

## Vedanta Darshanam

Salutations to all.

Today we find ourselves in a world where everything is moving very fast that catching up with the world is becoming impossible. This makes all our lives very busy and hectic. In this hectic schedule it is impossible to do anything except playing the game of trying to catch up with the world. This game leads to only one result which is failure leading to sorrow and suffering alone.

Even though the world is moving fast, still the minds of people are the same and it is constantly seeking eternal bliss alone (knowingly or unknowingly). Until this goal of eternal bliss (happiness which is untainted by sorrow) is achieved a person will go from one birth to another experiencing only sorrow. The only way to gain eternal bliss is through knowledge of the scriptures with focus on the non-dual reality of Lord. This is the one and only way to eternal bliss. Since we all are seeking this goal of eternal bliss therefore we should all strive to achieve this goal soon itself (for, each moment we don't achieve this goal we are suffering in the world alone). Thus it is essential to gain knowledge and attain the goal of moksha.

Knowledge of the scriptures with emphasis on Brahman is called the system of philosophy of Vedanta. Vedanta means that which appears at the end of the Veda (any treasure is released at the end) and that which gets rid of all knowledge (culmination of knowledge). Knowledge of Brahman is knowledge of the essence of everything and therefore it puts an end to all seeking. Therefore through learning and implementation of Vedanta we will be able to attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha here and now itself. There is no other alternative to moksha as eternal bliss than through learning of Vedanta.

Learning and implementation of anything is tough unless we develop a passion towards the same. Passion towards anything is only possible when we like something – liking something is only possible when it has beauty in it that is perceived by us. Thus this magazine serves as a means to bring out and enjoy the beauty of Vedanta so that through this we will be able to develop liking and passion towards Vedanta. Thus through learning and

implementation of Vedanta we will be able to attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha soon itself.

Generally majority of people consider Vedanta as something to be studied after growing old – this isn't the case. Vedanta can only be learnt when we are young as once we grow old, we will be used to our old habits (habits never die) and will never be able to learn Vedanta at all. Therefore whatever is our age, now is the time to learn Vedanta to ensure that at least when we become a little old we are able to implement Vedanta at least to an extent and thereby we will be able to attain moksha if not in this birth then at least in the next few births.

May we all strive to learn and implement Vedanta through enjoying the beauty of Vedanta so that we are able to get rid of all sorrows and ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

AUM NAMA SHIVAYA

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## Aukramaanika

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## Upanishad Vivaranam

### Mundaka Upanishad – 1-1-6

यत्तदद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमवर्णमचक्षुः श्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादं ।

नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद्भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥६॥

yattadadreśyamagrāhyamavarṇamacakṣuḥ śrotram tadapāṇipādam |

nityam vibhum sarvagatam susūkṣmam tadavyayam yadbhūtayoniṁ paripaśyanti dhīrah ||6||

That Brahman is beyond perceived, grasped, without any color, without eyes & ears, without hands & legs, eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading, subtler than the subtle and immutable – such a Brahman which is the seed of all beings is seen by wise people (people with knowledge) everywhere.

#### Brahman – beyond everything

Brahman is the ultimate reality beyond everything. This is because Brahman is the cause-substratum of the entire world. In order to understand this we have to try to look at Brahman from the perspective of the world.

The world that we currently perceive is filled with constantly changing objects. The world which constantly changes cannot exist of its own because it is not eternal and it is not independent. Thus there needs to be a source of the world which is eternal and independent. Such an entity has to definitely exist irrespective of whether it is the source of the source of the world or source of the source of the source of the world – this means that we consider a source of the world which itself changes and therefore we go one layer high to a source which is changeless. We may have to go infinitely but still there has to be a source which is changeless. Due to simplicity, it is enough to accept the source of the world itself as changeless. Sruthi, yukti and anubhava support this view that the source of the world itself is changeless and eternal.

This source of the world is termed as Brahman in the scriptures because it is very big and it appears as the entire world. This Brahman is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Now having reached the source of the world as Brahman, we have to analyze whether Brahman alone existed before creation or there was something else existing apart from Brahman (before creation). There cannot be two entities as they would be relative and

dependent. Thus before creation only Brahman existed, one without a second. There were no differences with respect to Brahman whether internal or external.

Since Brahman alone existed before creation, therefore the world has to be just an illusion in Brahman as changeless Brahman cannot change into this creation. The illusory world therefore is in the substratum of eternal Brahman. This means that Brahman is beyond the world even as the rope in which snake is seen is beyond the snake. Understanding this aspect of Brahman being beyond everything is well understood through the analogy of dream. In dream, an entire world is perceived in which the dreamer also appears to take a role. For a while the dream world goes on as if it is a very real world but suddenly the dreamer wakes up and realizes that there never is any dream world, there never was any dream world and there never can be any dream world as well. The entire world is just an illusion in the dreamer. This means that the dreamer is beyond the dream world (by being the mere substratum of the dream world). Though we can say that the entire world is the dreamer this is just an empirical viewpoint – ultimately the dreamer is beyond the dream world.

Similarly this entire world that we currently experience is just an illusion in Brahman. Therefore though Brahman appears as the entire world, Brahman is beyond the entire world as its substratum. Thus it is proven that Brahman is beyond everything.

#### Brahman – not an object

Anything and everything part of the world is objectified in one or the other way. Some things are seen, others are heard and yet others are grasped. In order to be objectified, any object has to be subject to the ten sense organs (the five organs of perception helps in perceiving objects whereas the five organs of action helps in performing actions with respect to objects).

The moment anything becomes an object, it is also short-lived as the objectification process isn't eternal and will vanish after a period of time (within the limitation of time). If Brahman is an object, then Brahman will become non-eternal. Hence Brahman is not an object of the sense organs.

Now objectification is also possible through the mind but such objectification is also not possible for Brahman because Brahman is the substratum or witness as a result of which

alone sense organs and mind act. Everything becomes as if conscious due to Brahman's presence alone. Thus Brahman is the ultimate subject of all objects – this subject isn't objectified but it objectifies everything in the world including sense organs, mind, intellect etc.

Thus says Drig Drishya Viveka

Ruupam drishyam lochanam drik tat drishyam driktu maanasam

Drishyaa dheevrittayah saakshi drigeva na tu drishyate

Forms are objects which are perceived by the Seer (subject) of eyes; eyes are objects to the subject of mind; mind or thoughts of the mind are objects to the saakshi Self or Brahma which is never seen (objectified).

Brahman thus is Consciousness which is a mere witness to the entire objects (of the world) and yet isn't objectified or affected by them. Thus Brahman is that Seer who is a witness or unaffected due to being the substratum in which the illusion of the entire world is perceived.

#### Brahman's nature defined

After talking about paraa vidyaa which leads to knowledge of Brahman, now the Upanishad explains Brahman in this sloka. Just because Brahman is known doesn't mean that Brahman is an object of knowledge. Brahman's knowledge is not objective knowledge but subjective knowledge as one's own Self – knowledge of oneself or one's own very nature of Consciousness. Thus it is direct and intuitive knowledge rather than indirect and objective knowledge (as in the case of objects of the world).

Though Brahman can be defined in many words, all such definitions don't objectify Brahman but point at Brahman with respect to the world. It is essential to define Brahman with respect to the world because majority of people are in the plane of the world and cannot understand or apprehend anything that isn't explained with respect to the world. Thus many start learning Vedanta but aren't able to understand head or tail about Vedanta – the reason is that they started learning Vedanta or that part of Vedanta which directly focuses on Brahman. Such words will not have any meaning at all as it will be well beyond our intellect or mind that is so used to objectification or grasping of objects alone at all times.

Brahman can only be directly defined as of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss but empirically or from world perspective many qualities of Brahman can be explained to give an idea about Brahman (such ideas aren't realization as they are just pointers to Brahman). Realization of Brahman is only through constant remembrance of the truth that Brahman alone exists here as one's very nature of Consciousness and the substratum of the entire world.

Broadly speaking, we can say that any definition can (or will) be made in two ways – negation and assertion. Saying that a cow isn't black is a negation whereas saying that it is white in color is an assertion. With respect to Brahman as well, definition is through negation and assertion as we find in this sloka.

#### Brahman – through negation

Brahman as explained earlier is not objectified at all as the subject of everything. Thus Brahman is mentioned as that which cannot be perceived by sense organs of perception or grasped by sense organs of action.

If this is the case, can't Brahman itself have eyes, ears, legs, hands etc.? (means can't Brahman can have indriyas)

The Upanishad answers saying that Brahman doesn't have any indriyas. That which is partless cannot have parts of indriyas. And indriyas are required in order to perceive or grasp objects – Brahman doesn't require any indriyas to perceive or grasp as it is the light which is used for perception and grasping; moreover Brahman doesn't require any objects at all. Objects are sought out in order to attain the state of eternal bliss or perfection or unlimited state. Brahman by nature itself is blissful, therefore doesn't require any objects. Now even if there is any way that Brahman might require objects, still Brahman cannot perceive or grasp objects as ultimately nothing apart from Brahman exists (Brahman is one without a second). It cannot be argued that empirically the world exists and therefore Brahman might require something empirically as this is like saying that the desert requires something from the water which is just an illusion in it. Even as desert doesn't require anything from water, the dreamer doesn't require anything at all from the dream world (really speaking) similarly Brahman doesn't require anything at all from the illusion of the world.

Lastly Brahman by being the very substratum of the entire world has the entire world in itself so doesn't really require anything at all whether empirically or ultimately.

Why is assertion required? Mere negation isn't enough?

When we negate everything, the entire world, then there might be a doubt that there will be nothing remaining behind (after negation). Thus in order to remove this doubt that shunya or voidness remains behind as Brahman after negation, assertion of Brahman is very important.

### Brahman – through assertion

When everything is negated then the non-negate-able Brahman will remain behind as the subject of negation itself. Thus the Upanishad says that Brahman is nityam or eternal. That which is eternal can never be negated or cease to exist. This means that Brahman is Sat Chit Ananda in nature. This is Brahman's very nature (svaroopā).

Definition of Brahman through assertion can be of two types – through Brahman's very nature and through any related entity. The former is called svaroopā lakshana and latter is called thatastha lakshana. A house can be defined as white in color, so big etc. and it can also be defined as that in which a crow is sitting. The latter definition isn't ultimate as the crow might fly away from the house after a while. Brahman is defined by its nature as Existence, Consciousness and Bliss but is defined as the substratum of the entire world.

