

Vedanta Darshanam

Salutations to all.

We saw in the last month as to the way out of all problems that the world is currently going through. Today problems are ever more with the chief minister of a state of India vanishing in a chopper and turning up dead; more deaths through bad weather, bombs etc.; senator in trouble for calling the president a liar in the US; the president himself (through phone tapping) getting into trouble for foul-mouthing while watching the MTV video music awards; the list of troubles is growing day-by-day. There seems to be no end to the miseries that we see in the world. If asked as to why, Vedanta answers that “that is the very nature of this temporary and sorrowful world” – what else can the illusory world give other than sorrow and suffering?

But as humans endowed with the discriminative intellect and an ability to choose our actions thereby creating our own destiny/fate we can definitely get rid of these sorrows. And this is our very right as we are already the blissful non-dual reality of Brahman whether we accept it or not; whether we experience the bliss or not. Just for a second imagine the state of being ever blissful irrespective of external situations and irrespective of whatever happens in the external world -- ☺inexplicable yet in a way very much attractive. How could a wise person not seek the state of realization after knowing that this world is sorrowful and that realization is the state where a seeker abides as his very nature of Self? Thus majority of the world are fools and idiots yet claiming to be big and very important people. And such fools and idiots rule countries – so what to speak about the tensions between countries, not to speak about tensions inside a country itself.

When in college for the first year, the students will be able bonded together and no differentiation of any sort exists between them. Slowly the college politics and group-ism creeps in. Thus by the last year (4th or 5th) we can find the people in the same class fighting amongst each other. Why to take the example of a college class, even in a house with father, mother and two children fight starts when the children grow up. We cannot blame the children because the parents themselves were such children who used to fight with their parents – this never-ending fool-chain goes on and on. Such people think they are very happy amidst the various pleasures of life but they are ever suffering. Ramakrishna

Paramahansa equates them with the fish which are caught in the fisherman's net but doesn't try to jump back into the water because they are in mud and think they are safe in the ocean only.

As to why many people even after knowing moksha don't seek it, AMMA gives this beautiful story. Once Uddhava raised this doubt to Krishna and started accusing Krishna of not helping out people by giving them moksha to which Krishna replied that he is ever-willing to give moksha but people are not willing to take it. Uddhava didn't believe it. So Krishna told him to ask the first 10 beings he meets and offer them moksha. Uddhava willingly agreed and was confident that all the first 10 beings would accept the offer. The first being was a pig – Uddhava had a siddhi that he could talk with animals as well. He asked the pig as to how it was doing etc. Then he said to the pig that the Lord is giving moksha so it can come and get it. The pig asked "what is moksha". Uddhava replied "it is a state where there is only bliss". The pig replied back "Will there be filth there". Uddhava replied that there will be only bliss, no filth and other stuff. The pig replied angrily that it doesn't want such a state – it wants a state where there is lots of filth and its children-grandchildren can play and enjoy in the filth. Saying so the pig ran away. Uddhava immediately ran back to the Lord understanding that very few people in this world really want moksha.

Moksha or eternal bliss is readily available as it is our very nature but still very few are ready to accept it but willing to be deluded in this ocean of samsara and thereby suffer. May all of us, seeing all the huge sufferings in the world take up, the resolution of at least striving for moksha rather than wasting the precious human birth in mere sensual pleasures which can give us only sorrow. May the ultimate reality of Brahman in the form of AMMA help us in getting the earnest desire for moksha and thereby achieving it in this very birth itself.

AUM NAMAH SHIVAYA

Sep 16th

Anukramaanika

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Guru Mahima

In the last month we saw the importance of a Guru briefly and Parvathi putting the question of knowing a Guru's Maahaatmyam and about how to realize. We also saw Siva getting happy at Parvathi's question. Let's continue with how Siva starts to answer Parvathi's questions.

Any knowledge needs credibility in order for people to believe in it and then follow it. We find the Lord speaking about the credibility of the knowledge imparted to Arjuna through the statement that "this has been explained by me to Soorya in the beginning" and that "this is the greatest of all secrets".

It is the nature of human mind to not easily accept things. The mind automatically analyzes whether things are true as well as the worthiness of anything. This applies to knowledge too. In the case of knowledge, worthiness is in the form of the knowledge being very rare and secretive. This would mean that it isn't very easy to achieve and that people achieve it after lot of struggles. This in a way makes the knowledge special too. That which is special appeals to the human mind very easily. We cannot say here that it is mere arthavaada or just praising in order to gain attention that the scriptures speak about the knowledge of the Self as great. The knowledge of the Self or Brahman or Ishwara is great indeed for two reasons: first is that it is about something which cannot be expressed in words & thoughts; second is that it gives us the fruit of eternal bliss, the highest fruit or goal possible.

Brahman – inexpressible in words

Lalitha Sahasranam gives the naama of "mano vaachaam agocharaa" or "one who is beyond words and thoughts" for Devi. Brahman is beyond words and inexpressible (adrishyam, agrahyam, alakshanam, achintyam etc.). This is not because Brahman doesn't exist and is unreal like the horns of a hare but because Brahman is the Subject that cannot be objectified (saakshi drigeva na tu drishyathe – the Self is the witness-seer or subject that is never seen or objectified). Therefore the shastras speak about Brahman through the nethi-nethi prakriya (the not-this, not-this way). Everything ranging from the smallest organism to the biggest organism of Brahma are rejected as not being the Self because they are objects of the subject of Consciousness or Self – the Self is never objectified. Ramakrishna Paramahansa gives a beautiful analogy to explain this – once a thief went into a house to

steal a laptop. There was no light as he couldn't steal with lights on – there were many objects in the room. The thief would touch each object and say "this is not the laptop" and when everything was ruled out, he touched an object which was the laptop thereby asserting "this is the laptop". In the same way this entire world is rejected and whatever remains behind (that which cannot be rejected is the Self).

Ramana Maharshi gives a story from the life of Rama to illustrate this. Once Sita's pathivrathatvam (chastity) was being put to test as she stayed for a long time in Ravana's palace. The test was wherein 100 Ramas were put in front of Sita and she would have to identify the real Rama. When approaching each Rama, Sita would say "No" as it was not the real Rama. When faced with the real Rama in front of her, she just hung her head "saying nothing". Thus when everything is negated, whatever remains behind illumines itself – there need not be any speech or thoughts there because speech and thoughts have been negated and only the self-existing Self is present – moreover, there is no need of speech or thoughts to assert the self-existing, self-luminous and self-proving Self.

