

Vedanta Madhuryam

Salutations to all.

Yet another month has started. Time, as Sankara says, is flying by but still desires aren't ending in our minds as desire can only be ended through knowledge and knowledge alone. Manu says that trying to put an end to desire through enjoying it is like trying to extinguish fire by pouring ghee onto it. The more one pours ghee, the more vigorously fire will burn rather than being extinguished. Similarly the more one fulfills desires, more desires will be created in the mind. This will go on without any end. If we think that death puts an end to desires then we are wrong – desires, as vasanas, continue from one birth to another. Thus many births have passed by without desires ending. When one desire ends, ten desires spring up in its place.

Taking a simple example, the desire to buy a car doesn't end with buying a car. Once car is bought, then it has to be maintained therefore maintenance charges are there. And in order to fill the car with people, more desires are encouraged and tried to be fulfilled. This applies to not just buying a car but with respect to all desires. The desire to marry doesn't end with marriage as then one has to get a proper job in order to take care of the family; a little later, desire for children springs up. Then children have to be taken care of or brought up. When they grow of age, then children have to be married. When children are married, then desire for grand children starts. And this goes on without any end.

Thus the Upanishads say that those who desire for things will be born again and again here itself but those who are able to conquer desires they will overcome all sorrow and will attain the state of moksha.

It isn't easy to get rid of desires as constantly they are created in our mind and with full fervor as well. The only way to get rid of desires is through knowledge – that knowledge which will make us realize our very nature of blissful Brahman. Realizing Brahman a person puts an end to all desires and thereby ever rejoices in bliss at all times.

Moksha or ever rejoicing in bliss is only possible through knowledge. Knowledge is only through the scriptures. There is no other way to know Brahman than through the scriptures. Many people think that there are different paths or ways to gain moksha or knowledge. The

scriptures repeat again and again that there is no other way to moksha than knowledge of the scriptures.

Today we are in a world where many so-called realized masters create new paths for the benefit of people. Many of these don't require intellect or even any effort; sadhakas should be beware of such people as there is no way to eternal bliss than through learning of the scriptures. All other paths will only make us ready or eligible to learn the scriptures. Whatever need be said about the spiritual path towards moksha has already been mentioned long ago itself and there is nothing new that can be added by any person. Hence whenever AMMA is questioned about different masters, AMMA just replies saying that all preach the path of moksha and there is nothing new to be said here, everything has already been said clearly (and beyond doubt) in the scriptures.

Wise sadhakas understanding that the way to moksha is through knowledge of scriptures should start learning the scriptures and follow the trio of sravana or listening to the scriptures, manana or reflecting on the scriptures and nidhidhyasana or contemplation on the truth of the scriptures (Brahman). Repeatedly remaining focused on sravana, manana and nidhidhyasana, a person will soon be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to attain the blissful state of moksha. All efforts in life should be to fulfill life itself through realizing one's very nature of Brahman (soon itself).

Time flies by very soon and we don't know where we will be born or what we will be born as; therefore all effort should be in order to attain moksha. No time is to be wasted as the very next moment we may face death and the end of a beautiful life where familiarity with Vedanta and moksha has been provided (due to God's grace).

It is the aim of this magazine to instigate sadhakas to learn the system of Vedanta, system of scriptures so that through more and more learning Vedanta they will be able to implement it in their lives and eventually, before this birth ends, they will be able to attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha.

Some people think that the system of Vedanta is only for intellectual people – this is wrong. Vedanta is for each and every person in the world as it is realizing one's very nature of Brahman. Therefore there cannot be any eligibility criteria for Vedanta. Each and every

person should strive to attain moksha (as else they are fools who don't know their very nature of Brahman).

Due to lack of time in between magazines therefore we will see Madhuryam being released around the 10th and the 25th of a month from now onwards.

May we all strive to learn the system of Vedanta so that through implementation of Vedanta in day-to-day life so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

AUM NAMA SHIVAYA

Apr 11th

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Vichaara Siddhi - II

Ultimate goal of life - bliss

We have seen time and again previously as to the ultimate goal of life being moksha of the nature of eternal bliss untainted by sorrow. Though from our current state, moksha is also called as a state, it isn't a state but it is that which alone exists at all times (changeless substratum of the changing world). Since ultimately one Brahman alone exists therefore everything that we see now is just an illusion of names and forms in Brahman. The moment we forget Brahman, that very moment we will experience only sorrow as names and forms are not real. That which isn't real will vanish after a period of time – therefore it will give only temporary happiness; temporary happiness is sorrow alone in the long run. Therefore wise people realizing the world to be temporary and sorrowful will not go behind pleasures of the world. Instead they will search for Brahman as the substratum of the world seeking eternal bliss.

It is only when we attain this ultimate goal of life reaching which there is no return to the sorrowful state that our life is fulfilled. Until this time, we will be taking birth over and over again. We will be going through the cycle of birth and death until this ultimate desire is fulfilled. Hence the scriptures say that those who have desires will be born again here itself in order to fulfill those desires but those who are able to overcome desires, they will attain the state of bliss here itself.

As Manu beautifully says desires cannot be ended through enjoyment; instead it can only be ended through achieving the ultimate goal of life – realization of Brahman as the substratum of the world of names and forms.

If Brahman is the substratum of the world, how can we realize Brahman?

We saw previously that realization of Brahman is possible through vichaara or enquiry alone. When we don't know something then we enquire into it. Enquiry leads to knowledge of the entity. In the same way, realization of Brahman or knowledge of Brahman is possible through enquiry into Brahman alone – karma or bhakti or yoga or any other means will not lead to realization of Brahman but enquiry and enquiry alone will lead to realization of Brahman.

Enquiry of the world leads us to the truth that the world is temporary and sorrowful so wouldn't enquiry into Brahman also lead to the same conclusion?

No, as Brahman is eternal and changeless substratum of the world. The changing world requires a changeless substratum and this substratum needs to be eternal for it to be changeless. Thus Brahman isn't temporary but ever-existing as the same.

What is the way of enquiry?

Enquiry is split into two parts – first is the negation and second is the assertion. Brahman is not only the substratum of the entire world but is the Consciousness that pulsates inside us as I-exist, I-exist at all times. Advaita Makaranda says that I always exist, am shining and am never hated or disliked; therefore I am Brahman of the nature of Existence. Consciousness and Bliss. That Brahman which is the substratum of the entire world is the I that pulsates constantly inside each one of us. In order to realize this I we have to negate everything that is not I.

The entire world of experience can be split into two of subject and object. The subject is the one who experiences the objects. Objects cannot exist without the subject but the subject can exist without objects. It is like saying that the body wears dresses but the body isn't dress – the body can remain without dress too. Some people put makeup for the face and other parts of the body, therefore deluding others into thinking that they are beautiful. But if we want to know real beauty of a person then makeup should be removed and then the body should be judged. True judging of the body is only after removing of dress and other components that aren't the body. Similarly objects have to be removed in order to reach the subject.

The subject is always experiencing objects so why not analyze the subject when objects are there?

Subject when objects are there isn't in his true state and only when objects are removed will we know the true state of the subject. We cannot know the true nature of a politician as long as he is in power as he will do things in order to please others. The moment power goes from the politician then we can judge whether he is a good person or a bad person. Similarly with objects, the subject cannot be properly judged and therefore should only be judged without objects.

Does the subject ever exist without objects?

Daily we experience the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. In the waking and the dream state, objects are present but in the deep sleep state there are no objects at all. It cannot be argued that objects are present in the deep sleep state but just not experienced – that which is experienced is called an object, since there is no experience at all therefore it means that no objects are present. The scriptures also support this by saying that there is no duality in the deep sleep state therefore there is nothing for the subject to experience.

Does the subject exist in the deep sleep state?

The subject does exist for after waking up there is the recognition or recollection of one sleeping well without knowing anything. Thus in the deep sleep state the subject was there without any objects.

