

## Vedanta Darshanam

Salutations to all.

New Year has started and yet another month has already passed. This is where our resolutions for New Year would have lost all its fervor. For sadhakas it is important to remember that each and every day, time passes by and we are progressing quickly towards death. Once death is embraced then we can't say where we will be born in the next birth and what we will be born as well. As Sankara says in Vivekachoodamani this human birth is very precious indeed and not to be wasted for futile worldly pleasures which we have undertaken for innumerable births in the past. Instead this human birth is the only birth where we can go beyond all sorrows and attain the ever blissful state of moksha. But moksha is attained only by those who seek it with full earnestness. Unless there is strong desire for moksha, there will not be progress towards moksha as the entire world will pose as a strong obstacle. The only way passion towards the world can be got rid is through strong desire of moksha or liberation from the bondages and sorrows of the temporary world.

In order to develop and strengthen the desire for moksha the one and only way is knowledge of Vedanta. As the scriptures repeat again and again moksha is attained only through knowledge and not through any other means. Since we have already crossed a month in this New Year it is therefore essential that we develop passion towards the system of Vedanta thereby learning it and trying to implement it in our day-to-day life. Though Vedanta appears very tough in theory it is very simple if we are able to grasp the simple truth that there exists nothing but one non-dual reality of Brahman alone.

Constant contemplation of this non-dual reality of Brahman is the direct way to moksha as moksha is ever naturally abiding in Brahman as one's very nature of blissful Consciousness. The more we learn Vedanta, the more we will be able to implement in life. And then we will realize that Vedanta is very simple indeed to implement – just the desire to implement it or desire for moksha should be there in the mind.

As the scriptures say, life becomes a waste if we aren't able to realize Brahman and ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself. Life becomes fulfilled here and now itself if we are able

to realize our very nature of Brahman (and realization of Brahman can happen here and now itself). Since the ultimate goal of life is to ever rejoice in bliss therefore we should all strive to achieve this goal through learning and implementation of Vedanta (as soon as possible as we don't know what will happen next or in the future). May this magazine serve as the means to learn and implement Vedanta.

May we all strive to learn and implement Vedanta through remembering that Brahman alone exists here 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.

AUM NAMA SHIVAYA

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## Upanishad Vivaranam

### Mundaka Upanishad – 1-1-4, 1-1-5

तस्मै स होवाच ।

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म

यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ॥४॥

tasmai sa hovāca |

dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma

yadbrahmavido vadanti parā caivāparā ca ॥4॥

तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः

शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति ।

अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ॥५॥

tatrāparā ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'tharvavedaḥ

śikṣā kalpo vyākaraṇaṁ niruktaṁ chando jyotiṣamiti |

atha parā yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate ॥5॥

Unto him (Shanauka), Angiras said – knowers of Brahman say that Vidyaa is of two types, paraa and aparaa.

Aparaa is the four Vedas of Rig, yajus, saama and atharva and the six Vedangas of Siksha, Kalpa, Vyaakarana, Niruktam, Chandas and Jyothisham; now paraa is that through which the immutable (ultimate reality of Brahman) is known.

### Knowers of Brahman

Vedanta says that the entire world that we currently perceive is just an illusion of names and forms in its cause-substratum of Brahman. Brahman is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Though Brahman alone exists, people forgetting their very nature of Brahman suffer in the world. This is called ignorance or avidyaa. As to what this avidyaa is, how it is and what are its qualities etc. cannot be analyzed as it doesn't stand any logic though is a direct matter of experience for an ignorant person. Even as water exists for a person seeing it in desert though it doesn't stand any logic, similarly avidyaa exists for one who experiences it. As a result of avidyaa, a person experiences only sorrow as a result of transmigrating in the ocean of samsara (characterized by birth and death). Rare are those

who are able to overcome avidyaa through knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures. Such people are knowers of Brahman. Here knowing isn't like worldly or objective knowledge but it is knowledge of one's own very nature of Brahman – intuitive and direct knowledge.

For ignorant people, source of knowledge is two – one is the scripture (which talks about Brahman) and other is the Guru (who is well versed in the scriptures and is ever experiencing Brahman as his very nature). Scriptures are the ultimate proof of Brahman but scriptures are alive or manifested in realized masters (who are living embodiments of scriptures). Instead of merely stating views about knowledge, the Upanishad here says that knowers of Brahman talk about knowledge. This shows as to how much important is knowing Brahman (rather than merely gaining intellectual knowledge). That intellectual knowledge isn't enough for moksha is further explained by the Upanishad itself.

#### Knowledge – two types

Though here Upanishad talks about two types of knowledge, we can say that the third type of knowledge we can find today is objective knowledge of the world. The various sciences, courses, degrees, topics etc. fall under this objective knowledge of the world. Since the Upanishad doesn't talk about objective knowledge of the world, we can say that the temporary and sorrowful world isn't given much value in spirituality. This doesn't mean that the world and worldly actions aren't given value but just that they are futile if knowledge of two types is not gained. This is similar to saying that having a car is futile unless we know how to use the car – similarly being in the world is futile unless we are able to use this world (which is nothing but the ultimate reality of Brahman alone) in order to attain the ultimate goal of life as complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss.

Those who object to scriptures not mentioning about worldly knowledge can take another interpretation from the Upanishadic statement. Of the two types of knowledge, the lower type of knowledge is the scriptures – scriptures talk about everything under the Sun and therefore worldly knowledge is already included in the scriptures.

Knowledge is split into higher knowledge or paraa and lower knowledge or aparaa.

Two perspectives

We can take two perspectives in order to understand the two types of knowledge (categorization into two types). First is that lower knowledge is that which talks about the objective world and higher knowledge is that which talks about Brahman. The second perspective is that lower knowledge is learning of the scriptures (mere learning of the scriptures is just intellectual or theoretical knowledge) and higher knowledge is direct experience of Brahman.

It goes without saying that higher knowledge is what leads to fulfillment of life. Only through knowledge of Brahman, will a person fulfill his life through ever rejoicing in bliss. The scriptures themselves say again and again that there is no other way to eternal bliss than realization of Brahman.

Then we may ask as to what is the purpose of lower knowledge, but before this is answered let's look into the two types of knowledge.

Lower knowledge – of scriptures

Lower knowledge is knowledge of the scriptures. Scriptures here means the four Vedas of Rig, Yajus, Sama and Atharva. These four Vedas themselves have four parts of samhita which deals with praise of Ishwara, brahmana which deals with rituals, aranyaka which deals with meditation and explanation of rituals and Upanishad which deals with Brahman (knowledge portion). These encompass everything under the Sun though programming language and various new technologies and sciences aren't covered in the Vedas (but we can really question the necessity of these – these new technologies and sciences have only lead to more problems in the world than solving problems in the world).

The Vedas cannot be learnt as such – of course in today's world, it is impossible to learn the Vedas or Vedanta without the commentaries by various acharyas on the same. In order to learn the Vedas (and understand properly) it is essential to learn the vedangas and upangas as well. Upangas are subsidiary and hence not mentioned by the Upanishad but Vedangas are essential. Vedangas are six in number – they are shiksha dealing with phonetics, kalpa dealing with rituals, vyaakarana dealing with grammar, niruktam dealing with etymology, chandas dealing with metre and jyothisha dealing with astrology. Though each of these are an entire science in themselves, they are to be learnt at least briefly by those who want to learn the Vedas.

But of what use is learning the Vedas? Vedas have different branches as we have seen and they will only lead to a better life either here or after death (in one of the fourteen accepted lokas). But what good is a better life unless it leads to eternal bliss? Eternal bliss is only possible through getting rid of duality. This is because duality is the cause of all sorrow (dual notions leads to likes-dislikes, birth-death and happiness-sorrow). Duality is as a result of ignorance alone. In essence, there is no duality at all present here but due to ignorance we think duality that we currently perceive is real. This leads to sorrow alone here and in the future births. The chain of birth-death never ends unless a person is able to go beyond it through going beyond duality.

Ignorance makes us feel that duality is real but duality is just an illusion in the non-dual reality of Brahman. Vedanta often uses the analogy of dream to explain as to how illusion in this world leads to sorrow. A person goes to bed and starts dreaming. In dream an entire world is seen; activities happen as if very real; there are times when the person starts running from death, suffering, struggling, crying, laughing etc. But all of a sudden the person wakes up. Then he realizes that there was no dream world at all – it was just an illusion in his own mind. He himself became the entire dream world (considering that dream world exists) but ultimately there was no dream world ever created and there is no chance ever that such a dream world will be created. Whatever exists is the dreamer alone. In the same way, this waking world we see is just an illusion in the ultimate reality of Brahman. Brahman alone exists as before creation and after creation Brahman alone exists – therefore it is logical that during creation too Brahman alone exists. Differences or duality in the world is just names and forms in Brahman even as various ornaments are mere names and forms in gold. Ignorance makes one feel that names and forms are real. Once knowledge dawns, duality is known to be just an illusion and never existing. Thus ends all sorrow and since only the non-dual reality of Brahman as one's own very nature of Consciousness alone exists, therefore such a person will ever rejoice in bliss.

Thus it is very clear that the ultimate goal of life as cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss is only possible through knowledge of Brahman. Thus knowledge of Brahman is the higher knowledge.

#### Higher knowledge – of Brahman

Higher knowledge is knowledge of the ultimate reality of Brahman. This isn't mere theoretical knowledge of Brahman but direct experience of Brahman as one's very nature of

Consciousness. Merely knowing about milk will not remove our thirst; thirst will be removed only by drinking of milk. Similarly merely knowing about Brahman intellectually will not get rid of sorrow; sorrow will only be removed through realization of Brahman.

Realization of Brahman is possible only through the scriptures – here scriptures aren't the Vedas but Vedanta or the Upanishadic portion of the Vedas. It is only in the Upanishads we find talk about Brahman (as the Upanishad itself separates brahma vidyaa from all other vidyaa). Sadhakas should always remember that Brahman is known only through scriptures. Rarely people might realize Brahman without learning the scriptures but these are exceptions and shouldn't be considered. Knowledge of scriptures or Brahman as found in the scriptures alone will lead to eternal bliss. Just mere words of Brahman will not help as well. Even the great Prof. Balakrishnan Nair who says that if we can remember that Brahman alone exists then we will be liberated here and now itself, talks about Brahman as found in the scriptures. Thus the various masters in the world who proclaim that just remaining as I is enough for moksha and all are not to be followed by ardent sadhakas desiring moksha.