Moksha – the goal or fruit of eternal bliss

Moksha is the greatest of all goals and moksha is realizing the Self. Thus Sureshwaracharya says in Manasollasa that "atma laabhaat paro laabho naastheethi kavayo vidhuh" or "realized masters say that there is no greater fruit than the Self". Such a goal of eternal bliss, that goal which will complete our lives, can be achieved only through the scriptures as the scriptures alone hint at the Self. All the other sciences that we have in the world will only give us temporary happiness as they don't point at the Self but are focusing on names and forms of the world (the illusory world). It is for this reason that the scriptures say "na anyah panthaa vidhyathe ayanaaya" or "there is no other way than this to eternal bliss". It is only in the scriptures that we find the hint of the Atman as the subject of all objects:

Srotrasya srotram manaso mano yat

Vaacho ha vaacham sa u praanasya praanah

Chakshushah chakshuh atimuchya dheeraah

Pretya asmaanlokaan amritha bhavanthi

Wise people who know the Self as the ear of the ear, mind of the mind, word of the word, prana of the prana and eye of the eye cross over this illusory world and attain immortality (eternal bliss).

Since this knowledge is very secretive, it isn't very openly available to everyone and isn't instructed as freely as other sciences (in current day we will have to interpret this as "it isn't easily taken by everyone" as even though it is offered free of cost in many ashrams and missions, there are hardly any takers for it).

Na vakthavyam idam devi rahasya athi rahasyakam

Na kasyaapi puraa proktham tvadbhakthyartham vadaami tat

O Devi! This is the secret of all secrets and hence is not supposed to be told; it hasn't been told by anyone prior as well; but I will tell you this due to your devotion (bhakthi).

Tvadbhakthyartham – for your devotion

Devotion here means earnest desire to know about the Guru who will guide us to the Self. Unless there is an earnest desire to know, knowledge even if imparted will not be of much use. We see very often youngsters taking up a particular field of science as education due to their parents forcing and ending up working in a field entirely different from whatever they studied. This is due to lack of earnest desire to know what they are learning. Unless we have the earnest desire to cook and eat, we will be cooking something that will be horrible to eat. We also find many rich youngsters who have a lot of money but since they lack earnestness in anything (as they spend time spending money here and there like it is some fruit that falls off a tree very often) therefore though they have everything under their hats yet they don't use any of those properly but end up their lives as an addict to drugs, alcohol, smoking etc.

Many people might ask as to how to gain devotion or earnestness. Earnestness is tough to gain for worldly matters but for moksha earnestness is very easy to gain – why? Because moksha will give us eternal bliss, that which we have been seeking for many births. Strong desire for the goal will make us try to achieve it soon – this in turn will make us follow the path that would lead to the goal with all earnestness to ensure that we achieve it very soon. We can remember the age-old saying of "where there is a will, there is a way".

As the age-old saying goes "when a person takes one step, the Lord takes 100 steps", if there is true devotion automatically guidance will come to us in one or the other form. Whenever I have had needs to find a publication of a scriptural work, I have always found guidance from many realized masters without any delay. Many sincere sadhakas find that

they get guidance immediately when they need it. Thus what a sadhaka has to achieve first is earnestness with respect to spirituality which is a sincere desire for the goal of moksha – we already have the desire for moksha but as happiness – so knowingly yearning for moksha and keeping this goal above all other goals is the way to develop devotion to the goal. If this is there, then we will get scriptural knowledge from a spiritual master and thereby realize in this very birth itself.

We will start with the knowledge imparted by Siva to Parvathi in the next month. Until then we can try to develop devotion so that we are always guided by Ishwara in one or the other way towards the goal of moksha.

Mukhya Vishayam

Each and every minute of our lives, we are ever suffering and thereby seeking eternal bliss knowingly or unknowingly. Even when we think we are enjoying sensual pleasures, we have got enough experience to know that sooner or later we will be experiencing sorrow in one or the other form. It is for this reason that the scriptures say again and again that “wise people don’t take resort to sensual pleasures as they know they are seeds of sorrow” (ye hi samsparshajaa bhogaah dokhayonaya eva te). But still majority of us go behind worldly pleasures either because we are bound by it or because we don’t want to strive for a higher pleasure. Even when we don’t seek the ultimate reality of Brahman or we seek only worldly pleasures, what we really are seeking is eternal bliss – this is the one and only goal that we really seek at all times (not just today or tomorrow but from time immemorial this is the only ultimate goal we have).

Since we now know as to what is the goal we have to seek, it is but wisdom to find out the abode of such eternal bliss. We asserted in the previous magazine that such an entity is Brahman as Brahman alone is eternal (yo vai bhooma, tat sukham or “that which is infinite alone can give us bliss”). When we figure out that Brahman is the abode of eternal bliss and it is eternal bliss that we are seeking, then we try to learn about Brahman and the ways to attain Brahman. There is only one way to know Brahman – scriptures are the one and only means to Brahman. If it be argued that Gurus are there who guide us and hence they are also the means to Brahman, this is not entirely true; Gurus teach us knowledge of the scriptures and Guru is a living embodiment of the scriptures. Thus scriptures are the one and only source of Brahman (we find Veda Vyaasa also asserting this as “shastra yonitvaat” in the 3rd sutra of Brahma Sutras). And a Guru is one who is defined through two qualities – a Guru is a brahma nista and srotriya – he is ever abiding in Brahman and he is learned in the scriptural knowledge (thus we get back to the scriptures as the only means to Brahman). It is worth remembering here that though scriptures are the only means to Brahman, scriptures are as illusory as the external world that we perceive as Brahman alone is real (vedaah avedaah – the Vedas are not Vedas in the state of deep sleep which is equivalent to the state of moksha or liberation where duality completely vanishes). Swami Paramarthananda therefore defines the shastras as a darpana or mirror in which one can see one’s own Self. Sankara also asserts in Vivekachoodamani that realizing one’s nature of Brahman (Brahma atma aikya bodhena vinaa vimukthir na siddhyathi brahma shathaanthare api – even in a 100 lifetimes of Brahma, we will not realize without the

knowledge that our very nature is that of Brahman or “I am Brahman”) is realization or experience of bliss and shastras only helps so much as to point to Brahman as one’s own nature. Thus shastras or scriptures show us as to what is Brahman – Brahman is all-pervasive, of the nature of Existence, Consciousness, Bliss and is the substratum of the illusory world, this Brahman is your very nature of Consciousness (that which pulsates inside you as “I-exist, I-exist”). Though the shastras point to Brahman and say “tat tvam asi” or “you are that Brahman”, it is upto an individual to realize this and abide in this realized state. There are many people in the world who know this truth yet don’t abide in it but just ignore it (Kamal Hassan once quoted on stage that mahatmas say tat tvam asi but still he is as ignorant as any other person in the world) – the age-old saying of “a horse can be taken to the pond but cannot be made to drink water” can be remembered here. The Lord also resonates this view while saying “uddharetaatman aatmaanam” or “a person has to uplift his own Self” – even after achieving a Sadguru a person might not realize (the best example in the puranas is Dritharaasthra who was taught by Vidura and Sanatsujaatha but still cling on to “his sons” rather than the ultimate reality of Brahman).