Now tracing back from the deep sleep state to the dream state and waking state, we find that mind is the first object in the dream state. Mind gets into thoughts and therefore creates an entire new world. Mind and thoughts are thus objects alone.

Don't people say that I think and therefore I exist?

It is a foolish statement as without thinking too I can exist and I do exist in the deep sleep state (there are also times when we don't think anything and still exist – there is a just a blank moment in front of us).

Mind and thoughts are subtle in nature – anything subtle can never remain subtle for long and therefore it takes a gross form. Therefore we come to the waking state where the gross objects are present (instead of the subtle objects of the mind). Gross objects can be perceived only with help from the sense organs of action and perception, along with the vital forces and the gross body. Thus all of these are objects of the subject of I.

Negation – neti neti

First step to realization of Brahman is to negate all objects. Everything that is an object has to be negated. Objects, as we have analyzed, include the external world of gross objects, the gross body, the vital forces, the sense organs and the mind (the mind here includes the thinking faculty of mind, discriminating faculty of intellect and storing faculty of memory).

All these are objects and therefore not me or I as the subject. This assertion through the mind and intellect is negation. Without this negation we cannot realize our very nature of Brahman. Many people repeat themselves that "I am Brahman" but aren't able to experience the bliss of Brahman. The reason is that they aren't able to negate the objects from the subject of Brahman. As long as objects are identified or associated with the subject (in the form of I and mine), there will be no happiness at all. This is because objects are temporary and sorrowful. Though I or Brahman is eternal and blissful, still association with objects leads to sorrow as objects are sorrowful.

Though I might be a very good person still association with bad people will automatically make me bad. Similarly when the subject is associated with objects, there will be experience of sorrow alone and therefore association with objects has to be negated or removed.

Negation isn't externally but in the mind alone. Nobody can remove the body or the world as they don't even exist but one should just assert always that I am not the body and I don't possess the body; I am not the world and I don't possess the world – both exist temporarily and are just illusions alone (I am a mere witness of everything).

When we negate everything, finally we come to the entity of I. Removal of identification and association with false I is the toughest step in spirituality. Hence Gita says that one who has no ego and one whose intellect doesn't stick on to anything (association), though he might kill the entire world, he doesn't kill at all. Sankara says that a person who has no sense of I and mine, he is a knower of the Self that very moment and even though he may not want, still he attains moksha.

Two I's

The normal I that we experience at all times is one who is associated with the body, mind and the world of objects and people. Advaita Makaranda says that this I is not real I or the Self as it is constantly changing, limited and experiences sorrow. The real I exists as itself at all times, is unlimited and ever blissful. Thus both are contrary in nature, like darkness and light. But still they are mixed together because the moment we think or consider the world to be real, that very moment the ego or false I comes into existence. This false I superimposes itself on the real I of Self. And thereby starts all sorrow.

In order to get rid of the false I, a person has to first negate the entire world and once the world of objects are negated then automatically ego I has to be negated as there is nothing to get associated or identified with it. Through repetitive contemplation alone one will gain conviction that I am not the false I but the real I of Self. Until that time, one has to again and again follow the process of enquiry into I (or Who am I).

Assertion of the Self

Once all objects are negated, we shouldn't think that there is void or nothing remaining behind. What remains behind is the subject who is the negator and cannot be negated. Can one negate oneself? Definitely no. One can negate the entire world but not oneself. Thus after negation, what remains behind is the Self. This Self is not void but it is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. It is that which alone exists at all times and pulsates as I-exist, I-exist. It is this I that remains changeless from the day of birth till the day of death (and further too). Though the objects including ego I are constantly changing and undergo vanishing and reappearing, the subject of Self is ever present as the mere witness and illuminator of them all.

Vidyaranya thus says in Panchadashi that the witness Self is like the lamp in a theatre; the lamp illumines everything that is happening in the theatre including the actors on stage and audience. But the lamp remains unaffected irrespective of whether audience like the drama or not. And the lamp exists at all times irrespective of whether drama is happening or not. Similarly the witness Self exists at all times irrespective of whether objects are there or not (when objects are there, it is the witness-illuminator of them and when objects aren't there, it is pure Consciousness, one without a second).

Ramana Maharshi when questioned whether he is in savikalpa or nirvikalpa samaadhi (with thoughts or objects and without thoughts or objects) answered that when eyes are open it is savikalpa samaadhi and when eyes are closed, it is nirvikalpa samaadhi – at all times there is sahaja or natural samaadhi or absorption in the Self.

The Self – always present

Though the Self alone always exist it is unknown and as a result enquiry is essential. Enquiry is into that which is real or exists at all times without any change. Everything else is not worth enquiring as enquiry itself will keep changing. We thus find that enquiry into the world and its origin has only lead to confusions for scientists and worldly people; one day

the world is created from a big bang, next it is contracting and next it is expanding. These views will further be contradicted and corrected time and again. This is because no enquiry is possible into that which isn't real. The world is unreal like water in desert – any analysis of water in desert will be futile as it doesn't exist. One moment it might appear as with waves, the next minute it might appear as calm and the next minute it will vanish itself. Therefore the Lord says in Gita that the nature of the world cannot be known, as such, from here (within the world). The only thing we can say about the world is that it is temporary and sorrowful.

Through this fact of the world being temporary and sorrowful we will be able to go to its changeless substratum. Thereby we can assert that the illusory world is nothing but the substratum of Brahman alone. Differences are mere names and forms that make it appear very real; really and ultimately the entire world is one Brahman and Brahman alone.

Since Brahman alone exists, therefore enquiry has to be on Brahman and Brahman alone. No other enquiry is worth (and will only lead to sorrow).

Ramana Maharshi and vichaara

No analysis of enquiry or vichaara (which we started from last edition of magazine) is complete without analysis of the words of Ramana Maharshi's followers. Many followers of Maharshi claim that Maharshi created a new path of aatmavichaara – this means that such a path wasn't there before his time. They also claim that as per Maharshi's words or path, there is no necessity of learning the scriptures – instead one just needs to do vichaara here and now itself.

Though theoretically it is right that just doing vichaara here is enough for moksha, this isn't the case. Vichaara as we have learnt here isn't merely asking the question of "Who am I" – vichaara is analysis of "I" and this analysis involves logic that uses negation of all objects and assertion of the Self of "I". For both negation and assertion, it is required to learn the scriptures or at least the tenets of the scriptures because nowhere else we can find both explained elsewhere than in the scriptures.

Brahma Sutras and Sankara clearly explain that Brahman or Atman or Self can be known through the scriptures and scriptures alone. No other means can illuminate the Self. There may be masters in the world who preach a path different from the scriptures but all paths

only set the stage for knowledge and knowledge alone can give us moksha (as moksha is veiled by ignorance). Knowledge is only found in the scriptures (scriptures are the only source of Brahman). Though it can be argued that realized masters and their words are living embodiments of the scriptures, but still it shows that the scriptures are the primary source of knowledge. And any realized master will bring our focus unto the scriptures (and learning of the scriptures as that is the only real way to attain the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss).

Maharshi and Sankara

Maharshi while translating Sankara's works into tamil found the works very well known and therefore he said that it is as though the original Sanskrit works were written by himself (rather than somebody other than himself). Thus we find that Maharshi follows the path prescribed by the scriptures. Maharshi is considered as an avatara of Dakshinamurthy who again symbolizes knowledge of the scriptures as he is considered as the first guru to have taught knowledge of the Self to the four disciples of the sages of sanaka etc. Therefore we clearly find that Maharshi doesn't deviate from the scriptural path as he is one of the traditional gurus to have treaded this earth.