Also those who think that Ramana Maharshi just preached that one should enquire into who am I are also fools; Maharshi's way of enquire is what the Upanishads call as neti neti or not-this, not-this. This process is separating the entire world from oneself and finally ending up with oneself. That Maharshi wrote Upadesa Saram, Saddarshanam etc. clearly show that Maharshi's teachings were resonances of the scriptures alone. Maharshi often used to quote from the scriptures – thus the argument that Maharshi didn't follow the path of the scriptures is wrong. Just the fact that Paul Brunton, the foreigner seeking knowledge of Self, was guided by mahaperiyaval of Kanchi (chandrasekharendra saraswati swamigal) to Ramana Maharshi itself shows that Maharshi's teachings follow the scriptures alone.

Brahman as found in the scriptures is the underlying reality of the entire illusory world. Brahman, as the Upanishads say, is known through sravana, manana and nidhidhyaasana. Sravana is listening to the scriptures with import on Brahman. Manana is reflecting on Brahman from logical perspective using logic provided in the scriptures. Nidhidhyaasana is constant contemplation on Brahman as pervading the entire world (non-dual reality behind the entire world). A person who follows these three will realize Brahman and thereby will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.



Since knowledge of Brahman is knowledge of supreme or ultimate and since it leads us to the ultimate state therefore it is called paraa (supreme or ultimate). All other knowledge will not really serve any purpose unless paraa is gained as paraa alone will fulfill our life by leading us to the eternal blissful state of Brahman.

If paraa alone is required for moksha, then what is the purpose of aparaa?

Paraa or knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures isn't very easy to grasp. Though theoretical and practical it is very easy indeed, still it is very tough indeed for those who are always focused on the world and who don't have a strong intellect. For such people, aparaa will help set the stage for gaining and implementation of paraa. Without knowledge of the Vedas or puranas, it may not be easy to gain paraa. And unless paraa is gained, there will be no moksha or eternal bliss. Thus those who aren't able to gain paraa should strive for aparaa which would in turn purify and concentrate the mind. Such a pure and concentrated mind alone will be able to easily focus on Brahman in paraa.

Even while gaining aparaa, sadhakas should always remember the ultimate goal of life as paraa. Paraa alone is ultimate and real – everything else is just an illusion in Brahman. Everything else, being an illusion, will only lead to sorrow. Keeping this in mind, sadhakas should strive to gain paraa and implement it in their lives. Even as those who don't know swimming will cross over the river with a boat, similarly those who can't directly gain paraa should strive to gain paraa through aparaa. The boat is renounced after crossing the river similarly aparaa will also have to be renounced after gaining paraa. Once paraa is attained, then what else is there to know? What else is there other than Brahman alone ultimately and after realization?

As Prof. Balakrishnan Nai always says, even now there is only Brahman. Some people accept this and are able to ever rejoice in bliss; others don't accept and therefore suffer constantly in the world. Any moment thus we have the option to attain eternal bliss – the choice is upto us. We should always choose paraa alone. Whether we are in a school or college or office or temple or ashram, we should always keep paraa as the goal and focus point (irrespective of whether we are initially aparaa or not). Then slowly we will be able to ever concentrate on the ultimate truth that Brahman alone exists. Through ever remaining fixed on Brahman, sorrows caused by duality will instantly vanish; though externally sorrows and problems might exist but they are known to be just illusions. Therefore such a person ever rejoices in bliss at all times.

The Upanishad after talking about paraa vidyaa will describe Brahman beautifully in the next sloka which we will see in the next magazine (though description is impossible still Brahman can be hinted at as beyond the world and as the subject of all objects).

May we all strive to gain paraa at all times through knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures so that we will be able to put an end to sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times in absorption in Brahman as our very nature of non-dual Consciousness.

## Gitaamritham

### Bhakti Yoga

In the second sloka the Lord defined devotion with form and in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> sloka devotion with formless was defined. The Lord said that devotion with form is good according to him and formless devotees directly attain Ishwara. Now as to why devotion with form is better for people is being explained.

### Sloka 5 – Why devotion with formless is tough and devotion with form is easy

क्लेशोऽधिकरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥५॥

kleśo'dhikarasteṣānavyaktāsaktacetāsām |  
avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṁ dehavadbhiravāpyate ||5||

5. Those who seek the unmanifest (formless Ishwara) they will face lot of obstacles/problems/sufferings; because unmanifest leads to sorrow alone for those who think they are embodied (the body or with a body).

### Ultimate reality – Ishwara alone

Ultimate reality is that one Ishwara alone exists at all times. Irrespective of whether this Ishwara is accepted or not, Ishwara alone exists. This is because before creation Ishwara alone existed and after destruction Ishwara alone will exist. Thus in between as well Ishwara alone exists – the duality which appears as very real is just an illusion in Ishwara. It temporarily appears as if existing but doesn't really exist. This world is like dream world which appears very real while we experience it but is known to be an illusion once we wake up. Until the truth dawns in our mind that Ishwara alone exists here, we will think this world to be real. And thereby starts all sorrows and sufferings.

### I – cause of all sorrow

The world is proclaimed by the Lord as temporary and sorrowful. But really speaking, this world which is sorrowful is our own perception of the world (or the world which has been filtered through our own perception or perspective vision). The world which is Ishwara's creation is pervaded in and out with Ishwara. Hence Ishwara in his various avatars and

various realized masters don't experience sorrow from the world but they only experience eternal bliss from the world.

But once the external world goes through a mind which is filled with duality or dual notion, such a mind taints the blissful world which in turn becomes sorrowful. Dual notion begins with individuality. Wherever there is individuality, there is difference between individuality and totality. The moment a bhakta sees only one Ishwara, that very moment individuality and sorrows end. This is true devotion – one-pointedness. Whether Ishwara is remembered as with a form or without a form, what is important is to see one Ishwara alone (and not have duality in our mind). But the moment individuality arises, it is impossible to see oneness. Then only differences will be perceived everywhere. The world gets split into my world or world of my people. The world also includes liked people (my people) and disliked people (other people). This notion of "mine" only stems from notion of "I". I essentially am Ishwara of the nature of pure Consciousness as I alone exists at all times without any change. I am not the body or the mind or the intellect or anything else as all of these constantly change (they are present in one state and are not present in another state). But I remain ever changeless. Thus our very essence is that of Ishwara – that Ishwara who pervades the entire world is pure Consciousness which pulsates inside as I-exist, I-exist at all times.

When this pure Consciousness is forgotten then we get identified with the body, the mind, the intellect, the objects and people of the world. The strongest of all bondage or association is that with the body – the notion that I am the body. Many people are so strongly rooted in the notion that they are the body that anything little happens to the body they become very scared. Small headache or fever comes then they are not just totally down and resting but they become restless – it is as if their kingdom of body has been attacked by some unknown enemy (germs or disease).

Many are so much conscious of their body that they keep staring in the mirror almost hours in the day to see as to whether they have become fat or not, whether beauty of the body is still there or not etc. Many others are so much identified with the body that they are scared to go out in the night because somebody might attack the body. Many others are scared to even walk outside alone as they are scared somebody might kill them. All these are wrong notions as the body is constantly changing. From day or birth till day of death the body undergoes a lot of changes. These changes are gross as well as subtle. Though we can

argue that changes inside the body or in the cells of body aren't perceived therefore not real, gross changes like in height, weight etc. is clearly perceived. But from the day of birth till day of death, I remain ever the same. This itself clearly shows that I am not the body but the body is just superimposed on I as a result of ignorance. This superimposition has been so strong rooted (since many births) that it is almost impossible to get rid of it. Lot of effort through sadhana and jnaana has to be put for such body-conscious people to get rid of body-consciousness even a little bit. This even applies to people in ashrams – they are also so much rooted in the notion that I am the body that they will crib constantly about body pains while in parallel performing sadhanas and gaining knowledge as well.

The common answer that such body-conscious people give to sadhakas or jnanis as a justification of their body-consciousness is that when you have body pain then you will understand and scream like a normal person. Yes, a jnani also will scream when there is body pain but such a jnani isn't identified with the body and hence will not be sad whatever happens to the body. Though there will be screams and going to the doctor etc. if it isn't able to get rid of the disease from the body, still such a jnani will ever remain blissful. Ramana Maharshi used to cry at the night due to body pain in his later years but at all times he was ever blissful (irrespective of whether body pain was there or not).

The difference thus is just in the strong notion of ignorant people that I am the body. A jnani performs worldly actions like a worldly person but he is internally ever blissful. Just remaining few moments in the presence of such a jnani will make us realize the blissful state of the jnani even though the body of the jnani might cry in pain.

Now what does body-notion have to do with devotion?

#### Body-Consciousness leads to seeing everything with form

Body itself is a form. A person who sees himself as the body will see everybody else as body as well. If he isn't seeing everybody then everybody will be conceived of as with a body (or form). Thus when we talk about Brahman to such people, they will immediately try to imagine Brahman with a body – that which pervades one's mind itself will come out. A businessman always thinks about money, therefore anything and everything we tell the businessman will be related to money or seen from perspective of money. Similarly a body-conscious person always tries to think about things with respect to form. Even if we talk about the mind to such a person, the person will start imagining a form.

The moment we talk about a mahatmas or even a normal person whom such body-conscious people haven't seen before, they will try to assume a form. Mahatmas will be seen with form; normal people will be seen with form; even Ishwara will be seen with form.

Thus such body-conscious people will always attribute a particular form to Ishwara. To such people, formless Ishwara is out of the question. If we talk about anything which is formless, they will find it very tough to grasp. As much as we may explain, it will be in vain as their mind still tries to imagine a form. Therefore such people are suited to think about Ishwara with a form alone. Ultimately remembrance of Ishwara is what is important (Ishwara alone being remembered). If they cannot even imagine Ishwara in their mind, then they will not even be able to think about Ishwara. Thus devotion will be impossible for such people. Therefore form devotion is suited for such people who have body-consciousness strongly rooted in them.