When we talk about the shastras, the list is huge including the chathurdasha vidyas. If we just consider the Upanishads, still the list is huge of 108 and more extant Upanishads. If considering the 10 main Upanishads, still it is huge with Brihadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads (not to mention the Bhagavad Gita comprising of 700 slokas, prakarana granthas, puranas etc.). When literature is huge about just one topic of Brahman, it is always possible that one might get doubts. Literature is huge because the same Brahman is explained in various ways, through various analogies, for different seekers and repeated over and over again. Hence in this a lot of confusion is possible. More so today as there are many preachers who preach their own philosophy while claiming to give the authentic interpretation of the scriptures (they justify it by blaming the previous seers and by saying that they got vision of Ishwara who directed them into this mission of correcting the interpretation) – (there is no blame made here but just giving the state of views and setting the stage for the concept that is about to follow). Hence it was required to clarify all these doubts, confusions and arguments so that seekers with lesser intellect will be able to easily understand the scriptural concepts and focus on Brahman alone. Thus Veda Vyasa wrote the Brahma Sutras which is a logical analysis of the various seemingly-conflicting scriptural statements and views. Since Brahma Sutras is an analysis of the scriptures, therefore a brief learning/understanding of the scriptures is essential (here it is fine as we will be explained as to which statement is being referred through Sankara’s bhashya). Even

Brahma Sutras got to be corrupted through diverse views and hence it was essential that Sankara write a bhashya in order to clear the views of Veda Vyasa. Enough of this analysis of Brahma Sutras☺.

When any work is undertaken, it is essential to set the stage as to why such a work is undertaken. For Sankara who was writing a bhashya (commentary) on the Brahma Sutras, it was essential to explain as to why we are learning the Brahma Sutras (or why a seeker should learn the Brahma Sutras) or for that matter even the scriptures. The one word explanation that Sankara gives for this is "adhyaasa" and the explanation of this one word is taken up in the introduction to the bhashya (now popularly known as the adhyaasa bhashya). Adhyaasa bhashya is the very basis of Sankara's entire Brahma Sutras and if we might say, all of Sankara's work and even Vedanta itself. Many of us would be familiar with the meaning of adhyaasa as "superimposition" though it isn't that simple a concept to just put in one word. In brief, adhyaasa is mixing the Self with the not-Self (self is real, not-self is unreal) and the way out of this is through apavada (negation of the not-self from the self and thus realizing the Self).

It isn't that important to know as to what is adhyaasa or even as to how to come out of this adhyaasa but it is important to know as to why Vedanta is required to assert us of our very nature of adviteeya satya of Brahman. And this is exactly what Sankara does in the very first paragraph of the adhyaasa bhashya. If this "why Vedanta" is properly understood, then in it we will find the answer as to what is Vedanta and will achieve realization very soon itself. This might seem to be a little far-fetched concept but once we learn the first paragraph, we will understand this to be true. Let's see the first paragraph, its translation and brief insight into it.

**Yushmadasmad pratyayagochara vishayavishayinostama prakaashavad
viruddhasvabhaavayoh ithara itharabhaava anupapathau siddhaayaam
taddharmaanaamapi sutharaam ithara ithara bhaavaanupapatthi, ithyatho
asmatpratyayagochare vishayini chidaatmake yushmad pratyayagocharasya
vishayasya taddharmaanam cha adhyaasah, tad viparyayena vishayinah
taddharmaanam cha vishaye adhyaaso mithyethi bhavithum yuktham; tathaapi
anyonyasmin anyonyaattmakathaamanyonyadharmaascha adhyasya ithara ithara
avivekena athyantha vivikthayoh dharmadharminoh mithyaaajnaana nimithaah**

satyaanrithe mithuneekrithya, 'aham idam' 'mama idam' ithi naisargikoyam loka vyavaharah

Though the subject of "I" and objects of "you" or "these" are contrary like light and darkness and their oneness is impossible; same with their qualities too, still in the Conscious Self we see the superimposition of "you" (world) and its qualities; same with the superimposition on "you" of the Self. This superimposition is just an illusion and mithyaa (unreal – that which doesn't really exist). The wrong knowledge (false or non-knowledge, ignorance) of the Self and "you" thereby makes us mix both (along with their qualities); thereby the notions of "I am this insentient, these are mine" are taken up naturally and this is the activity that we see of the world (in worldly people).

It is very much possible to speak long about each word of Sankara and even dissect the translations given above but here our goal isn't expertise in Sankara's word but using it for the goal of moksha (eternal bliss). Today we see many people who are experts in interpreting Sankara's words but they fight amongst each other as to what is the right translation or interpretation of each word of Sankara – all those are unwanted and only takes us further away from where Sankara is leading us to.

Sankara gives this beautiful sloka in Brahma jnaanaavalee mala as to how we can easily categorize the world into just two entities:

Drik drishyau dvau padaarthau sthah paraspara vilakshanau

Drik brahma drishyam maayethi sarva Vedanta dindimaa

There are only two contrary entities when we try to categorize this world ultimately – one is the drik or Subject and the other is drishya or the objects; Drik is Brahman and Drishya is the world, thus roars the lion of Vedanta.

It is these two terms that we know as "brahma satyam, jagan mithyaa" and Sankara uses the words of asmad and yushmad here for "brahman" and "world" respectively. We all know that "I" am Brahman and "you" is everything apart from Brahman which we collectively term as jagat or the world. These two are distinct and contrary to each other. Brahman is real whereas jagat is unreal. Brahman is changeless whereas jagat is changing. Brahman is eternal whereas jagat is not eternal. Brahman is unborn whereas jagat takes birth. Brahman is blissful whereas jagat is sorrowful (anityam asukham lomam, the world is temporary and sorrowful thus says the Lord in Gita). Brahman is Conscious whereas jagat is insentient. Brahman is one whereas jagat is many – the list is endless.