Maharshi and works

Maharshi wrote many works but the most important two are Upadesa Saram and Saddarshanam. The former was written in Sanskrit and is a summary of the various paths and is an essence of the instructions of the scriptures. In this work of 30 small and simple slokas, Maharshi explains the various different paths of karma, bhakti, yoga and jnaana beautifully. We find that Maharshi gives emphasis to knowledge in this as knowledge alone takes us beyond triputi or all duality itself (knower, known and action of knowledge).

When we analyze these two and other works of Maharshi we find that they are in tune or sync with the scriptures. The concepts explained by Maharshi in no way contradicts the scriptures and they also don't put forth an entirely new path of aatmavichaara – instead they only re-emphasize or re-state the path of knowledge as propounded in the scriptures. Thus it is very clear that Maharshi didn't propagate a new path distinct from the scriptures and learning of the scriptures.

Maharshi's words

It can be argued that Maharshi in his words clearly propounds a path of enquiry which isn't to be found in the scriptures; this argument is totally wrong as each and every statement of Maharshi can be corroborated from the scriptures.

Aatma vichaara or self-enquiry has been explained as the way to know the Self (attain realization) by Sankara in Vivekachoodamani and Yoga Vasista. Though the exact term of vichaara may not appear in many scriptural texts but through jnaana or knowledge, what is meant by the scriptures is enquiry into the Self or Brahman alone. This is clearly known through the very first sutra of Brahma Sutra which says that we have to know Brahman (means we have to enquire into Brahman) and the second sutra which defines Brahman.

If it be argued that just abiding as the Self is a new path or theory propounded by Maharshi, this isn't true; Vidyaranya clearly uses the word of vichaara and says that abiding as the Self is moksha (in the tenth chapter).

Maharshi – the true Advaitin Guru

Thus we can conclude that Ramana Maharshi is the true Advaita Guru who preached and lived the scriptures. It is thus unwanted and unwarranted to consider that he preached a new path which is different from the scriptures and which doesn't have anything to do with learning of the scriptures. Such people who claim to be followers, disciples and devotees of Maharshi are in fact disrespecting Maharshi and they will never be able to attain the goal of moksha through vichaara – true vichaara is learning and implementation of the scriptures each and every minute of our life. It is only when a person is able to live the truth of the scriptures that the person abides as a true disciple or devotee of Maharshi and such a person alone gives the real tribute to Maharshi.

May we all offer our prostrations unto the great master of Maharshi remembering him to be a true Guru whose words are resonances of the scriptures and whose life is as per the scriptures so that we will be able to through following his words and works attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha through self-enquiry.

May we all strive to do self-enquiry through knowledge that I am Brahman-Self which is the changeless substratum of the changing illusory world so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Anumaanas used

देहो नाहं, दृक्स्वरूपत्वात् तस्य विषयत्वाच्च, नाटकदीपवत् ।१।

deho nāhaṁ, dṛkṣvarūpatvāt tasya viṣayatvācca, nāṭakadīpavat|1|

1. I am not the body, due to being of the nature of Seer and it being a vishaya or object, like lamp in a theatre (is a mere witness and subject).

पञ्चकोशाः नाहं, तस्य विषयत्वात् जडत्वाच्च मम चैतन्यस्वरूपत्वाच्च, ब्रह्मवत् ।२।

pañcakōśāḥ nāhaṁ, tasya viṣayatvāt jaḍatvācca mama caitanyasvarūpatvācca, brahmavat|2|

2. I am not the pancha koshas, due to they being objects and insentient and my nature being that of Consciousness (or sentience), like Brahman.

अहमात्मा इत्येव विचारः, वस्तुत्वात्, ब्रह्मवत् ।३।

ahamātmā ityeva vicāraḥ, vastutvāt, brahmavat|3|

3. Vichara or self-enquiry is “I am the Self”, due to being vastu or real, like Brahman (that which is real alone is to be enquired or can be enquired into).

Summarizing Sloka

विषयाः नेति मार्गेण त्यजेत्सदा विचारेण ।

अहं ब्रह्मेति भावाच्च आप्तुयात्मानवो मोक्षम् ॥

viṣayāḥ neti mārgēṇa tyajetsadā vicāreṇa|

ahaṁ brahmeti bhāvācca āpnuyātmānavo mokṣam||

Through the path of neti neti or not-this, not-this; that is, through vicaara or self-enquiry, a person should renounce all objects (their status as being real); also through the notion that I am Brahman a person should attain the goal of moksha.

Chathussutra Prakaashah

Shareeraka Nyaaya Sangraha

Fourth Sutra

शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ।

śāstrayonitvāt

Because shastras are the source (of Brahman).

We finished the third sutra with the commentary of Prakaashatman previously. Now we come to the final sutra of the first four sutras.

Recap of three sutras

It is essential to understand the first three sutras before getting into the fourth sutra as there is a continuity that has to be maintained. Continuity between two sutras is termed as sangati in the context of brahma sutras.

The first sutra introduced the term of Brahman while saying that a person has to develop the desire to know Brahman. Knowledge of Brahman alone will put an end to all desires. Constantly we are struggling in life in order to get to the ultimate goal of life as complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss. This ultimate goal of life is only possible from an entity which is eternal in nature. This eternal entity realizing which we will be able to attain the ultimate goal of life is termed as Brahman in the scriptures (that which is huge and is seen as the entire world).

When we try to drill down the entire experience spectrum we end up with just two entities of Subject and Object. Subject is only one whereas Object is many. Subject is eternal and changeless whereas Objects are constantly changing. We are generally only focused on objects in the world. Education also focuses only on objects and therefore though we have people with multiple degrees, post graduates and even doctorates, still they are all in the plane of objects alone. Therefore even such people have no knowledge about the Subject – not even a clue that there is something called a Subject.

Since objects are many therefore there are infinite possibilities to try out objects to see if they give us eternal bliss. But as time passes by a person realizes in the harder way that

objects lead only to sorrow as they are ever changing. Brahma Sutras thus say that once we have tried all means in the world and none of them lead to eternal bliss, therefore we have to develop the desire to know Brahman as Brahman is the eternal subject of all objects.

There is no adhikaari or eligible person for realization of Brahman as Brahman is the very nature of each and every person. But in order to realize Brahman, there are some prerequisites to be followed even as there are prerequisites to any activity in the world. This prerequisite is categorized into four by Sankara as the saadhana chathustayam and includes viveka or discrimination between real and unreal, vairagya or dispassion towards the temporary-sorrowful world, shamaadi or the six qualities of the mind and mumukshutva or burning desire for liberation. Without these prerequisites even though there might be desire to realize Brahman in the mind, such desire will not get fulfilled and a person will not even be able to start towards fulfillment of the desire.

We see many people in the world who have the desire to know Brahman but since they don't possess these four prerequisites therefore they aren't able to progress even little towards knowing Brahman.

How can we know that we are progressing towards realization of Brahman?

Even as a person who goes towards fire will feel the heat of fire increasing gradually, similarly a person who progresses towards Brahman will find the bliss of Brahman gradually increasing. Thus the more one progresses in the spiritual path, a person will become more blissful. Bliss also means contentment, satisfaction and peace. Such a person will be ever blissful or rejoicing at all times irrespective of where he is or what he is doing.

Once the prerequisites are gained, then a person has to start knowing Brahman. Now what is Brahman? A general idea is necessary in order to start knowing about Brahman. Brahman is therefore defined in the second sutra.

As we have seen earlier, Brahman can be defined in many ways but since we are always focused on the external world therefore the apt definition of Brahman is that it is the cause of the world or Brahman is that from which the world has come, in which the world resides and unto which the world merges after its destruction. This definition of Brahman is called thatastha lakshana or definition with respect to something else – such relative definition isn't ultimate as it is depended upon something else. In this case, Brahman's definition

depends upon the world but the world itself is temporary and therefore ultimately unreal. Therefore such thatastha lakshana is valid only empirically or at the world level – not at the ultimate level (where Brahman alone exists). Example of thatastha lakshana is identifying a house as that on which a crow is sitting. The crow will fly away after a while and hence the definition isn't a permanent one.

