

## Vedanta Darshanam

Salutations to all.

Various people, of different religions, are of the opinion that the world will end in this month. People in various ashrams also opine that this month is generally bad and hence we all should be chanting for the welfare of the entire world. But as AMMA always says, the world is already going towards end only because of lack of respect for each other and respect for nature or prakriti. Though these may be solved through some or the other means such solution will not be permanent. Permanent solution for all problems is knowledge alone. Knowledge is as found in the scriptures or the philosophy of Vedanta as this knowledge alone puts an end to all knowledge. This knowledge also puts an end to all sorrows and sufferings as sorrows and sufferings are not real – empirically they are due to not understanding the temporary nature of the world and the underlying reality of Brahman.

We will be able to respect each and everything in the world only when we see everything as one entity – as our own very Self – as the ultimate reality of Brahman. This vision of everything as one Brahman isn't a mere vision as this is the ultimate truth. The world which has come from Brahman, abides in Brahman and merges unto Brahman after destruction is nothing but Brahman alone. The differences that appear in the world are mere names and forms in Brahman. Even as various names and forms of gold as in gold ornaments don't create new entities or differences, similarly names and forms of the world don't create different entities. Lack of knowledge of the world as the underlying reality of Brahman leads to all problems whether they are with respect to an individual, society, country etc. or with respect to the body, the mind or the intellect. As much as we may try to solve problems externally, through various means, problems will not be solved. As Chinmaya beautifully says we will only be mitigating the problem. In place of one problem, ten other new problems will be created. This will go on and on without any real solution.

It is rather pitiful that real solution is readily available with us in the form of our ancient philosophy of Vedanta. Vedanta doesn't change the external world or our association with the external world. It only changes our mental perspective of the world. Instead of seeing the world with our preferences, we will just be seeing the world as filled in and out with one entity of Brahman; we will just be seeing the world as the underlying essence of Brahman.

This doesn't mean that activities in the world will end – activities will continue in a much better way but we will be able to remain unaffected irrespective of the activities or the outcome of activities. Thus while living in the world we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times internally while externally performing activities like an actor portrays a role to perfection while internally remembering his real nature.

Vedanta is very simple to learn and as Krishna says it is simpler indeed to implement. Though the literature of Vedanta is vast, we will find that they all talk about the one entity of Brahman as the only real entity and that everything else is just an illusion in this entity of Brahman. Remembering this Brahman to be the Consciousness that pulsates inside us as I-exist, I-exist we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

Though prayers for the welfare of the world are essential, it is also essential to progress towards realization of our very nature of Brahman, that Brahman which is the very substratum of the entire world. If not, we will be able to temporarily solve the problems of the world but they will reappear in a different format. Thus there will be no resolution of all problems and there will not be any bliss at all. In order to get rid of problems and ever rejoice in bliss we just have to learn Vedanta and then strive to implement it through remembrance of Brahman as non-dual reality pervading the entire world of names and forms.

May we all strive to pray for the welfare of the world and at the same time strive to realize our very nature of Brahman as pervading the entire 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.

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## Upanishad Vivaranam

### Mundaka Upanishad – 1-1-2

अथर्वणे यां प्रवेदत ब्रह्मा-

थर्वा तां पुरोवाचाङ्गिरे ब्रह्मविद्याम् ।

स भारद्वाजाय सत्यवहाय प्राह

भारद्वाजोऽङ्गिरसे परावराम् ॥१॥२॥

atharvaṇe yām pravedata brahmā-  
tharvā tāṁ purovācāṅgire brahmavidyām |  
sa bhāradvājāya satyavahāya prāha  
bhāradvājo'ṅgirase parāvarām ||1||2||

That Brahma vidya which was instructed by Brahmaa to Atharvaa, Atharvaa long back instructed it to angira. Angira instructed to Satyavaaha who was of the Bharadwaja clan. And he in turn instructed it to Angiras.

### Brahma vidya - traditional

The word of tradition or traditional also has been often misunderstood today. Traditional mean that which is passed down from generation to generation. This passing down isn't without any knowledge as in that case we all are traditional because we have been handed down some basic knowledge of the world and worldly activities. Tradition is that in which knowledge of the scriptures is passed down from guru to shishya and in this process the shishya becomes the next guru. Even as one torch lights another and thereby light is passed on (never ending) similarly the guru passes down knowledge to the shishya who passes it down to his shishya and so on. Here the shishya who receives knowledge from the Guru isn't just a theoretical person but practical as the shishya himself experiences directly and intuitively Brahman. This means that knowledge isn't just theoretical but practical or a direct matter of experience for the shishya. And thereby continues the tradition of realized masters. Needless to say, realized masters are beneficial to the entire world as they are the way out of sorrow for all suffering people in the world (whether they realize this or not). Hence Ramana Maharshi says that the very presence of a mahatma is beneficial to the entire world.

It should be remembered that tradition is passing down of true knowledge which doesn't serve the intellect but it serves as a way to directly experience eternal blissful Brahman. Even as a lit lamp alone can lit another lamp, similarly only a realized master can pass down knowledge which is beneficial to others (beneficial through leading to the goal of moksha or eternal bliss).

Brahma vidya or knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures is traditional in that it is passed down from generation to generation and each new generation is benefitted by eternal bliss and this benefit is passed down to the next generation as well.

The tradition that is mentioned here is that Brahmaa gave this knowledge to his son Atharva who then passed it on to Angir. Angir taught it to Satyavaha who was of the clan of Bharadwaja and Bharadwaja taught it to Angiras (as we will see later Angiras is going to give this knowledge to Shaunaka).

#### Brahma Vidya – eternal

In the fourth chapter of Gita, the Lord says that he instructed this knowledge to Sun God in the beginning. When questioned by Arjuna as to how the Lord can have imparted knowledge to Sun God, the Lord replies that there have been many lives in the past and he knows all of them (whereas Arjuna doesn't remember). This means that the tradition of passing down knowledge has started from the Lord and it has continued.

From the time of Sankara which was centuries ago, we find that this tradition has been continued till today with various sankaracharyas and other acharyas like Swami Tejomayananda, Swami Paramarthananda, Nochur etc.

It is very tough indeed to continue any knowledge for a long period of time as after some time it either diminishes or undergoes change based on the current time. But brahma vidya has remained exactly the same. It is ever the same without any change, not even the slightest of changes. Though there are many commentaries in different languages written on the scriptures and many individual works written by various acharyas still the knowledge in the scriptures remains the same (without any change at all). This is because brahma vidya is about Brahman (the scriptures talk about Brahman).

Brahman is eternal as it is the cause-substratum of the world; that cause which is uncaused. Any knowledge about Brahman is also thereby eternal. Worldly sciences undergo a lot of change as they are about the changing world whereas brahma vidya is ever the same as it is about changeless Brahman.

Moreover ultimately Brahman alone is real. Thereby knowledge of Brahman alone exists. Any other knowledge is futile and will not lead to eternal bliss though might fetch us money, fame, name etc. It is only Brahma Vidya that will lead to eternal bliss (as Brahman alone is eternal and thereby blissful in nature).

Couldn't there be any other means to eternal bliss?

There is no other means of eternal bliss as there is only one entity which is eternal – that entity is termed in scriptures as Brahman and is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Since everything apart from Brahman is constantly changing and unreal therefore they will only lead to sorrow, This is something that we ourselves would have directly experienced. Any possessions we get from the world isn't enough and there is always a craving for more and more. This craving makes us more and more miserable – while it doesn't give us any happiness (but temporary happiness which itself is seed of sorrow) it also leads to a lot of suffering (through effort in order to achieve and maintain it). Thus direct experience shows us that Brahman and knowledge of Brahman alone is the means to eternal bliss.

Then why do a lot of people still no seek Brahma Vidya?

Because either their knowledge isn't strong (and hence they think that there might be something else in the world that will lead to eternal bliss) or their addictions towards the world (and worldly pleasures) is so strong that they cannot get away from it (and seek brahma vidya). Any wise person realizing the temporary sorrowful nature of the world will seek the underlying essence of blissful Brahman through Brahma Vidya.

Still why should I try Brahma Vidya when I don't know anything about Brahman and cannot get a glimpse of the bliss of Brahma Vidya?

Brahma Vidya – most trustworthy

It is easy to understand as to why Brahma Vidya is the most trustworthy – it is because Brahman alone is real and that which is real or without changes alone is trustworthy. Amidst the entire world which is constantly changing, Brahma Vidya alone is trustworthy.

Another more valid reason to trust Brahma Vidya is that it is something which has been tested time and again. That which has been passed down from generation to generation has to be fruitful – else it wouldn't be passed down; this means that Brahma Vidya is that which has been thoroughly tested again and again. There have been always realized masters who through knowledge of Brahman have attained the bliss that is the fruit of Brahma Vidya. Thus these masters have been living testimonials of Brahma Vidya.