Thus we see very clearly that there is no way that these both or their qualities can be mixed (mixed means considering one as other) and Sankara says that these are like light and darkness – there is no way that we can mix both. This impossible task of mixing but happens – the Self is seen in the not-Self (the not-Self which is unreal is considered as real, reality of Self superimposed on the not-Self – the Self which is real is considered unreal, unreality of not-Self is superimposed on the Self). Thus we have forgotten the Self (which alone exists and is our very nature) and consider the not-Self (including the body, mind, intellect and objects/people of the world) as the Self or “I”. The real “I” is forgotten and the unreal “I” is considered as the real “I” – here itself we therefore see as to how this impossible superimposition happens as generally we consider even the body, mind etc. as “I” (though at times we do mention the body, mind etc. as mine). Considering this example, we know that this impossible (mithyethi bhavithum yuktham – definitely this superimposition has to be considered unreal) is because of lack of knowledge or proper knowledge (some people interpret mithyajnaana as wrong knowledge and others as inexplicable – both are right only – wrong knowledge is ignorance of the Self and this ignorance cannot really be explained as it isn’t real thus it is inexplicable as well).

If wrong knowledge is what causes the superimposition, then the way out is proper knowledge – we already saw that proper knowledge will immediately clear this superimposition and ensure that this doesn’t happen again. As simple as this sounds, it is only simple in theory. In practice getting rid of the notion of “I” as body, mind etc. and asserting always this “I” as the non-dual reality of Brahman (Self) is very tough and might require many years or even births of anusandhaanam (this is not to discourage but a fact – if a sadhaka has an earnest desire then realization will happen very soon itself as it is one’s very nature itself). Thus Sankara says that this happens very naturally (naisargikah) and is seen in the world. If questioned as to how this happens naturally, we can try to explain it through vasanas but we will only end up nowhere as it was already proven earlier that such a superimposition is impossible – thus Sankara defines Maya as that which makes the impossible possible, in his Maya Panchakam.

Thus superimposition or adhyaasa is the impossible becoming possible and is what we currently experience as well – this experience of considering the real as unreal and unreal as real is what is the cause of all sorrows (anartha hethuh) and hence scriptural knowledge

and anusandhaana (contemplation on the scriptural knowledge) over and over again is essential to overcome it.

The word of loka vyavahara and naisargika explains as to why realized masters are very less. The Lord himself says that realized masters are very rare indeed thus:

Bahunaam janmanaam anthe jnaanavaan maam prapadhyathe
After many births a jnaani worships me (as present everywhere).

Manushyaanaam sahasreshu kaschit yathathi siddhaye
Yathathaamapi siddhaanaam kaschit maam vetti tattvatah
Out of thousands of people, few strive for perfection; out of those striving people, few know me in reality.

Since many people don't know that they are in an illusion, therefore they don't come out of it and therefore it is the nature of the world that we find many people getting deluded in superimposition (adhyaasa can be considered as same as maya, avidya etc. though not strictly in that sense☺). The first thing to come out of this illusion is to know that we are in an illusion – then automatically we will come out of it. Thus Sankara's words that show that majority of people are under an illusion (in other words "why Vedanta" because we are in an illusion and not in real) will help us come out of this illusion and realize the real Self which is Consciousness that pulsates inside us as "I-exist, I-exist" and the substratum of this illusory world.

Since we have covered adhyaasa in this issue, we will see apavada and the way-out of this superimposition (or way to moksha) in the next issue with quotations from adhyaasa bhashya.

Interested in listening to explanation about Brahma Sutras, hear the mp3s in the below link:
http://vedantatattva.org/vedanta/discussion_mp3/brahmasutra.html

Sankshiptha Vedanta

Bhaja Govindam is a prakarana grantha written by Adi Sankaracharya. This work is also called Moha Mudgara which means Hammer of delusion. Sankaracharya along with his disciples were going on a pilgrimage and on their way Sankaracharya saw an old man trying to by-heart the Sanskrit grammar. Sankaracharya was so moved by this sight that he felt bad for the old man that he instead of spending the time contemplating on the Ultimate Reality of Brahman is wasting time in intellectual learning. Sankaracharya felt that most of the people are spending their lives with the passion to enjoy the pleasures of the world and thus composed this work to help people understand that such passions cannot help a person to get anandam (bliss) rather it will only lead to dukham.

Of all the passions a person has in his life passion for possession of more wealth (kaanchanam) and passion for women (kaamini) are the two main passions. Sankaracharya through this work tells how futile it is to spend the entire life with these passions without realizing one's own nature of bliss and thereby gives us the way to overcome these. When a person has strong passion to possess more wealth such a person will never get satisfaction how much ever wealth he may possess. Even if such a person becomes the wealthiest person on earth, still his thirst for more wealth will not go. Possessions not only include wealth, but also people and power. Similar is the case with the passion to enjoy women that this strong passion make him to crave for more and more sense pleasure and over indulgence of sensual pleasures will only lead a person to disease and sorrow. Ramakrishna Paramahansa always used to speak about kaamini and kaanchana as the problem-creators in life.

By nature everyone is complete and hence by nature everyone is anandam. But this particular truth is forgotten due to ignorance, hence the real purpose of this life is to realize that one truth that we are already complete and blissful. When a person realizes this particular truth then all sorrows will end, and such a person will ever rejoice in bliss. If a person is ignorant about this truth, he will consider himself to be incomplete and hence will start desiring for happiness from the world. And once a person starts desiring and does action to satisfy those desires there will be no end for this cycle of desire-action-result and he will take birth again and again to do action and enjoy the result of the action. Whether a person is in the world or a renunciate, whether a person does most sacred action or the most sinful action, if a person doesn't realize his own real nature he will have to take birth

again and again until realizes his own real nature. On the other hand, if a person realizes his real nature of bliss then whether a person does good action or bad action he will ever rejoice in the bliss of the Self.