The permanent definition of any entity is defining it by its nature. Brahman by nature is defined as Existence, Consciousness, Bliss and Infinite or unlimited. This is the real definition of Brahman but such real definitions are tough to grasp as we are focused on the world.

When we perceive the world, its cause of Brahman cannot be perceived. When Brahman is perceived, the world isn't perceived as such. Thus both are contrary in nature. Since majority of people are focused on the world therefore definition of Brahman as the cause of the world is apt. It is taking such people from the world unto Brahman.

Brahman by being the cause of the world is also the substratum of the world. This is because the world is temporary and changing; therefore the world is just an illusion in its changeless substratum of Brahman even as a variable is just an illusion in a constant at any point of time. Vedanta uses the analogy of gold objects, mud objects etc. to show that the world is just an illusion of names and forms in Brahman even as all gold ornaments are gold alone and all objects of mud are mud alone. An ignorant person sees names and forms considering them as real; therefore he experiences sorrow. But a learned person sees names and forms as just illusions in the real entity and therefore he ever rejoices in bliss at all times (like the goldsmith who is unaffected by gold taking various names and forms as he knows that gold alone exists).

Defining Brahman alone is not enough, it is also essential to prove that Brahman is the ultimate reality behind the world and that which will take us to the state of eternal bliss. While proving Brahman's nature, it is also important to mention the means of realization of Brahman.

When the world of duality is perceived there are infinite possibilities even for moksha. Thus we have new-new paths created by people every day for moksha. A new master comes and starts preaching his own way to moksha. True realized masters like AMMA will always hold

the truth that they aren't preaching anything, for everything has already been preached in the scriptures; they are just re-iterating the words of the scriptures (maybe suit them to current situations through examples and analogies catering to current world). But there will always be followers who will stick on to masters thinking their physical body and words to be true. Thus such followers will claim that their masters are the best in the world and are creating new paths for moksha. All such wrong notions which will take us downhill (and away from moksha) has to be avoided and this is done in Brahma Sutras through mentioning of the one and only way to moksha.

The third sutra says that Brahman is proven through the scriptures – this means that scriptures are the one and only source of Brahman. Brahman being the Subject of all objects cannot be objectified by any means. The only way to know Brahman is through the scriptures as they are the mirror to seeing our own Self as Brahman.

Scriptures are the breath of Brahmaa and are eternal – they are without any author, this means that nobody created the scriptures. Therefore through learning of the scriptures we will be able to know Brahman and attain the ultimate goal of life as moksha.

There can be a doubt as to whether through knowing Brahman, we will know everything. Knowledge of everything is only that which will put an end to all desires. When we know everything then there is no sorrow whatsoever. In order for Brahman to put an end to all knowledge, Brahman has to be all-knowing in nature.

How can we prove all-knowing nature of Brahman?

Brahman by being the source or cause of the world knows the entire world as the cause pervades the entire effect. Unlike the mud which pervades the objects of mud but still doesn't know everything about objects of mud, due to being insentient in nature, Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the world.

Any effect has two causes of material and efficient. The material cause is insentient whereas efficient cause is sentient. For pot or objects made of mud, mud is the material cause and the potter is the efficient cause. But in the case of spider weaving a web, spider is both the material and the efficient cause. Similarly for the world Brahman alone is both the material and efficient cause – as nothing apart from Brahman exists.

This world is like dream world – dream is created out of the dreamer and appears very real but is just an illusion in the dreamer. The entire dream world is the dreamer alone. Similarly this waking world is Brahman and Brahman alone.

Since Brahman is the cause of the world, therefore Brahman also is the cause of the scriptures (though scriptures are eternal still Brahman is that from which the scriptures are manifested). Due to being the cause of the scriptures, Brahman is all-knowing. This is because scriptures know everything – they deal with everything under the Sun. Since scriptures are all-knowing therefore their cause or source also has to be all-knowing in nature. Therefore it is proven that Brahman is all-knowing and through knowledge of such a Brahman, we will also be able to gain knowledge of everything.

Thus the scriptures say that one who knows Brahman verily becomes Brahman (as he realizes his very nature of Brahman). Through knowledge of Brahman, knowledge itself ends as everything is known as Brahman. Therefore no desires remain behind and the person therefore will be able to ever rejoice in bliss at all times – thus through knowledge of Brahman a person attains the ultimate goal of life of moksha. Therefore all effort should be towards realization of Brahman through the scriptures as we all are knowingly or unknowingly seeking the ultimate goal of life as moksha.

Fourth Sutra Introduction

Now there can be a doubt as to how to accept the scriptures to be pointing out the ultimate reality of Brahman? The scriptures are many in number and we often find contradictory statements from the scriptures. Taking just a simple example, in one place it is said that Brahman cannot be attained through the mind and in another place it is said that Brahman should be known through the mind. Such contrary statements are many. Whatever is contrary in nature should be renounced.

When we have to build a house, we hire a contractor but when we find that the contractor always keeps changing his opinions or statements or views, then we will not hire him or fire him. Similarly scriptures due to having contrary statements within themselves aren't worth to be followed. They cannot be considered as the ultimate proof (proof which is valid always). When scriptures thus are negated, Brahman as the ultimate reality also gets negated because Brahman is proved only through the scriptures. When Brahman is negated

then the entire system of Vedanta is negated and therefore there is no use following Vedanta in order to achieve the ultimate goal of life as ever rejoicing in bliss.

Thus unless the various scriptural statements are properly harmonized, we will end up with Vedanta not being a system at all, let alone a system leading to the ultimate goal of life as moksha. It is this harmonizing that is mentioned in the fourth sutra of Brahma Sutra and continued in the rest of the brahma sutras.

Through the fourth sutra, Vyaasa just says that scriptural statements can be harmonized into the non-dual reality of Brahman and this is also proven through the rest of the work. As to the explanation of the fourth sutra along with commentary of Prakaashatman, we will see this in the next edition.

May we all strive to gain knowledge of Brahman through the scriptures so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and through realization of Brahman ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Upaadhi Dhyotanam

Upaadhi Khandanam

We saw previously the first sloka of Upaadhi Khandanam where Madhva defines Vishnu as one without any bad qualities and full of all good qualities. We also saw that as per the system of Dvaita, such a Vishnu alone is supreme. It is only such a Vishnu who can take us to the state of moksha. Moksha isn't realization of oneself being Vishnu as difference between oneself and Vishnu is always there – moksha is rejoicing in bliss of one's own Self. This bliss differs from person to person – Lakshmi is the closest to Vishnu and she gets bliss which is little less than Vishnu's. All other devatas get less bliss only compared to Vishnu and Lakshmi. Therefore bliss experienced by human beings are much lesser alone.

Knowing that Vishnu alone is independent and we are dependent upon Vishnu, we have to develop surrender and devotion unto Vishnu. This is the way to moksha or rejoicing in bliss inside one's own Self. Differences between individuals, insentient entities and Ishwara is always there and it isn't an illusion as Advaita claims. The scriptures do support duality and vision of non-duality is just a way to gain concentration, it isn't the ultimate truth.

Upaadhi Dhyotanam

Before we start with analysis of Upaadhi Khandanam and answering of the objections raised by Madhva in Upaadhi Dhyotanam, it is important to understand as to why different views are developed by people though scriptures are one alone and to establish that Ishwara isn't a form like Vishnu – it is important to establish that the definition of Vishnu as per Madhva's philosophy isn't right or true to the scriptures. Such concepts are also not true to yukti or logic and anubhava or experience.

The author said in the first sloka that Madhva wrote khandanam of the upaadhi or adjuncts concept of Brahman before (long ago) and upaadhi is being illuminated or clarified in this work. It was also mentioned that this clarification through illumination is only possible due to the grace of Sankara. If not for the great master of Sankara, we would not get the right interpretation of the scriptures and thereby would be lost the traditional as well as right meaning of the scriptures. Thus we all have a great tribute to be given to the great master of Sankara. Even later acharyas who have propounded theories different from that of Sankara have had to start with refutation of Sankara – thus any acharya after Sankara has

had to either agree or disagree with Sankara; thus they all cannot ignore this great master of Sankara.