When we are able to trust each and everything in the world, it is but apt that we should trust these testimonials which lies right in front of us. Though it may be argued that ancient masters and their lives are just humbugs and they cannot be proven; but what about those which are staring at our face? Masters like AMMA, Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and many others are living testimonials of Brahma Vidya. If it is argued that these are avatars then we just need to look at Chinmaya, Prof. Balakrishnan Nair, Swami Tejomayananda, Swami Paramarthananda and Nochur (there are still more). These masters lives are open books and any wise person will be able to easily figure out that these masters are living testimonials of Brahma Vidya.

Even after finding out that Brahma Vidya has been tested again and again, if there is anybody who doesn't put effort into gaining Brahma Vidya and realizing Brahman then such a person needs to be called either a mad man or a person who doesn't want moksha.

Interestingly the world is filled with people who don't want moksha (some know and don't want moksha and others don't even know about moksha). And hence the Lord says that only one out of a thousand will strive for moksha and fewer still are those strivers who realize Brahman.

#### Brahma Vidya – always having shishyas

It is true that Brahma Vidya will always have shishyas who learn it desiring moksha. Though such shishyas are very less indeed but still brahma vidya is never extinct. This is because out of the millions of people at least few will strive for moksha. The yearning for moksha is there knowingly or unknowingly in everybody as it's our very nature of pure Consciousness and as it is the ultimate goal of eternal bliss which everybody seeks. When knowingly people seek moksha they strive to gain Brahma Vidya. And through striving for few births they will be able to attain this Brahma Vidya. And thereby they become carriers of this

tradition to the next set of shishyas. Next set of shishyas also will be there always as the entire world is seeking moksha only.

Thus we can say that this tradition of Brahma Vidya is eternal and will always be there. Earlier we said that Brahma Vidya is eternal because Brahman is eternal; now we can say that it is also eternal as there always are people who will seek eternal bliss (or Brahman).

It is definitely good for all sadhakas that this tradition of Brahma Vidya is eternal as this gives a way out of sorrows whenever we want. Many are there those who run around trying to find out Gurus – these are foolish people; there are always gurus in one or the other form in the world but they don't want to accept somebody hence keep searching. Such people are searching for an object in the darkness (and therefore will never get it). Wise people will strive to have the strong desire for moksha (mumukshutva). This strong desire for moksha makes them ardent sadhakas and true shishyas. Wherever there are true shishyas there also will be true gurus.

This tradition of Brahma Vidya has always had one or the other Gurus at all times. Just the desire for moksha is required in sadhakas or shishyas. Then the Guru will appear in front of the shishya and through guidance will impart brahma vidya to the shishya thereby making the shishya realize his very nature of Brahman. Such a shishya thus will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times.

Those who aren't able to find out a physical guru just need to look into the various Gurus who still live through their works. These include Sankara and others who have given us crystal clear explanation of the scriptures and with these we will be able to progress in the path (and when time is apt we will be lead to a physical guru who will guide us till the goal of moksha).

In the first two slokas the Upanishad just talks about Brahma Vidya we will find next as to what is really Brahma Vidya through the question of the shishya to the Guru (we will thus also find out as to what is to be sought from the Guru).

May we all strive to seek the eternal Brahma Vidya so that through realization of Brahman we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.



## Gitaamritham

### Bhakti Yoga

We saw in the first sloka Arjuna asking the doubt as to whether Nirguna bhaktas are greater or saguna bhaktas are greater. This doubt was raised because Arjuna had earlier learnt about Brahman being formless or attributeless (nirguna) but he achieved the vishwaroopa darshana of the Lord thus coming to know that saguna or form is also there with respect to Brahman or Ishwara.

The Lord now proceeds to answer Arjuna's doubt in the most systematic way.

### Sloka 2 – Devotion (with form) defined

श्रीभगवानुवाच

śrībhagavān uvāca

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥२॥

mayyāveśya mano ye mām nityayuktā upāsate |  
śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ ||2||

1. The Lord said: Those who fill their mind with me, worship me with steadfastness and consider me as the ultimate goal of life, they are the proper devotees as per me.

### Devotion defined

The most systematic way of answering a question is by defining terms that are present in the question. Most of the times we find that the question itself is raised as a result of not understanding the terms present properly. Here also we find that Arjuna didn't really understand as to what is form-devotion and formless-devotion.

Though the definition the Lord provides here is with respect to a form, it can also easily be applied to formless-devotion. If we cannot apprehend this, then we can consider that the Lord is defining form-devotion first before getting into formless-devotion (which we will see in the next magazine).

As simple as things appear, they still need to be properly defined. Though logically as well a definition has to be proper (in order to avoid the various faults that may be raised with the definition) but it is also important to define a term from a layman's perspective.

There are many things we may know briefly yet not deeply (and accurately). Hence definition of terms is very important in spirituality (as well as in worldly life). Those who just argue that Brahman alone exists and therefore there is no need of definitions, they also need to remember as to what is the meaning of the term "Brahman" – without knowing this one term of Brahman, we will just be repeating again and again that "Brahman alone exists"; this will then lead only to delusion in the mind rather than knowledge (and bliss as a result of implementation of knowledge).

Most of us think that the term of bhakti or devotion is well known to us. And many claim that they are devotees of Ishwara or others are devotees of Ishwara. The first thing a devotee does is stopping of praises of oneself or others. A true devotee will never talk about devotion – instead a true devotee's world is focused on Ishwara and Ishwara alone. There is no individuality or ego in devotion. Thus stopping all talks about oneself or others is the first sign of devotion. Many also think that just going to temples or singing few praises of Ishwara we become devotees of Ishwara. This isn't true devotion but part-time devotion. Such part-time devotion only leads to sorrow in the long run whereas true devotion will lead to eternal bliss not just in the long run but as soon as one implements it.

All ardent sadhakas who want to know devotion should take a look at the Lord's beautiful definition of bhakti or devotion here (devotion of a form Ishwara). And all judgment about one's devotion should be based on the three characteristics that the Lord beautifully portrays here.

The three characteristics are:

1. Mind entered unto Ishwara
2. Steadfast in Ishwara
3. Considering Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life (total focus on Ishwara).

#### 1. Mind entered unto Ishwara

The mind is very limited and Ishwara, even when having a form, is almost leaning towards unlimited. Thus any mind cannot enter into Ishwara. Here it only means that the mind is

pervaded with thoughts of Ishwara. A true devotee is one whose mind is filled with thoughts about Ishwara. A true remembers the Lord through his names, songs or praises, glories and anything and everything related to the Lord. For a true devotee, the Lord alone is everything and hence the mind always contemplates on the Lord. As Narada puts in Narada Bhakti Sutras, a true devotee thinks about the Lord, talks about the Lord, speaks about the Lord, hears about the Lord etc. Or in simple terms, such a devotee's mind is filled in and out with the Lord.

Once a siva bhakta was passing by a temple priest while chanting siva mantra. Seeing that the bhakta was a low-born, the priest scolded him and told him to shut his mouth (to not chant the siva mantra). The siva bhakta out of respect shut his mouth. But to the surprise of the priest, siva mantra was still being chanted. The priest observed that the bhakta's entire body was chanting the mantra. Realizing the priest apologized and said to the bhakta that his entire being was focused on siva and therefore no caste-rules apply to him.

Here we find that not just the mouth but the entire body was chanting the siva mantra. This is possible when the entire mind is filled with thoughts of Ishwara.

## 2. Ever steadfast in Ishwara

Anybody remembers Ishwara in a temple or a pilgrimage place or in the presence of mahatmas. But it is tough to remember Ishwara wherever we are and whatever we are doing. True devotion thus includes being constantly focused on Ishwara. This means that a true devotee always remembers Ishwara in the mind. A true devotee's mind isn't filled with Ishwara for 30 minutes or an hour or a day but is filled with thoughts about Ishwara at all times.

Many people's devotion is valid only until Ishwara listens to their pleas. The moment Ishwara stops listening to their pleas or fulfilling their desires, Ishwara's thought vanishes from the mind. This isn't true devotion. True devotion means that at no point of time, Ishwara is forgotten. Externally one may be in a temple or an office or parliament or even liquor shop but internally, in the mind, Ishwara is remembered constantly. This is true devotion.

### 3. Considering Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life

As simple as it sounds to remember Ishwara at all times in the mind, it is very tough indeed. And therefore such constant remembrance of Ishwara in the mind is possible only when a person considers Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life – this means that there is total focus on Ishwara at all times.

A merchant thinks about money most of the time because according to him, the ultimate goal of life is money. A fame-seeking person thinks about fame (as to how to achieve fame) because according to him, the ultimate goal of life is fame. That which is the ultimate goal of life will be constantly remembered in the mind, irrespective of external situations. Thus a person who remembers Ishwara at all times is one who considers Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life. Only such a person will be totally focused on Ishwara.