Now what if body-conscious people strive to imagine Ishwara without any form?

Body-Consciousness with formless -> sorrow alone

If a person who has strong body-consciousness tries to think about Ishwara without any form, then it will be very hard and impossible. Whatever is very hard or tough to implement shouldn't be implemented; for the struggle for implementation will lead to sorrow alone. A person who cannot lift a 25 kilo sack of rice shouldn't strive to lift it; for if he strives then he will not only fail but he will cause himself harm. Then getting his body to a normal state will take a lot of time.

The spiritual path is already filled with lot of obstacles. Amidst these obstacles, remembrance of Ishwara is very tough indeed. Therefore we should ensure that we don't add more obstacles to our path. Body-conscious people if they strive to worship formless Ishwara will cause more obstacle to themselves. These obstacles will ensure that they stray far away from Ishwara (due to lack of faith). Therefore instead of progressing towards the Lord or at least not progressing backwards they will progress backwards (away from the Lord). Therefore the Lord here says that those who think they are the body will find it impossible to remember Ishwara without any form.

This statement of the Lord should be remembered as many people think they don't have any particular ishta devata (favorite deity) and therefore they start worshipping nirguna

Brahman. Needless to say, they end up not progressing and going backwards in the spiritual path.

When we observe people of the world we find that majority of people fall under the category of those who think they are the body. Hence Sankara says in Laghu Vakya Vritti that a person attains moksha when his notion that he is Brahman is as strong as the notion that I am the body for normal people. Therefore the Lord says that majority of people are only suited for devotion with form. Hence they should take resort to devotion with form rather than causing themselves harm by following formless devotion.

#### Devotion with form – not a weakness

It might appear that body-consciousness which leads to devotion with form is a weakness. This isn't the case. Anything becomes the strength and weakness by the way we perceive and use it. Instead of looking at body-consciousness as a weakness, a sadhaka should use it in order to develop devotion towards form Ishwara. This would ensure that the same weakness eventually gets converted into a sadhana for moksha (and will ultimately lead to moksha itself).

AMMA narrates this beautiful story about how we can change our own weakness into strength. Once there was a kingdom where kings were elected from normal people. The elected king could rule for a month. But after the month he would be sent to the forest across the river in the kingdom. The forest was inhabited by wild animals and therefore nobody could ever survive there. Many people were elected King and they died after their tenure of one month. Some kings used to be very happy for the one month and crying aloud when being sent to the forest. Others would be sad for the entire one month thinking about the fate that awaits them after one month. But after a long time a wise young person was chosen to be King. The people of the kingdom liked this king who was very efficient and ever smiling (blissful). But the rules said that the King also had to be sent to the forest. One month got over and the sentries of the kingdom were taking the King in a boat towards the forest. During this time the King was still smiling. This perplexed the sentries – they thought that the King had gone mad. But once they reached the other shore (to the forest), they found out as to why the King was smiling. There was no forest there – an entire Kingdom along with people were awaiting the King. What had happened was that during the one month, the King had sent people to cut down the forest, build an entire kingdom along with inhabitation of many people. Thus the King was able to overcome his death. Seeing this, the

people of the original kingdom requested the King to rule over both kingdom. In this story we find that the King was able to convert his weakness to strength (by having the right perspective).

Similarly those who have the notion that I am the body should constantly strive to worship Ishwara with form. When such Ishwara is pervaded to the entire world (everything is seen as the form-Ishwara in the mind), then eventually they will be able to overcome their own body-consciousness and will be able to realize their very nature of all-pervasive Ishwara.

Since majority of people have body-consciousness (many have strong) therefore they should strive to worship Ishwara with form lest they forget Ishwara and go far away from Ishwara.

Now there can be couple of doubts – whether such people who worship Ishwara with form will be able to attain Ishwara and how they attain Ishwara (Ishwara essentially being formless)? These doubts are answered in the next sloka which we will see next month.

May we all strive to worship Ishwara with form so that we will be able to overcome body notion and will be able to through realization of Ishwara as pervading the entire world ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.



## Prakarana Prakaashah

### Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam - 4 – Atman, the light of all lights

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं

ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ।

जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभाति एतत्समस्तं जगत्

तस्मै श्रेगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रेदक्षिनामूर्तये ॥४॥

nānācchidraghaṭodarasthitamahādīpaprabhābhāsvaram  
jñānam yasya tu cakṣurādikaraṇadvārā bahiḥ spandate |  
jānāmīti tameva bhāntamanubhāti etatsamastam jagat  
tasmai śreegurumūrtaye nama idaṁ śreedakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||4||

Light that shines from the big lamp kept inside a pot with nine holes (the body)  
Whose knowledge goes outside using the instruments of eyes etc.  
Its existence in the form of “I-exist, I-know” alone is followed by this entire world  
Unto that light of Guru who is of the form of Dakshinamurthy, my prostrations.

### Brahman (Atman) – the ultimate reality

Irrespective of what one is doing, where one is and all distinctions a sadhaka should constantly remember the ultimate reality of Brahman. Ultimate reality of Brahman is that which alone exists – everything that appears as existing, the entire world, is just an illusion of names and forms in this ultimate reality of Brahman. Brahman is nothing but that Consciousness which pulsates constantly inside as I-exist, I-exist at all times. Anything and everything in the world is dependent upon this Brahman. A knower of Brahman is a Guru who instructs the ardent sadhaka (who wants to get out of the illusory bondage and sorrows created due to ignorance) the ultimate truth that “Tat Tvam Asi” or “That Thou Art”. If the sadhaka is able to follow this advice (remembering it all times after listening properly and removing doubts through logical analysis) then such a sadhaka will attain the ultimate goal of life as complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss.

Since the ultimate goal of life of all sadhakas is moksha therefore all should strive constantly to remain focused on this ultimate reality of Brahman. Though the Guru’s instruction was provided in the previous sloka (third sloka) of this work, Sankara now proceeds to explain through an analogy that the pure Consciousness which pulsates inside

us is the ultimate reality of Brahman and it alone is the basis of all activities (as well as perception of the world).

### Lamp inside a pot with holes

Sankara uses this beautiful analogy to point out to the Self. There is a lamp. The lamp is lit and therefore throws its light everywhere. If we keep the lamp inside a room we will find the room being illumined. If we keep the lamp inside a cover (open at the top) then the lamp will still throw its light outside. As open as the lamp is, it will throw light to everything. The key here is to have the lamp as open as possible. If we keep the lamp inside a opaque object with no openings then the lamp's light will be not thrown outside the object.

Imagine that this lamp alone exists in a house with many rooms – therefore the lamp cannot be kept fully covered. Instead it will be kept as open as possible (in order to throw light to as many places in the house as possible). Without the lamp there is no light inside the entire house. Thus we can say that nothing inside the house exists unless the lamp is shining. Existence of everything inside the house depends upon the light thrown by the lamp.

### Body – pot with holes

Vedanta generally uses pot and room as adjuncts to show that infinite space is never limited but appears as if limited when these adjuncts are present (thus appearing as pot-space and room-space which aren't different from infinite space but appear as different from infinite space). The body that we current possess (the gross body) is an adjunct. We can easily know that it is an adjunct or upadhi through the simple experience of its appearance and disappearance – moreover it is useful for certain purposes (adjuncts have a particular purpose which is only empirical). Gross body consists of nine holes or openings (nava dvaare pure dehi – says the Lord in 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Gita). These nine holes or openings are two eyes, two ears, two nose, one mouth, opening for excretion and opening for procreation.

Needless to say all these openings are continuously involved with sense objects through perception and action. As a result of too much indulgence in sensual pleasures these openings become covered and often veiled. Such covered or veiled openings will lead only to sorrow. Though the external opening of eyes may be proper, still if there is no knowledge of the light behind this opening then the eyes will perceive things through its own filter.

Such tainted vision obviously will end in sorrow alone. Therefore it is essential to find out the essence of these openings.

### Atman – the light of all lights

The Upanishads proclaim in multiple places that the Atman is the light of all lights. All sources of light including electricity, coal, sun, moon, stars, fire etc. derive their existence from the Atman which is the light of Consciousness. But for Consciousness nothing will exist at all. This is clearly known through imagining what would happen if Consciousness isn't there – then absolutely nothing will exist. And Consciousness exists even all these sources of light aren't present or shining. Thus in a dark room Consciousness still exists as I – nobody doubts their own existence in a dark room. In the state of deep sleep where everything except Consciousness is temporarily non-existent (being merged unto Consciousness) we find that Consciousness still exists (as we say after getting up that I existed – I slept well – such recognition is a proof that Consciousness always exists). Therefore Consciousness is the light behind all lights.

The various openings in the body can be considered as shining light to the entire world. As a result of these only we are able to perceive the world and perform activities in the world. But as of now these openings only cause sorrow – this is because we fail to apprehend the underlying light which is the cause of these openings functioning (or shining their light to the entire world). Being too much engrossed in sensual pleasures, these openings lead to constant forgetting of the light behind them. Eventually there is only total sorrow and suffering experienced as a result of these openings.

Taking few examples – the opening of eye is able to see objects because of the light of Consciousness being there in order to give eyes the power of seeing (shining light). But instead of remembering its very source of Consciousness, eyes start perceiving duality in the world. And then attachments-aversions towards duality is created. These attachments and aversions lead to happiness and sorrow but still Consciousness is not sorted out or remembered. As a result one birth after the other, these eyes lead to experience of sorrow and suffering. If eyes were to remember Consciousness as the source of light, then they would remember everything that is present in the entire world (since seen through the light of Consciousness) as nothing but Consciousness alone. This vision of oneness will get rid of duality or dual notions thereby providing no scope for attachments-aversions and happiness-sorrow. Thereby these eyes will become the source of happiness.