When we look at the bhashyas of Sankara we find as to how crisp and concise they are; yet they are filled with the ultimate truth. True to the word of bhashya, Sankara doesn't explain anything extra – only in few places we can find long explanations following. Many words in the scriptures would be interpreted wrongly by even grammarians if not for the bhashya of Sankara which gives us the right interpretation and meaning. Thus it is apt for the author to start his work by mentioning Sankara and saying clearly that this is possible only due to the grace of Sankara. Sankara is not alive in physical form but he is present with us in the form of his works (guiding us at all times).

Different systems (of Vedanta and others as well)

Advaita Vedanta says that once something is not known then something else is superimposed on this. Taking a simple analogy, when we don't know that what is right in front of us is a rope we superimpose a snake on the rope. Thus ignorance leads to veiling of the rope and superimposition of the snake on the rope. Veiling is called agrahanam and superimposition is called anyathaagrahanam. Both these are caused due to ignorance or not knowing that it is rope that we are seeing.

Ignorance is something very tough to explain as the moment we try to explain it, it ceases to exist. When somebody says that I am ignorant about physics, if we ask as to what is physics then what will be the answer of the person? The person cannot say what is physics for then he knows physics. The person also cannot say that he doesn't know physics for then ignorance about or of physics wouldn't be there. If it is said that ignorance doesn't an object like physics, then it would exist at all times and therefore it cannot be removed at all.

All the above analysis doesn't mean that ignorance doesn't exist but just that ignorance cannot stand logic even as darkness cannot stand light. Ignorance just appears as existing for an ignorant person, through his direct experience – he directly experiences it. This ignorance is of the Self or Brahman as the non-dual reality behind the world.

How can it be said that Brahman is the non-dual reality behind the world?

The world that we perceive is constantly changing. Such a changing world cannot exist without a changeless substratum even as a variable cannot exist without a constant as its

substratum. This changeless substratum of the world is eternal. If it has to be eternal then the world of duality should just be an illusion in it – else the substratum has to change to become the world, which would make it changing and therefore non-eternal. And when the world wasn't created, then the substratum alone existed – one without a second. Thus it is proven that Brahman is the non-dual reality behind the world, and of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

That Brahman alone existed before creation is mentioned by the scriptures and supported by logic. Experience also supports this theory that Brahman alone existed before creation and therefore Brahman alone exists now also. The state of dream and deep sleep show as to how one Brahman alone exists and appears as the dual world which we currently experience. In the deep sleep state, only Brahman of the nature of Self or Consciousness exists (as after waking up, we say that "I existed" and since there is no existence of anything apart from I therefore it is proven that I alone existed). Thus in this I, the entire world merges but after waking up (which is similar to creation) the world appears again. This world of duality is similar to the dream world created by the dreamer. The entire dream world appears very real and filled with duality of all sorts but once the dreamer wakes up, he realizes that there never was any dream and there never can be any dream at all – whatever exists is the dreamer alone. Even while experiencing the dream world, dreamer alone exists – similarly even when we experiencing this world of duality, what exists is one Brahman alone.

When this non-dual reality of Brahman is not known, ignorance has crept in. And ignorance appears to veil Brahman even as clouds appear to veil Sun. Really speaking (and ultimately) there is no ignorance at all but temporarily it appears as existing. When Brahman is not known, the ignorance manifests as duality through superimposition on Brahman. Ignorance cannot create anything new other than in Brahman as Brahman alone exists. Thus names and forms appear in Brahman.

Vedanta says that the names and forms of Brahman as the world is similar to various gold ornaments or objects made of mud. All gold ornaments appear different from one another but they are all gold alone. The difference between them is just in name and form. One is called ring and has a circular shape whereas another is called necklace and has oval shape. Thus differences are mere names and forms, gold alone exists. This truth that gold alone exists in all gold ornaments is known and seen by the goldsmith. Therefore whenever we go

to the goldsmith in order to change or repair or buy a new ornament, the goldsmith is unaffected and just fulfills our desires with respect to ornaments. Though externally talking with us and discussing the various latest fashions in gold, internally the goldsmith ever knows that gold alone exists. Therefore he is unaffected irrespective of whether one ornament is broken or another is created. When fashions change, we as buyers of gold get affected as we see all ornaments as different from one another. But since the goldsmith sees all ornaments as gold, therefore he is unaffected at all times. Fashion changes but the goldsmith's internal vision of all ornaments of gold doesn't change and therefore he ever rejoices in bliss with respect to the gold ornaments.

Similar is the case with objects made of mud. Though different objects of mud like pot, wall etc. are made, all of them are mud alone – just illusions of names and forms in mud. The potter knows this and therefore is unaffected at all times. But we as buyers of objects of mud are ignorant of this truth and therefore we get affected due to changes in the names and forms.

This entire world of names and forms is Brahman and Brahman alone. The scriptures repeat again and again whatever exists is Brahman alone. They go to the extent of saying that Brahman is in front, in back, above, below, right, left etc. It is when we forget this truth that everything is just names and forms in Brahman (even like a dream or a drama) that we get affected by the various names and forms. Thereby we are lead to sorrow (and seek happiness from the external world).

What is the problem of not perceiving the world as Brahman?

We will lead to sorrow but if it is said that sorrows are fine as we also get temporary happiness from the world (which is enough), then the answer is that temporary happiness is also filled with sorrow. Only fools will run behind temporary happiness, not knowing that they are also sorrowful in nature. Wise people knowing this will not go behind the temporary pleasures of the world – instead they will try to realize their very nature of Brahman (of the nature of eternal bliss).

What happens when Brahman is not known?

When Brahman is not known or not accepted, then the entire world of duality will be accepted as real. The moment the world is accepted as real, it will only lead us to sorrow.

But rather than leading us to just sorrow, it will also lead others to sorrow as we will try to explain the dual world (with respect to Brahman as its cause).

Thereby are created the various systems of philosophies or darshanas. All darshanas are created in order to explain our experience spectrum and to take us to the goal of eternal bliss (happiness that is ever-lasting). Each darshana tries to explain this through what they think as right. Some follow the scriptures and others don't follow the scriptures – thus we have aastika and naastika darshanas respectively. Each of them have sub-parts or sub-systems based on how later people think that things can be explained a bit better. Though all these systems try to explain the world and the way to eternal bliss, none of them are successful except Vedanta. This is because Vedanta alone emphasizes on the cause of the world as Brahman, along with giving full authority to the scriptures. Vedanta is that darshana which is based on the scriptures and therefore is without any fault.

All other systems depend on one thing or the other (based on their notions) and therefore are filled with faults of one kind or the other. Needless to say, they also try to refute Vedanta through logic and other means. Such refutations and argumentations are part of the world and can never be removed. But the system of Vedanta which emphasizes on Brahman as the cause of the world cannot be refuted as the world requires a cause that is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. And this is found only in the system of Advaita Vedanta as other Vedanta systems don't base themselves on a Brahman of this nature (and non-dual as well).

We will not get into the various darshanas or their analysis but it can be concluded beyond any doubt that it is only the system of Advaita Vedanta that postulates a Brahman as the cause of the world in such a way that it is beyond any refutation.

When this Brahman is not known, then people create all theories in order to suit their notions or concepts of the mind. This is being mentioned by the author in the second sloka of the work (as to how or why the various theories or philosophies are created).

संशयातीतब्रह्मणि अज्ञानमोहमेति च ।

अज्ञाततत्त्वकारणात् ततो जातं मतं हि वै ॥२॥

saṁśayātītabrahmaṇi ajñānamohameti ca |
ajñātatattvakāraṇāt tato jātaṁ mataṁ hi vai ||2||

In doubtless Brahman, one attains ignorance and delusion; as a result of ignorance of the truth, different views (theories or systems) are definitely created.