Ishwara can be considered the ultimate goal of life only when knowledge about Ishwara is there in the mind. This knowledge is that Ishwara is all-pervasive Brahman or at least remembering Ishwara as the source-cause of the world. And Ishwara obviously has to be remembered as bliss in nature (and one who can bestow us with bliss, which is the ultimate goal of life for each and every person knowingly or unknowingly). Narada also says that there is no lack of knowledge in devotion (knowledge about the glory of the Lord) as then it becomes like the love of an unchaste wife/woman. Thus it is very clear that devotion doesn't lack knowledge but devotion is filled with knowledge. AMMA thereby says that we should have tattvathil bhakti or devotion in the truth (truth of Ishwara).

#### Form to formless

Though the Lord here defines form-devotion, we should remember that slowly (and ultimately) we have to be lead to the formless Lord. Any form is temporary or limited as it undergoes change and will eventually die. Thus such forms cannot lead to eternal bliss but will only lead to sorrows as we find in the case of death of people in the world (near and dear to us).

But then what is the purpose of form-devotion?

Form-devotion is meant to take us indirectly to formless-devotion. As to how a form-devotee attains moksha, the Lord will tell later. But the moment a form pervades the mind it instantly becomes formless. Form is that which is limited and hence it will be limited in the mind as well. As the mind, so objects are perceived in the world. An atheist doesn't

believe in Ishwara and hence sees the idol in a temple as mere stone whereas a believer sees Ishwara in the idol and is benefitted by worshipping such Ishwara (through fulfillment of desires and eventually being lead to satisfaction or contentment). A person who remembers Ishwara in the mind will constantly think about Ishwara alone. Such a person is like the gopis and therefore whatever be seen externally, it will be related directly or indirectly with the Lord. This means that for such a person, the form is all-pervasive – or everything is seen as or is related to the form. Thus the form pervades the entire world – or it becomes formless.

Thus through the three characteristics mentioned by the Lord a devotee progresses from form to formless. Such a person thereby attains moksha or eternal bliss very soon and here itself. And therefore, the Lord says that according to me, such a devotee is the proper devotee.

Does this mean that form devotion is greater? The Lord answers in the negative by defining formless devotion in the next two slokas (which we will see in the next magazine). It is human nature to compare and contrast things – with respect to devotion what matters is whether focus is there on the Lord and not whether the Lord is thought about as having form or without form.

May we all strive to be true devotees of the Lord through pervading our mind with the Lord, and constantly remembering the Lord as the ultimate goal of life so that we will be able to put an end to all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Prakarana Prakaashah

### Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam - 2 – Reality/Nature of the world

बीजस्यान्तरिवान्ङुरो जगदिदं प्राङ्निर्विकल्पं पुनः

मायाकल्पितदेशकालकलनावैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतं ।

मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यः स्वेच्छया

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥२॥

bijasyāntarivānṅuro jagadidaṁ prāṅnirvikalpaṁ punaḥ  
māyākalpitadeśakālakalanāvaicitryacitrīkṛtaṁ |  
māyāvīva vijṛmbhayatyapi mahāyogīva yaḥ svecchayā  
tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idaṁ śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||2||

The world which is like a town reflected in a mirror and is inside (the mind),  
And seen in the Self but like dream seen as if outside due to Maya,  
He who realizes, after dawning of knowledge, himself alone to be non-dual,  
Unto such a form of Guru, Dakshinamurthy, my prostrations.

#### World – full of vikalpa (thoughts or modifications)

The world that we currently perceive is constantly changing. And these changes are not just external (in the world) but in our mind as well. As our mind changes, so the external world also undergoes change. Thus the same person whom we met yesterday for the first time became our close friend today; and this same friend becomes our enemy tomorrow due to conflict in our mind. The friend remains exactly the same – there are no changes at all to the friend. But based on our mind the friend has changed. Thus Vidyaranya says that problems are not created by the world but by the mind which creates a micro world which is a replica of the external world tainted by our preferences of likes and dislikes.

Anything changing requires a changeless substratum. Thus the changing world also requires a changeless substratum which is called or termed in Vedanta as Brahman. Knowing the world to be changing or temporary in nature is the first step in spirituality because this will make a person remember the sorrowful nature of the world as well. That which is temporary cannot give us eternal bliss and therefore gives us nothing but sorrow alone. That which is sorrowful is to be renounced. Thus this knowledge makes a person not get attached to the world or affected by the world. Thus such a person truly renounces the world from the mind

(inside the mind). This renunciation though appears to be tough is very simple indeed because we all implement it in one or the other way with respect to smaller entities which are part of the world. We work in an office where 100s of people work. But we are only attached to a few people and the rest of the people are ignored. Thus we are implementation renunciation of the rest of the people in our mind. Wherever we are staying, there are 100s of people; still we only associate ourselves with a smaller set of people. The rest are renounced from our mind. There can be many more examples given and all these clearly show that we implement renunciation in one or the other way with one or the other entity but since we aren't aware of the temporary-sorrowful nature of the world, therefore we don't renounce the world. This non-renouncing of the world leads to sorrow alone.

Now comes an important doubt – Swami Tejomayananda says that if we don't stand for anything, we will fall for everything. It is impossible to live without clinging on to somebody or something. If we renounce the world then what do we cling on to?

The answer is that we cling on to the source of the world. This source is Brahman and of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. This Brahman is that from which the world has come, that in which the world resides and that unto which the world merges at its time of destruction.

Does the world exist in Brahman? If so, in what format?

#### World – nirvikalpa in Brahman

That Brahman which is the cause-substratum of the world, in that Brahman and before creation the world exists without any modifications or differences or dualities. Even as a tree is present in the seed in unmanifest form similarly this world that is manifested now is present in unmanifest form in Brahman. This is because world is the effect of Brahman and any effect is present in unmanifest form in its cause.

The world has to exist in Brahman because else it cannot be created now; it cannot come into existence now. That the dual world appears as existing itself means that it is present in unmanifest form in Brahman even as tree is there in unmanifest form in a seed.

But wouldn't this lead to duality always existing, because the world is present in Brahman at all times?

No, says Sankara as creation of the world is due to Maya (in other words, creation is just an illusion).

Then how can we say the world is present in Brahman in unmanifest form?

Ultimately speaking the world doesn't even exist but empirically if the world is seen as existing then it exists in its cause. And in the cause there is no differentiation between the cause and effect. Thus in Brahman, the world exists as Brahman. This doesn't lead to any duality because the world in itself is an illusion (not real) and therefore such an illusion always is present in its substratum. Even as water is always present in its substratum of desert (and in unmanifest form when not experienced) similarly the world is present in its substratum of Brahman.

#### World – caused by Maya

Yaa maa saa maya – that which doesn't exist is called Maya. This means that Maya itself doesn't really exist. And that Maya is the cause of the world. This means that duality which we currently perceive is caused by Maya. This is saying in a different way that the world is not at all created but just is an illusion in Brahman.

That the world is temporary itself means that it is just an illusion. Illusion or mithyaa is that which is neither sat nor asat. Sat is that which never ceases to exist or exists at all times (Brahman alone is sat in nature). Asat is that which never has any existence or it doesn't exist at all times. Example of Sat is Brahman as Brahman or Consciousness exists at all times. Example of Asat is horns of a hare or son of barren woman – as these never exist. The world is not Sat because it wasn't there before creation and will not be there after realization (after realization Brahman alone exists). The world is not asat as it is currently perceived (due to ignorance). Therefore the world is said to be mithyaa or an illusion. An illusion is something which temporarily appears as existing but doesn't really exist ultimately. By saying that the world is caused by Maya, Sankara says beautifully that the world is just an illusion in Brahman.

How duality is created in this world?

Duality is created by the duo of time and space.



Duality – created by desha and kaala (time and space)

Brahman is absolute whereas this world filled with duality is relative. This relativity is based on time and space. It is using these two that Maya creates the entire world. Remove time and space, we will find that the world itself ceases to exist instantly. Such a state which is beyond time and space is daily experienced by all of us – the dreamless deep sleep state. In the dreamless deep sleep state there is neither time nor space and we find that there is no world also (if the world did exist we would experience it; lack of experience of the world clearly shows that the world doesn't exist in the state of dreamless deep sleep).

Thus it is clear that time and space creates duality. And thereby we find a wonderful creation coming into existence. Vidyanaraya says that creation is like a citra or a picture drawn on a canvas. Creation is when the canvas is opened and destruction is when it is folded. The picture in the canvas isn't real – similarly the world isn't real yet it goes on and on; creation is followed by destruction and destruction is followed creation; so on, this continues without any end at all.

The world which doesn't really exist is a wonderful creation indeed. There are so many things wonderful in the world (it wouldn't be wrong to say that this entire world is wonderful). Firstly this world appears very real (and thereby deludes even the learnt person who has learnt that the world doesn't really exist). Secondly all the rules in the world are perfectly followed (these aren't human or country made rules but what we call as nature's rules). The Sun, the moon etc. follow these rules without any fail. People live till a particular age and die. Things perish after a particular time. Generations take birth and die. Civilizations are created and then destroyed. All these happen in such a beautiful way which the brilliant or intelligent human being cannot even apprehend (or conceive). We as human beings try to create pets and try to make them follow rules. But in this process we only end up on the receiving end of the rebuke of the pets. The same is the case with any technology or entity in the world that we try to create. But the world in itself is ruled by nature (as if some unseen force controls it). Thirdly the world is very attractive – the world attracts due to its beauty even a normal layman who has no sense of beauty. This aspect of the world can't be seen in all places of the world today because we have changed the world (removed its natural essence and brought in artificiality). But if we go to places like Himalayas or Ganges we will find the natural beauty automatically sweeping us off our feet (we don't need to be an admirer of nature in order to be swept away).