Definition with respect to the world is essential as majority of people only understand things from a worldly perspective. Also we all have to overcome or go beyond the world. Going beyond the world is only possible when we get rid of duality – the notion that duality being perceived as the world is real. Thus it is essential to explain Brahman from the perspective of the world.

The one very easy way to define Brahman which also can be used as a way to contemplate on Brahman (sadhana for realization) is being mentioned by the Upanishad here. Brahman is omnipresent or present everywhere due to being all-pervasive in nature. Such all-pervasive Brahman when contemplated in the mind will get rid of duality and eventually such a sadhaka will realize that Brahman is all-pervasive.



How is Brahman all-pervasive?

The Upanishad replies by saying that Brahman is the source of all beings in the world – in other words Brahman is the cause from which the world has come. Any cause pervades its effect. The cause of mud pervades the effect of pot, wall etc. The cause of gold pervades all its ornaments. Similarly Brahman being the cause of the world pervades the entire world (its effect). Thus not only all-pervasiveness is a means to realize Brahman but it is the ultimate truth also (that the entire world is nothing but Brahman alone).

Hence Vedanta says that the entire world is mere names and forms in Brahman. Differences are mere names and forms. Essentially the entire world is the one substratum of Brahman alone. Without Brahman existing, the entire world will just cease to exist. Thus forgetting Brahman as the cause-substratum of the world is the cause of all sorrows. The moment Brahman is forgotten, duality appears very real. And duality leads to likes and dislikes which in turn leads to happiness and sorrow – ultimately leading to sorrow alone. Thus in order to get rid of sorrows, one has to get rid of duality. Since duality doesn't really exist therefore it cannot be removed but can only be known as illusory or non-existent.

Thus contemplation of Brahman as pervading the entire world as its substratum will get rid of the notion that duality is real and thereby will lead to the state of eternal bliss.

Now, if Brahman cannot really be perceived then how can a sadhaka attain Brahman?

Brahman is not an object to be attained but from the perspective of ignorance, Brahman is something that is attained. Really speaking Brahman is realized as that which pervades the entire world. This means that whatever exists is Brahman and Brahman alone. Nothing apart from Brahman exists now, has existed in the past and can exist in the future too.

Can such Brahman be realized?

Yes, hence the Upanishad says that many brave people realize Brahman through seeing Brahman as pervading the entire world.

Brave people are those who are able to go beyond the passions of the world and seek the underlying reality of Brahman. It isn't very easy to overcome the passions of the world. And since the entire world is running behind world only therefore it is tougher to stop pursuing the world and worldly passions (as it is the norm of the world). Therefore only brave people are able to go beyond the world and perceive Brahman.

Who are such brave people?

Those who have knowledge that the world is just an illusion and Brahman alone is real are brave people. In other words, one who has viveka or discrimination between real and unreal is a brave person. Such a brave person alone will be able to see this Brahman as pervading the entire world. By saying that brave people see Brahman the Upanishad says that the goal of moksha as realization of Brahman isn't something impossible or not present – it is readily available and any person can attain it at any point of time.

Realized masters see everything as Brahman and therefore those who seek eternal bliss should also perceive everything as Brahman alone. This is the one-way solution to all problems and one-way to eternal bliss (getting rid of all sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss).

May we all strive to see Brahman as pervading the entire world so that we will be able to through realization of Brahman get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

## Gitaamritham

### Bhakti Yoga

We saw the Lord explaining in the 5<sup>th</sup> sloka as to why formless devotion is tough and causes suffering to those who think they are the body – thus people who haven't yet overcome their notion of I am the body will experience only sorrow when they worship the formless. Since majority of people fall in this category therefore it is better to take up form devotion.

Those who worship the formless will attain Ishwara directly so what about those who worship form Lord, will they also attain Ishwara and how? This is being answered by the Lord in the next two slokas.

### Sloka 6, 7 – Ishwara the savior of form-devotees unto the formless Ishwara soon itself

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मतपराः ।

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥६॥

ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannasya mataparāḥ |  
ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate ||6||

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्यु संसारसागरात् ।

भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥७॥

teṣāmahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyu saṁsārasāgarāt |  
bhavāmi nacirātpārtha mayyāveśitacetasām ||7||

6-7. Those who offering all actions unto me are ever focused on me and worship me constantly through meditation with undivided mind (mind which doesn't focus on anything other than me), for them I will become the savior from the ocean of samsaara very soon itself as their mind is fixed unto me.

### Form devotion – re-explained

The Lord has already explained in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sloka as to what is the basis of devotion – it is the mind contemplating on the form of Ishwara aloine, always remembering Ishwara and considering Ishwara as the ultimate goal of life. Unless these three are there in a person,

there is no true devotion. And wherever true devotion isn't there, such a person will never attain Ishwara.

What is the use of attaining Ishwara?

Ishwara is eternal and blissful in nature. It is only through attaining Ishwara that one attains eternal bliss and one's life gets fulfilled. Here attaining just is from empirical perspective where we appear as if different from Ishwara – really speaking our very nature is that of Ishwara and hence there is no attaining but only realizing Ishwara. But from ignorance or empirical perspective, it is as if attaining and therefore the word of attaining is used commonly in Vedanta.

Thus until our mind is pervaded constantly by Ishwara we will not find any devotion arising and if there is no devotion then there will not be any attaining Ishwara at all.

Ishwara – savior of devotees

Formless devotees directly worship and attain formless Ishwara but form devotees find it tough to contemplate on the formless. Hence many of them even think that there is no formless and they don't even want to attain any formless (as it is tough for them and they get deluded into the limited happiness that comes out of worshipping a form). But for form devotees, Ishwara is the savior. Ishwara gradually takes them from form Ishwara to formless Ishwara. This basically happens through pervasion of the one form to the entire world. When there is a form, then there will be differentiations between this one form and the entire world which is filled with forms of different types and kinds. But when this one form pervades the entire world, then there is no differentiation at all.

One form pervades the entire world just means that everything is seen as this one form. Though essentially the entire world is Ishwara alone still differences with respect to names and forms will exist – these cannot be removed as they aren't real. It is like trying to get rid of the dream world. It is foolish as there is no real dream world to be got rid of. Any illusion is just an appearance in its substratum. Though it might appear as if real, it isn't real but a mere appearance. Such illusory appearances are removed through knowledge that it doesn't exist. Therefore the forms of the world cannot be removed but they can be understood as essentially one Ishwara alone.

A devotee slowly starts seeing the same form Ishwara as pervading the entire world. Everything is mentally seen as that one Ishwara's manifestation alone. Thus slowly Ishwara pervades the entire world. When one form pervades the entire world then it isn't limited by space. Form is that which is limited by space. But since one form pervades the entire world, it becomes unlimited and thereby it isn't limited at all. Such unlimited form is formless alone. Thus slowly through pervading one Ishwara to the entire world, the form devotee automatically is taken towards formless Brahman – this is done by Ishwara who is being worshipped in the mind. The devotee doesn't know and doesn't need to know what happens or how form vanishes into the formless. Ultimately the devotee is taken to the formless by Ishwara.

Why Ishwara should take the pain of saving his devotees?

Even as a mother takes the pain of saving her own child, similarly Ishwara takes the pain of saving his own children. Really speaking, devotees are more than children to Ishwara. Devotees are those who have captured Ishwara in their minds or hearts and therefore Ishwara is their slave. Ishwara is thereby bound to protect and save his devotees.

As to how eventually the devotee goes from form to formless, we find the Lord explaining the same.

### 1. Offering all actions unto me

A form devotee should always strive to offer all actions unto Ishwara (the three points mentioned by Ishwara in the second sloka should also be remembered but there it was about mental state and here it is more about practice with respect to the world). Offering all actions unto Ishwara is as simple as performing them as pooja to Ishwara and considering the results of actions as Ishwara's grace or blessings alone. As AMMA says if good results happen, then it should be considered as Ishwara's grace and if bad results happen then it should be considered as Ishwara's will – at all times all results are attributed to Ishwara. This is possible only if the action itself is offered unto Ishwara. Once it is offered unto Ishwara there is no result craved for. In true pooja there is no result being sought out (it is just an offering – offering doesn't have any expectation at all).

Ramana Maharshi thus says beautifully in Upadesa Saram

Ishwara arpitam na icchayaa kritam

Chitta shodhakam mukti saadhakam

Actions performed as an offering unto Ishwara and without craving for the results purifies the mind and thereby helps in liberation.

The reason why we get attached to the body and other forms of the world is due to seeking results with respect to actions. The more actions are offered unto Ishwara, everything has to be pervaded by Ishwara or related to Ishwara in one or the other way. The more we focus on the forms of the world, the more we will strengthen the notion of our body. And thereby we will continue strengthening it through expecting from various forms of the world. This endless chain continues and we will be lead to total sorrow alone. But through offering of actions unto Ishwara, we will get rid of attachments and aversions with respect to any form in the world. Even attachment and aversion to our body will slowly diminish or vanish as all actions through the body is offered unto Ishwara.

But offering all actions unto Ishwara is not possible unless the mind is always focused on Ishwara.

## 2. Ananya yoga – without any other thought than Ishwara

Very easy theoretically but very tough indeed to implement is ananya yoga. The mind is generally constantly dwelling upon multiple things. The mind is considered a monkey that hops from one thought of object to another thought. And most importantly the mind focuses on a goal which it finds prime in life. This prime important goal has to be Ishwara. Then such a mind will ever remember Ishwara alone in the mind. There will not be even a moment when Ishwara's thought is not there in the mind.

Ananya really means that there is no other thought than that of Ishwara in the mind but we should consider it as the thought of Ishwara alone being important and every other thought temporarily comes in and then leaves without leaving any trace at all in the mind. This is similar to a businessman who has ananya thought about money alone. His wife may come, children may come, partners may come, even sanyaasis or gurus may come but still his mind is ever focused on the thought of money or making money. Thus Chinmaya jokingly says that when such a person meets him, he will think and ask "how much money you have, is there a way for that money to transfer into my hands etc."

How can we really know that Ishwara's thought is constantly there in our mind?

## 3. Upaasana – worship with meditation on Ishwara

If ananya yoga on Ishwara is there in the mind then Ishwara will be constantly worshipped. Such worship isn't like normal worship as it is associated with meditation at all times. Meditation means that one-pointedness or total focus on Ishwara is constantly there in the mind. As a result of ananya yoga, Ishwara is meditated upon and worshipped through all actions externally.