Doubtless Brahman

Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss is one's very nature. As Advaita Makaranda says, I always exist, I am ever shining and I am never hated; thus I am Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. There are no two entities of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss – thus it is clear that I am Brahman.

Doubt is possible in that which is not known or that which is not clear. But Brahman is ever known as pure Consciousness or "I" which pulsates inside us at all times as "I-exist, I-exst". Though I might not really know my nature of Brahman or experience the bliss of Brahman, still I am known at all times. The veil that appears to veil Brahman is not real and hence little knowledge of Brahman will show that there is no veil at all. Thus it is wrong to say that Brahman is not known.

Though it can be said that Brahman is not clearly known, this also isn't true as in the deep sleep we experience our nature of blissful Brahman clearly. If I experience bliss in deep sleep state, then I can experience it now also. There is no lack of clarity with respect to Brahman as my nature (if there is any lack of clarity or unknown notion, then that notion is called ignorance and has to be removed like darkness is removed through light – since there is no darkness or ignorance at all, therefore it cannot be argued that Brahman is not known or not clear).

Lastly Brahman is of the nature of one's own Self. Anything and everything can be doubted except oneself. How can a person doubt oneself? If there is a doubt about oneself, then how can it even be said that "I doubt myself" as "I" which is the basis or stand for all doubts itself is being doubted. Such people who doubt themselves are called as fools or mad people.

Since I as Brahman can never be doubted therefore diverse theories with respect to the dual world which is just an illusion in Brahman cannot be created at all. Yet different theories are created.

Ignorance of the truth – cause of different theories

Though different theories are impossible in doubtless Brahman, still how are they created? The answer answers by saying that this is due to ignorance or ajnaana of the truth of non-dual reality of Brahman.

As explained earlier, the moment Brahman is not known everything else is superimposed on Brahman. Thus ignorance or not knowing Brahman is the cause of all problems. Sureshwaracharya terms this as atma anavabodha – not knowing the Self. Though we are all the Self at all times yet the moment we appear ignorant of our very nature of Self, that very moment we will get into diverse theories about ourselves (like I am a man, I am beautiful, I am intelligent etc.). Such notions in turn only lead to sorrow as they make us again and again dwell in duality. Similar to a person who again and again dwells in the illusion of water in desert will run behind water and be sad always.

Ignorance, as explained earlier, cannot withstand any logic but it is a matter of direct experience for an ignorant person. Any person who experiences ignorance should get rid of through learning of the scriptures (where alone Brahman is explained and the way to realizing one's very nature of Brahman is put forth). Sankara thus raises the question of who experiences ignorance in his Gita bhashya and answers it by saying that "whoever experiences ignorance is ignorant". We cannot say anything other than this that ignorant person experiences ignorance even as a person experiences darkness. But the moment light dawns, he realizes that there is no darkness, there never was and never will be any darkness. In the same way, there is no ignorance at all possible yet when one experiences it, it appears very real and such a person should put effort to learn the scriptures.

What if one doesn't learn the scriptures?

If one doesn't learn the scriptures, then ignorance of the truth, which means ignorance, leads to delusion.

Ignorance and delusion

Delusion is considering something for something else. This superimposition is only possible when ignorance is there. When we are ignorant of the desert, then we superimpose water in desert. The analogy of a post seen variously by different people is apt to show as to how ignorance leads to superimposition (delusion). There is a post in the road where there isn't much light. From far, a robber sees the post and fears it as he thinks it is a policeman. A policeman sees it as a robber. A lover sees the post as his love. A ghost-fearing person sees it as a ghost. Thus everybody sees it different. It can also happen that one person itself sees it differently.

When we are ignorant of something, automatically we will start superimposing (assuming) a lot of things on it. This is called delusion where the mind starts thinking this and that. Such thinking not just eventually leads to sorrow but always gives sorrow alone. A deluded person is one whose mind and intellect aren't working properly – mind and intellect require proper focus in order to work properly. Though it can be argued that a scientist's mind works properly though he is ignorant of Brahman, such "working properly" isn't eternally – there are many scientists who are still sad at the end of the day as they haven't experienced eternal bliss in Brahman. There is no other way to eternal bliss than through realization of Brahman. Though we might be able to get temporary happiness through science or other means in the world, they will eventually lead us only to sorrow. Hence wise people will not go behind such worldly pleasures and will only seek eternal bliss in Brahman.

When the mind and intellect aren't focused properly, then they are like horses astray on a road. Whenever they see something good, they will run behind them. While enjoying something, they see something else and therefore will instantly jump to the new thing. Thus they will be jumping from one thing to another. Even when remaining steady or stable on one thing they will be constantly seeking new things (in order to test if they will lead to eternal bliss). Thus such mind and intellect will lead to sorrow alone in the short and the long run.

Therefore Krishna says in Gita that a deluded person destroys himself. There is nothing but destruction that can happen to a deluded person. Majority of people in the world are deluded as they are unaware of Brahman (they are unaware that there is an entity called Brahman and which alone has to be sought out as well). Such people though might appear to be happily living will be sorrowful alone at all times.

Wasn't Steve Jobs a happy person?

Happiness or eternal bliss is the state where a person is content with his life and therefore his actions are for the welfare of the entire world. Everybody knows that Steve Jobs was never content and hence instead of giving up his life blissfully he gave up while in a meeting. Though many people consider this as a great achievement, it is no achievement at all and a Vedantin will feel pity for Steve Jobs – whatever one thinks at the end of his life, that he will become next birth. Since Steve Jobs was in meeting while dying therefore he will be born doing the same stuff again. Is this bliss? Only fools will consider it as bliss. Just fighting in the name of Apple with all other products in the world isn't blissful living or doing service to the world – it is definitely a sorrowful and pitiful life.

Vedanta repeats again and again that only a person who realizes Brahman will be able to ever rejoice in bliss. Everybody else will only experience sorrow at all times (in this birth and future births as well). Therefore wise sadhakas should stop seeking worldly pleasures and should start seeking Brahman as found in the scriptures.

Delusion at its peak will not just lead sorrow to oneself but will lead sorrow to others (and others in huge numbers). Sorrows to others due to delusion can be experienced by each and every person in one's own family. If we are ignorant of Brahman then we will lead to sorrow for ourselves and others as well – this is contrary to a knower of Brahman who himself remaining blissful spreads the bliss to his entire clan itself.

The peak of delusion is when an entire set of people are led to sorrow. This is through various philosophies created. Normal people when ignorant of Brahman will be led to delusion and thereby they will spend their life in futile pleasures of the world. But some smart people who are deluded will think about this world, how it came and how we can bring bliss to the world. Thereby they will start philosophies or followers etc. in order to explain the world and the way to eternal bliss. Such deluded people are very dangerous in that they will lead to the downfall of others as well.

We cannot say that masters like Ramana Maharshi, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and AMMA are also deluding people through their various missions. Their missions only serve the entire world with knowledge of the truth. And these masters always say that the non-dual reality of Brahman alone exists – they also propagate the scriptural truth and encourage everybody to learn the scriptures. Thus while helping people from a worldly perspective,

they also drive people to the non-dual reality of Brahman. Therefore they aren't leading others to sorrow but only to bliss.

But followers of such masters can be lead to sorrow as a result of their own misunderstanding of the words of their masters. The blame for this only falls unto the followers and not to the masters who are living embodiments of the scriptures.

Various philosophies or darshanas are all created as a result of not knowing Brahman and being deluded. We often find that when a group of ten people are lost in a particular road, there will be one or two who will try to lead the others. They are called "leaders" and encouraged in the world but they are really "fools" leading others to their doom. They themselves don't know where they are and where they should go, but they will show as if they know the path or are ahead of others. The scriptures say that such people are like blind people leading other blind people or a person drowning in water who doesn't know swimming trying to help another drowning person.