Thus in all ways we find that this world is a wonderful creation. Lastly, above all its wonder lies in the truth that it doesn't really exist in Brahman. That world which doesn't even exist is very wonderful, appears very real and attracts everybody. Therefore Sankara says that this creation of Maya is wonderful indeed.

#### World – controlled by Mayavi

The world as we know is temporary and sorrowful. It is also insentient in nature. Such an insentient entity (jada) cannot exist of its own. It requires a conscious or sentient being in order to exist (or throw light upon its existence). Thus world is like a puppet show. The puppet show cannot happen of its own. There needs to be a puppeteer. This puppeteer who controls the puppet show of the world is mayavi or controller of Maya. This person is none other than the ultimate reality of Brahman.

Without Brahman, the world will become unreal instantly. With Brahman also the world is unreal but at least appears as if real. Even as the dream world cannot exist without the dreamer, similarly this world cannot exist without its cause-substratum of the sentient entity of Brahman.

This Brahman, as we have seen previously, is Ishwara, Guru and Atman. Ishwara is one who controls the world. Guru is one who guides a sadhaka to moksha and atman is that which pulsates inside as I-exist, I-exist. It is clear that Atman is Brahman due to being of the nature of Consciousness (as two Consciousness cannot exist at a time). Ishwara is Brahman because the world which is controlled is an illusion – thus Ishwara is essentially Brahman but appears in a different role when the world, that is to be controlled, appears as if real or existing. Guru is Brahman as the Guru abides as blissful Brahman at all times and Guru guides a person to realization of Brahman (only a realized master can guide another person to realization). When sadhaka strives to know his own Self (Atman) then the Atman or Brahman appears in front of Guru in order to instruct the sadhaka and to make the sadhaka realize his own very nature of Brahman. Thus ultimately Brahman and Brahman alone exists.

Though the world ultimately doesn't exist still it appears as existing for ignorant people and for such people the world is controlled by Brahman. And in order to prove this Sankara gives two examples to prove as to how the world is created by Brahman (that world which doesn't really exist).

Examples – magician and yogi

It is said that long ago a magician visited the king of Travancore and in the magician's presence, the entire kingdom was immersed in water. Actually nothing happened but due to the magician's magic, the entire kingdom appeared as if immersed in water. Sarkar (the great magician) has made Taj Mahal disappear for a few minutes. These magicians use their magic in order to show something which doesn't really exist. In the same way this entire world appears as if existing due to the magic of Brahman. Magic is that which doesn't really exist and it portrays something which doesn't exist on something which exists. Through Maya Brahman shows the world, which doesn't exist, as existing in itself (in Brahman). This is clearly seen in dream that the entire dream world appears in the dreamer.

Now it can be argued that magician's magic is illusory even inside the world and the world isn't that illusory from empirical perspective. And that magician's magic is very limited whereas this world isn't that limited. Thus Sankara says that even as yogis create a new world, similarly this world is created by Brahman.

We find in the puranas that Vishwamithra created another svarga or heaven for trishanku. The Mundaka Upanishad says that whatever a realized master thinks, that will happen. This is true with respect to the words of various mahatmas like AMMA – as their words appear impossible yet becomes possible (and accomplished easily and in the simplest way as well). Thus yogis who have controlled their mind are able to create a world of their own. This world can be in the plane of the external world or it can be a different plane itself. But they are able to create a world out of their very mind itself. Their creation or created world isn't real because it is created due to their mind or power and thereby will vanish definitely after a period of time. Similar to the world shown as if existing, after being illusorily created, by a magician or a yogi this external world is shown as if existing by Brahman through the power of Maya.

World – ultimately non-existent or unreal

Though we can say that Brahman creates this world with his power of Maya and through time-space, still the world is temporary. And such a temporary entity doesn't really exist in its own very changeless substratum. Thus the world ultimately doesn't exist at all. Even as the dream world appears very real when we experience it but is known to be an illusion after waking up, similarly the external world appears very real when experiencing it but it is non-existent as Brahman alone exists at all times.

We also find through a simple analysis of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep that the waking world doesn't really exist. This is because the waking world is negated in the dream; the dream world is negated in waking; and both the worlds are negated in dreamless deep sleep. It is clear that the waking world is akin to the dream world – therefore the waking world is as illusory as the dream world.

Thus ultimately the world doesn't exist but it appears as if existing for a person who perceives it. And for such a person it is said that this world exists in unmanifest form in its substratum of Brahman and as a result of creation (time and space), the wonderful world is created or shown as existing like a magician's magical world or a yogi's world. Whether one acknowledges or not, ultimately Brahman alone exists here. The external world that we perceive is just an illusion of names and forms in Brahman. A person who remembers that Brahman alone exists will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May Dakshinamurthy as Brahman making the unreal world appearing as if real guide us through knowledge of the temporary-sorrowful-unreal nature of the world to remembrance of Brahman as the ultimate non-dual reality existing so that we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Madhuraamritham

### Hanuman Chalisa - 1

जय हनुमान ज्ञान गुन सागर ।

जय कपीस तिहुं लोक उजागर ॥१॥

jaya hanumāna jñāna guna sāgara |  
jaya kapīsa tihum̐ loka ujāgara ||1||

With a mind purified through the dusts from the feet of Guru, I now am going to describe the pure (faultless) glory of Hanuman who is a great in the raghu's clan and capable of bestowing the four fruits (purusharthas).

### Ocean – the unlimited

We find in the scriptures the peak of comparison given to ocean. Another entity of space is also used a lot in the scriptures for analogies but space is generally compared with the Self or Brahman. This is because, as the scriptures say, space was the first entity to be created from Brahman. The heart in itself is called chidaakaasha or space of Consciousness. Space is unlimited and partless similar to the Self or Brahman. The only difference being that space is created whereas Brahman ever exists.

Ocean though isn't really unlimited yet is unlimited with respect to one's perception. From one end of the ocean it is impossible to find the other end or shore of the ocean. Therefore whenever we have to mention something that is beyond reach or comparison, the analogy of ocean is used.

The scriptures are the words of rishis or seers who were ever abiding in constant contemplation of Brahman (or they were Brahman themselves). Thus their words are words of Brahman. These words are mere words but direct experiences of the rishis which any sadhaka can also experience, if proper effort is put in the right direction. It isn't a wonder that ocean is used to denote the state of bondage as well as the way out of this bondage.

On one side we have the ocean of samsaara or transmigration characterized by birth and death. This ocean of samsaara is beyond limits and hence very tough to conquer. As much as one may strive to conquer it, it is impossible to conquer by oneself. It is only due to the

Guru's grace (Guru who is a living embodiment of Brahman or Ishwara) that one conquers this ocean of samsara. On the other side we have the Guru or Ishwara who is an ocean of all good qualities (including compassion which makes the ever-blissful Guru to help the shishya though having no desires or profit for himself – and this activity of the Guru is a true act of compassion in that it is similar to acting in a movie, irrespective of the action or the fruit the Guru is ever blissful).

Thus to conquer the ocean of samsara one needs to seek ocean of good qualities of Guru. And then eventually the person will be able to overcome the cycle of birth and death characterized by sorrow (and will be able to achieve the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss untainted by sorrow).

Though it is easy to say that a Guru is to be sought out such a Guru is very rare to find. A Guru who is endowed with all good qualities is very rare indeed to find and we find such a Guru in Hanuman.

#### Hanuman – ocean of good qualities

The various good qualities that we can think of or conceive in the mind are present in full (perfection) in Hanuman. Whether it is compassion or strength or support or courage, we find that Hanuman is perfect in all aspects. Just a look at Hanuman's life itself shows that all these qualities are implemented perfectly by Hanuman; implementation is a wrong word as Hanuman is the very embodiment of all these qualities.

What does it matter whether Hanuman has good qualities or not?

It matters because these good qualities are essential in order to progress in the spiritual path towards moksha. Good qualities like discipline, humility, compassion etc. purify the mind and give focus or concentration of mind. These are essential in order to progress towards moksha. These can be said to be the pre-requisites for moksha; which means that without these qualities, moksha is not possible.

Even as when we praise a king we get wealth from the king and when we praise a computer professional we will learn about computers, similarly when we praise or worship or seek Hanuman, one who is the embodiment of all good qualities then we will be blessed with all these qualities. And through gaining of these good qualities we will be able to attain purity and concentration of mind thereby setting the stage for moksha to be revealed to us.