Thus, Sankaracharya says that we have to understand all pleasures of the world will eventually lead to sorrow and hence futile to overly indulge in passions of the world, have to purify our mind through various sadhanas like selfless service, japa, meditation and have to surrender to Iswara or Guru to get the knowledge of Scriptures which speaks about our real nature and thereby realize our own very nature of bliss. Once a person realizes his very nature such a person Sankaracharya says "nandathi nandathi nandatyeva – rejoices, rejoices and only rejoices". There won't be even a fraction of sorrow to such a person once he realizes his very nature of bliss.

Detailed explanation of Bhaja Govindam by Rajesh:

http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/VedantaDarshanam/Sep09/Bhaja_Govindam.doc

Gitaamritham

9.26

***patram puspam phalam toyam
yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tat aham bhakty-upahrtam
asnami prayatatmanah***

Word – meaning

Patram = leaf,

Puspam = flower,

Phalam = fruit,

Toyam = water,

yo = whoever

bhaktya = with devotion,

prayachhati=offers

me= unto me,

tat aham = that I

asnami =accept,

prayatatmanah=one having purity of mind.

Meaning of the sloka

If a pure soul offers me even a leaf or flower or fruit or water with devotion, I accept such an offering made by a person with purity of mind.

We find the Lord here emphasizing the importance behind the attitude rather than an action in itself. Whatever is offered to the Lord with devotion is accepted whole-heartedly by the Lord whereas even great gifts that are offered to the Lord without devotion (having selfish desires) will not be accepted by the Lord.

Does it matter whether the Lord accepts or not? It does because if the Lord accepts, then the prasaada of bliss will be given to us by the Lord. If the Lord doesn't accept, that means that we will have to hold on to our gifts and vasanas thus creating many more births and sufferings in the long run.

There are many puranic stories which depict this concept of attitude being more important than the action in itself. Even though an action might be wrong per se, still if there is the

attitude of devotion (surrender to the Lord and performed as an offering to the Lord) then it becomes pure and leads to bliss for oneself and others.

We find Rama partaking Shabari's partly-tasted (partly eaten) fruit – it is considered impolite and disrespectful to offer something to the guest what has been tasted by us – more so for the Lord. But Shabari's actions were based on devotion to the Lord, devotion in the form of trying to offer the best to the Lord and we find the Lord taking Shabari's offering completely and thereby fulfilling her desires.

We also find Draupadi's offering to the Lord out of devotion being taken by the Lord though it was as small as a grain of rice! When the pandavas were staying in the forest, the saptha rishis made a visit (they were being sent by the Kauravas to enrage them when they find that Draupadi doesn't have anything to feed them). The saptha rishis say that they will eat food after taking bath. At that time Draupadi calls out Krishna to help her out as there is no food in the house. Immediately the Lord makes a visit there and says he is hungry. Draupadi offers the one grain of rice that is available to her – the Lord eats it filling his stomach with half of it and the stomach of the entire world with the rest half of it. The saptha rishis realize that their stomach is full and embarrassed they go away from the place after taking bath, not even mentioning anything to Draupadi or Pandavas. Just calling out to Ishwara with devotion and offering a grain of rice was enough to fulfill the entire world's hunger – speak about the power of devotion!

Kuchela's story also can be remembered here. Kuchela went to the Lord after being sent by his wife to ask for wealth as he was Krishna's childhood friend and was in utter poverty. Instead of asking anything to Krishna, Kuchela just visits and decides to come back. He doesn't even offer flattened rice prepared by his wife to Krishna as he felt embarrassed. Krishna knowingly asks for the rice and is about to eat everything when Rukmini stops him half-way. Kuchela then returns back to find that he has been given a lot of wealth in return for the flattened rice offered by him. Here we find that flattened rice which is not worth anything at all became a huge wealth because of the attitude of offering and devotion. The poverty of kuchela is eradicated due to his devotion without him even uttering a word to the Lord (abhista vara daayike – Devi or Ishwara is one who gives everything one desires, without even asking for it – "vaanchidaartha pradaayini").

The Lord mentions this in another sloka in the same chapter thus:

*Yat karoshi yad ashnasi yaj juhoshi dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva mad-arpanam*

Whatever actions you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer unto the sacred fire, whatever you give to others and whatever austerities you do, do it as an offering unto me.

When a seeker is able to get the right attitude of "Ishwara arpitham" (actions as an offering to Ishwara) and "na icchayaa kritham" (done without any cravings for the fruits there-of) as mentioned by Ramana Maharshi in Upadesa Saram, such action purify the mind and pervade the seeker's mind with Ishwara smarana (thought about Ishwara). Thus everything becomes pervaded by Ishwara.

This state wherein everything is pervaded by Ishwara has been beautifully explained by Sankara thus in Soundarya Lahari:

*Japo jalpah shilpam sakalam api mudra-virachana
Gatih pradaksinya-kramanam asanady'ahuti-vidhih;
Pranamah samvesah sukham akilam atmarpana-drsa
Saparya-paryayas tava bhavatu yan me vilasitam.*

Let the mutterings that I do,
With the sacrifice in my soul.
Become chanting of your name,
Let all my movements become thine Mudhras,
Let my travel become perambulations around thee,
Let the act of eating and drinking become fire sacrifice to thee,
Let my act of sleeping becomes salutations to you ,
And let all actions of pleasure of mine,
Become parts of thine worship.

Narada also resonates such a view in bhakthi sutras defining bhakthi thus:

"Tad arpita akhila acharatha cha tad vismarane parama vyakulatha cha"

A true bhakta offers everything unto the lord. hus remembering the lord in all the actions performed one gets rid of the notion doer-ship/enjoyer-ship thereby getting rid of the Ego. The Ego-less state is the state of moksha and thus a bhaktha attains moksha starting with offering everything with devotion to the Lord.

Upanishad Prachaaram

We will see a brief of Skanda Upanishad, one of the 108 Upanishads mentioned in the Mukthikopanishad. This Upanishad, going by its shanthi mantra of "sah naavavathu", is from the Krishna Yajur Veda. This is an important Upanishad in that it gives the beautiful sloka saying that Siva and Vishnu are one and the same.