Taking another example – the opening of procreation forgetting Consciousness as the light behind it seeks sensual pleasures in the form of children. Once children are born, automatically sense of “mine” is developed. This leads to sorrow through many ways – when my child is not taken care I become angry and sad. When my child whom I brought up for many years goes against my wish with respect to his marriage, then I become very sad. The same son who was earlier my pride now becomes my source of sorrow. Many people struggle for many years and through prayers and pilgrimage they get a child – thus they are very happy. But after many years when the same child goes against parents wishes, then the parents pray that such a child was never born to them. Forget the sorrow and suffering caused by children but look at the delusion caused as a result of children.

Really speaking, children or perception of external objects aren't the source of delusion and sorrow; but forgetting the light behind everything as Consciousness (Brahman or Ishwara) is. If only people would remember that children are also Brahman alone, then they wouldn't be over-excited when they are born and over-sad when they go against their wishes.

Thus we find that these openings which are sources of light of Consciousness because source of sorrow when Consciousness is forgotten. This is similar to a minister thinking that he is the king when the king is out of town – this will lead to sorrow as once the king returns, he will have the minister instantly hanged (or killed or banished from the country).

#### Body like pot with Consciousness shining through holes

Knowingly or unknowingly the light of Consciousness shines through the holes of the body even as a lamp kept inside a pot throws its light through the holes in the pot. Thus constantly we find everything in the world existing. But until we find the source of existence as Consciousness, we will experience only sorrow. Therefore what is important to remember is that Consciousness is the light which shines through these holes. These holes are like ministers or messengers of a country – they might appear to be self-existent but they are existing only because of the king. Even as their very existence is depended upon the King similarly all organs (openings) are existing and functioning as a result of Consciousness behind them.

### Consciousness - unaffected

Though Consciousness is the light behind all lights (and activities) still Consciousness is not affected by the faults in the openings or in the external world. This is similar to the lamp inside a pot. The lamp is unaffected (lamp or lamp's light) by the impurities in the pot or outside the pot. Consciousness is that which alone exists and everything else is just an illusion in Consciousness. Therefore Consciousness is ever unaffected. Consciousness also is without any parts as is eternal – therefore Consciousness is unaffected. That which has parts alone undergoes changes and gets tainted; such object with parts is subject to birth and death like the body or a tree. Since Consciousness is eternal therefore Consciousness is always unaffected.

Two analogies are generally used in Vedanta to show that Consciousness is unaffected at all times. In earth lot of activities both good and bad are happening. All these activities are illumined by Sun as Sun is the source of light or illumination for Earth. Irrespective of whether somebody is offering prayers to the Sun or doing yajnas or killing another person under the light of the Sun, Sun remains totally unaffected. In the same way Consciousness though illumines everything (that appears as existing in it) is unaffected at all times.

Second analogy used is dream. A person after performing a lot of activities over the course of the day is very tired and therefore goes to bed. While sleeping he dreams. In the dream he is a King who rules a huge country. There is so much wealth and pleasures in the kingdom. He daily eats, drinks and spends time with his many wives. After few years an enemy King attacks this King – since this King was surprised therefore he was defeated by the enemy easily. Before getting caught himself he starts running into a nearby forest. He is able to escape from the enemy. But in the forest there are wild animals and therefore he is scared as to what dangers await him in the forest. For some time he is safe but all of a sudden he finds himself facing a lion. Immediately due to fear, he wakes up only to realize that everything was just a dream. Then he realizes that he was never affected by the dream. All the activities in the dream, both good and bad, didn't affect him even the least. After waking up he finds that he is the same as before and that there never was any dream world.

Similarly Consciousness isn't affected at all times because everything else is just an illusion in Consciousness even as the dream world is just an illusion in the dreamer. Consciousness is independent and absolute whereas the entire world is dependent on Consciousness and is

related (to everything in it) – therefore it is clear that the entire world is just an illusion in Consciousness even as a variable is just an illusion in a constant.

### Consciousness existing, everything else exists

If we trace back as to how the world exists we will find that the first existence is that of Consciousness or pure I. This I is not associated with the body or the mind or the intellect. This I is unaffected, independent, absolute and one alone. This I existing, everything else exists. Everything else just follows this I even as servants follow the master and soldiers follow the King. But for Consciousness existing, nothing at all will exist. Thus ultimately Consciousness alone exists – everything else that we currently perceive is just an illusion in Consciousness. As long as Consciousness is not perceived everything else will be considered as real. When the entire world is considered as real, it will lead to sorrow as it is based on duality or differences. Since the world also is constantly changing (temporary) therefore it is sorrowful. People from the past and present constantly experience the sorrowful nature of the world. And this world which constantly changes is just an illusion in Consciousness.

The moment a person apprehends Consciousness as the light behind all lights, that very moment such a person knows his very nature of Consciousness. The moment Consciousness is known, all sorrows will end and such a person will ever rejoice in bliss. Knowing Consciousness isn't similar to knowing objects of the world but it is knowing Consciousness as one's own very nature (pure I which constantly pulsates as I-exist, I-exist).

Vedanta talks about the ultimate goal of life as not something which is newly attained but something realized. Once a lion was born amidst a flock of sheep (as the mother lion died while giving birth). The lion cub started roaming around with the sheep and therefore behaved like a sheep. After few years as well as the cub was behaving like a sheep. But then once a lion saw this lion cub and caught hold of it. The lion cub started crying like a sheep. Upon seeing this, the lion took this cub to a river and told it to see its own face. The cub saw to its surprise that it was like the lion and not like other sheep. Thereby the lion told the cub that you are a lion (not a sheep). Following this the lion cub realized itself to be a lion thus starting to live like a lion.

Like the lion cub we all are constantly living as individuals limited by the entire world. But essentially we are all pure Consciousness – the non-dual reality of Brahman. Our very nature has been forgotten and therefore moksha is nothing but making us realize our own

very nature of Consciousness. Moksha isn't newly attained but it is realization of our very nature which has been forgotten. It isn't worth analyzing as to how or why this forgetting (or ignorance) came into existence as really there is no ignorance at all. For an ignorant person, it appears that ignorance is there and sorrows are experienced as a result. But for a person who realizes that only Brahman exists, there is no ignorance at all and Brahman alone exists.

Consciousness or Brahman alone exists at all times whether we accept this or not. The entire world is shining not because of itself as it is insentient and therefore incapable of throwing light to other things and itself. Thus the world is present only because of Brahman. Brahman is that which shines behind the world as the substratum of the world and as the entire world itself. An ignorant and deluded person will think that the world is real and I am different from Brahman even as an ignorant actor will consider himself as the role which he is enacting. A wise person will understand easily that Consciousness is the light behind all lights and therefore I am that Consciousness which alone exists at all times.

This one Consciousness is realized only through the grace of the Guru of Dakshinamurthy. Thus Guru is the light of Consciousness which makes everything shine. Put in Ramana Maharshi's beautiful words, the Self inside us when there is strong desire for moksha appears in front of us as the Guru thereby inspiring us to look into ourselves and realize our very nature of Self. Once through the Guru's grace and constant remembrance that Brahman of the nature of Consciousness alone exists then we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May Dakshinamurthy as Consciousness which is the basis of everything (light of lights) provide us with knowledge so that we will be able to constantly remember that I am Brahman and thereby we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Madhuraamritham

### Hanuman Chalisa - 3

महावीर बिक्रम बजरंगी ।

कुमति निवार सुमति के संगी ॥३॥

mahāvīra bikrama bajaranḡī  
kumati nivāra sumati ke saṅgī ॥3॥

O Hanuman! You are very strong (hard) like diamond and a great incomparable warrior; you are one who removes bad thoughts from the mind and endow the mind with good thoughts (or association with good people).

#### Hanuman – the strong

Strength isn't something that can be easily gained. It is one of the toughest to attain and many people struggle to become bold or courageous. Strength itself can be split into internal and external whereas external is bodily or physical strength and internal is mental strength. Some people have physical strength but no mental strength whereas some people have mental strength and no physical strength. Rarely we can find a person who is strong both externally and internally. And such a rare person is Hanuman.

Strength also means hardness with respect to body and mind. The hardest substance known to man is diamond. Showing that Hanuman is very strong, Tulasidas says that Hanuman is strong like diamond. This strength is again of two types – one is inherent or naturally in a person and another which is attained through effort. For Hanuman, the external or physical strength was naturally there. But internal or mental strength was only gained through devotion to Rama. This clearly shows as to what devotion towards Ishwara can do for a person. It makes the least strong person the strongest person in the world.

How can one become strong when devotion towards Ishwara is there?

Devotion to Ishwara is nothing but thinking about Ishwara in the mind. The moment Ishwara is thought in the mind, that very moment a person will become strong. This is because of two reasons – one is that strength comes from thinking that somebody is there to protect or help us; second is that Ishwara is all-pervasive Brahman, that Brahman who is all-knowing and all-powerful therefore such an Ishwara will always protect us. If such a



powerful person is there in the mind, then anybody automatically will become strong (and fearless).

We shouldn't misunderstand this dependency on Ishwara in the mind to be similar to dependency of other people in the world. Other dependencies will eventually vanish when the people themselves vanish but Ishwara never vanishes and therefore it is as good as we ourselves becoming strong when we remember Ishwara in the mind. Thus people who remember Ishwara constantly in the mind automatically become very strong. Nothing, not a person nor anything in the world will trouble such a strong person.

We know that Hanuman wasn't perturbed or affected by anything – even when asked to jump the ocean, Hanuman jumped across the ocean while facing many demons (and killing them); Hanuman himself went in front of Ravana and chanted only Jai Sri Ram. When others would tremble and fall at Ravana's feet, Hanuman wasn't moved at all. This clearly shows that when Ishwara pervades our mind, we will become unaffected to anything and everything. In Gita, the Lord says that in this state of yoga (where the mind is constantly remembering Ishwara or Brahman or Self alone), the person isn't affected by even the biggest of sorrow. Sorrows also will fall off easily not even tainting the devotee.

#### Hanuman – the incomparable warrior

Generally there is a notion that devotees don't get into fights or arguments. This is a wrong notion. The right statement is that devotees will not get into fights or arguments unwantedly – their fights and arguments will always have a good purpose behind it (either helping others or helping protect Dharma, which is remembrance of Ishwara, in the world).