### Hanuman – ocean of knowledge

All good qualities are pre-requisites for moksha but they will not bestow us with moksha. Moksha is possible only through knowledge – this is because bandha or bondage is due to ignorance. Ultimately one entity of Brahman alone exists. When this ultimate truth is forgotten then duality which appears as existing, an illusion, in Brahman is considered to be real. Thus starts bondage in the form of sorrows and sufferings. Getting rid of bondage which is due to ignorance is possible only through knowledge even as darkness can be removed only through light.

The scriptures thus say again and again that knowledge is the only means for moksha. All other means including karma, bhakthi etc. can only either purify the mind or lead to concentration of mind; they cannot get rid of ignorance as they themselves are products of ignorance (thereby reinforcing ignorance rather than removing it).

Knowledge of Brahman which removes ignorance is found only in the shastras and shastras are learnt only through a Guru. The Guru of Hanuman is the very embodiment of knowledge. We find that once Hanuman met Rama then his knowledge that Rama alone is real was always there. This is what made Hanuman obey the words of Rama irrespective of whether they were logical or not. Though Hanuman did perform activities in the world and showed attitudes of devotion yet this devotion isn't normal worldly devotion which is established in duality whereas this devotion was one-pointed devotion established in knowledge – this means that Hanuman knew nothing other than Rama. For Hanuman, Rama and Rama alone existed at all times.

It is easy generally to find people who just preach knowledge but themselves don't implement it in their own lives. Rare is to find a true Guru who isn't just preaching knowledge but implementing it in his life (each and every moment). Hanuman was such a Guru. Such a Guru doesn't merely teach through words but the very presence is a teaching. The thoughts, words, actions and very existence of such a Guru is a teaching for shishyas. Just looking at Hanuman's life itself itself is a teaching and no words need be spoken in order to learn from the Guru of Hanuman.

Many people are averse to knowledge and argue that it is dry, it doesn't have value, it is very tough etc. But all these are just wrong notions. Knowledge isn't dry as it gives eternal

bliss each and every moment in life. It alone has the real value as it is the very basis of sanaathana dharma. It is very simple to learn and much simpler to implement as it just revolves around the one ultimate reality of Brahman.

Knowledge is that Brahman alone exists and the entire world of names and forms is just an illusion in Brahman. Mere contemplation of this truth at all times is implementation of knowledge. As we can see it is very simple indeed to implement as nothing changes in the world. Worldly activities, worldly pleasures, worldly people and the entire world itself remains exactly the same – the only change is in the mind of a sadhaka who remembers that Brahman alone exists here. Even as lover remembers his love at all times irrespective of external situations, even as a mother remembers her child at all times and even as a worldly person thinks about worldly pleasures at all times, similarly a sadhaka who is seeking moksha will be able to remember at all times that Brahman alone exists. This very knowledge will instantly lead to eternal bliss. Through constant contemplation such a person will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

In order to gain this knowledge and implement it, it is essential to seek Hanuman. When we seek the ocean of knowledge we will be imparted with knowledge and we will be able to implement knowledge very easily (without much effort).

#### Hanuman – the monkey

Hanuman is a monkey. The mind is generally compared with a monkey. Like a monkey the mind constantly hops from one thought to another. Even while sitting for a 30 minute discourse, the mind will be traveling around the world and thinking about everything under the Sun. Swami Vivekananda beautifully compares the mind to be drunken monkey. Monkey itself hops around so what to talk about a drunken monkey? It hops from one branch to another without any purpose. Similarly the mind hops from one thought to another without any purpose. All thoughts, desires and actions of the world cannot be logically explained (or proven to have any purpose).

But when this same mind is purified and taught to concentrate then it will be able to focus on the ultimate reality of Brahman. Such a mind thereby will be totally focused internally on Brahman while externally performing all activities (like a normal worldly person). If it be argued that such a mind doesn't really exist then we find that Hanuman denotes such a mind. Hanuman was totally focused on Rama at all times – therefore Hanuman denotes that



monkey of mind which is ever focused on Rama (ever established in knowledge). Such a mind alone will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

In order for a sadhaka to attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha, it is essential to seek Hanuman. Through seeking Hanuman such a sadhaka will be able to focus his mind on the ultimate truth of Brahman at all times. Therefore such a sadhaka will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

#### Hanuman – famous in the three worlds

Hanuman by being that mind which is filled with all good qualities and implementing knowledge is famous in the three worlds. This means that such a Hanuman is being sought in the three worlds. A sadhaka who is able to worship Hanuman thus will become famous or known in the three worlds.

This known in the three worlds can be understood as being present in the three worlds. It is impossible for an individual to be present in the three worlds – thus when it is said that a person is known in the three worlds, it means that such a person realizes the underlying reality of the three worlds as Brahman. Through implementation of knowledge a person will become known in the three worlds – such a person verily becomes the three worlds (as its substratum even as a dreamer becomes the entire dream world).

Another perspective of “known in the three worlds” also means that such a person doesn’t need anything from the world. We will need something from a country where we aren’t famous or known. Once we are famous or known in the country then we don’t really need anything from the country. Similarly a person who is known in the three worlds doesn’t need anything at all from the three worlds. This means that such a person is devoid of any desires (or has gone beyond all desires).

A person who is abiding in constant contemplation of the ultimate reality of Brahman as the blissful substratum of the entire world doesn’t need anything at all in the world as such a person is ever blissful at all times (since bliss is the ultimate goal of life everybody seeks and this goal is already achieved, therefore such a person doesn’t need anything else at all from the entire world).

### Hail Hanuman

Though we find here Hanuman being hailed in the very beginning of Hanuman Chalisa, this hailing means seeking of Hanuman. We generally hail or praise somebody when we have love or devotion towards that person. This love or devotion means that we will be establishing the person in our heart. Through establishing Hanuman in our hearts we will be able to remain ever blissful in constant contemplation of Brahman (Rama) as pervading the entire world.

Any work generally begins by hailing one's favorite deity and in the case of works that are based on a deity, the deity will be praised (or hailed) in the beginning itself. Through extolling the glories of Hanuman Tulasidas initially itself fixes our mind unto Hanuman. Through constantly focusing on Hanuman we will be able to quickly progress towards the goal of moksha (as Hanuman is the very embodiment of moksha or bliss).

May we all praise Hanuman regularly so that through focusing on Hanuman we will be able to gain all good qualities and through knowledge we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## **Praadeshikam - I**

### **Hari Naama Keerthanam – 2**

Onnayi ninneyiha randaayi kandalavi  
 Undaayi orindal batha mindaavathalla mama  
 Pandekaneke varuvaan ninkripaavarikal  
 Undaaka yenkaliha naaraayanaaya nama

That which exists as one alone but there was a mistake in seeing it as two and this mistake of mine cannot be explained; may through whose grace I will be taken back the previous state of non-duality (through words of praises), my prostrations unto you, Naaraayana.

### Ultimate truth – one alone

The scriptures say that ultimately one truth alone exists. This one truth alone exists at all times. It is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is one without a second (devoid of all differences, beyond duality and non-dual in nature). In order to understand as to how this entity is found it, causal analysis of the experienced world has to be undertaken. The world that we currently perceive is an effect of a cause. It definitely requires a cause as anything requires a cause (unless it exists of its own). The world cannot exist of its own at all times because it constantly changes. That which constantly changes isn't real but temporarily appearing as existing. Such a temporarily existing entity isn't a self-existing entity and therefore is an effect of another cause. This cause of the temporary world has to be real, if not we will have to assume another cause for this cause – and this extension will have to continue until we find a cause which exists of its own (rather than being the effect of another cause). Due to simplicity, we can take the cause of the world itself as self-existing cause (that cause which isn't caused and is unchanging). This cause thus always exists and therefore is existence in nature. This cause needs to be consciousness in nature because consciousness is the light that illumines existence and since the cause always exists, it has to be consciousness in nature (for consciousness to always illumine it). That which is existence and consciousness in nature is unlimited and therefore blissful in nature. Thus this ultimate reality is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss (Sat Chit Ananda).

This entity is termed in the scriptures as Brahman (that which is big and appears as the entire world, by being the cause-substratum of the effect of the world – any cause pervading its effect).

Scriptures say that this entity of Brahman alone existed before creation. This is because there cannot be any other entity other than Brahman really existing – all existences other than Brahman are mere appearances in Brahman. In order to prove that Brahman alone existed before creation we have to prove that the three types of differences aren't present with respect to Brahman. The three differences are internal differences, differences between similar entities and difference between dissimilar entities.

That the cause of this world isn't many but one alone is easily proven through simplicity; if the world has two causes then the relation between these two causes have to be explained. If the relation is unreal or imaginary or illusory one then it leads to just one cause really existing. If the relation is real then we will have to definitely assume an absolute entity which is the very basis of these two relative entities. And this absolute entity will be the cause of these two causes. Due to simplicity we can say that the cause of the world itself is absolute. And by being of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, this cause is absolute alone (anything relative is sorrowful in nature and will not exist at all times).