We all would know or would have heard that many years (or centuries) ago there was a huge clash between saivites and vaishnavites (devotees of Siva and Vishnu respectively). We can find this even in the life and works of Appayya Dikshithar. Even today, though people don't acknowledge openly, this fight as to who is greater still is prevalent. There are vaishnavites who will not enter a Siva temple and the opposite is also true. This whole fight about superiority of one god is something that is caused out of lack of understanding of the scriptures. Today we also find this fight getting into devotees of other gods as well. Once a shaaktha (devi bhaktha) was telling me as to how great is the commentary of Bhaskararaaya on the Lalitha Sahasranama, so great that he spends three pages explaining the first naama or "sri matha"! As if other sahasranamas or darshanas don't have any exhaustive commentary☺ - not to continue this argument but the chathussutri brahma sutra bhashya has an exhaustive commentary by Padmapadacharya called Panchapadika and the list of sub-commentaries goes very deep that each word of Sankara is explained through many sub commentaries. Madhvacharya has written three commentaries on the Brahma Sutra which has sub-commentaries and glosses. Ramanujacharya's sri bhashya is very exhaustive not to mention his other two bhashyas (small and medium length) on the Brahma Sutras. Sureshwaracharya explains Sankara's bhashya on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in 12000 verses in his vartika – more than 1000 verses dedicated in explaining just the introductory paragraph of Sankara!

Let's while learning a brief of this Upanishad take up the resolution to focus on the non-dual reality preached in the scriptures through many ways and been given many names and forms for the many sadhakas to contemplate easily based on their temperament (ekam sat vipraah bahudhaa vadanthi – one truth is variously explained by wise men).

All Upanishads have the same subject-matter of Brahman. We find this Upanishad mentioning the truth propagated beautifully by Sankara as "brahma satyam, jagan mithyaa,

jeevo brahmaiva naaparah” or “Brahman alone is real, this world is an illusion, jeeva is one with Brahman and not different from Brahman” thus:

Samvit maatrasthithah cha aham ajosmi kimathah param

Vyatiriktham jadam sarvam svapnavatcha vinashyathi

I am of the nature of Consciousness (non-dual absolute Consciousness) and am unborn (eternal); what is there greater than this? The different world that we currently perceive is insentient and gets destroyed when knowledge dawns even as a dream world vanishes when the dreamer wakes up.

Svapna – a very powerful analogy

Dream-analysis is a very important analysis in the seeker’s spiritual path. Dream-analysis is also inevitable. If we closely analyze dream, we will realize that this waking world is also like a long dream – once this realization dawns, the sufferings that we are facing in this world will be perceived as we perceive the sufferings in the dream world. Thus a person focuses on his very nature of Brahman and that this world along with its changes, sorrows, sufferings etc. is but an illusion (a dream) thereby ever rejoicing in bliss.

Ajosmi – I am unborn

That I am unborn is something which we all ought to contemplate over and over again until we are very convinced because most of the problems in life start with the fear of death which is because we think we are the body that has taken birth. Therefore the Lord starts his discourses to Arjuna in the 2nd Chapter by again and again reiterating the view that “you are not the body but the unborn, undying and therefore eternal Self”.

The Upanishad proceeds to tell that when in bondage, “I” am the jeeva and when not in bondage, “I” am Sadasiva or blissful Brahman. What is bondage? Action is the bondage. Actions, as we know, are born out of desire to fulfill something. Desire to achieve things is because of the ultimate desire to become perfect, full, infinite etc. and this desire is because of ignorance, the ignorance that “I” am already perfect. Thus karma (action) is caused out of kaama (desire) which in turn is caused out of avidya (ignorance). As long as a person is not bound by action, he is Brahman.

Bound by action

Actions lead to fruits and repetitive action leads to vasana (latent tendencies). Thus karma, phala and vasana are the bondages caused by karma. Vasana in turn leads to more births in order to enjoy the vasanas. Thus man gets whirled from one birth to another in this never-ending chain of birth and death (punarapi jananam punarapi maranam punarapi janani jatara shayam – again birth, again death and again in the womb of the mother).

Avirodhithaya karma na avidhyaam vinivarthayet

Vidhyaavidhyaam nihanthyeva tejasthimira sangavat

Since action is not against ignorance, therefore it cannot remove ignorance. Ignorance can be removed only by knowledge even as darkness is expelled only by light.

The knowledge that “I am not the body” means there are no actions to be performed, no desires to be fulfilled and no ignorance whatsoever as “I” am the self-existing Self (beyond darkness, ignorance and duality).

The Upanishad makes it clear that this Siva that it is praising is one with Vishnu (Brahman) thus:

Yathaa shivamayo vishnuh evam vishnumayah siva

Yathaantharam na pashyaami tathaa me svasthiraayushi

Even as Siva is filled with Vishnu, Vishnu is filled with Siva. One who doesn't see differences, all is well for such a person.

The Upanishad then says that abhedhadarshanam or vision of non-duality (indifference) is knowledge and meditation is the mind which focuses on non-duality (doesn't go behind sensual pleasures – mind goes behind sensual pleasures when we consider objects as different from oneself). Such a seeker should do intense meditation (contemplation) on this indifference (non-dual reality) and thereby will achieve the goal of Brahman.

Abhedha darshanam jnaanam – knowledge is vision of indifference

The Lord says in Gita that samatvam is yoga (equality or vision of oneness). Knowledge thus is when a seeker sees everything as filled in and out by Brahman, nay everything is Brahman. Such a vision of indifference gets rid of likes-dislikes which in turn gets rid of attachment-aversion which in turns gets rid of happiness-sorrow. Thus a seeker goes

beyond duality and each moment of life is blissful irrespective of whatever happens in the external world (externally still duality might exist and a person might suffer but due to vision of oneness internally and knowing that this world is like a dream world, a person will not suffer but ever rejoice in bliss).

Tadvishnoh paramam padam sadaa pashyanthi soorayah

Saints always see that Supreme non-dual state of Vishnu (Brahman)

We can quote another minor Upanishad sloka here:

Nimeshaardham na thistanthi vritthim brahma mayeem vina

Not even for a moment do (saints) remain without the thought that "I am the non-dual Brahman".

With a brief insight into this beautiful yet short Upanishad (just 15 slokas in it), let us get rid of all differences and see this entire world as the non-dual reality of Brahman so that we may ever rejoice in bliss.

Text - http://sanskritdocuments.org/all_pdf/skandaupan.pdf

Translation - <http://www.celextel.org/108upanishads/skanda.html>

Raga Varsha

Miyan ki Malhar

This is one of the foremost of the malhar group of ragas. Malhar group of ragas are generally sung during winter season as these are supposed to bring rain. It is generally argued that since the raga name as "miyan ki" in the beginning, it is a creation of Tansen (like miyan ki todi or miyan ki sarang) but this isn't something very certain.