Offering of all actions unto Ishwara should always be associated with upaasana of Ishwara. In upaasana slowly the devotee will find that everything is about the Lord alone. Therefore such devotee starts talking about the Lord, singing the Lord's name, listening to the glories of the Lord, learning more and more about the Lord and the very presence of such a devotee is filled by the Lord.

When we see such a devotee we will be able to find the Lord's presence itself with the devotee. This means that the devotee will be ever blissful at all times. Many people think that Lord's presence means wearing of bhasma – this isn't the case. There are many who wear bhasma during the day and later perform prohibited actions like smoking, drinking etc. Ishwara is an embodiment of bliss. Wherever we find bliss present at all times and unconditional bliss (that which isn't dependent upon external situations) there we can find the Lord's presence.

Such Lord's presence in the form of bliss will be pervading the very presence of a devotee. Any person with an open mind will be able to directly experience this bliss or peace when in the vicinity of the devotee. Open mind is essential else whatever we experience also will be negated as a result of the filters of our mind in the form of likes and dislikes.

Narada says that when a person attains prema or unexplainable love or devotion towards Ishwara then such a person thinks only about Ishwara, talks only about Ishwara, listens only about Ishwara etc.

All of these happen automatically due to the Lord's grace and a devotee doesn't need to think or consciously do any of these. Ishwara is like the camel inside a tent in the desert. In this short story once a person was traveling at night in the desert with his camel. He halted and was resting in his tent. But since it was very cold outside he felt sad for his camel and therefore let the camel put its head in the hut. The camel put its head and slowly its body and finally its legs also. And in this process, it kicked away the person out of the tent.

Similarly once Ishwara is given a little space in our heart, Ishwara will kick away all impurities and even our Ego or individuality. Thus Ishwara is portrayed as slayer of all demons – demons aren't external but internal (in our mind). Eventually thus Ishwara alone will remain behind in our mind. Ishwara thus is the savior of us as devotees. We don't need to know anything at all – just providing a little space for Ishwara in our mind is enough and the rest will be done by Ishwara himself.

Now we can ask as to how long it will take for all this to happen (for a devotee to go from form to formless and attain Ishwara) but the Lord replies to this beautifully.

Lord – savior very soon itself

Ishwara will not save us after a while (after few births or few years) but will us instantly itself. If we are true devotees of Ishwara then attaining Ishwara is already there as our mind is pervaded by one Ishwara alone at all times. This alone is attaining Ishwara. Thus Ishwara saves devotees not after a long time but very soon itself.

If worldly passions have so much addiction (even though they give only temporary happiness) then what to talk about the addiction of Ishwara (who is eternal bliss in nature)? Thus one who has once tasted the bliss of Ishwara will be attracted towards Ishwara more and more. Very soon itself such a devotee will be addicted to Ishwara, ever contemplating on Ishwara and soon itself totally merging unto Ishwara.

Last but not the least why should we be saved and from what?

Lord – savior from ocean of samsaara

Ishwara saves us from the ocean of samsaara. Samsaara means the endless chain of birth and death which leads to only sorrow and suffering as the experience. Though in each birth we strive for eternal bliss still in this ocean there is no bliss at all but only sorrow and suffering. Many try to overcome this ocean of samsaara but it is very tough indeed to overcome. There is no refuge at all in this ocean of samsaara – those who appear as around us will not be able to help us as they themselves are immersed in this ocean fully. The only way out of this ocean of samsaara is through the Lord or Brahman.

If we think that this ocean of samsaara isn't that sorrowful then we just need to look at our own lives. During birth we come crying and when dying too we leave crying. In between also we cry ourselves and make others cry too. If we find some happiness temporarily it is



so short-lived that it is seed of sorrow alone. Even for a small happiness we have to struggle or work hard (which is sorrowful), while experiencing the happiness we remember that it is short-lived and finally when the experience has vanished we are sad in memory of the happy-experience. Thus all throughout happiness from the world is sorrowful alone. Only fools will think that such happiness is true happiness and is enough. If one says that this limited happiness is enough as there is no eternal bliss in sight, then such a person is the greatest fool of all as eternal bliss readily available for us here and now itself in the form of Ishwara (that Ishwara who pervades the entire world as cause-substratum and pervades our own existence as pure Consciousness).

Thus everybody should constantly strive to come out of this suffering samsara through devotion towards the Lord. This is the only way to eternal bliss which is the ultimate goal of life of each and every person in the entire world.

As to the summarization of devotion, we will find the Lord doing the same in the next sloka which we will see in the next magazine.

May we all strive to worship Ishwara with form through pervasion of the form in the entire world through arpanam (offering), ananya yoga (ever contemplating on the Lord) and upaasana (ever worshipping the Lord through actions) so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss in non-dual Ishwara here and now itself.

## Prakarana Prakaashah

### Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam - 5 – Maya, deluder of all

देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः  
 स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः ।  
 मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे  
 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्री दक्षिणामूर्तये ॥५॥

deham prāṇamapīndriyāṅyapi calām buddhiṁ ca śūnyam viduḥ  
 strībālāndhajaḍopamāstvahamiti bhrāntā bhṛśam vādinaḥ।  
 māyāśaktivilāsakalpitamahāvvyāmohasamhāriṇe  
 tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye nama idam śrī dakṣiṇāmurtaye॥5॥

Saying that the Self or I am body, vital forces, sense organs, changing intellect and void, people walk around talking proudly about their views like a woman, child, blind or insentient person; one who destroys the great delusion that is caused out of the power of Maya, unto that Dakshinamurthy my prostrations.

### Brahman (Atman) – the ultimate reality

In recent times, Prof Balakrishnan Nair was a master who would always talk about Brahman as bodha or Consciousness alone. Irrespective of what is the subject of discourse, whether talking to one person or many person he would only talk about Brahman and Brahman alone.

Many people therefore used to ask him itself as to why bodham bodham bodham alone all the time. The reply used to be that there is nothing apart from Brahman to be spoken about here. Though we might find that the entire world is a subject of discussion, still such discussions would be futile alone. The entire world that we experience is constantly changing. Such changing world is sorrowful alone – even though it might appear that the world is giving us happiness, the happiness is so short-lived that it itself leads to sorrow alone.

As Sankara says in many of his works, there are only two entities we can find here – one is the Subject or Drik and the other is the object or Drishya. Drik is one, Drishya is many; Drik is independent, Drishya is dependent; Drik is blissful, Drishya is sorrowful; Drik is

changeless, Drishya is ever-changing. Thus we find that these two are mutually contrary in nature, like light and darkness. One who sees one doesn't see the other – hence it is important as to what we see.

The entire world that we perceive is dependent upon Brahman as its source-substratum. Thus the world is just an illusion in Brahman even as the entire dream world is just an illusion in the dreamer. While experiencing the dream world, it appears very real but once we wake up, it is known to be just an illusion. Similar is the case with the world that we currently perceive. The entire world is just an illusion in Brahman – while experience it appears as different from Brahman but it is just names and forms in Brahman. Even as various names and forms of gold make it appear as if there are different entities, similar this world also makes it appear as if there are different entities. Even as all gold ornaments are gold alone, similarly this entire world is one Brahman alone.

Sanatsujateeya says that pramaada is mrityu or death or sorrow. Sankara beautifully defines pramaada as deviation from the state of Self or Brahman. Such deviation or distraction happens only when we forget Brahman. Forgetting Brahman happens when we get deluded into the world. Thus when we aren't talking about Brahman, we will automatically talk about the entire world. A sadhaka who craves for eternal bliss should thus never deviate from Brahman – hence Upanishad says that not even for moment people like Narada, Brahma etc. forget Brahman (remain without the thought of Brahman). Wherever Brahman is thought about or is the subject-matter, there will be eternal bliss as a result. Wherever Brahman is forgotten, there will be sorrow alone as delusion by Maya then begins.

The Lord mentions in many places of Gita that one should have ananya chintanam or bhajanam – this means that no other thought than Brahman should be in the mind. This only means that other thoughts can come and go but they should always be associated with the thought of Brahman alone (Brahman shouldn't be forgotten in the mind even for a moment). As are thoughts, so would be words and actions. Thus a master like Prof. Balakrishnan Nair never stops talking about Brahman – because then we will also only listen about Brahman constantly. For such masters, talking about Brahman is natural as nothing else is there to talk but for sadhakas, it is sadhana to keep talking about Brahman.

Of course there are those who keep telling that Brahman alone exists and the very next moment they will get into fight over why their children weren't treated properly etc. If

Brahman is really spoken about or remembered, then there will be no attachments or aversions. Everything will be considered as Brahman's manifestation – whether good or bad, everything will thus be blissful as filled in and out with Brahman. Such a person will never get deluded into attachments and aversions though might appear as reacting externally for a while.

How can we know whether we are deluded or not?

We can know easily as after the angry moment we will be able to remain instantly calm if we remember that everything is Brahman and anger was just an acting (even as an actor who portrays an angry role will become calm the moment shooting is over).

It is very important to remain ever focused on Brahman, for the power of Maya is ever waiting to delude us. Maya can only delude when Brahman isn't remembered. As to how Maya deludes, Sankara explains beautifully in this sloka.

#### Maya – making the impossible possible

The very definition of Maya is that which doesn't really exist (yaa maa saa maayaa). But this illusory power of Maya is very strong in that it makes the impossible possible. Sankara himself mentioned previously in the second sloka that Maya creates magical creations after creating the three limitations of time, space and causation. Even as a magician creates a magical world which appears very real, similarly Maya also makes it appear as if the entire world we currently perceive is very real.

But magician's world isn't real so how can that be related to Maya's creation?

Hence Sankara said that this is similar to a yogi creating a world out of his yogic power (siddhis or mental powers).

Maya doesn't really exist at all but it easily deludes people through names and forms. Names and forms are the tools with which Maya makes duality appear as if real. Of course only those who forget the ultimate reality of Brahman get deluded into thinking that Maya is real. Wise and learned people will not get deluded by Maya – instead they will remember that names and forms aren't real and only one Brahman is real.

Vedanta gives the analogy of goldsmith to show as to how a jnaani will see the entire world. There are many gold ornaments created out of gold – all of these are just names and forms

in gold. Names and forms aren't real but illusions in gold alone – gold alone is always real. One name and one form will vanish giving way to another name and form. But gold ever remains the same, without any change and as the substratum of the various gold ornaments. A normal person goes to the goldsmith to buy an ornament. Since he doesn't remember that gold ornaments are mere illusions of names and forms in gold, he considers names and forms to be real. Thereby he gets affected by the names and forms. He likes one name-form and dislikes another. Thus searching around, he finds one that he likes the most and therefore ends up buying it. After buying it, he maintains it well for a period of time. All of a sudden, the ornament breaks and he becomes sad. He takes the ornament to the goldsmith who then mends it and gives it as if new. Thus the person who is buying the ornament gets affected by the names and forms whereas the goldsmith is ever unaffected by whatever happens to the names and forms. This is because he knows that names and forms aren't real and all ornaments are gold and gold alone. This vision of oneness with respect to gold makes him remain ever blissful with respect to the various gold ornaments.