This one cause of Brahman is without internal differences because it is changeless (that which has internal differences in the form of parts undergoes changes and therefore is non-eternal). Brahman is eternal and hence without any parts (unlike the body or tree which have parts). Brahman is without difference between similar entities because there is nothing apart from Brahman (even if such an entity exists, as we have analyzed above we will have to assume another absolute entity or for simplicity, accept Brahman alone as absolute or it alone existing). Unlike body or tree which has difference in its own category (like one body is different from another), Brahman doesn't have this difference as Brahman alone exists – and another entity which is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss cannot exist (therefore there is nothing similar to Brahman). Since there is no second entity apart from Brahman therefore there is no difference between dissimilar entities as well.

Thus with respect to Brahman there are no differences and therefore Brahman is non-dual alone. Now if it is argued that this is only before creation and during creation, duality does exist this isn't true. Duality that appears as existing after creation is temporary and

therefore such temporary existence isn't real – but just an illusion or appearance. And the scriptures clearly prove through analogies of mud, gold, iron etc. that creation or the world is just names and forms in Brahman. Names and forms don't create any new entity but just makes it appear as if duality exists (and is real). Even as a normal person gets deluded into believing that different ornaments of gold are different from each other, an ignorant person gets deluded into thinking that the world of different entities is real. Even as goldsmith knows that names-forms isn't real and gold alone is real, similarly a jnani knows that names-forms isn't real and Brahman alone is real.

Thus irrespective of whether we accept duality or creation to be just an illusion in Brahman or not, duality is just an illusion in Brahman. Thus Brahman is non-dual (that which alone always exists). The state of dream clearly shows as to how one dreamer becomes or appears as many entities (the entire dream world which appears very real while experiencing but is known to be an illusion after waking up); similarly this entire world is one Brahman alone. After gaining knowledge that Brahman alone exists, a person will realize that there is no duality at all here (and therefore such a person will be able to ever rejoice in bliss like a dreamer who dreams knowing dream to be just an illusion).

As to what makes duality as if real, Vedanta says that it is ignorance. Thus the sloka says that though one Brahman alone exists, it is seen as two (or many) – here seen is as-if-seen. And this is due to ignorance and for an ignorant person alone.

#### Duality – seen by ignorant person

Duality as proven earlier isn't real but still it is perceived as if real, by an ignorant person. Ignorance of the ultimate truth that Brahman alone exists makes a person to see as if duality is real. This is termed in Vedanta as ignorance. This ignorance is a matter of experience of an ignorant person. Only an ignorant person perceives this ignorance. This means that ignorance cannot be proven through logic even as darkness cannot be proven through logic though it is directly experienced by a person.

When there are no lights in the room a person perceives darkness. This darkness appears very real due to being experienced but we all know that it doesn't exist. It appears as if existing when light isn't there. And this darkness cannot be proven because the moment we try to prove it, it vanishes. But this doesn't mean that it doesn't exist – it exists for a person who perceives it.

Similarly ignorance exists for an ignorant person when knowledge that Brahman alone exists is lacking. This ignorance cannot be proven as when we try to prove it, we will find that it doesn't exist. But this doesn't mean that ignorance doesn't exist – it exists for an ignorant person. Whoever experiences it has to strive to get rid of it in order to get rid of sorrow caused by ignorance.

Ignorance as the sloka beautifully puts it cannot be put into words. It is indescribable. The moment we try to explain it, we will fail as words also are part of ignorance alone. Words lead to duality and are based on duality – duality itself is caused by ignorance – thus words are caused by ignorance, then how can words describe ignorance? It cannot. But it is a matter of experience for an ignorant person. Whoever experiences it (or its effect of sorrows) should strive to get rid of it.

Why get rid of ignorance?

If the answer is that, it is in order to rejoice in bliss; we do experience happiness from ignorance or world itself then why go behind removal of ignorance?

The answer is that happiness from the world is temporary and hence seeds of sorrow (will lead to sorrow alone in the long run). And ignorance doesn't really exist therefore all effort should be put in order to get rid of ignorance (any person who wants to get rid of sorrow eternally and wants to rejoice in bliss eternally should strive to get rid of ignorance).

Though many strive to understand and explain ignorance it is futile as it is just an experience of an ignorant person (which doesn't ultimately exist therefore is without any proof). Ramanujacharya's and Madhvacharya's attack on ajnaana or ignorance is futile as it doesn't serve any purpose – ajnaana is a matter of direct experience of an ignorant person who needs to strive to get rid of it (in order to realize Brahman and ever rejoice in bliss) but it doesn't really exist and hence its removal is knowledge that Brahman alone exists, at all times.

#### Removal of ignorance – through grace

Though the scriptures say that knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures is the means to remove ignorance still this requires a Guru and Guru is none other than Ishwara or Brahman or one's very nature of Self. In order to receive a Guru and be able to apprehend knowledge as taught by the Guru, grace is essential. Grace is nothing but merits

of good deeds performed in the past and good deeds along with good qualities performed in the present. Without grace we will find that though we are putting a lot of effort into gaining knowledge it doesn't lead to the fruit of eternal bliss (or getting rid of ignorance and sorrows).

Grace also is achieved through faith or trust or belief or acceptance. Each of these words are very deep words (with lot of concepts) and hence tough to explain in brief but it just means complete surrender unto Guru or Ishwara. If this surrender is there then automatically the path towards moksha (or Brahman) will be shown to us. Surrender isn't something partial but it has to be complete or total. Total surrender is that which is unconditional. Just surrendering when facing sorrow isn't true surrender – total surrender is surrendering at all times irrespective of whether facing happiness or sorrow, success or failure etc. Though very simple in theory, this is very tough to implement. It is possible only when the goal of moksha or eternal bliss is kept in mind – along with this the knowledge that Guru or Ishwara is the ultimate reality pervading the entire world as its substratum is required.

If surrender is there then grace will automatically flow into us. And when grace flows we will find that knowledge becomes easy to apprehend and easier to implement. Through constant implementation of knowledge we will then be able to realize Brahman as our own very nature of Consciousness (that which pulsates inside as I-exist, I-exist).

As Sankara beautifully puts it, the ocean of samsara is very tough to cross over and therefore grace of Ishwara is required (essential in order to cross over). As the Lord says in Gita this Maya or delusion of Ishwara is very tough to conquer but those who surrender unto me (the Lord) will cross it over very easily.

#### Oneness – always existing

Now it can be argued that if ignorance is removed then its removal isn't permanent as it cannot re-appear. This isn't the case as it was already mentioned that ignorance isn't real and hence its removal is just knowledge of its substratum as Brahman. And the sloka beautifully tells this through praying to the Lord to take us back to the previous state. Current state is the state of duality and sorrow; previous state is the state of non-duality and bliss. The author through prayers to the Lord to take us back to the previous state of

non-duality shows that the state of non-duality alone is real and the state of ignorance is something which is temporary (illusory and just temporarily appearing).

Vedanta ultimately thus says that oneness or non-duality alone exists at all times. In between duality appears as existing and due to grace of Guru-Ishwara a person gains knowledge which removes ignorance (which appears as existing) and realizes that non-dual Brahman alone exists at all times.

This desire of a person portrayed through prayer to Ishwara to take back to the state of non-duality is termed as mumukshutva or desire for moksha (liberation). Without this desire it is impossible to progress towards the goal of moksha or towards Brahman. The author thereby says that all our prayers should be to take us to the state of non-duality from the state of temporary-duality and sorrow. The desire for eternal bliss, if strong, by itself will lead us slowly towards the state of bliss (non-duality). If this desire is strong then the Guru will automatically be brought in front of us and then grace also will automatically flow (as such a person will strive to do welfare to the entire world remembering that Brahman alone exists as the world of names-forms and will have total surrender unto Brahman remembering that Brahman alone is real).

It is important to remember while traversing the path of moksha that Brahman alone exists at all times – there is neither bondage nor liberation but non-dual Brahman alone exists. Ignorance appears as if existing and therefore it leads to sorrow – but this sorrow is like sorrow in dream; once we gain knowledge from the scriptures we will realize that Brahman alone ultimately exists, of the nature of eternal bliss (this truth shouldn't be forgotten irrespective of whether implementation is happening fully or not).

May we all prostrate to the ultimate reality of Brahman so that we will be able to surrender unto Brahman through constant remembrance and thereby through realization of the ever-present non-dual state of Brahman will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.



## **Praadeshikam - II**

### **Kanda Shashti Kavacham - 1**

Kanthar shashti kavacham is a hymn composed by Sri Devaraya Swamigal. This hymn is on the praise of Lord Muruga. This hymn is not just a hymn, it is a kavacham which not only can give us with all prosperity, it acts as a protective armor from all bad situations and effects. Even if this is chanted without understanding the meaning of the hymn, this kavacham is very powerful which would protect us from all evil effects and also grants us all boons.