Hanuman was a devotee who was very strong and hence he faced all enemies vanquishing them very easily. It wouldn't be wrong to say that Hanuman was one of the greatest warrior of all times. Nobody stood a chance against him. When he went to Lanka, the soldiers struggled to catch him but Hanuman let himself be caught so that he could meet Ravana (and convey the message of Rama to him). But once he was caught and his tail was set on fire, he wreaked havoc in entire Lanka through setting everything on fire except the ashoka vana (where Sita was kept as a captive). This clearly shows that in front of Hanuman even Ravana didn't stand a chance.

It might be doubted as to whether Sun (Soorya Bhagavan) was more powerful than Hanuman as he delivered a blow to Hanuman when Hanuman jumped to catch him; but this was a time when Hanuman hadn't come in contact with Rama. Even before meeting Rama, Hanuman was such a strong warrior that he, without any fear, jumped to catch Sun (though he was just a small kid). So what to speak about the valor or fighting strengths of Hanuman after meeting Rama?

Often what we miss in life is just one entity of Ishwara. If this one entity falls into place, then we will find that everything else also falls into place. Whatever is required in life will automatically be achieved if Ishwara is present in our life. Though Ishwara is all-pervasive still such an Ishwara is forgotten in the mind (not remembered). The moment a person starts remembering Ishwara in the mind, that very moment the person will ever rejoice in bliss as anything and everything will be achieved in life. But what good are worldly pleasures for such a person who is ever rejoicing in bliss (in eternal bliss of non-dual Ishwara alone being present)?

In order to remember Ishwara in the mind (bring Ishwara into our lives) it is essential to get rid of bad thoughts and nourish good thoughts. Good and bad are always perspective – one's good is another's bad. But here the ultimate good is meant and it is Ishwara being present. Ultimate bad is lack of Ishwara or absence of Ishwara in the mind. Any mind where Ishwara isn't present is a bad mind – it is bad for the simple reason that it forgets the one truth of Ishwara and since everything else is just an illusion in Ishwara, therefore it will experience nothing but sorrow alone (like a person running behind water in desert thinking it is real will experience only sorrow when water isn't found). That mind which has Ishwara in it is good as it will ever rejoice in bliss. Not only it will rejoice in bliss but it will also spread the bliss to the entire world. While seeing such a blissful person itself, others will automatically become blissful (even if temporarily blissful). Therefore many people go and visit mahatmas though they don't know who the mahatma is and they also don't know the greatness of the mahatma as well. But like kids, mahatmas are ever blissful and therefore in such a mahatma's present, one will become blissful. Therefore such mahatmas are constantly sought by people.

Like we go to a place where our people are there, similarly Ishwara goes to a place where Ishwara's people are there. In order for Ishwara to come into our mind, Ishwara's people or Ishwara's thoughts have to come into our mind. This is possible when we remove thoughts

that don't have Ishwara in it from our mind and bring thoughts that have Ishwara in it in our mind.

#### Hanuman – removes dussanga and helps in satsanga

Hanuman is that great devotee of Rama who just stands for Rama. Wherever Hanuman is, Rama also is there. Hanuman being the incomparable warrior destroys all negative or bad thoughts from our mind. Even as where Tyagaraja is there, there will be music only similarly wherever Hanuman is, there will be only thoughts about Ishwara. Thus automatically thoughts that aren't based on Ishwara will be removed and Ishwara's thoughts will be instilled in the mind.

Bad thoughts or people who take us away from Ishwara are called dussanga and thoughts or people who take us nearer to Ishwara are called satsanga. A sadhaka who wants to realize Ishwara as pervading the entire world and thereby ever rejoice in bliss should strive to get rid of dussanga and worship satsanga as much as possible.

Though appearing to a very simple task, it is very tough because majority of people and places in the world are dussangas (automatically they don't focus on Ishwara). And the places which should make us remember Ishwara more have become commercial today thus killing Ishwara's thoughts from them – thus when we go to ashrams or temples or pilgrimage places today we will not find any thought of Ishwara but only thoughts about the world. Add to this that our mind gets into so many latent tendencies that is very tough indeed to bring in the thought of Ishwara to our mind.

Even as when there are people staying in a house it is very tough to bring new people in the house (considering that the people staying in the house are very bad people who refuse to move out), similarly when the mind has lot of vasanas which aren't focused on Ishwara then such a mind cannot easily contemplate on Ishwara (bring in the thought of Ishwara).

But such sadhakas will be able to easily bring in the thought of Ishwara into their mind by worshipping Hanuman. Hanuman symbolizes Ishwara and hence the thought of Hanuman itself will bring Ishwara into our mind. And Hanuman isn't weak that he will give away to vasanas; Hanuman is the strongest and an incomparable warrior as well therefore he will destroy all bad vasanas and thoughts from our mind. Thereby automatically thought of Ishwara will come into the mind of sadhakas.

When worshipping Hanuman through remembering him, we need not worry about where we are, what we are doing etc. because the very thought of Hanuman itself will take us towards Ishwara. Hanuman in this way is the one-man solution to realization of Ishwara. Worshipping Hanuman is very easy and easier than learning the scriptures. Those who worship Hanuman will automatically be lead to learning of the scriptures. Such people thereby eventually will be very easily able to remember Ishwara in the mind at all times.

Today in an era where in the name of satsanga only dussanga happens, we have the easy way to get rid of dussanga and implement real satsanga through worshipping of Hanuman. The more and more we worship Hanuman we will become more and more immersed in thoughts of Ishwara. The more we think about Ishwara the more blissful we will become. Thence-after we will find that no sorrow can touch us and like Hanuman we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss. Since the ultimate goal of life is ever rejoicing in bliss therefore we should strive to remember Ishwara at all times through worshipping of Hanuman in the mind.

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 – 4**

Arkaanalaadi velivokke grahikkum oru  
 Kanninnu kannu manamaakunna kanathinu  
 Kannayirunna porul thaanennuraykkumalavu  
 Aanandam enthu hari naaraayanaaya namah

### Experience – split into subject and object

The entire spectrum of experience can be split directly into two – one is the subject who experiences everything and the second is object. Subject is one alone whereas objects are many. For example, the activity of seeing is seen by one Subject or Seer and the objects are many that are seen by the Seer. There is nothing else that we can find apart from these two entities. Sankara beautifully says in Brahmajnaanaavalimala that these both are contrary in nature. Objects are constantly changing whereas Subject is ever the same. Objects are temporary in nature whereas Subject is eternal in nature. Objects are sorrowful in nature whereas Subject is blissful in nature. Objects are many and relative whereas Subject is one and absolute.

If a person is able to understand that the entire world is split into just the subject and object, then everything is known. This is because the objects are dependent upon the independent subject. If Subject is there, then objects exist. If subject isn't there then objects cease to exist. Knowing this, a person should strive to know the subject of all objects. This subject being blissful in nature will lead us to eternal bliss. Since the ultimate goal of life is complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss therefore everyone should strive to realize this subject which is the basis of all objects.

### Search for the Subject

The search for the eternal blissful Subject is something that has been going on since ages. Though ancient rishis from time immemorial have beautifully put forth the way to realize the eternal subject still not believing in these words, today science and scientists are still seeking this subject without any result at all. Their search continuously changes – one day they seem to find something new and the next day it makes them realize as to how much less they know about that thing. Thus through more and more knowledge, more and more ignorance is being discovered. If we put forth just few questions unto a scientist then we

will find that there are more unanswered questions than the very few answers that are provided by the scientist.

Why is it that science that has progressed vastly in all areas today hasn't been able to progress towards the search of the subject?

The reason for this is that science is searching in the wrong area for the subject. Yoga Vasishtha tells the story of an old woman searching for the needle of a sewing machine. The woman was continuously searching for the needle outside her house under the street light. A passer-by noticed this and therefore approached the old woman asking her as to what she is searching. To this the old woman answered that she was searching for her lost needle of the sewing machine. When questioned further by the passer-by as to where she lost the needle, the old woman replied that she lost it inside her house. The passer-by then asked as to why she is searching outside. To this, the old woman answered that there is no light inside and hence she is searching outside where there is light present.

All search of science (and majority of people of the world) is like this. What is being searched can never be found in the external world. Eternal bliss is never possible from the external world as the world is constantly changing. That which changes is subject to birth and death. That which will die tomorrow (or later) will not be able to give eternal bliss (because it itself will cease to exist). That such a changing world can give is only sorrow, though it might appear to give temporary happiness in the beginning. Thus searching for eternal bliss in the external world is like searching for needle outside the house (when it was lost inside the house).

Then how are we to search for the Subject of all objects?

This is through tracing back from the objects to that which inspires or is the cause of experience of objects. The objects of the world are grasped by the sense organs (as without sense organs no experience is possible). But these sense organs themselves cannot be active (or perform actions) as they are mere equipments throwing light on the objects (similar to a bulb not being able to shine light of its own – unless the switch is turned on).

### Mind and intellect

Sense organs are activated and controlled by the mind. This is the reason why sometimes we find ourselves not seeing anything though our eyes are wide open – the reason being that our mind is not focused on the external object, instead it is lost in thought somewhere.

It is very common to find our friend come to us and ask "what were you thinking in the morning? I saw you and called you but you didn't listen at all". To this we just say that "Sorry, I didn't hear you because my mind was somewhere else". Thus mind is the controller of the sense organs. The sense organs will not work unless directed by the mind.

But can the mind direct the sense organs itself?

Definitely no as the mind is just pros and cons with respect to thoughts. There should be something deeper than the mind which determines as to what is to be done and what is not to be done. This is called the intellect or buddhi. Buddhi is the determinative faculty among the inner equipments.

The sense organs are called external equipments or bahikarana whereas the inner equipments or antah karana consists of the thinking mind, determining intellect, storing memory and identifying ego. The inner equipments control the external or outer equipments.

Buddhi or intellect is what determines as to the goal of life for a particular person. Thus sometimes we see a person listening to what we are saying as the mind is focused on the words but still there will be no result at all. This is true with respect to drinking or smoking addicts. Many people will advise them and at that time they will be listening attentively; often they will also agree to whatever is being said to them. But after a short while we will see them again indulging in the same addictive actions. The reason for this is that their buddhi isn't convinced of what we are saying. Their buddhi is still focused on the goal to be achieved (as per them) and therefore they will not change their mind or external equipments (which still get into addictive habits).