Similarly a jnani remembers always that the entire world is mere names and forms in Brahman. This knowledge makes the jnani ever blissful with respect to the entire world. But like the gold buyer, a normal person who is ignorant of the truth that Brahman alone exists will get deluded into thinking that names and forms are real – therefore he gets whirled between happiness and sorrow constantly.

We can say that those who haven't heard about Brahman at all have valid reason for getting deluded but there are many others who even after hearing about Brahman get deluded very easily. This is because their knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures isn't clear. Unclear knowledge is half-knowledge which is more dangerous than no-knowledge. A person with no-knowledge can be taught right-knowledge but a half-knowledge person will not accept any knowledge at all as he has his own preconceived notions. This is the peak of Maya's delusion.

Maya makes such deluded people into thinking that there is nothing called Brahman and that everything apart from Brahman is real. Thus the various entities of the world are considered as the Self (eternal blissful Self). Needless to say, such deluded people only experience sorrow alone irrespective of whatever they consider as the Self.

Who are such people and what are their views about the Self?

### Self – many diverse views

Since time immemorial there have been diverse views with respect to the Self (some of these views are even prevalent today as well amidst many people). In order to understand these perspectives it is important to understand as to what all are there apart from the Self and what all have to be conquered or overcome to realize the Self.

The process or way to find out the Self is to find that subject which isn't objectified – first we find objects are the external world of people and objects. The Self isn't the objects and people of the world as they are temporary and Self is eternal – moreover they are known as "mine" than "I" which is the Self. Though long ago there were people who thought that their son is the Self etc. Next in line comes the body (gross body). Gross body is activated by the pranas or vital forces. Then we have the sense organs which convey all perception to the mind which in turn gets its instructions from the intellect. Lastly all of these are controlled by ignorance (ignorance of the truth that one Self alone exists here). Together, the vital forces, sense organs of action and perception, mind and intellect are called the gross body (17 components in total). The causal body is ignorance. Thus the three bodies of gross, subtle and causal are there as objects to the Self which is beyond these. But still due to wrong notions, all of these are considered as the Self by many people.

There are many darshanas or philosophies each of which differ in the definition of the Self as well as the way to attain eternal bliss. The one common thing is that all these darshanas strive to set a path towards the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss.

The charvakas say that body is the Self; there are different sects of charvakas who say that the indriyas, pranas, mind etc. is the Self. Then there are nyaaya-vaisheshikas who claim that the Self is an entity or padaartha and it is endowed with the quality of knowledge (or Consciousness). Sankhya-Yoga philosophies proclaim that the Self enjoys the pleasures of the world but once the Self distances itself from the world, then it attains eternal bliss. The Buddhists are a different set of people who variously believe the Self to be either changing consciousness or shoonya or voidness.

That all these views are wrong is clearly known through the one truth that I as Consciousness is the Self which alone exists at all times. Nothing other than the Self can be ever proven by anybody. The scriptures also proclaim again and again that there is nothing apart from one Self of Brahman. Even the various sub-systems of Vedanta that claim that

duality in one or the other form is there are wrong as only non-dual Self or Brahman can ever be proven and hence is propounded in the scriptures. Even if there is any scope for duality, such duality will not lead to eternal bliss as eternal bliss is only in absolute entity (relative entities will die or vanish after a period of time due to being limited). Thus it is very clear that the Self is one Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; it is the very substratum of the illusory world of names and forms. The I that pulsates inside each one of us is one Brahman alone. Though many people appear as existing, they are all one Brahman alone. Even as one sun gets reflected in waters kept in different buckets, similarly one Self or Brahman gets reflected into various intellects and therefore appears as many. Really speaking and ultimately, one Brahman alone exists here.

It is not knowing this ultimate truth that many people opine differently about the Self and as a result they experience only sorrow alone. The main problem with these people is that they will not be ready to change their own opinion or wrong knowledge.

#### Maya – making people talk loudly about their own wrong notions

Even as various addictions like drugs, liquor etc. make people think they are doing something right while doing wrong, similarly Maya also makes people think that they are always right when they are always wrong only. Thus such people who are deluded by Maya walk around praising themselves, their knowledge, their notions etc. Sankara thus says that they walk around bragging about themselves – a jnani alone knows that they are very deluded and therefore laughs at them. But such laughing jnanis are considered as mad people. Hence Krishna says that which is night for normal people is day for jnanis and that which is night for jnanis is day for normal people.

Needless to say any delusion is caused due to lack of knowledge and will only lead to sorrows and sufferings. Therefore such delusions should be got rid of soon itself (before one delusion leads to another leading to another and finally ending up in a web of delusions coming out of which becomes very tough indeed).

Can we see any such examples of deluded people in the world?

Sankara beautifully says that women and children are generally this way. We should understand that here Sankara is just generally mentioning. Children are without knowledge generally and therefore being deluded perform stupid activities. Women generally get overpowered by passions and therefore end up in trouble. Both these people generally talk

loudly as if they alone know something and bragging about what they know. People deluded by Maya are also the same alone – they walk around the world bragging about their wrong knowledge and therefore aren't willing to change their wrong knowledge as well.

If this is the case, can we ever come out of the delusion of Maya?

Krishna says in Gita that one who seeks refuge in Ishwara or Brahman will be able to get rid of Maya very easily. This Ishwara who appears in front of us to guide us and take us beyond Maya is the Guru of Dakshinamurthy. Therefore Sankara says that Dakshinamurthy is the Guru who through giving us right knowledge will get rid of the great delusion of Maya. Thereby we will be able to assert the Self to be Brahman of the nature of Consciousness and that there is nothing here but Brahman alone exists (everything is just an illusion in Brahman). Through constant contemplation of Brahman at all times, we will thereby be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May Dakshinamurthy as Brahman, destroyer of the delusion of Maya, provide us with knowledge about Brahman so that through learning and implementation 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 - 4

महावीर बिक्रम बजरंगी ।

कुमति निवार सुमति के संगी ॥३॥

mahāvīra bikrama bajaranṅgī  
kumati nivāra sumati ke saṅgī ॥3॥

O Hanuman! Your golden complexion shines more in attractive clothes along with glittering earrings and curly hair.

You have thunderbolt in one hand and flag in another. And sacred thread made of munja grass shines across your shoulder.

### World – very attractive

It is well experienced by majority of people that the external world is very attractive. Attraction towards the world is something that is naturally developed in a person. Without even anybody else telling, attraction to the world is developed (we can say as a result of vasanas accumulated over many births).

Why the world is very attractive?

Because it appears very real and will give happiness. Though the world gives happiness, it is realized later only that happiness got is short-lived. But still since there are infinite possibilities to get happiness from the world, therefore fools think that they can shift from one object to another and thereby get happiness.

The most attractive object in the entire world is gold – this is because gold has value that stays forever without diminishing. Whether it is for decoration or wearing (possessing) or for money-purposes, gold is always the same and attractive. Symbolic way of showing that the mind runs behind gold is shown in Ramayana where Sita gets attracted by the golden deer (which was just an illusion). The gold there lead to sorrow alone for Sita (or the mind).

Many people though know that the world will only lead to sorrow aren't able to get rid of passion or attachment towards the world – the only reason we can hear from such people is

that "I am helpless". As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, desires cannot be removed or destroyed; instead they have to be converted into a higher desire or desire for a higher object.

Why we should get rid of attraction towards the world?

Because the temporary and constantly changing world will only lead to sorrow. Therefore wise people shouldn't take resort to world and worldly objects. Though they might seem to give happiness initially they will only lead to sorrow in the long run. Since everybody is knowingly or unknowingly seeking eternal bliss untainted from sorrow, therefore in order to achieve this eternal bliss attraction towards the world should be got rid of.

#### Hanuman – golden complexion and adorned with gold ornaments

Tulasidas says here that Hanuman has golden complexion and is adorned with golden ornaments (just earrings mentioned here). Since gold is the most attractive entity in the entire world, therefore we can consider this as symbolism to say that if we see Hanuman we will be attracted towards Hanuman. Attraction towards the world can easily be removed if our attraction is focused on a higher truth – truth of Ishwara endowed with a form (or without a form). Ishwara thus is that serum which removes the poison of all attractions from our mind. But in order for Ishwara to do so, he needs to be attractive to us. Thus we have Ishtadevatas or favorite deities for each person. There are so many devatas in sanatana dharma to ensure that there is a deity who is attractive to each and every person in the world. But since gold automatically attracts people, therefore any deity adorned with golden ornaments will automatically attract people. Thus we find that most deities in temples are always adorned with golden ornaments as well as beautiful decorations. If not so, then people will not feel attracted towards the deity. Many therefore say some day after going to the temple that the deity's decoration was very beautiful.

Really speaking there is no use running behind decorations (essence is what matters) but the mind doesn't see it that way and hence decorations are very important. A person or object in the world doesn't have beauty unless decorated in the proper way (in order to attract people). A car's purpose is to just take us to our destination but even the latest car appears non-attractive if not cleaned properly; on the contrary, even an old car appears very attractive if cleaned properly (difference while using the car is a different question but initially attraction is required in order to pull people towards it).

Only an attractive Ishwara can take our mind away from the external world and the best attraction lies in being filled with gold or compared with gold. Hanuman's complexion itself is golden therefore automatically everybody will get attracted towards Hanuman – add to this Hanuman is also wearing attractive ornaments and therefore more attraction will automatically be developed towards Hanuman.

But of what point is mere attraction of Ishwara if it doesn't destroy other attractions (eventually)?

#### Hanuman – holding thunderbolt

Avoiding problems will not get rid of problems – they have to be faced and destroyed eventually. But while being attracted to the world we cannot get rid of attractions. Once our attraction is focused on Ishwara of Hanuman then we will easily be able to get rid of attractions. Initially thus attraction turns towards Hanuman and then Hanuman will destroy the attraction of the entire world using his thunderbolt. Thus we can say that thunderbolt or gadaa signifies destruction of all evil or bad.