Though the great masters who have propounded various darshanas are no mere mortals and they are all realized masters still they propounded theories which are different from Brahman (or which will take sadhakas away from Brahman). Such theories though might help sadhanas in the short run, will never help in the long run. When the ultimate reality of Brahman is beautifully propounded in the system of Advaita Vedanta, no other philosophy is really required. Sadhakas should understand this and put effort into learning Advaita Vedanta rather than getting distracted into other philosophies.

Though many other philosophies will appeal to the mind than Advaita Vedanta, they will only lead to sorrow. Advaita Vedanta is dry and without appeal only to one who doesn't understand it properly. People think that since the world is mithyaa in Advaita Vedanta, therefore it doesn't exist and all worldly actions are to be stopped. This is wrong knowledge – Advaita Vedanta doesn't prohibit any worldly action or worldly pleasures as well. It just tells a person to remember the world to be ultimately unreal. This knowledge will make the person enjoy the world while not getting attached or affected by it. This is similar to an actor portraying a role in a movie – he portrays the role to perfection while remaining unaffected by the role as he knows that the movie is not real.

Thus a true Advaitin remains ever unaffected at all times while performing actions and enjoying the pleasures of the world like any other worldly person. Therefore at all times he will ever rejoice in bliss.

Any person who desires eternal bliss shouldn't run behind different theories that are based on ignorance and delusion which are caused by ignorance of Brahman and superimposed on doubtless Brahman. Instead such a person should start learning the system of Advaita Vedanta remembering that one Brahman alone exists at all times. Thereby such a person will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May we all strive to remember the non-dual reality of Brahman as the only entity existing and as our very nature of Consciousness so that we will be able to put an end to all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Vedanta Shabda Vicharanam

Panchakosha

The meaning of Panchakosha is five sheath of ourselves. In this article we will analyze about Panchakoshas as to what are Panchakoshas and what do we gain by knowing about Panchakoshas.

There are 4 purusharthas or goals available for all human beings which are Dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (pleasure) and moksha (desire). Out of the 4 moksha is the ultimate goal to be achieved by a human being. Moksha is called the Ultimate goal of human life because it is the permanent goal, every other goals are temporary. As scriptures mention very clearly in various ways, Moksha or liberation can be attained only through Knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman, there is no other way. Thus, we can say that the main purpose of human life is to get the Ultimate Knowledge of Brahman and there by attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. The effect of Moksha is complete cessation of sorrow there-by experiencing Anandam which is the nature of Brahman. The knowledge to be attained is "I am Brahman". When we get the clear conviction that "I am Brahman", there will be only Anandam as Brahman is of the nature of Anandam.

Now, why should there be a need for the knowledge of Brahman and desire for Moksha? Scriptures point out that our real nature is Brahman. If our real nature is Brahman, and if Brahman is of the nature of Anandam, there should only be Anandam. But this is contrary to our normal experience. We don't experience happiness all the time. We experience sorrow and happiness alternatively. This means that there is something opposing to what scriptures say and our experience. That opposing thing is the conclusion we have about ourselves and the conclusion is that we are not Brahman. Scriptures say that this conclusion about ourselves is wrong and this wrong conclusion or wrong knowledge is because of ignorance of who we really are. So in order to remove the wrong knowledge about ourselves, we have to bring the right knowledge about who we are, which will lead us to the realization that "I am Brahman" there by attain moksha.

Before we understand what the panchakoshas are, it is important to understand the nature of the Self. Scriptures are very clear that these Panchakoshas are not the Self but something different and beyond.

*"yo veda nihitam guhaayaam parame vyoman
He who knows what is situated in the supreme space in the cave"*

Self is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Anandam (Existence-Consciousness-Anandam). Self exists on all periods of time. Self alone was before the creation of the world, Self is while the world is seen, and Self alone would exist when the world dissolves. Self is the witness of everything but there is nothing else to witness the Self.

*"satyatvam baadharaahityam jagatbaadhaika saakshinah
Baadhah kimsaakshiko broohi na tvasaakshikah ishyate
Existence is what cannot be negated. If the Self which is the witness of the perishable world becomes perishable, then who will be the witness of the fact of its perishability? For destruction without a witness of it cannot be postulated"*

Self is of the nature of Consciousness. We know naturally and clearly that we exist. All experiences that we have is because of the Conscious nature of the Self. Self cannot be experienced because it is not an object but the subject, but everything else is known only by the consciousness.

Self is of the nature of Anandam. Self is non-dual and is free from all limitations. Only when there is duality, there will be limitation and thus there will be no peace. Self is not limited by space, time or causation and hence is unlimited. Such an unlimited entity can be only one and hence will be Anandam.

Q: If scriptures say we are the Self, why should to know about these kosas?

A: Essentially, we are the Self which is of the nature of Anandam. If we are the Self essentially, we should be every joyful all the time. But that is not our experience. We do not know that we are of the nature of Anandam, and we also think that we do not have happiness and hence we desire for happiness that would stay with us permanently. This shows that though scriptures say we are Self, we do not that we are the Self which is of the nature of Anandam. This contrary experience from what scriptures mention is because of the wrong identification with body and mind. Also, we are so convinced about this wrong identification that we have no doubt in our mind that we are not the Self. This is because of the ignorance of our real nature. Thus, in order to get rid of this wrong knowledge we have to analyze everything we identify with, and when we analyze we will gain the conviction that

we are really any of the pancha kosas but we are the Self. In order to perform such analysis, the first step is to understand what they are, what is its nature. When we thus understand the nature of each of the kosas, we will be able to compare it with the nature of the Self. Thus, it is important to know about the pancha kosas.

What are panchakosas?

The panchakosas are

1. Annamaya kosa
2. Pranamaya Kosa
3. Manomaya Kosa
4. Vijnaanamaya Kosa
5. Aanandamaya kosa

Annamaya Kosa:

Annamaya kosa is the physical body born out of food. The food eaten by the father gets transformed into veerya and goes into mother's body and then comes out and grows again. The physical body goes into 6 modifications of asthi (existence), jayathe (birth), vardhathe (grows), viparinamate (matures), apaksheeyate (decays) and vinashyati (dies). The body takes birth, grows, decays and dies.

Annamaya kosa cannot be the Self because the physical body undergoes changes. The body takes birth, grows, decays and perishes which is contrary to the nature of the Self of SAT.

Pranamaya Kosa:

Pranamaya Kosa consists of the vital energy and 5 organs of action. Prana is the vital energy that pervade the entire body and that gives power to the entire body. The body stays alive and functions because of the prana in the body. If Prana is not there, body will die. There are 5 pranans which are Prana, apana, vyana, udana and samaana.

Pranamaya Kosa is not Self because it is devoid of sentiency whereas Self is of the nature of Consciousness.

Manomaya Kosa:

Manomaya kosa consists of mind and the 5 organs of knowledge. Mind is consists of thoughts and experiences all the objects through the sense organs. Mind has thoughts of I

and Mine with respect to the body, things and people around. Mind, through the sense organs, perceive objects and also develops desire for pleasure. It moves from one thought to other and hence is not steady all the time.

Manomaya Kosa is not Self because it has desires for happiness and it is not steady whereas is Self is complete, peaceful, and immovable.

Vijnaanamaya Kosa:

Vijnaanamaya Kosa consists of Intellect and 5 organs of Knowledge. The intellect gets the reflection of the Pure Consciousness which is known as the ahamkara and it pervades the entire personality of the person. This disappears in deep sleep, and hence there is no experiences in deep sleep. Vijnaanamaya Kosa is not Self, because it exists at one time, disappears at another time and hence is changeable whereas Self is ever Existent.