Miyan ki malhar or just miyan malhar is a strong raga which uses all seven svaras (doesn't skip any svaras). The svaras used as shadja, shuddha rishabha, komal gandhaaram, shuddha madhyamam, panchamam, shuddha daivatham and two nishadhas (komal and shuddha).

AROHANA

Ri ma ri sa ma ri pa ni dha NI sa

AVAROHANA

Sa ni pa ma pa ga ma ri sa

LAKSHANA

ri ma ri sa, ma ri pa, ma pa ni dha NI sa, (pa) ni pa

(Bigger note in CAPS – NI is shuddha nishadham and ni is komal nishadham)

FILM SONGS

The first song that comes to mind which portrays miyan ki malhar to perfection is *bole re papihara* song from *Guddi* (beautiful adaptation of a classical song by Vasant Desai and beautifully sung by Vani Jayaram).

BHAJANS

Bhajan song

http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/Aparna/Compositions/Songs/bhaje_dhwani.mp3

<http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/Aparna/Compositions/Songs/lyrics.html#song5>

Kaivalya Navaneetham sloka

http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/Kaivalya_Navaneetham/10_miyankimalhar.mp3

Kaanada

Kanada is the janyam of 22nd Melakarta raga Kharahapriya. This raga uses chaturuti Ri, sadharana Ga, suddha Ma, chaturuti Dha, and kaishiki Ni.

AROHANAM

S R2 G1 M1 P M1 D2 N1 S

AVAROHANAM

S N1 S D2 P M1 P G1 M1 R2 S

Both arohanam and avarohanam are sampooranam with vakra sancharas in both arohanam and avarohanam.

The Jiva swaras for this raga are Ga, Dha and Ni and the nyasa swaras (swaras permitted to use as resting points in the phrasing) are Ri, Ga, Pa and Ma.

This raga is mostly a karuna rasa pradhana raga and this raga is thiristhayi raga which means this raga can be sung at all times.

The common sancharas of this raga are NSR-NPMG-GMDNS.

CLASSICAL SONGS

Sukhi Evaro – Tyagaraja Swami

Alaipayudhe Kanna – ottukadu Venkatasubbaiyar

FILM SONGS

Mullai malar mele moikum vandu pole – Uttama Putran

Poo maalai vangi vandhar – Sindhu Bhairavi

BHAJANS

AMMA's bhajan

<http://vedantatattva.org/vedanta/songs/song38.html>

Kaivalya Navaneetham

http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/Kaivalya_Navaneetham/17_kanada.mp3

Praadeshikam

Kerala is known as God's own country and is a state that has given birth to many Mahatmas like Sankara, Tapovan Maharaj, Chinmayananda, AMMA and many others. We can also find many Vedantic works in its language of Malayalam (which is very close to Sanskrit). One great Mahatma who embedded Vedanta into devotional works was Thunjatthu Ezhuthachan. He is very famous for the work of Hari Naama Keerthanam. We will see one verse of Hari Naama Keerthanam this month.

Hari Naama Keerthanam is a brief description of the life of Vishnu in verse form. Ezhuthachan embeds Vedantic concepts while describing the life of Vishnu and his various avatars. In the very beginning of the work itself Ezhuthachan gives the ultimate truth preached through in Vedantic works thus:

Omkaramaaya porul moonaayi pirinjudane

Aankaaramaayathinu thane thane saakshi athu

Bodham varutthuvathinaalaayi ninna paramaacharya

Rupa hari naaraayanaaya namah

Omkaramaaya porul – that truth which is of the form of AUM, Brahman

Moonaayi pirinju – became three-fold

Udane aankaaramaayi – immediately became the ego (egos were created)

Athinu – for this ahamkaara

Than thane saakshi – Brahman itself is the witness

Athu – this truth

Bodham varutthuvathin – to experience it intuitively

Aalaayi ninna – helping for the same

Paramaacharya rupa – in the form of a supreme guru

Hari naaraayanaaya – to that Narayana

Namah – my prostrations

The truth denoted by the symbol of AUM is Brahman. Such a Brahman became three (the three of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva or the three gunas of Sattva, Rajas, Tamas – Maya made it many). And thus becoming three, it became Ahamkaara(s) (many ahamkaaras based on the various adjuncts of body-mind-intellect). Brahman itself remains a witness illuminating the

various egos or jeevas. I offer my prostration to such a Brahman who in the form of the supreme guru makes me realize this ultimate truth that is the witness to all the activities of the various egos.

Truth is one and one alone – it is non-dual as we saw in the main topic of last month. It is termed as Brahman and is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss absolute. It becomes many (the many-ness is due to Maya – this itself is an illusion as there is no real many created but this many is like the dream world getting created from the dreamer).

Maya thus is the culprit behind many-ness created. Sankara beautifully defines Maya as aghatitha ghatanaa pateeyasee maaya or “that which makes impossible possible is Maya”. Maya is very tough indeed to conquer but for the grace of the realized master who himself is beyond Maya and thus guides seekers towards the goal (even as a passer-by who is a local guides us to the nearby gas station himself). This Guru or the master who guides us to the goal of moksha is none other than Brahman or Ishwara himself (krishnam vande jagadgurum – adi guru of dakshinamurthy). If asked as to whether such a Guru is just a jeevan muktha or Ishwara himself, the scriptures very clearly tell that a knower of Brahman is verily Brahman. Thus such a Guru is one with Brahman. Ramana Maharshi thus used to beautifully put it that the Self inside us (which is Brahman) comes outside in the form of a Guru and guides us to our very nature of Self when there is a very earnest desire to get liberated from the bondages of samsaara.

When such a Guru guides us in removing the ignorance, we realize our very nature of Brahman. This Brahman is ever a witness to all the activities that are happening in this world even as a dreamer is a mere witness always to the activities in the dream world. Vidyanaraya gives the beautiful analogy of a lamp in a theatre to illustrate this saakshi bhavaa (witness-hood). Even as the lamp is ever a witness to the theatre stage, the people on stage including the main actor and supporting actors and the audience as well. Irrespective of whether the actors and audience are there (whether the drama is going on or not), the lamp is ever there. Similarly irrespective of whether a person is realized or not, the Self is ever there as the witness to all the illusions that is/will be seen in it.