This thunderbolt also is always powerful against enemies. Enemies signify more attractions from the world that might be developed or objects that appear to distract us away from Ishwara. Though ultimately we have to get rid of all attractions ourselves, initially it helps for Ishwara to get rid of all other distractions to ensure that we are able to progress smoothly in the spiritual path.

How does Hanuman, a monkey, get power to conquer all enemies?

#### Hanuman – holding flag of Rama

In war, he who wins hoists his flag. Hanuman always carries the flag of Rama to hoist Rama once enemies are destroyed. We can in a way say that it is Rama being carried by Hanuman (or Hanuman representing Rama's army) that gets rid of enemies. He who remembers Ishwara will be able to overcome all obstacles very easily. We find in the puranas as well as in lives of great master as to how mere remembrance of Ishwara gets rid of all obstacles. The best near-history example is that of Meerabhai who was given poison. Even after consuming poison, Meerabhai didn't die as her mind was contemplating on Krishna and Krishna saved her from the poison.

A very famous sloka about Rama says that there is no other way to moksha than contemplation of Rama. Hanuman also thus shows us as to how to overcome all enemies –

it is through contemplation of Rama. Wherever Rama is, there will always be victory alone. Thus contemplation of Rama in the mind will make us conquer over all enemies.

It is essential to remember Ishwara in our mind while treading the spiritual path as initially the world will pose obstacles of all sorts. For some it may be in the form of parents; others spouse; yet others children; others friends; yet others name and fame; yet others money. Thus we cannot say how obstacles will be posed towards us – in order to get rid of those obstacles there isn't any alternative other than contemplation of Ishwara, which will automatically make us conquer all enemies without much effort itself.

But how does mere remembrance of Ishwara get rid of all enemies and takes us to the goal of moksha?

Mere remembrance of Ishwara doesn't take us to moksha but Ishwara remembered as all-pervasive Brahman takes us to the goal of moksha. This is knowledge which is essential and inevitable in order to attain moksha.

#### Hanuman – wearing sacred thread

Knowledge has to be attained at a ripe age (before age of 13 or less than 10 itself) in order to ensure that worldly attractions haven't found a strong place in the mind. Children aren't that much attracted to the world whereas as one ages, attraction towards the world becomes very strong (and often irremovable). Knowledge has to be thus imparted at a very young age.

Even as driving can't be learnt by oneself, for majority of people, knowledge also cannot be learnt by oneself and requires a Guru. But even a Guru is of no use unless the mind of the child has purity and concentration. One who doesn't have purity and concentration of mind will not be able to grasp knowledge – even if knowledge is somehow grasped, it will not be implemented in life. Purity and concentration of mind are initially attained through meditation or dhyana. This dhyana is through the very great gayatri mantra. Gayatri mantra is a prayer to Lord Sun that our buddhi may be enlightened or uplifted (so that knowledge can be gained and implemented in life).

Any mantra has to be given with proper initiation – getting some mantra from somebody or somewhere will not have value (and it will be fruitful). Thus a child initially gets initiation into gayatri mantra. This initiation process isn't just for gayatri mantra but it is called

upanayana. The main part of this ceremony is wearing of the sacred thread (made of munja grass in ancient times). This sacred thread is a way of saying that one will remain focused on Ishwara or the ultimate reality of Brahman in one's life. It is taking a oath that my goal will be realization of Brahman or moksha alone. The sacred thread itself is composed of three threads bound together by a knot. The three threads can be considered as three gunas or the three bodies – all these have to be bound together by the knot of Brahman (thought and focus on Brahman). Thus wearing of the sacred thread denotes one's focus or abidance in Brahman.

Upanayana also means inner eye. It is often called as second-birth (one who wears sacred thread is called a dvija or twin-born). Denoting spiritual birth, it is where the child starts treading the spiritual path towards the goal of moksha. Once sacred thread is worn, then the child does gayatri japa and dhyaana daily. These purify the mind and provide concentration to the mind. In parallel, the child also starts learning the scriptures. As a result, the child slowly starts grasping knowledge. Though implementation of knowledge might take a long time, still grasping of knowledge itself means that the child will be able to implement knowledge eventually through practice. After learning from the Guru, the child comes out of the gurukula almost a realized master. If not realized, the child through practice is able to ever abide in Brahman eventually.

We find here that Hanuman is wearing the sacred thread – this means that Hanuman is ever abiding as the ultimate reality of Brahman. Though Hanuman is a devotee or servant of Rama, still we find Hanuman himself mentioning that with respect to the Atman I am nothing but you alone. Thus Hanuman is knowledge personified. We can say that Hanuman is the embodiment of Brahman or knowledge. Such Hanuman by being eternally-alive will be easily able to guide us whenever we need help.

We find in Hanuman the perfect person to guide us. Whether it is attraction or strength or knowledge, Hanuman has everything. Through guidance from Hanuman we will be able to become another Hanuman ourselves (a good teacher is one who makes teachers out of students). What is required from us is to just surrender unto this great master of Hanuman and let ourselves be guided towards the goal of moksha. Then we will find that automatically we progress towards the goal of moksha without much effort itself and eventually we will be able to get rid of sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

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 – 5

Harinaamakeerthanamituracheyvathinnu guru  
 Varulaale devakalumarulcheyka bhoosurarum  
 Naranaay janicchu bhuvu maranam bhavippalavum  
 Uracheyvathinnarulka naaraayanaaya namaha

In order to chant harinamakeerthanam, may Guru and all devas shower their blessings; and may it be chanted till death in this world after taking the birth of a human being, for this I prostrate unto you, O Narayana.

### Samsaara – cycle of birth and death

That which takes birth will die and that which dies will take birth. Thus the cycle of birth and death once started goes on without any end at all. As to where it started or how it started, there is no answer as ultimately it doesn't exist at all (it is just an illusion in the one ultimate reality of Brahman or Ishwara). Any illusion cannot have any beginning but it definitely has an end – like water seen in desert has an end but is beginningless; we can never find out when it began, where, how etc. The only thing possible with respect to an illusion is getting rid of it through knowledge of the substratum. Once we come to know the substratum of water in desert to be desert, then water immediately vanishes (knowledge of desert as the substratum gets rid of water seen in desert). Similarly once we are able to gain knowledge of the substratum of this world as the ultimate reality of Brahman then the illusion of world will end (ending here only means that it will not lead to delusion).

But what is the problem of being deluded by an illusion?

The problem is that delusions always lead to sorrow and suffering. Seeing water in desert, one will run towards the water thinking that there is water that can quench thirst but when water isn't found then the person becomes very sad (more sad than before as there was hope that water is there but it wasn't met with). Similarly the delusion of seeing snake in rope will make a person run away from the rope in fear and even might lead to death due to heart-attacks on seeing the rope (seeing the snake as if raising its hood, coming towards oneself and about to bite etc.). In a similar way, the cycle of birth and death leads only to sorrow. In each birth we try to find out eternal bliss as it is the ultimate goal that everybody knowingly or unknowingly seeks. But the temporary world cannot lead to eternal bliss and

therefore getting dejected, we are lead to sorrow. Moreover identification with the world including one's own body makes one feel as if the changes of the body etc. are one's own changes – thus when the body undergoes pain, the person undergoes pain. There might be times when the body etc. lead to happiness but the happiness is so short-lived that it is seed of sorrow alone. Hence the scriptures say that wise people will not take resort to sensual pleasures of the world as they are temporary and hence seeds of sorrow.

If we think that sorrow ends with one birth, it just doesn't as it continues in the next birth as well. Thus from one birth to another birth we go on without any removal of sorrow – instead our sorrows only constantly remain with us (though in between there might be slight experiences of happiness but since it is sandwiched between sorrow, it is as good as sorrow alone).

It is only when sorrow as a result of delusion caused by illusion vanishes that we will be able to put an end permanently to sorrow and then alone we will be able to attain the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss.

#### Guru – the one way out of bondage

Illusion though might appear as very simple yet is very tough indeed to conquer. It is a bondage that traps us as time passes by. The moment we get deluded into thinking that the external world is real, we get identified and associated with it. This in turn leads to strong bondage which builds on as time passes by. Even as a mirror which has some dirt in it will accumulate dirt over period of time if it isn't cleaned, similarly bondage in the mind with the world becomes more and more strong as time passes by. Thus from one birth to another, our bondage only becomes strong and hence coming out of such bondage is very tough indeed. Majority of people don't even want to come out of bondage as it is very strong and painful to get rid of. When it is very tough indeed for people to get rid of habits accumulated in just one birth, what to talk about bondage accumulated over many births?

So isn't there any way out of bondage?

Since bondage is caused by delusion of illusion therefore the way out of bondage is knowledge alone. Here knowledge isn't any sciences of the world or scriptures but the science of Vedanta which talks about one Brahman being the cause-substratum of the entire illusory world. It is this knowledge of Brahman as found in Vedanta which gets rid of bondage.



Even as a person who is mentally ill requires a doctor, even as a person who has forgotten his own nature requires another person to remind him his nature and even as the ten fools (in the famous story where they cross a river and think one person is dead because while counting they leave out themselves and count only the rest 9) required a passer-by, similarly in order to come out of the delusion of the world we all require a Guru. Guru need not be necessarily in physical form but the great masters of the past are all Gurus alone though for sadhakas who are very initial in the spiritual path, a physical Guru will be very helpful.

Guru is one who is well versed in the scriptures and ever abiding as Brahman. We can also say that a Guru is ever performing activities for the welfare of the shishya – a Guru's only concern at all times is the welfare of the shishya (or shishyas). Therefore such Gurus will never want benefits of any sort from shishyas – instead such a Guru by abiding as Brahman doesn't have any desire at all (aaptakaamasya kaa sprihaa).

In Mahabharatha, Veda Vyaasa visits the emperor Shantanu when he was ill. Bhishma addresses all those who came to meet Shantanu saying that the emperor is not ill and therefore they can ask whatever they want which will be provided to them. Vyaasa replied that he hasn't come to take but to give – eventually Vyaasa was able to cure Shantanu.

Thus we find that Gurus are those who don't really need anything from shishyas but they are compassionate masters whose very purpose is to uplift shishyas from the bondage of samsara (birth and death) and thereby take them to state of ever-realized Brahman. The way Gurus behave will depend from each guru to other and on the shishyas who approach them. Even as it is impossible to judge a nuclear physicist unless we know nuclear physics, similarly it is impossible to judge a Guru unless we become a Guru. Therefore care should be made not to judge a Guru. In order to fall into the trap of a false Guru we should ensure that a true Guru is ever filled with bliss and peace – just being in the vicinity or presence of a true Guru will make our mind also rejoice in bliss and peace.

