacharya
- 3) Who is called the vartikakara in purvamimansa system (similar to Sureshwaracharya being called vartikakara in Advaita Vedanta)?
  - a) Madhvacharya
  - b) Vidyananya
  - c) Mandana Mishra
  - d) Kumarila Bhatta
- 4) Who propagated the system of bhedaabhedha Vedanta through his commentary on Brahma Sutras?
  - a) Bhaskaracharya
  - b) Sankaracharya
  - c) Madhvacharya
  - d) Vijnaanabhikshu
- 5) Who is called the tikaakaara in Dvaita Vedanta system?
  - a) Vyaasa teertha
  - b) Raaghavendra teertha
  - c) Jaya teertha
  - d) Madhvacharya
- 6) Who wrote the famed Nyaayaamritam which is an attack on Advaita Vedanta?
  - a) Jaya teertha
  - b) Ramanujacharya

- c) Raaghavendra teertha
  - d) Vyaasa teertha
- 7) The famous Vedanta Desika came under which sub-system of Vedanta?
- a) Dvaita
  - b) Advaita
  - c) Vishistaadvaita
  - d) Bhedaabheda
- 8) What is the Brahma Sutra commentary of Ramanujacharya called, in which he attacks avidyaa through the seven illogicalities of avidyaa?
- a) Vedanta Saara
  - b) Vedanta Dipa
  - c) Yatindramata Dipika
  - d) Sri Bhashya
- 9) What is Madhvacharya's big commentary on the Brahma Sutras called?
- a) Anuvyaakhyaana
  - b) Anu bhashya
  - c) Tatparya Nirnaya
  - d) Vedanta Dipa
- 10) Who wrote the sub-commentary of brahmaanandi on Madhusudana Saraswati's Advaita Siddhi?
- a) Appayya Dikshitar
  - b) Gaud Brahmananda
  - c) Brahmananda Bharati
  - d) Bharati Teertha

Watch out the next magazine for answers to this quiz. Email your responses to [admin@vedantatattva.org](mailto:admin@vedantatattva.org) and find out how good your scores really are.

Answers to previous months' quiz

1. c Appayya Dikshitar
2. b Anandagiri
3. b Vidyaranya
4. c Chandrasekhara Bharati
5. b Chandrasekharendra Saraswati
6. c Sri Harsha
7. a Madhusudana Saraswati
8. c Chandrasekhara Bharati
9. c Sacchidanda Sivaabhinava Nrsimha Bharati
10. c Appayya Dikshitar

Marks for quiz

Sunanda amma – 9

Nikhila – 8

Aparna – 9

Congrats to all who answered the tough questions about various acharyas and their works.



## Anukramaanika Nirdesham

1. Editorial – a general message
2. Upanishad Vivaranam – verse-by-verse explanation of Upanishad (Mundaka Upanishad)
3. Gitaamritham – verse-by-verse explanation of a chapter of Gita (Bhakti Yoga, 12<sup>th</sup> chapter)
4. Prakarana Prakaashah – illumination of a prakarana grantha (Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam)
5. Madhuraamritham – a devotional/song work explained verse-by-verse (Hanuman Chalisa)
6. Praadeshikam – detailed explanation of two regional works (Hari Naama Keerthanam and Kanda Shashti Kavacham)
7. Vidyaa samskhepa – a brief analysis of vidyaa
8. Acharya Smrithi – remembering an acharya through brief life-history and works
9. Vedanta Pariksha – Q & A

1. Comments
2. Suggestions
3. Corrections (word, sloka, content etc.)
4. Would like to see specific content
5. Would like to contribute (through research from websites, don't need to write up the content yourself)

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