As Chinmaya beautifully says a businessman is ever thinking about money and acting with sense organs in order to achieve more and more money – this is because his buddhi says that money is everything and money is the ultimate goal of life. With respect to a musician, music is the ultimate goal of life. With respect to politician, name and fame is the ultimate goal of life. Depending on what the buddhi determines as the ultimate goal of life, each and every person performs appropriate actions with the mind and the sense organs.

Let this be the case, still is the buddhi the ultimate ruler?

Definitely no as buddhi is also part of inner equipment or thoughts alone. Thoughts keep changing. We find that buddhi's determination also keeps changing. Initial the determination is to earn good marks in school and college. Later it is about getting a job. Later it changes to family of partner and children. Thus we find that buddhi also keeps changing and therefore isn't the ultimate ruler.

#### Ultimate ruler or control of everything – Self

The Upanishads give this beautiful story to illustrate the ultimate ruler or controller of everything. Here ruler or controller just means that which is the basis of everything else and not the worldly sense of ruler-ship or controller-ship. Once there was a big fight as to who is most important – the eyes said they are important, the ears said they are important, the hands said they are important, the mind said it is important, the pranas said they are important – similarly everybody started saying that they are important. A consensus was achieved that in order to test this, each entity would vanish for a year and then it would be possible to see whether the individual (person as a whole) would live. If the individual still lived it means that the entity isn't very important. First eyes went away from the individual for a year. But still the individual lived (just couldn't see, that's it). Next the ears left and still the individual lived. Next hands left and still the individual lived. This same happened with mind and pranas and everything else as well. Finally they were all surprised as to who is then the most important entity. The Self was patiently and calmly watching everything till now. It then said that it will leave the body for a year and started leaving. Immediately all other entities started crying in fear asking the Self to not leave. Thus they all found out that the Self is the most important entity.

We find that if the Self of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss exists, then everything else exists. But even when everything doesn't exist, the Self still exists – we find this in the deep sleep state where everything else including the mind and buddhi are not present (sleeping). But still the Self remains in that state. Thus it is very clear that the Self is the light behind everything.

#### Self – light behind everything

Though it can be said that the Self is the controller of everything, still Self is said to be the light behind everything – why is this so? This is because the Self is ever unaffected by whatever happens with the sense organs or the mind or the intellect. The Self alone is real



and unchanging whereas everything else constantly changes and is just an illusion in the Self.

The Self being the power or light behind everything is said to be the eye of the eye, ear of the ear, prana of the prana, the mind of the mind etc. This just means that the Self is the very basis of everything – ultimately the Self alone exists as everything else is just an illusion of names and forms in the Self. The dream state is just an illusion in the dreamer though everything appears very real in the dream state. Similarly here everything is just an illusion in the Self. The Self alone ultimately exists here.

Ezhuthacchan beautifully is indirectly quoting from the Kena Upanishad which says that the eyes cannot see the Self as the Self is the power behind the eye (eye of the eye) – similarly the Upanishad mentions about all equipments as everything is powered by the Self alone. Remove the Self, everything will vanish – this clearly shows that everything is just an illusion in the Self (which alone ultimately exists).

The Upanishads in multiple places tell that the Self is the light of all lights – in the Self, no other lights shine but all other lights shine because of the Self. The Self shining, all other lights become luminous. This is similar to the King being present and everybody around the King appearing powerful.

#### Self – one's own very nature of Consciousness

The Subject of all objects, the light of all lights (the essence of everything), is the Self of the nature of Consciousness. This Consciousness is that which pulsates inside us as I-exist, I-exist. In simple terms, I am Consciousness. This ultimate truth is being propounded multiple times in the Chandogya Upanishad where the Guru says to the shishya that "you are that" (Tat Tvam Asi). Generally we keep searching for the independent subject in the entire world but we forget that the independent subject is our very nature of Consciousness.

If I am Consciousness, then why do I feel dependent, limited etc.?

This limited "I" is just an illusion in the real I. This limited I is constantly identified with the body-mind-intellect. But as we know, these being not present in the deep sleep I am still present in the deep sleep state thus clearly showing that limited I isn't real. But that I which is unlimited and is pure Consciousness alone is real. Ignorance of our own very nature of pure Consciousness or Self leads us to think that I am limited and therefore starts all

sorrow. The moment we think ourselves to be limited I, that very moment we get into duality and attachments-aversions. These can only lead to sorrow, though might appear to give happiness in the long run. This ignorance of our very nature of Self is removed through knowledge of the scriptures. Scriptures say that the Self alone exists here – everything else is just an illusion in the Self. The I that pulsates inside is the Self.

#### Realization of blissful Self

When a person gains knowledge from the scriptures and implements this knowledge through constantly remembering that I am blissful Self – that Self which alone exists – then such a person experiences intuitively bliss. This bliss isn't like worldly happiness but is eternal or ever-lasting. Even tasting this bliss for a moment will make us addicted to experience it continuously at all times. When we are able to ever abide in contemplation of our very nature of Self (and that everything else is just an illusion in this Self – the world and its activities are similar to an actor portraying a role in a movie), then we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

Ezhuthacchan beautifully says that the bliss which one experiences through realization of one's own very nature of the Self which is the subject of everything is unspeakable (it cannot be thought about or mentioned in words). Needless to say, it is just bliss that is unlimited. Since this unlimited bliss is the ultimate goal of life therefore we should all strive to achieve this bliss through remembrance of our very nature of being the Subject or essence of everything (we should remember that this Subject of Self is unaffected as everything else is just an illusion in this absolute non-dual Self).

May we all strive to remember at all times that I am the changeless unaffected eternal blissful Self – subject of everything – so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows knowing that everything is just an illusion in I and thereby we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Praadeshikam - II

### **Kanda Shashti Kavacham - 3**

*Amarar idar theera amaram purindha*

*Kumaranadi nenje kuri*

Mind, meditate on the feet of Lord Muruga who waged the war, to end the problems of the devas.

In the previous edition we saw the first part of the venpa which spoke about the purpose of the work. That last part of the vemba here is about the dedication or what we need to do.

Among all the human goals, Moksha is the Ultimate goal of human beings. Scriptures say that moksha can be attained only by the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman and there is no other means. In order to gain this knowledge of Brahman thereby attain moksha, we have to approach a Guru and learn from the words of the Guru and Scriptures. In order to assimilate the knowledge from Guru, our mind should have the capability to grasp the words and understand them in the right way and to get the right capability of the mind we have to do spiritual sadhanas. In this spiritual path towards the goal of moksha, there will be obstacles that can always take us away from the path and it is Isvara's grace to keep us on track and it is Isvara's grace to make us progress towards the goal.

The first part of the vemba mentioned the purpose saying if we keep Lord Muruga in our thoughts all the time, he will provide all that is required in abundance and also remove all the obstacles. The work title has the word kavacham which means shield. A soldier wears armor to protect himself from getting hurt in a battle likewise this work is a shield that would protect us from all evils and make us good so that we will do what is required to be done to progress in the spiritual path. This work not only removes the obstacles but also grants all the necessary things to whoever chants this kavacham keeping Lord Muruga in their mind. In the final part of Venba, the poet says meditate on Lord Muruga.

### **Kumaran adi nenje kuri - Meditate on the feet of Lord Muruga:**

Isvara is the protector and sustainer of the entire world. For everyone in the world, Isvara is the only refuge. From our part, we have to understand and be clear that Isvara is the only refuge and have to surrender unto Him. When we understand clearly that Isvara is the controller of the entire world, naturally we will be able to surrender. We will be able to offer

both happiness and sorrow, good and bad to the Lord and take everything as His will. Lord Krishna says in 12<sup>th</sup> chapter

Ye tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sanyasya mat paraaH

Anayenaiva yogena maam dhyayanta upaasate

As for those who having dedicated all actions to Me and accepted Me as the supreme, meditate by thinking of Me with single-minded concentration only.

Teshaam aham samuddhartaa mrtyu samsara saagaraat

Bhavaami na ciraat paarTha mayyaaveshitacetashaam

O son of Partha, for them who have their minds absorbed in Me, I become, without delay, the Deliverer from the ocean of samsara of death.

Therefore, it is important to meditate on the feet of the Lord, which signifies surrender unto the Lord. It also shows that the poet meditates the feet of the Lord while writing this work and thus offering this work unto Lord Muruga.

**Amarar idar theera amaram purindha - Muruga who waged the war, to end the problems of the devas:**

In this the greatness of the Lord is mentioned. Problems will get instantly resolved in the presence of Lord and the presence of Lord will be when there is thought of the Lord. Devas had problems constantly from asuras. Lord Muruga, who is considered as deva senapathi, engaged in war as it were with the Asuras there by removed the problems of Devas. Devas can be understood as our own body and mind as each and every part of the body is considered to be controlled by a devata. Body and mind should be in right condition so that we will be able to use them to progress in the spiritual path towards the goal of Moksha. Asuras are the obstacles which will distract us from the spiritual path and have the capability to take us away from the goal of Moksha. But when there is grace of Lord, these Asuras will be defeated so that our journey is steady and obstacle free.

It is also prayer for the poet, he meditates on the feet of Lord Muruga so that he removes all the obstacles that might prevent the work from completion. It is also a prayer from our part that we could learn this work of Kanthar Shashti Kavacham without any obstacle.

We will continue with the actual text in the next edition.

## **Avidyaa Samkshepa**

### **Ignorance**

Though ultimately whatever exists is one Brahman alone, still many people suffer in this world of illusions. The reason for such people suffering is apprehension of duality as being real. The moment duality is considered real, that very moment itself they step into the ocean of samsara characterized by births and deaths. These births and deaths will only lead to more and more sorrow (instead of getting rid of sorrows). Many people have tried to get rid of sorrows through means of the world (including science, technology etc.) but all of them have been failures. Yes, science and technology have improved the way of living in the world but it hasn't lead to removal of sorrow – instead sorrow still exists in one or the other form.