#### Spiritual path – encompassing all

Many people think that Guru who is one with Ishwara (Ishwara or a form-deity can also be a Guru) alone is required in the spiritual path. Though this is true, it is wrong to negate everything else that is perceived in the world as the entire world is just manifestation of the

Guru as Brahman. Whatever is seen in the entire world is nothing but Brahman alone – differences are just names and forms in Brahman. The moment a Guru enters our life (or Brahman's thought enters our life) then everything in the world favors us in one or the other way. Thus we can learn from anything and everything in the world.

Even as attachment will lead to sorrow, aversion also will lead to sorrow and hence we should strive to get rid of both attachment and aversion. Once we find a true Guru, we will find that the entire world is beneficial for us through helping us towards the goal of moksha in one or the other way. A true shishya thus will find everything to be manifestation of the Guru. A true bhakta also will find everything to be manifestation of Ishwara. A jnaana sadhaka will find everything to be manifestation of Brahman. Thus everything has to be seen as one and we shouldn't let the mind get into dual notions (dualities).

Bhagavatham talks about the avadhuta who had 24 Gurus. Though each and every guru is explained there, it is just a way of telling that the entire world is our Guru. Some tells us what to do and others tell us what not to do. Differences, faults and sorrows are only with respect to the illusion of names and forms. If we are able to see through the names and forms into the underlying reality of Brahman then everything will help us progress quickly towards the goal of moksha.

A true Guru teaches a shishya to see everything as one, without any differentiation at all. As AMMA always says, love is the way to conquer the entire world. Though we cannot expect anything while showering love to the entire world, still showering leads to peace of mind for us. This showering isn't external as then people will start misusing us – this showering is internal where we see everything as one alone.

Thus through Guru's grace, we open the gate to the grace of the entire world. The entire world here is mentioned by Ezhutthacchan as consisting of devas and human beings (good people in the entire world). It is a direct experience for any sadhaka that once the spiritual path is started and continued with full fervor, everything will be conducive. Whenever anything at all is required, it will be got without much effort itself (due to the grace of the Guru and the Lord).

Even while having a guru and everything being conducive for us, we should remember the goal of human birth itself. What is the goal?

### Goal of human birth - moksha

The goal of human birth is the ultimate goal of life as moksha. Moksha is nothing but getting rid of sorrow, bondage and delusion through knowledge of the underlying reality of Brahman (as pervading the entire world of names and forms). Sankara says in Vivekachoodamani that this human birth is very precious indeed – this is because moksha is only possible for humans. Devas can only constantly enjoy in sensual pleasures whereas asuras or lower lokas only lead to constantly suffering in pain. But since human birth and earth has both pleasure and pain, therefore there is choice as to which to choose. Instead of choosing either pleasure or pain, a human being can choose moksha as well. It isn't possible just to choose moksha but to attain moksha also because humans are endowed with the intellect which can discriminate between real and unreal.

Though intellect or buddhi is rarely used for moksha, still it's main purpose is to be used for moksha through discriminating between real and unreal. Real is that which constantly changes and unreal is that which changes constantly. Real leads to eternal bliss whereas unreal leads to sorrow. If we are experiencing sorrow then it is as a result of clinging on to the unreal, while thinking it to be real. Through discrimination or viveka we will be able to differentiate between the unreal world and real Brahman or Ishwara. As a result we will be able to progress towards development of dispassion towards the world and passion towards Brahman. This vairagya will eventually make us ever focus on Brahman even while perceiving the entire world. Thus jnaana is possible to be implemented through viveka and vairagya alone. Since viveka is only possible in human births therefore human birth is precious indeed and shouldn't be wasted for normal worldly pleasures. Instead human beings should strive to get rid of the cycle of birth and death through viveka-vairagya and knowledge.

Implementation of knowledge though appearing as very tough is very easy indeed if we are able to develop strong passion towards Brahman or Lord as pervading the entire world. Wherever there is strong passion or love, anything is possible. Thus when it is the middle of the night and we are sleeping deeply, we will still get up immediately and run to the doctor where our near and dear ones are in serious trouble. In the same way if we are very passionate about a movie star, then we will go very far and often stand in long queues in order to see the latest movie of the star. Thus anything is possible if there is true love. Such true passion towards Brahman or Ishwara is to be developed.

Though love towards Brahman can be easily attained through knowledge of the world to be temporary-sorrowful and Brahman to be eternal-bliss, still majority of people might find it very tough in today's world. In today's world, everybody is busy in their own world and therefore getting out of our world for even few moments is very tough. We find relationships including parents-children, partners, friends etc. falling apart in this busy world (or busy schedule of the world). Therefore implementation of knowledge is almost out of the question. And then we also have unfavorable elements in the form of false gurus all over the world today – thinking that we are progressing towards moksha if we follow them we will be taken in the wrong direction and our life will become filled with more sorrows than before.

If thus it is not easy to implement knowledge, then what is the easy way to progress towards moksha?

Naama keerthanam – singing the glories of the Lord

Though knowledge that one Lord or Brahman alone exists is the only way to moksha still such Ishwara can be very easily remembered through naama keerthanam or naama sankeerthanam. Thus Sankara quoting from purana in his Vishnu Sahasranama bhashya says that in kali yuga, Ishwara can be easily attained through naama sankeerthanam.

Naama sankeerthanam has different aspects or levels. The very basic is merely chanting the names of the world. A little higher level is singing the glories of the Lord (glories means activities of the Lord which are out-of-the-world and show the Lord to be all-knowing and all-pervasive). Hari naama keerthanam isn't mere singing of the Lord's names but singing of the glories of the Lord. In this we find that all the stories about the Lord or Lord's play has been explained. A little higher than just normal glories of the Lord is knowledge of the Lord as all-pervasive Brahman (the cause-substratum of the world and he who shines in our very heart as pure Consciousness). It is this higher devotion filled with knowledge that is true devotion (it is same as knowledge of Brahman) and will quickly lead a person to the goal of moksha through constant contemplation of not only Ishwara but Ishwara as pervading the entire world.

It is essential for the mind to first sing the names of the Lord so that the Lord's thought fills the mind but slowly the mind also need stories for only then love towards the Lord will be stronger to ward off all other distractions that can be got from the world. Eventually the Lord also has to be remembered as that Brahman which is the very essence of the entire

world. The knowledge that one Lord alone exists here is essential for moksha (as per scriptures this is knowledge – the one and only way to eternal bliss or moksha). It is this knowledge that will, automatically and in due course of time, lead to moksha here and now itself. Thus a devotee should slowly progress from mere singing of the names of the Lord to singing the glories of the Lord to remembrance of the Lord as all-pervasive Brahman – then such a devotee will slowly find bliss pervading the mind. Eventually such a devotee will be indifferent from the Lord (though external differences will be there, there will be no individuality for the devotee). Such a devotee is filled in and out with the Lord – therefore such a devotee truly fulfills the human birth by attaining moksha.

May we all strive to sing the glories of the Lord while remembering the Lord to be the ultimate non-dual reality of Brahman so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss in moksha here and now itself.

## Praadeshikam - II

### Kanda Shashti Kavacham - 4

*Amarar idar theera amaram purindha*

*Kumaranadi nenje kuri*

In the previous edition we saw prayer verse of Kanthar Shashti Kavacham. It is mostly a traditional way of starting any work with a prayer for auspiciousness so that the work started completes successfully. For people who chant this, the prayer verse will serve as the meditation verse to keep the Lord in the mind while chanting it so that the expected fruit can be obtained.

*Shashtiya noka saravanabhavanaar*

*Sishtarukudhavum senkathirvelon*

*Paadamirandil pan mani sathangai*

*Geetham paada kinkini aada*

*Mayya nadanam cheyyum mayilvaagananaar*

*Kayyil velaal ennai kaakavendru vandhu*

*Vara vara velaayudhanaar varuga*

*Varuga varuga mayilon varuga*

*Inthiran muthalaa enthisai potra*

*Mandira vadivel varuga varuga*

*I pray Lord Saravanabhava*

*Who holds red sun like Spear, who helps all devotees*

*With anklets tied to both feet that has numerous bells*

*Who moves his feet for the song with ringing anklets,*

*Oh Lord! Who rides on Peacock, who comes dancing*

*Please come with the spear in your hand to protect me*

*Lord, who is praised by everyone from Indira*

*One who is mystical, Please come!*

Scriptures say that everything in the world is pervaded in and out with Isvara. There is nothing in the world that is not pervaded by Isvara. Lord is the essence of everything we see in the world. Such a Lord who is in essence everything and who is the controller of the entire world always protects everyone and everything. Mahatmas or Jnanis are the only ones who know this truth clearly with firm conviction and hence Mahatmas are always

happy and never seek Lord for their own protection or well-being. But for those who don't know that Lord alone is the essence of everything see everything different from oneself and one another. Hence such a people get affected by things or people in the world. They either get overly joyed or overly sorrowed by people or things in the world. When people are experiencing happiness or sorrow in the world and are going through cycle again and again, they will not be able digest the scriptural truth that everything is pervaded by one Lord. They will not be able to even listen to this.

Lord tries various ways to divert the attention of people from worldly objects to the Lord. Everyone in the world want happiness and don't want sorrow. When a person is undergoing painful experience, the only thing he will have in his mind is to get rid of the pain. With the idea in the mind that Lord is the very powerful, when he worships the Lord, his sincere prayers would get answered with the removal of the painful experience. This would instill faith in the Lord and slowly would attract his mind towards the Lord. Thus, through these kind of works attracts the mind of everyone to plant the seed of devotion and thereby completely make them absorbed into the Lord slowly.

In the beginning of this work, the poet provides the description of Lord Muruga. Ordinary appearances normally doesn't stay in our mind. We see normal things in our day to day life but they don't stay in our mind after sometime. But if we see something extraordinary, they would stay in our mind for long time. Even if someone speaks about something extraordinary, we will try to visualize such a vision in our mind based on whatever the other person's description. In the beginning of this work, the poet provides description of Lord Muruga.

The Poet describes that Lord Muruga with the famous spear in his hand, with anklets in his feet that has many bells in it. Lord Muruga uses his spear to kill the asuras and the asuras are the evil that takes away our happiness. The Lord removes all evil using his spear and is always there to protect everyone. The fundamental evil of everyone is the ignorance that veils the vision of Lord everywhere. When the ignorance is removed, knowledge dawns that Lord alone is present. Lord will remove the veil of ignorance only when the devotee asks for it to be removed. Until that time, Lord will patiently wait and will grant all the boons the devotees ask for.