Kanthar Shashti kavacham is particularly chanted on Shashti day (6th day after new moon) in the month of Ipasi (October-November), because that was the day when Lord Muruga killed the asura Soorapadman. Lord Muruga was born from the third eye of Lord Siva. During that time, Soorapadama and his brothers Tharakasuran and Singan were constantly disturbing Devas and hence Devas prayed Lord Siva for solution to this problem. Lord Siva then opened his third eye, out of which came 6 sparks. Those 6 sparks became 6 babies on 6 lotuses in Saravana Poygai (Poyigai means pool). Hence he has the name Saravanan. He was raised by 6 ladies who are called Karthikai pengal and hence he is also called Karthikeyan. Goddess Parvati then united these 6 bodies into 1 body with 6 faces and 12 hands. Hence he got the name Shanmukhan.

Lord Muruga then became the senapathi of Deva's army and went on to defeat the Asuras. He killed Soorapadman's brothers first and then he fought with Soorapadman for six days. On Shashti (Sixth day after new moon day) he killed Soorapadman. All Devas praised Lord Muruga who killed Soorapadman for the protection of Devas. Lord Muruga was so pleased by their praises. He then granted all boons whatever was asked. The day of Shashti is thus very auspicious. Devotees fast and perform poojas on all 6 days during the month of Ipasi, to get the grace and blessings of Lord Muruga.

Lord Muruga is also called Shanmukha, Lord with six faces. It can be understood that these six faces are to kill the six enemies of human kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (miserliness), moha (delusion), madha (pride) and matsarya (jealousy). It can also be understood to mean the Lord of five senses and the mind. Lord Muruga is also called Guha which means the "in-dweller of everything" or the Self.

The text starts with a venba explaining the purpose of the text.

**Thuthiporku valvinai pom thumbam pom**  
**Nenjil padhiporku selvam palithu kathithongum**  
**Nishtaiyum kaikoodum**  
**Nimalar arul kandar shashti kavacham thanai**

Those who pray, their intense karmas and sufferings will go away

Those who fix (Lord) in their mind all wealth will be in abundance

All penance will bear fruit

By the kanthar shashti kavacham written by the grace of god

Thuthiporku valvinai pom thumbam pom - Those who pray, their intense karmas and sufferings will go away:

The text starts by presenting the purpose of the text, the benefit we would get by chanting Kanthar shashti kavacham. Before performing any action, most people would want to know the benefit they would get out of the action. As an answer to such curious mind, the author presents the purpose or the fruit a person would get by chanting this text.

Normally, a text would start by presenting the subject matter of the text, who is the target people, what is the goal or benefit that would bring to people and the way to achieve the goal. This is called Anubandha Chathushtayam. This is clearly brought out in this first few lines of the text. Subject matter is the glory of Lord Muruga, targeted people are the devotees of the Lord, the benefit that is briefly mentioned is freedom from sorrows and suffering and both spiritual and material gains. Finally, the way to achieve is by chanting this fixing the Lord in the mind.

Thudhipavar means one who does sthuthi or praise. Lord, who is control of everything and who is everything, is the most powerful and it is not possible to find words to glorify such a almighty powerful Lord. A devotee is one who knows and remembers this aspect of the Lord and hence such a devotee can do nothing but praise the Lord out of love and reverence. When we love something, that object stays in our mind for longer duration and it would be natural to glorify that thing we love whenever we get a chance. Likewise, when we love the Lord in such a manner, we would do nothing by remember the glory of the Lord and pray. When we are able to pray to the Lord with Devotion, our mind will have more thought about the Lord than anything else.

Sorrows and suffering are from the objects of the world. When we forget that Lord is the essence of everything in the world, we fail to see Lord and hence we experience sorrows and we suffer. But when we remember that Lord is the controller of everything, our fear and anxiety, which in turn causes suffering, go away and thus we will be able to enjoy joy and peace.

Rest of the Venba will be continued.

## Acharyasmrithi

### Sri Harsha

Though there are four shishyas of Sankara who are stalwarts having given us great works, the learning of which alone will take us eventually to the goal of moksha, there are few acharyas who stand out amongst the entire set of acharyas (from the time of Sankara until now).

Acharya isn't necessarily a person who is a renunciate. But acharya is one who preaches the scriptures, sets conduct for living and himself implements (lives the conduct). Thus it wouldn't be wrong to say that an acharya is a realized master whose all activities are for the welfare of the world alone. Though majority of acharyas and realized masters are sanyaasis, there are few like Prof. Balakrishnan Nair who aren't sanyaasis but acharyas and realized masters to the core of the word.

There is generally a wrong notion that logic will not help in moksha. Logic used properly (as per what the shastras prescribe) is essential in order to gain conviction and for moksha (through conviction of knowledge). It wouldn't be wrong thus to say that logic is essential for moksha. Anything which is used too much is harmful – in the same way logic used too much and in a wrong way is harmful and will take us away from moksha. Logic after being properly used should be renounced for contemplation of Brahman (as pervading the entire world). In order to understand the scriptures and the import of scriptures logic has to be used. Thus logic can be compared to the car in which we reach a destination. Car is essential in order to reach the destination (assuming that there is no other means of transportation). But still car isn't the destination and once we are outside the destination (a building) we have to get rid of the car (get out of the car). Similarly logic takes us to the goal of moksha but it also has to be renounced. Its purpose is to gain conviction in the mind so that the mind can contemplate continuously on Brahman.

A sadhaka who doesn't understand the place of logic in the spiritual path will not progress in the path and thereby will not attain moksha. There is a place for each and everything in the world and we have to understand this properly before starting accusations – lest we lose out on the ultimate goal of life as moksha.

When the scriptures were improperly understood, Sankara wrote bhashyas thereby setting straight the meaning and interpretation of the scriptures. It isn't wrong to say that it is due to Sankara that we are able to apprehend the true meaning of the scriptures.

When we progress in the spiritual path we will encounter many obstacles. These obstacles in the form of various wrong notions are found externally as different darshanas. Though each of these may serve a particular purpose still they are wrong notions that have to be avoided. It may be argued that Vidyaranya arranges all darshanas in a particular order in sarva darshana samgraha and therefore each darshana is valid for a sadhaka – the problem in this is that each darshana starts by refuting every other darshana (including Vedanta). Thus a person who is believing in a particular darshana, other than Vedanta, will not be able to believe Vedanta. Therefore a sadhaka should strive to focus directly on Vedanta which is the ultimate of darshanas in that it alone leads us to the state of eternal bliss.

At all points of time there have been opponent darshanas in the world which have attacked Vedanta using some or the other means. It was after Sankara's time that the Nyaaya darshana became very popular (and vehemently opposing Vedanta). The concepts of nyaaya are dualistic in nature whereas Advaita Vedanta is non-dualistic in nature (this very fundamental difference itself shows that both are opposing to each other). Therefore it was essential to refute the nyaaya theories. And this proving requires logic to be used in order to show Vedanta isn't opposed to logic. This very tough task of proving nyaaya concepts to be illogical while proving that Vedanta is logical was undertaken by the giant or great person of Sri Harsha.

The very name of Sri Harsha is enough to evoke a lot of fear in naiyyayikaas and devotion along with admiration in vedantins.

### History

Though history is always questionable, still let's see the history that lead to Sri Harsha's greatness. It is said that Sri Harsha's father was an advaitin and in the kingdom of a king. And his father was defeated in a verbal dual with a naiyyayikaas (it is opined that this naiyyayika was the great Udayanacharya). Since his father was defeated by a naiyyayika, Sri Harsha took it upon himself to negate the nyaaya system itself. This nyaaya system is now known as pracheena nyaaya.

Khandanakaara

Nyaaya system emphasizes on a set of entities (categorization of the world) and means (pramaanas) in order to gain knowledge of these entities. Sri Harsha wrote a work refuting each and every concept of nyaaya system – refutation was done on the basis of logic, the same logic which are used by the nyaaya system. Thus through their own system, their system was proven to be illogical by Sri Harsha. This masterpiece work of Sri Harsha where nyaaya system is thoroughly refuted is titled khandana khandana khaadyam. As a result of writing the khandana work, Sri Harsha is known as khandanakaara.

There are generally two types of works – one is those which explain one’s own concepts while raising objections of opponent systems in order to answer them and make one’s own system clearer. Second is those which don’t deal with one’s system but deal with exploitation of other systems – this kind of work is called khandana works. Sri Harsha’s work is of the second type (other examples of khandana works are the three khandanas of Madhvacharya namely Mayavada khandana, upaadhi khandana and anumaana khandana).

Though personally (and traditionally) khandana works are to be avoided, Sri Harsha’s khandana briefly touches upon one of the main concepts of Vedanta which is that everything except Brahman is anirvachaniya or indescribable and therefore illogical. Sri Harsha briefly delves upon this concept in his work. This is contrary to Madhvacharya’s khandana works which only deal with refutation of Advaita Vedanta (and many times using improper logic and accusations which have already been answered by either Sankara or Sureshwara).