It is only sorrow that is commonly present in all the people or beings of the world – all of them experience sorrow continuously. There is constant effort in order to get rid of this sorrow as nobody really wants to experience sorrow. But such efforts are not fruitful as they aren't trying to get rid of sorrows completely – just mitigation of sorrow or problems causing sorrow is undertaken.

The source of all sorrows is ignorance. The scriptures repeat again and again that one Brahman alone exists pervading the entire world of names and forms. Pure Consciousness that pulsates inside each one of us as I-exist, I-exist is Brahman alone. This Brahman being non-dual and unlimited in nature is blissful. The moment a person realizes his very nature of Brahman, that very moment the person will ever rejoice in bliss. But ignorance of Brahman as our very nature is constantly deluding us. As a result of this ignorance we experience only sorrow though our very nature is that of blissful Brahman.

What is the cause of this ignorance? Where did it come from? How did it come and why did it come?

All such questions about ignorance cannot really be answered as ignorance is inexplicable. This means that it cannot be clearly explained or defined. The moment we try to define our ignorance of mathematics we end up explaining mathematics which itself means that we have knowledge of mathematics and thereby ignorance vanishes. But just because ignorance is inexplicable doesn't mean that it doesn't exist or there are no proofs for its existence. Ignorance is directly experienced by an ignorant person – this is only proof

required as it is direct anubhava (though this anubhava is later contradicted after realization but still it is direct anubhava that has direct validity therefore not requiring any other proof for its existence).

Just because ignorance is experienced doesn't mean that it is real as it will definitely vanish after realization. Ignorance is removed through knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures. Then such a person will realize that there never was any ignorance, there never is any ignorance and there never can be any ignorance at all.

Ignorance can be easily understood by taking an analogy of illusion. Once a person was waking evening when light was less and passing through a dark street. He saw a rope lying down but didn't realize it was rope. Therefore he thought that it was snake. Getting deluded that it is a snake, he sees the snake as if moving and as if raising its hood to bite him. Instantly scared he runs away from the snake. On the way he encounters his brave friend who knows that it is just a rope. The friend forces him to go with him near the rope. To his surprise he finds that there is no snake at all but only a rope exists. He also realizes that there never was a snake in the first place, it was just an illusion.

Snake never existed in the rope therefore its perception cannot be proven; but this doesn't mean that it is invalid as it is a matter of direct experience for the person who perceives the snake. Such a person should therefore gain knowledge about the snake's substratum (through going near the snake) and then he will realize that there never is any snake at all but only rope exists.

In the same way, ignorance doesn't exist at all as one Brahman alone exists. Therefore ignorance cannot be proven (as it doesn't exist at all) but it is a matter of direct experience for an ignorant person who should put effort to get rid of it through knowledge of Brahman. Then after realization, such a person will know clearly that there is no ignorance at all.

Many argue as to what would happen to the world which is the effect of ignorance once ignorance is removed – the world doesn't exist during ignorance for it to vanish after ignorance vanishes. After ignorance vanishes the world is seen as Brahman, though the world appears as existing different from Brahman it is known to be Brahman and therefore such a person doesn't get affected or deluded by the world. This is similar to a person seeing water in desert even after knowing that there is no water in desert. But such a

person though may run behind water in the desert will not get affected as he knows that there is no water at all in the desert.

Then what is this world that appears as different?

The entire world is just names and forms in Brahman. One Brahman alone appears as the entire world. It is like one person donning multiple roles in a movie. If it is known that this entire world is just a movie we will not be affected irrespective of whatever happens in the world. If we don't know that this is a movie then though nothing really affects us we will get affected by the world. If we get affected by the illusory world then we are to be called fools. We are similar to those who get affected by their dreams.

Dream is a perfect analogy to the current world we perceive. A person goes to sleep and thereby finds an entire new world and he is part of the world. He experiences a lot of things – spends an entire life and sometimes many lives in the dream. But suddenly he wakes up to realize that it was just a dream and nothing really existed. The entire dream world ultimately is unreal but it is present during the state of dream and is the dreamer alone during the time it is perceived. In the same way ultimately Brahman alone exists but when we perceive the world, it is just an illusion in Brahman or Brahman itself has become the entire world.

Ignorance can only be properly understood if we remember the two perspectives of ultimate and empirical. Ultimately one Brahman alone exists but empirically the world is existing and valid. Though empirically the world appears as different from Brahman, its essence is Brahman alone. The differences in the world are mere names and forms. Even as various names and forms of gold are gold alone, similarly the entire world of names and forms is nothing but Brahman alone. Like a goldsmith if we are able to see the entire world as Brahman then though we will act externally like a worldly person, internally we will not be affected irrespective of the changes in the names and forms of the world. It is this unaffected blissful state that is the ultimate goal of life. Therefore in order to achieve this all sadhakas should strive to gain knowledge of Brahman from the scriptures – this is the only means to moksha or realization of our very nature of Brahman.

Ignorance is just a veil over ever-existing Brahman even as clouds are just a veil over the Sun. Sun is never really veiled but appears as being veiled. Ignorance is removed through vritti jnaana or knowledge in the mind that Brahman alone exists. This knowledge removes

ignorance and thereby ever-present Brahman remains behind. In this state of eternal blissful Brahman there is nothing to know, nothing to gain and nothing to attain.

Many people constantly argue over the locus and support of avidyaa. Some claim that locus is jeeva and others claim it is Brahman. Some claim support or aasraya is jeeva and others claim it is Brahman. Even view is supported by arguments for and against their and other views. All such arguments are futile as ultimately Brahman alone exists. Since only Brahman exists at all times therefore Brahman alone is both the locus and support of avidyaa.

Istasiddhi says beautifully that Brahman alone gets deluded by his own avidyaa and he himself gets liberated. Thus it is the same Brahman that gets into ignorance or bondage and gets liberated. Here there is no fault of Brahman getting affected by ignorance or that liberation is temporary as it is newly attained – because there is no real bondage or liberation. Sankara says that the Self is nitya shuddha Buddha mukta or ever pure, ever enlightened and ever liberated. This means that there is neither bondage nor liberation. Gaudapadacharya goes one step further in saying that there is no jeeva or individual created and there is no scope for this as well. This is because Brahman alone exists.

Whether we call this Brahman as absolute or ultimate reality from ultimate perspective or cause-substratum-witness of the world from empirical perspective, Brahman alone exists at all times. Either Brahman exists by itself or exists as unaffected witness of the entire world. Either way Brahman alone exists – non-duality alone exists. Therefore Brahman alone is the locus and support of avidyaa. There can be pointed no faults in this approach. But we should remember that such approach itself is unwarranted as only Brahman exists here – if we have ignorance then we should strive to get rid of it rather than arguing over its technicality.

Then why did acharyas give different views?

Acharyas wanted to make concepts clearer for those sadhakas who would ask questions regarding ignorance and aren't content by just the statement that "ignorance is directly experienced by an ignorant person but ultimately doesn't exist at all". For a sadhaka who is able to remember that Brahman alone exists here, there is no confusion with respect to any concepts in Vedanta. Instead such a sadhaka will be able to easily focus on knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures – and thereby such a sadhaka will be able to quickly



realize his own very nature of Brahman and that ignorance doesn't exist at all. The entire world is just an appearance in Brahman – if it appears let it appear; if it doesn't appear let it not appear. Ultimately Brahman as my very nature of pure Consciousness and Bliss alone exists. Therefore I will remain ever blissful at all times irrespective of whatever happens in the external world.

As Sankara says such a person whose mind revels in Brahman might do yoga or bhoga, might be attached or detached, still ever rejoices in bliss alone. What else can be result for a person whose mind is fixed on the ultimate non-dual blissful reality of Brahman?

Avidyaa is that which doesn't exist at all – it just appears as existing. If it appears as existing then we should gain knowledge of the scriptures and then we will be able to realize that avidyaa doesn't exist at all and whatever exists is the non-dual reality of Brahman even as when we analyze the snake seen in rope we will realize that there is no snake at all but rope alone exists at all times.

Though it might appear very tough to remember and realize that Brahman alone exists here as we constantly experience the dual or different world, still it is easily possible if we are able to remember that Brahman alone exists here. This constant contemplation on non-duality of Brahman is the direct way to eternal bliss here and now itself.

May we all strive to remember that Brahman alone exists here as our very nature of Consciousness and Bliss so that we will be able to get rid of non-existent but appearing as existing avidyaa thereby putting an end to all sorrows and ever rejoicing in bliss here and now itself.

## **Acharyasmrithi**

### **Chitsukhacharya**

When we look at the various vedantic masters that have tread earth, we will find that there are very few who stand as mighty giants in the field of Vedanta. Sankara obviously stands as the big giant of Vedanta, akin to the aged Veda Vyaasa. We have already seen other acharyas like Sri Harsha and Vidyanaraya whose contributions to Vedanta have been incomparable. Each one has been a giant in their own aspect. If we are able to even apprehend a little bit of their words, we will find ourselves progressing quicker towards the goal of moksha.

There is a general notion that logic is to be avoided in the spiritual path for the Lord only loves devotion. This is a wrong notion that has someone crept into the sanaathana dharma. Shaastras never forbid use of logic but just say that logic shouldn't be too much that it deviates from the scriptures. Logic that follows the shaastras instead of negating or going against the shaastras is to be entertained – it is like the queen for the king of shaastras. Without the queen, it is impossible to continue ruling earth but if the queen decides to take things into her hands and goes against the king then the entire kingdom will be in suffering alone.

In a house we find tooth brush, tooth paste, slippers, cooking vessels, bed and tv. Each has a purpose. While we should watch tv we shouldn't watch our slippers. We should eat out of the vessels but not out of the slippers or tv. We should sleep or rest in the bed but not only slippers. Tooth brush has to be put into the mouth, not the slippers. Slippers have to be worn in the feet, not put into the mouth. Thus each and everything has a purpose. This purpose has to be correctly understood – if not there will be only trouble. AMMA gives a short story to illustrate this – once a person went to the doctor seeking medicine for the eye and cold. The doctor gave syrup to drink and eye-drops to pour into the eye. The person returned next day saying that his eyes were in a very bad state now and cold had become worse. When enquired the doctor found that instead of drinking the syrup and pouring eye-drops into the eyes, the person had drank the eye-drops and poured the syrup into the eyes.