If we know of someone very powerful, we normally would feel much secured if we are closer to them. When we know that a Police officer is living near our house, we would feel much secured. Similarly if we know that Lord is with us, protecting us, there will not be any worry at all. This feeling should not make us arrogant, because Lord is not just protecting us from evil, Lord is protecting everyone and everything. Even though we know that Lord is with us and protecting us, Lord is doing this out of compassion. We can pay back nothing to Lord at all and only thing we can do is to remember Lord as much as possible. In order to remember Lord, we have to invite Lord to our mind in some way or the other. The poet says that Lord is dancing to the tunes of the song with the anklets in his feet and ringing them with dance. As mentioned above, whenever there is something extraordinary, mind gets attracted effortlessly and hence will easily remember it.

Thus, here the poet is inviting the Lord, to the mind, and therefore stay in the mind and protect from all evils. What kind of Lord? The Lord who is praised by everyone starting from Indira. Lord Muruga is considered as the head of the army for Devas and hence whenever Indira and other devas are attacked by Asuras, they seek the help of Lord Muruga for protection. It is not just people in distress who would praise the Lord, but the Mahatmas as well. Mahatmas praise the Lord for being so compassionate to provide His vision. So the poet says, Oh Lord who is the protector of everyone, who is praised by everyone, please come for my protection. Please be with me and protect me!

We will continue the work in the next edition.



## Vidyaa Samkshepa

### Knowledge

Previously we saw a summary of avidyaa so it is apt that we see a summary of vidyaa in this edition of the magazine. Just recapping, avidyaa is that which doesn't exist ultimately but empirically exists for a person who is ignorant. Such an ignorant person as a result of avidyaa experiences sorrow constantly. The problem with avidyaa is that it spans multiple births and hence the person goes from one birth to another while experiencing only sorrow. Therefore it is essential to get rid of avidyaa if it is experienced.

It cannot be argued that once got rid of avidyaa, still the external world which is effect of avidyaa exists – because avidyaa and the world doesn't really exist ultimately; they exist empirically but when they are known to be just illusions in Brahman, then what remains is Brahman alone. Once avidyaa is destroyed then the entire world is seen as one Brahman alone – therefore there is no world at all existing. But even if such an illusory world appears as existing, there is no harm at all. Even as water is seen again after knowing that there is no water in desert but for one who knows that there is no water there will be no sorrow, similarly once a person realizes that the external world doesn't exist at all then the person will not be affected at all (irrespective of whether the world is perceived or not).

The world provides us with different means to anything and everything. Therefore with respect to avidyaa as well there are many ways that people try to get rid of it. Some try through actions – normal actions, actions as service to others, actions like daana, yajna or vaidic actions etc. Some others try through pilgrimage trips or visits to various ashrams where realized masters have or are living currently. Yet others pray to the Lord in order to take them beyond sorrow- this prayer itself is of different types, some pray partially, some pray whole heartedly, others pray not for avidyaa but for worldly pleasures (not knowing that worldly pleasures are seeds of sorrow and will lead to sorrow alone in the long run).

Sometimes one birth passes by and yet another comes but still the same old-means or ways to get rid of avidyaa or sorrow is again retried with the same failure as previously. This goes on for many births. As Vidyananda says, a person goes from one birth to another suffering like a keeta (organism) in a river until a compassionate master pulls him out and puts him under the shades of a tree. Thus until we come to meet a compassionate master, all means to get rid of avidyaa will prove failures alone constantly.

Who are compassionate masters?

Compassionate masters aren't just those who are living now but those who guide us directly or indirectly (even through their words or books or works) from avidyaa to its own removal.

Such compassionate masters obviously are living embodiments of Brahman. Brahman is the one word to get rid of avidyaa. Here the one word means knowledge of Brahman. Brahman is the non-dual reality behind the entire illusory world (and avidyaa). Thus knowing Brahman will get rid of all sorrows caused by avidyaa (even as knowledge of desert will get rid of all sorrows caused by water seen in it).

What is the way to know Brahman?

This is where many so-called masters differ. The so-called masters may be realized but still they aren't proper Gurus for the shastras are very clear that it is only through a Guru that a person realizes his own Self. Though ultimately only Brahman exists, there requires a realized master to guide us. The master may be in physical presence or just in our mind as an idol along with his works. But realized master is inevitable. It can be argued that aren't such so-called masters realized so then wouldn't they be sufficient for moksha, but such argument is clearly answered by acharyas themselves.

In order to find out the answer we have to analyze as to how we can know Brahman. Brahman, in brief as we know, is the source-substratum of the illusory world that we are experiencing. Even if Brahman isn't accepted as substratum, Brahman has to be accepted as the source of the world. The source of the world is the creator and therefore he is all-knowing about the world. Such an all-knowing person can never be grasped through our mind (any person's mind in the world) as all minds are limited with respect to the world itself – then how can such limited mind that cannot even grasp fully few things of the world grasp that which is beyond the world and knows everything of the world? Thus all the worldly means cannot lead us to Brahman. Another reason why Brahman cannot be grasped is that it is the subject of all objects. All objects can be known but the subject can never be known as it is not subject to objectification.

But then it can be argued that I as the Subject am Brahman and therefore this is knowledge that leads to realization. Such arguments are also faulty because then anybody can claim himself to be Brahman and be realized while getting attached to the world like any worldly person. Thus it is essential to have a means that is without any fault (not even the faulty

mind can taint it). Such a means has to also be the essence of realized masters – this means that realized masters should know this mean and use it in order for their own and others realization.

This means of knowledge is the mother of sruthi or scriptures. Veda Vyaasa anticipating all such wrong views and objections answers it directly in Brahma Sutras through the sutra of “shastra yonitvaat” which means that scriptures are the source of Brahman. It isn't wrong to say that scriptures are the only source of Brahman.

If we look at the words of masters like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi and AMMA we will find that they are all resonances of the scriptures and these masters often ask disciples to learn the scriptures (which is the one and only way to know Brahman).

Before somebody starts arguing that Ramana Maharshi told to find out who I am rather than learn the scriptures, Maharshi's who am I enquiry (as has been explained by him) is the process of neti neti or not this, not this or negation as we find in the scriptures. Thus scriptures are the basis of Maharshi's instructions. Often Maharshi used to quote and explain from scriptural texts and other texts of masters like Sankara.

Maharshi's Upadesa Saram and Saddarshanam are clear essences of the scriptures – thus saying that Maharshi didn't go the shastra way and created the new path of self-enquiry is disrespecting Maharshi himself. And unlike others who claim to be disciples of Maharshi and preaching just to find out who I am and abide as I, Maharshi preached the age-old traditional path through scriptures.

Yes, through the words of other non-traditional masters too one may attain realization but wouldn't a person be a fool if he doesn't follow the ever-tested path of scriptures and follow the untested path and words of new masters?

Traditionally knowledge of Brahman is found only through the scriptures. It cannot be argued that Brahman is objectified in the scriptures because scriptures only hint or point out at Brahman directly or indirectly (rather than objectifying Brahman). Thus the Guru tells the shishya TAT TVAM ASI or You are That – here Brahman is pointed out as the subject of “I”, one's own Consciousness and therefore there is no objectification happening here.

Avidyaa causes a lot of sorrow in this and many more births. Therefore ardent sadhakas should always strive to get rid of avidyaa and all the sorrows caused due to avidyaa. Though knowledge is as simple as only Brahman exists, still it can be clearly understood and strengthened only through scriptures as scriptures are the only source of Brahman. Though realized masters are sources of Brahman their words are reflections of the scriptures and they are living embodiments of scriptures – thus they are as good as representatives of the scriptures.

Rather than following some people's words, we should strive to learn the scriptures with full faith and devotion. Many might argue that masters like AMMA preach only karma and bhakti – those who argue thus are really fools as they daily hear to the words of masters like AMMA that one has to learn the shastras, only Ishwara exists, it is due to lack of knowledge of scriptures that one gains sorrow and the propagation of learning of scriptures encouraged and followed regularly by masters like AMMA (in their own ashrams). Thus really wise people follow the path of the scriptures in order to get rid of avidyaa.

Now scriptures are very vast so how to follow them?

Scriptures themselves tell that knowledge has three steps of sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana. Sravana is listening to the scriptures with import on Brahman. Again and again listening to the scriptures will clear basic doubts in our mind and take our mind away from the external world to the ultimate reality of Brahman (else our mind will be focused on the world alone as majority of people whether they are in ashrams or in the world are occupied constantly with the thought of world at all times). But after listening as well there may be still doubts persisting – such doubts are removed through manana or reflection on the words of scriptures using logic. Logic here isn't some or the other hair-splitting logic but logic as prescribed by the scriptures and logic which is subservient or secondary to the scriptures (rather than itself being primary and twisting the scriptures to suit itself). Manana will remove all doubts with respect to spiritual path itself. But after this well, a person might find that theoretically everything is correct but practically there isn't still any experience of Brahman. Thus in order to gain practical or direct intuitive experience of Brahman, one needs to do nidhidhyasana which is constant contemplation of Brahman at all times.

Through constant contemplation of Brahman at all times, avidyaa and all its sorrows will be removed. Even though the world might still appear as existing, it will be known to be an illusion in Brahman like water in desert and the dream world. Thus eventually such a person

who does nidhidhyasana will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

The ultimate goal of life is to get rid of all sorrows and ever rejoice in bliss – this bliss isn't something that is newly attained or gained but it is one's very nature itself. This nature of bliss of oneself has been forgotten due to avidyaa (as to how and why, there is no answer at all as forgetting itself is an illusion alone, not real). Through vidyaa or knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures we will be able to get rid of this avidyaa and thereby will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

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

## Acharyasmrithi

### Hastamalaka

When we look at great realized masters of the past we can find two types of masters. One are those who are Gurus guiding ardent sadhakas towards the goal of moksha while themselves abiding in the goal of moksha. Second are those who themselves abide in the state of moksha and therefore aren't worried about the external world at all. The second set of people don't really care about the world or worldly people as for them one Brahman alone exists at all times.

Some of the second set of people follow the rules of the world whereas some ignore it totally. Those who don't even bother to follow the rules of the world are called avadhoothas and they should never be imitated as their actions are without any rules, hence a sadhaka will be easily misguided by them (though they will never give guidance to any person at all in the world – they will just live in the world like a mad person while internally remembering that one Brahman alone exists).