Anandamaya Kosa:

Anandamaya Kosa is the sheath where happiness or pleasures are being enjoyed. When we enjoy something or get something we desire, the mind and intellect temporarily goes inward and merges into this Anandamaya Kosa which has the reflection of Anandam of the Self. At the time of deep sleep, everything merges and into this sheath and thus the sleeper experiences anandam while in deep sleep.

This is not Self because the Anandam experienced is not permanent. It will be experienced only for a short duration where Self is ever Anandam.

Thus, through this analysis we can understand that Self is not any of the pancha kosas. If we think that I am body, or I am the mind etc., the thought is because of this analysis was not performed and therefore the wrong knowledge is deep rooted in our mind. When we get the proper understanding about ourselves and keep contemplating that Self is not any of the Pancha kosa but beyond, the conviction will grow which will lead the person to get liberated.

"avicharakrito bandhah vichaarena nivartate

Tasmaat jeeva paraatmaanau sarvadaiva vicaarayet

Bondage is caused by indiscrimination, and it can be removed through discrimination.

Therefore, one should discriminate about the Individual and the Supreme Self all the time. "

Q: Through the above analysis it is proved that Self is not Panchakoshas. How is it said to be beyond Panchakoshas?

A: All these panchakoshas are experienced and in order to experience them, there should be an experiencer. That experiencer is the Self and it has to be beyond everything otherwise everything cannot be experienced. Even though Self is called the experiencer, it is not affected by the experience. Everything is experienced because of the Self yet, it remains unaffected and untouched. Self just remains as the witness illumining everything it remaining unaffected.

Natatra suryobhaati na Chandra thaarakam

Nema vidhyuto bhaanti kutoyamagnih

Tameva bhaantamanubhaati sarvam

Tasya bhaasa sarvamidham vibhaati

There the sun does not shine, nor the moon or the stars; nor do these flashes of lightning shine there. How can this fire do so? Everything shines according as He does so; by His light all this shives diversely.

Svayam jyoti bhavatyasha purosmaat bhaasate akhilaat

Tameva bhaantim anveti tadbhaasaa bhaasyate jagat

The sruti declares: 'This Atman is self-reveling'; 'Before the evolution of the universe, the Self alone was shining'. 'It shining, all follow; by Its shine the universe shine'.

Q: All experiences happen because of the Self which is the experiencer. How can Self then be experienced?

A: Self can never be experienced as it is not the object of Knowledge but it is the very subject. Self do not need anything to experience itself. Since Self is of the nature of Consciousness, it doesn't need anything else to know its own existence.

Svayamevaanubhootitvaat vidhyate naanubhaavyata

Jnaatrujnaantara abhaavaat ajneyo na tu asattayaa

As the Self is Itself of the nature of experience only, It cannot be an object of experience. Since there is no experiencer nor any experience other than It, the Self is unknowable not because It does not exist but because It cannot be an object of experience.

Q: Everything is experienced because of the Self. Are the experiences real since Self which is illuminating everything is real?

A: Scriptures are very clear that there is nothing here apart from Brahman. "Na iha nana asti kinchana – there is no duality whatsoever". Everything that is experienced will vanish at some point. During deep sleep, there are no experiences at all. So when scriptures say that everything is experienced because of the Self, it means that if there is an object of experience, then the object is experienced because of the Self. All experiences are because of the availability of the object. If the object vanishes the experience vanishes. But the Self remains unchanged, unaffected and blissful, whether there are objects to be experienced or not.

Apaniteshu moortheshu hyamoortham shiShyate viyat

Shakyeshu baadhiteshvante shishyate yat tadeva tat

When all forms are destroyed, the formless space still remains. So, when all the perishable things are destroyed, what remains is That (the imperishable Brahman).

Q: If everything can be negated, why cant we say that there is only shoonyam in the end?

A: If everything is negated and if there is nothing to be experienced, Self would still exist. Self cannot be negated. When we are in a dark room, we don't see anything, yet we don't have any doubt whether we are there or not. In deep sleep as well there are no experiences, yet after we wake up we say that we slept well. Even if we say that there is shoonyam after negating everything, there has to be an experiencer of the shoonyam to know that there is only Shoonyam. Thus, at any point in time Self can never be negated whether there is objects or not.

Kaarana Nirupanam

ॐ कारणनिरूपणम्

om kāraṇanirūpaṇam

कारणं विना लोकसंस्थितिः ।

नास्ति सर्वदा शून्यवत्तदा ॥१॥

kāraṇam vinā lokasamsthitiḥ |
nāsti sarvadā śūnyavattadā ||1||

1. Without cause, the existence of the world (as an effect) is not possible at all times and the world will be like void.

कारणस्य कार्यं तु नामकम् ।

रूपकं तथा मृत्यथा घटः ॥२॥

kāraṇasya kāryam tu nāmakam |
rūpakam tathā mṛtyathā ghaṭaḥ ||2||

2. The effect of a cause is name and form, even as pot is just name and form of mud.

ब्रह्मनामकं लोककारणम् ।

शास्त्रवर्णितं स्वात्मरूपकम् ॥३॥

brahmanāmakam lokakāraṇam |
śāstravarṇitam svātmarūpakam ||3||

3. That which is named as Brahman is the cause of the world, described in the scriptures and of the nature of one's own Self.

ब्रह्मणो भिदा अन्यवस्तुनः ।

सत्यवर्जितो युक्तिहीनतः ॥४ ॥

brahmaṇo bhidā anyavastunaḥ |
satyavarjito yuktihīnataḥ ||4||

4. Any entity different from Brahman is devoid of reality and logic (as only Brahman really exists).

स्वप्नवत्पुमान् पश्यतीह हि ।

लोकनामकं ब्रह्मकारणम् ॥५ ॥

svapnavatpumān paśyatīha hi |
lokanāmakam brahmakāraṇam ||5||

5. A person here itself sees (can see) this world as its cause of Brahman, like dream world is just the dreamer alone.

एकभावनं स्वात्मरूपतः ।

बन्धनाशनं सत्यरूपतः ॥६ ॥

ekabhāvanaṁ svātmarūpataḥ |
bandhanāśanaṁ satyarūpataḥ ||6||

6. Vision of oneness in the form of one's own Self is destroyer of bondage as it is of the nature of reality.

नास्ति भेदभावस्तु कारणम् ।

सर्वदा विभात्येव सुखम् ॥७ ॥

nāsti bhedabhāvastu kāraṇam |
sarvadā vibhātyeva sukham ||7||

7. There is no duality at all as everything is the cause which alone shines, this is very

clear indeed.

भेदतः क्रिया दुःखकारणम् ।

नैव सा यदा नन्दभावनम् ॥८॥

bhedataḥ kriyā duḥkhakāraṇam |
naiva sā yadā nandabhāvanam ||8||

8. If duality is maintained and actions performed as a result, it is the cause of sorrow. And if it isn't there, then it leads to happiness.

कारणं यदा दृश्यते तदा ।

नन्दनन्दनो नन्दनन्दनः ॥९॥

kāraṇaṁ yadā dṛśyate tadā |
nandanandano nandanandanaḥ ||9||

9. When the cause (of Brahman) is seen, such a person is a blissful person and he ever rejoices in bliss.

Anukramaanika Nirdesham

1. Editorial – a general message
2. Vichaara Siddhi – an analysis of vichaara or self-enquiry.
3. Chathussutra Prakaashah - a multi-part series on illumination of the first four sutras of Brahma Sutra through learning of the work of Shaareeraka nyaaya sangraha of Prakashatman.
4. Upaadhi Dhyotanam – a multi-part series with slokas explaining madhvacharya's upaadhi khandanam and answering of the same.
5. Vedanta Shabda Vicharanam – thorough analysis of one word of Vedanta.
6. Kaarana Nirupanam - explanation of the cause (of the world). This section is dedicated to original work written but not explained in depth in order to help sadhakas in reflection of the concepts themselves.

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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