Thus each and everything has a purpose in the spiritual path. We should understand the purpose and then use it appropriately. Devotion isn't blind but devotion is born out of total

trust for Ishwara. Such trust is only possible if there is true knowledge of Ishwara. If Ishwara is not known then how can there be trust? If trust or faith isn't there how can there be any devotion. Thus Narada says that there is no lack of knowledge of Ishwara's glory in devotion. This means that devotion has knowledge and knowledge has devotion. Both focus on non-duality alone. The scriptures say that knowledge is the only way to moksha because it is knowing our own very nature of Consciousness. A bhakta also has to eventually realize that I am that Ishwara whom I am worshipping.

Logic is also essential in devotion in order to develop full trust unto Ishwara. Logic is also essential while learning the shastras but this should be according to the shastras and subsidiary to the shastras, not the primary. We have had great masters in the past who have focused on logic but logic supporting the shastras (thereby being secondary in nature, not primary). One such great giant is Chitsukhacharya. That this acharya's words and concepts have been used by many other acharyas including Ramanujacharya itself speaks great about him. Irrespective of whether people quoted him or not, we find that this great giant stands as a icon or symbol of logic. If we are able to drink the nectar of logic from Chitsukhacharya's works, then we will find ourselves strengthening belief of Advaita and thereby soon itself progressing towards moksha.

#### Chitsukhacharya – the great writer

Generally it is very tough indeed to write individual works but it is tougher to write commentaries on many works. Commentary on a single work itself requires complete knowledge of the work as well as deep insight into the work. When we look at the list of works of Chitsukhacharya we find that this great master has given us a huge list of commentaries.

There is a commentary each on the two siddhi works of Brahma Siddhi (of Mandana Mishra) and Naishkarmya Siddhi (of Sureshwaracharya). Though commentary on the latter work more or less follows jnaanottama's commentary still it is an independent commentary and worth going through by ardent sadhakas.

There are commentaries on Anandabodha's Nyaayamakaranda and Pramaanamala. There is also a commentary on Sankara's Brahma Sutra bhashya called bhashya bhaava prakaashika. There is also a commentary on Sankshepa saareeraka of Sarvajnaatman. Then lastly there is a highly illuminating commentary on Sri Harsha's Khandana Khanda Khadhy.

### Following the footsteps of Sri Harsha

If we have point out one person who was the main inspirer for Chitsukhacharya then it would be Sri Harsha. Chitsukhacharya's approach to Vedanta was more or the less the same format as Sri Harsha. The acharyas of this time including Sri Harsha and Anandabodha focused on refuting and attacking the Nyaaya system (the prachina nyaaya system which later became the navya nyaaya system).

During this time, Vedanta came under the fire of Nyaaya system which got rejuvenated as a result of Udayanacharya and other naiyyayikaas. Therefore it was essential to not just support Advaita against the attacks of Nyaaya but also show the vulnerabilities and illogicalities in the nyaaya system itself (needless to say this was beneficial also to nyaaya as it become strengthened as the navya nyaaya system). Chitsukhacharya's role in this attack on nyaaya and support of advaita from nyaaya is very high (and almost in par with Sri Harsha).

If we have to say two people who were the inspiration of Chitsukhacharya then it would be Sri Harsha and Anandabodha (whose works have been commented upon by Chitsukhacharya).

### Tattvapradipika or Chitsukhi

Though the commentaries of Chitsukhacharya on the various works of Advaita acharyas itself is huge still he might have felt that Sri Harsha's attack on Nyaaya should be extended a little bit more. It is well known from Sri Harsha's work that majority of the work is concentrated on attack on nyaaya (trying to prove that nyaaya is wrong) and few parts on the way to argue, in such a way that always the arguer will be the winner (using the argument mode provided in the work). There are only few parts of Sri Harsha's work which focuses on advaita and its support.

The same mode used by Sri Harsha can be extended easily to support Advaita well (instead of merely refuting nyaaya). This herculean task of supporting advaita was undertaken by Chitsukhacharya in his magnum opus of Tattvapradipika or Chitsukhi. This is a huge work which supports advaita from different angles. When we look at the way of argument we find that it follows the pattern of Sri Harsha but instead of merely refuting nyaaya most of the portion emphasizes on supporting Advaita. Initially purvapaksha views are mentioned in

total (many cases almost 10-15 views are mentioned) and then each of these views are sufficiently answered.

It is but true that the way of arguments of Chitsukhacharya is used by Vidyananda and Madhusudana Saraswathi.

Chitsukhi also can be considered as an encyclopedia of concepts of Advaita Vedanta (a bigger and more logical version of Appayya Dikshitar's Siddhanta lesa sangraha and Nrsimhasrama's Vedanta tattva viveka) – concepts like eka jeeva vaada and naanaa jeeva vaada also are discussed. Throughout this work we can find the focus on Advaita or non-duality (the view that Brahman alone exists).

Chitsukhi following the path of Sri Harsha demolishes the concept of bheda or difference (though the seed for this can be clearly found in Sureshwaracharya's Brihadarany Upanishad bhashya vartika itself). Advaita Vedantins will ever remain indebted to the great work of Chitsukhi.

#### Chitsukhi on avidyaa

Ramanujacharya following Chitsukhi takes the view that avidyaa is bhaava rupa (existent in nature). Thus there are many acharyas like sacchidanandendra saraswathi who claim that Chitsukha and other acharyas have corrupted Advaita Vedanta as found in Sankara's works. The arguments of all opponents and same system followers are unwarranted as Chitsukhacharya himself says that avidyaa is said to be bhaava rupa only because it cannot be said to be abhaava rupa. In order to avoid the wrong notion that avidyaa is non-existent, avidyaa is mentioned to be existent. The word of bhaava rupa in the quoted sloka itself means that avidyaa is neither bhaava nor abhaava. Not understanding this clearly, people get into attack on avidyaa of Advaita Vedanta.

#### Chitsukha – great realized master

There are many masters who aren't realized like mahatmas who serve the entire world through their activities. That Chitsukhacharya is a great realized master is clearly known through his works itself. The huge list of works, the depth of thought, the deepness of logic and all the while sticking on the scriptures (as the ultimate authority) itself shows that this great master was a realized master. Mere reading of Chitsukhi (even few parts of Chitsukhi) will make us progress quickly towards moksha – realized masters are known only through

the bliss that pervades their very existence. Masters like Chitsukhacharya are ever-living through their works. Samsarga with their works itself will give us bliss and therefore will easily prove that they are realized masters.

Though any amount of tribute is insufficient for these masters, still let this short article serve as a tribute to this great master of Chitsukha. It is very tough indeed to take up few parts of Chitsukhi or any other work of Chitsukhacharya for us to understand but hopefully through the acharya's grace we will be able to accomplish the same in the future. But we will not delve into too much Vedanta or logic here as this article just serves for us as an eye-opener that there were great masters who should be prostrated and served regularly through learning and implementation of their words.

May we all offer our prostrations to the great master of Chitsukha so that we will be able to through proper logic get rid of all doubts in our mind and will be able to quickly progress towards the goal of moksha – thus may we all get rid of sorrows and ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

श्रीहर्षमार्गद्योतकं युक्तिसुपोषकम् ।

यः तत्त्वप्रदीपकः चित्सुखं तं नमाम्यहम् ॥

śriharśamārgadyotakaṁ yuktisupoṣakaṁ |  
yaḥ tattvapradīpakaḥ citsukhaṁ taṁ namāmyaham |

One who illuminated the path put forth or tread by Sri Harsh; one who nourished logic; One who wrote tattvapradipika (or one who illumined concepts), that ChitSukha I prostrate.

## Vedanta Pariksha

This month all questions are on simple concepts of Advaita Vedanta.

- 1) What is the absolute reality termed in Vedanta (specifically Brahma Sutras)?
  - a) Jeeva
  - b) Vishnu
  - c) Ishwara
  - d) Brahman
- 2) What is the famous mahavakya repeated multiple times in Chandogya Upanishad?
  - a) Aham brahmaasmi
  - b) Tat tvam asi
  - c) Ayam atma brahma
  - d) Sarvam brahma mayam
- 3) What is a person who is unaffected at all times called?
  - a) Jeeva
  - b) Kutastha
  - c) Brahman
  - d) Siva
- 4) What is the ocean in which a person takes birth and dies again and again?
  - a) Karma
  - b) Samsaara
  - c) Kaama
  - d) Jnaana
- 5) What is the nature of Brahman?
  - a) Sat
  - b) Sat Chit Ananda
  - c) Ishwara
  - d) Ananda
- 6) What is seeing everything as one termed?
  - a) Karma
  - b) Bandha
  - c) Yoga
  - d) Avidyaa

- 7) Brahman is defined in the scriptures (brahma sutras) as
- a) Absolute reality
  - b) Cause of the world
  - c) One's own Self
  - d) Essence of the world
- 8) How many koshas are there covering the Self or Atman?
- a) 5
  - b) 4
  - c) 3
  - d) 1
- 9) The world is defined in Gita as:
- a) Blissful
  - b) Real
  - c) Temporary and sorrowful
  - d) Absolute
- 10) What is the cause of not remembering/knowing Brahman?
- a) Jnaana
  - b) Karma
  - c) Avidyaa

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 Siva and Shakti
2. d Mahishasura Mardini
3. d (but a too fine) instructed from Hayagriva to Agastya
4. a Vishnu
5. b Himavaan
6. c 10
7. a Soubhagya Bhaskara
8. b 9
9. pasha, ankusha, kodandaa, saayaka
10. Yantra is Sri Chakra and mantra is Panchadashakshari Mantra

Marks for quiz

Aparna – 9

Nikhila – 7

Sunanda amma - 8

Congrats to all to answer this very tough quiz (unless one is a staunch Devi bhakta) and getting good marks as well.

## 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. Avidyaa samskhepa – a brief analysis of avidyaa
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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