Few masters are those who are ever abiding as Brahman but still guide people whenever essential. Such masters who abide as Brahman at the highest level aren't capable of talking about anything other than Brahman. Though they will follow the rules of the world and even guide sadhakas still nothing apart from Brahman (or at least nothing very far away from Brahman can be got out of them). Sadhakas just need to sit in the presence of such masters and they will find themselves uplifted to the state of the Self instantly (provided there is openness of the mind, no preconceived notions exist in the mind) – this is similar to a person feeling hot while sitting near fire. These masters constantly spread the bliss and peace of Brahman which can be experienced by any person. Such masters presence therefore should be used for sadhanas like dhyana, japa etc. which would easily take sadhakas towards the goal of moksha (without any instruction verbally obtained from such masters).

One such great master who was a disciple of Adi Sankaracharya was Hastamalakacharya. As evident from just one short work of his, his state was that of Brahman at the highest level. That there was even any scope for duality to be assumed can be easily negated by looking at his work.

### History

When Sankara was doing digvijaya he came across a village in south where a father approached him saying that his son wouldn't talk at all and that due to his grace, the son's dumbness should vanish. As Krishna says in Gita, that which is day for jnanis is night for normal people. The father wasn't able to see through the elevated realized state of his son and thought that the son was dumb unlike other worldly people. Sankara was able to see through the realized state of the son. And therefore Sankara asks few questions to the child hearing which the child explodes with beautiful slokas on Vedanta.

Here we find as to how great masters are able to bring out the indwelling Self of the nature of knowledge outside. Sankara's asking of questions triggered the child to explode with words about Brahman. This is a symbolic way of showing all sadhakas that the Self or Brahman is ever inside us in the form of knowledge. There is nothing new to be gained from anywhere – whatever is there alone has to be known or uncovered. But in order to uncover the Self, ignorance has to be removed and this happens through knowledge and presence of the Guru. Here presence doesn't mean physical presence but spiritual presence or spiritual proximity attained as a result of surrender from the sadhaka unto the Guru. The guru's presence and knowledge being imparted removes ignorance and the sadhaka realizes his own very nature of Self – which was ever there but as if veiled by clouds of ignorance.

We can ask as to why the questions of anybody didn't evoke any response from the child but only from Sankara it evoked a response. The answer is that only a realized master can evoke knowledge-filled words from a sadhaka (here the sadhaka himself is a realized master). Even as only one lit lamp can light another lamp, similarly only a realized master can trigger realization in another person (others might try their best to evoke realization but it will not happen – therefore today we have people following various so-called masters and implementing just being the Self, though it appears as working it never leads to eternal bliss as eternal bliss through realization is only possible from a guru who imparts us with knowledge as found in the scriptures).

It shouldn't be forgotten that a true guru or realized master will never go against the scriptures and will consider the scriptures (Upanishads) as the ultimate source of knowledge. Such a master will always believe and follow that scriptures alone are the source of knowledge (realization) – there is absolutely no other way that realization can happen other than through knowledge as found from the scriptures.

Sankara himself was a strict traditionalist maintaining the view that scriptures alone will lead to knowledge that removes ignorance and makes us realize our very nature of blissful Self. But through the words of Hastamalaka we can see clearly that he himself was such a traditionalist alone.

Now, there is a story maintained that shows as to how the small child was filled with knowledge at a very young age itself. Long ago, one sage was meditating at the shades of a tree near the shores of a river. A couple came there to take bath with their very young child. They left the child there asking the sage to take care of the child (they didn't realize the sage was in deep meditation). Opening his eyes, the sage found that the child had fallen into the water and drowned. Feeling very sad for the couple, the sage renounced his body and got into the body of the child. Thus when the couple came out of the river after taking bath, they didn't find their child lost but that the child wouldn't speak at all. The child wouldn't speak at all as it knew the futility of words with respect to the world. One who has found eternal bliss in the ultimate reality of Brahman wouldn't find any value in petty pleasures of the world (even as a person who finds a treasure chest in his home will not go outside to work for petty cash).

Since the child knew everything and had very clear knowledge like an amla fruit on one's palms therefore Sankara named the child Hastamalaka. Telling the father that such a child will not be of any help in the world, Sankara accepting Hastamalaka as his disciple takes him along. Hastamalaka thus became one of the four main disciples of Sankara.

### Hastamalakeeya

This is one work many people generally stay away from due to its very high level of knowledge. But truly speaking this is a very simple work which explains all the tenets of Advaita Vedanta using simple analogies as well. Containing just under 20 slokas, this work is an answer to the questions posed by Sankara. Though Sankara's questions were normal ones yet the answers are from an ultimate perspective (showing that Sankara knowingly posed the questions in order to bring out knowledge from the mouth of this great master of Hastamalaka).

We find Hastamalaka repeating again and again in each sloka that I am that Self of the nature of being ever-present. This definition of the Self as that which ever-exists is enough



for sadhakas to not only know the Self but also to realize the Self. Many people run hither and thither trying to find out what is the Self – many others run hither and thither trying to find out the ways to realize the Self – many in this process go from one guru to another, one scripture to another; there are others who even after learning all the scriptures aren't able to get any eternal bliss or moksha. Thus they get dejected with themselves and delude others also into believing that there is nothing called Self at all.

We find in this work no scope for karma or bhakti or yoga etc. – though ultimate devotion is one with jnaana, here bhakti means lower type of devotion as per the world which is part-time devotion alone (thus foolishly many, even those in ashrams, say that he is devoted – why? Because he goes to temple daily, because he sits in front of a master like amma constantly – how foolish to define devotion so wrongly when it has been beautifully defined by the Lord in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter). To avoid any wrong notions, the scriptures clearly repeat again and again that realization is only possible through knowledge (knowledge and knowledge alone – there is no other way to realization). This emphasis on knowledge is what we find in the work of Hastamalakeeya. Since there is no deviation at all from knowledge and Brahman, therefore sadhakas who want moksha will find this work guiding them quickly towards moksha.

Another greatness of this work is that it is also explanation of concepts gradually through analogies and yet it is also a work for contemplation purposes. One who learns this work and then contemplates regularly on the sloka will find his knowledge getting clarified and strengthened. Through intellectual conviction about Brahman, such a person will be able to attain moksha soon itself through contemplation of Brahman (without any doubts at all in the mind).

Lastly, the greatness of this work also lies in the fact that it has been commented upon by Sankara himself. Though controversial and many may refute, still if it is true it is the only case where the Guru has written a commentary on the shishyas work. Sankara would have felt definitely that this work is very great indeed and hence alone took up the job of writing a commentary on it (to bring out its essence more clearly even for normal people to understand).

It can definitely be said, without any doubt, that any sadhaka who wants to attain moksha would have to learn and contemplate on this work of Hastamalaka, if moksha is required soon itself and in this very birth itself.

May we all offer our prostrations to the great master of Hastamalaka and may we try to learn the work of Hastamalakeeya (it is through learning of the works of masters that we pay them real tribute) so that through gaining knowledge we will be able to attain the goal of moksha and ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

करामलकवज्ञानं यस्यरूपंस्वतोऽप्येव ।

शंकरस्य च शिष्यो यः तं हस्तामलकं वन्दे ॥

karāmalakavajñānam yasyarūpaṁsvato'pyeva |  
śaṅkarasya ca śiṣyo yaḥ taṁ hastāmalakaṁ vande ||

One whose very nature definitely is knowledge like an amla fruit in one's hand and one who is the disciple of Sankara, that Hastamalaka I prostrate.

## Vedanta Pariksha

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

- 1) Who wrote the famed Kalpataru Parimalam on Bhamati sub-commentary of Sankara's Brahma Sutra Bhasya (hint is that this same acharya wrote the famed kuvalayananda poetic text)?
  - a) Vachaspati Mishra
  - b) Anandagiri
  - c) Appayya Dikshitar
  - d) Chitsukhacharya
- 2) Who wrote the tikas on Sankara's bhashyas on prasthaana traya?
  - a) Vachaspati Mishra
  - b) Anandagiri
  - c) Atmasukha
  - d) Chitsukha
- 3) Who summarized Sureshwaracharya's Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya Vartika (hint is that this acharya wrote a fifteen chaptered introductory text of Vedanta which is inevitable for any sadhaka to learn Vedanta fully)?
  - a) Vachaspati Mishra
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Anandagiri
  - d) Sri Harsha
- 4) Which acharya of Sringeri wrote a commentary on Sankara's Vivekachoodamani?
  - a) Bharati Teertha
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Chandrasekhara Bharati
  - d) Abhinava Vidya Teertha
- 5) Which acharya of kanchi wrote a commentary on Sankara's Soundarya Lahari?
  - a) Jayendra Saraswati
  - b) Chandrasekharendra Saraswati
  - c) Sarvajnaatman
  - d) Sadaasivendra Saraswati
- 6) Which acharya singlehandedly lead to nyaaya system being rewrote as Navya Nyaaya by Gangesha Upaadhyaya?

- a) Chitsukha
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Sri Harsha
  - d) Atmabodha
- 7) Which baala Krishna bhakta acharya wrote the famed Advaita Siddhi which is an answering of objections raised by Vyaasa Teertha in Nyaayaamritam?
- a) Madhusudana Saraswati
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Appayya Dikshitar
  - d) Vachaspati Mishra
- 8) Who is the recent sringeri acharya who lived his last years as an avadhoota and was found in the water in padmasana (jala samaadhi)?
- a) Abhinava Vidya Teertha
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Chandrasekhara Bharati
  - d) Sureshwaracharya
- 9) Who was the acharya who reinstated kaladi (also wrote the gurupaduka stotram)?
- a) Chandrasekhara Bharati
  - b) Vidyaranya
  - c) Sacchidanda Sivaabhinava Nrsimha Bharati
  - d) Bharati Teertha
- 10) Who wrote the famed Siddhantalesa Sangraha which is an encyclopedia of advaita acharya's views (he also wrote the Kalpataru Parimala)?
- a) Vachaspati Mishra
  - b) Anandagiri
  - c) Appayya Dikshitar
  - d) Chitsukhacharya

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. d Brahman
2. b Tat Tvam Asi
3. b Kutastha
4. b Samsaara
5. b Sat Chit Ananda
6. c Yoga
7. b Cause of the world
8. a 5
9. c Temporary and Sorrowful
10. c Avidyaa

Marks for quiz

Aparna - 10

Nikhila - 9

Sunanda amma - 9

Congrats to all who answered this confusing set of questions and congrats also to scoring very good marks in the same☺.

## Anukramaanika Nirdesham

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

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

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