World is anirvachaniya

That the world is anirvachaniya or indescribable because it is an illusion is one of the fundamental concept of Advaita Vedanta. The world (or anything different from Brahman) is not unreal as it is experienced now and isn’t real as it didn’t exist before creation and will not exist after realization; thus the world is neither real nor unreal. Such entities are called illusions and cannot be really explained or described, from an empirical viewpoint. Just because they cannot be explained doesn’t mean that they aren’t valid as illusions are directly experienced (and it exists for whoever experiences it). And since ultimately illusions don’t exist at all therefore there is no harm to non-dual Brahman (which alone ultimately exists).

Sri Harsha through refutation of each and every concept of nyaaya philosophy (all of which focus on the world or duality) therefore shows that they are illogical and illusions alone (like dream). That world which didn't exist in the beginning (before creation) and at the end (after creation) doesn't exist even now but just appears as existing (mere illusion in Brahman). Knowing the world to be just an illusion in Brahman is the direct way to realization of the truth that Brahman alone exists as the very cause-substratum of the illusory world.

Though Sri Harsha emphasizes mostly on proving everything other than Brahman to be illogical (or illusions), he also briefly dwells upon Advaita (or Brahman alone being real). The pre-requisite for realization of Brahman is knowing the world to be an illusion. As generally attachment towards the world is there therefore we have to be convinced about the illusory nature of the world in order to focus on Brahman.

#### Purpose of Khandana khandi khaadyam

Though Sri Harsha's masterpiece is a refutation work still it serves three purposes (or rather served):

1. Everything other than Brahman being illusory
2. Strengthening and rebirth of the nyaaya system
3. Setting the standard for future logic

#### 1. Everything other than Brahman being illusory

As we have seen, this is essential in order to even learn the shastras. Else we would still be focusing on the world rather than focusing on the shastras and Brahman who is propounded in the shastras.

#### 2. Rebirth of nyaaya system

The ancient nyaaya system prior to Sri Harsha's time is now called praacheena nyaaya (old nyaaya). This system was shown to have so many logical fallacies hence this system required to be strengthened or corrected. Thus nyaaya was reborn into the current known navya nyaaya system. This navya nyaaya was formulated by Gangesha Upadhyaya in his work of Tattvachintaamani and in this most of Sri Harsha's arguments have been answered or negated. That Sri Harsha helped in the rebirth of nyaaya system bringing into vogue a much logical stronger nyaaya system itself is a credit to his khandana work.

### 3. Setting the standard for future logic

Logic was initially considered as not just secondary to the scriptures but as something which shouldn't be used by ardent seekers. Sri Harsha proved through his work that logic if used properly can establish the truth in the scriptures in crystal clear way. The way of arguments or logic used by Sri Harsha has been utilized by Anandabodha, Chitsukha and even as late as Madhusudana Saraswathi.

Thorough logic as found in Khandana has been used, loosely, by even Madhvacharya and other acharyas in their works (and systems). Through a thorough critical analysis of any system, through the method found in Khandana, the system itself can be proven to be without any logical fallacies (and all fallacies can be convincingly answered as well).

#### Package for defeating opponents

As Sri Harsha himself mentions, the logical way used by Sri Harsha against nyaaya can be used by any person against any opponent and any system. That the opponent will be defeated is an under-statement as the opponent and opponent's system will be demolished thoroughly through the logics used by Sri Harsha. Thereby Khandana work is a package for defeating opponents either in dual or in written works.

#### Sri Harsha – advaitin par excellence

Sri Harsha through his own words makes it very clear that in his system, Advaita Vedanta, there are no logical faults as Brahman alone is real. Because this Brahman is direct experience (as one's own very nature of Consciousness), there are no logical faults with respect to the subject-matter or goal or purpose of Vedanta. It cannot be argued that ignorance which veils Brahman cannot be explained (and thereby subject-matter, goal, purpose etc. will be illogical) because though it cannot be explained it is a matter of direct experience; and that ignorance is inexplicable itself shows that it is just an illusion (that will vanish once a person realizes Brahman through knowledge).

#### Sri Harsha – poet par excellence

Sri Harsha was also a poet par excellence and this is shown through his work of Naishadeeya charitham. This work consists of lot of poetic phrases and usages. Though there are many places a copy of the slokas, not verbatim, from other works, still this work shows that Sri Harsha was an expert in Sanskrit grammar and poetry.



### Khandana commentaries

All the above words about Sri Harsha can be just said to be arthavaada; but that this is not the case is shown through the long list of commentaries on Khandana Khanda Khyaadyam. That one of the commentaries is by the great naiyyayika of Shankara Mishra itself speaks volumes about the excellence of the work. There are as many as eight or nine very popular commentaries on the work (this also talks about the importance associated with this work) – these include commentaries by purnaprajna vidyaasagara and chitsukhacharya.

It is impossible to even provide a brief or explanation of a part of Khandana work as it is beyond the grasp of normal people (only the intellectual and logically strong can understand this work); therefore an attempt for the same is not undertaken here.

But we as ardent sadhakas of moksha should remember that there once was a great master in the form of Sri Harsha who demolished the nyaaya system (not in a negative way) setting the stage for the navya-nyaaya system and establishing advaita system very clearly as the most logical system. Though there have been later acharyas who have attacked Advaita Vedanta, these attacks have been answered by other acharyas who have based their logic on Sri Harsha's work. Sri Harsha's way of explanation or logic has been used by Anandabodha, Chitsukha and Madhusudana Saraswathi – we are therefore eternally grateful to Sri Harsha for the same. Last but not the least those who are able to read or grasp even a bit of Sri Harsha's work cannot even feel any gratitude as their mind and intellect will be taken from a normal worldly plane to the plane of logic (that this plane gives immense bliss is beyond words); and those whose mind has been blessed by Sri Harsha (or his work of Khandana) will very soon realize Brahman and ever rejoice in bliss.

May we all offer our prostrations to this great acharya of Sri Harsha who changed history itself and thereby through his supreme (and faultless) logic provides us with conviction about the indescribable/illusory nature of the world and that Brahman alone exists here; so that we will be able to realize Brahman and ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

न्यायदर्शनहन्तारं युक्त्यानिर्वचनीयैव ।

तत्त्वद्वैतप्रवक्तारं श्रीहर्षं सततं वन्दे ॥

nyāyadarśanahantāraṁ yuktyānirvacanīyaiva |  
tattvādvaitapravaktāraṁ śrīharṣaṁ satataṁ vande ||

He who destroyed the nyaaya darshana through the logic of indescribable (or indeterminable) and preached the truth of Advaita, such a Sri Harsha I prostrate always.

## Vedanta Pariksha

This month all questions are on Siva.

- 1) As a result of drinking the nectar that came from churning the milk ocean, Siva is called what name?
  - a) Jataajuda
  - b) Sadaasiva
  - c) Nilakanta
  - d) Mahadeva
- 2) What is adorned by Siva on his head?
  - a) Snake
  - b) Moon
  - c) Bhasma
  - d) Parvati
- 3) How many wives does Siva have?
  - a) 1
  - b) 2
  - c) 3
  - d) 0
- 4) What is the favorite leaf of Siva which is offered to Siva during puja of Sivarathri (and other pujas as well)?
  - a) Tulasi
  - b) Bilva
  - c) Lotus leaf
  - d) None
- 5) Who is the amsaavatara of Siva who helped Vishnu in Rama avatara?
  - a) Sugreeva
  - b) Vibhishana
  - c) Lakshmana
  - d) Hanuman
- 6) What is Siva's name as the consort of Tripura sundari or Lalitaambika?
  - a) Mahadeva
  - b) Sadaasiva
  - c) Siva

- d) Rudra
- 7) Who among the pandavas is a staunch devotee of Siva?
- a) Arjuna
  - b) Yudhisthira
  - c) Bhima
  - d) Nakula
- 8) How many are the devotees of Siva, Nayanmaars?
- a) 60
  - b) 61
  - c) 62
  - d) 63
- 9) Who is Siva's father-in-law?
- a) Brahma
  - b) Vishnu
  - c) Indra
  - d) Daksha
- 10) What is Siva's name as the consort of Madurai Meenakshi?
- a) Sundareswarar
  - b) Ishwarar
  - c) Siva
  - d) Sadaasiva

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. b 10 avataras are commonly considered for Vishnu
2. c 24 avataras are mentioned by Bhagavatham
3. c Krishna is said to be the purna avatara
4. d Rama as per Yoga Vasistha forgot knowledge and had to be taught again
5. c Bhasmasura was the asura killed by Vishnu after giving a boon to Siva
6. a Brahma alone came from navel of Vishnu
7. b Vaamana is called as upendra (brother of Indra)
8. c Bhishma instructed Vishnu Sahasranama to Yudhisthira
9. d 3 times Vishnu was born to father-mother of Devas
10. c Vishnu is one who is all-pervasive

Marks for quiz

Sunanda Amma – 10

Aparna – 7

Nikhila - 8

Congrats to Sunanda Amma for scoring full in the quiz. Congrats to Aparna and Nikhila as well for scoring good in the quiz. Thanks to all the three for finding time to take part in the quiz, amidst all busy schedules.

## 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. Acharya Smrithi – remembering an acharya through brief life-history and works
8. 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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