Lakshmidhara gives this beautiful sloka to show as to why the “I” that pulsates inside us is this witness Self and not the Ego (ego is identified with the body-mind-intellect and objects/people around):

Saakshi sarvaanvithah preyaan aham naaham kadaachana

Parinaama paricchedha paritaapairupaplavaat

"I" am the all-pervasive witness Self and not the Ego; because the Ego is subject to changes, limitation and suffering (whereas the Self is changless, unlimited and blissful).

Beyond changes, limitation and suffering

At all times (even when we consider ourselves as the body and think we have a birth and death), the Self remains changeless. The "I" who took birth many years ago is the same as the "I" who am so-many-years-old today. This "I" is also beyond all limitations – it is unlimited because it is changeless. This unlimited state is experienced in the dream state where everything is created in "I" and any sadhaka who is willing to do some sadhana can very well experience the infinite potential inside oneself. This "I" as it is changeless and unlimited is blissful (without any sufferings) as per the chandogya Upanishad logic of "yo vai bhooma tat sukham, na alpe sukham asthi" or "that which is unlimited/infinite is blissful, there is no bliss whatsoever in limited entities".

We thus find that in the very first verse itself the author lays-out the ultimate truth of Vedanta in very crisp words. We will end this brief summarization of the work with this yet another beautiful sloka from the verse that speaks about the attitude to be maintained in order to realize one's witness-hood:

Yathonnu kaanmathathu naaraayana prathima

Yathonnu kelpathathu naaraayana sruthikal

Yathonnu cheyvathaathu naaraayana archanakal

Yathonnathathokke hari naaraayanaaya namah

Whatever is seen is the form of Narayana (Brahman);

Whatever is heard is the praise of Narayana;

Whatever is done is an offering to Narayana;

Whatever is there, all those are offered to Narayana.

Charitham

Goswami Tulsidas

Valmikisthulasidasa: kalau devi bhavishyati |

Ramachandrakathaametaam baashabhaddhaam karishyati ||

-Bhavishyottar Purana, Pratisarga Parva, 4.20

In Bhavishyottar Purana, Lord Shiva tells His consort, Paarvati Devi how Maharshi Vaalmiki got the boon from Lord Hanuman to sing ShriRaamKathaa in native language in Kaliyuga. This prophecy of Lord Shiva materialised on the Shraavan Shukla Saptami, 1532 A.D when Maharshi Vaalmikiji took birth as Tulsidas in a village named Raajaapur, Uttar Pradesh situated on the banks of the river Yamuna.

Tulasidas was born in Brahmin family and his parents were Atmaram Shukla Dube and Huls. He did not cry at the time of his birth and instead of crying he uttered "Raama" thus became Tulasiram or Ramabola in his childhood. After his parents left this world he came into contact with some saints who advised him to surrender to Lord Rama. When he was young he got married to Ratnavali; he was very attached to his wife. One day his wife went to her father's house, being unable to bear her separation Tulasidas went to meet her. Ratnavali feeling shame for this asked Tulasidas "My body is nothing but flesh and bones, why are you so attached to it? If you develop faith in Lord Rama, you would easily cross the ocean of samsara and attain eternal bliss." These words shocked him after which incident he became ascetic by abandoning the home.

Tulasidas spent afterward years in visiting sacred places and pilgrimage. While returning from answering the calls of nature Tulasidas used to throw the left over water at the roots of a tree which a spirit was occupying. The spirit was very much pleased with Tulsidas. The spirit said, "O man! Get a boon from me". Tulsidas replied, "Let me have Darshan of Lord Rama". The spirit said, "Go to the Hanuman temple. There Hanuman comes in the guise of a leper to hear the Ramayan as the first hearer and leaves the place last of all. Get hold of him. He will help you". Accordingly, Tulsidas met Hanuman, and through His grace, had Darshan or vision of Lord Rama.

Tulsidas wrote twelve books. The most famous book is his Ramayan— Ramcharitmanas—in Hindi. He wrote this book under the directions of Hanuman. This Ramayan is read and

worshipped with great reverence in every Hindu home in Northern India. It is an inspiring book. It contains sweet couplets in beautiful rhyme. Vinaya Patrika is another important book written by Tulsidas.

Some thieves came to Tulsidas's Ashram to take away his goods. They saw a blue-complexioned guard, with bow and arrow in his hands, keeping watch at the gate. Wherever they moved, the guard followed them. They were frightened. In the morning they asked Tulsidas, "O venerable saint! We saw a young guard with bow and arrow in his hands at the gate of your residence. Who is this man?" Tulsidas remained silent and wept. He came to know that Lord Rama Himself had been taking the trouble to protect his goods.

Hanumanji told Tulsidasji to visit Chitrakoot to have darshan of Lord Rama. Following this instruction of Hanumanji, Tulsidasji visited Chitrakoot and constantly chanted the pious Sri Raam naam. One day while doing parikramaa of Kaamadgiri (a hill in Chitrakoot where Lord Raam had stayed), Tulsidasji saw two handsome princes, one dark complexioned and one fair complexioned, riding beautiful horse in front of Him at some distance. Though the beauty of two princes mesmerized Tulsidasji, He could not recognize that they were actually Lord Rama and Lakshmana. When Hanumaanji met Him again and told Him the reality, Goswamiji felt very sad. Hanumanji then gave assurance and Goswamiji restarted His jaap saadhnaa.

In Kashi, on the night of Chaitra Shukla Saptami, Lord Shiva came in the dream of Tulsidasji and inspired Him to write Sri Rama Kathaa in vernacular language. Tulsidasji mentions this- Goswamiji then visited Ayodhya and on Chaitra Raam Navmi of the same year, during that time, ShriRamcharitmanas appeared inside Him and illuminated His heart. Ramcharitmanas soon gained popularity far and wide, so much so that jealous scholars created a hue and cry in Kashi. They protested that composing Sri Rama Kathaa in vernacular language inflicted insult on Sanskrit, a language of gods. But truth remains truth. With the aim of testing this new scripture, Ramcharitmanas was put at the top of all scriptures in the temple of Sri Vishwanathji in Kashi and the door was closed. Next day in the morning, when the temple door was opened, Ramcharitmanas was found lying at the bottom of all scriptures. The incident left everyone dumbstruck. It made everyone accept the fact that if Sanskrit is devbhasha, then the language of ShriRamcharitmanas is Mahadev bhasha. Because despite being a great scholar of Sanskrit himself, Goswamiji chose vernacular language due to Lord Shiva's will and instructions.

Tulsidas left his mortal coil and entered the Abode of Immortality and Eternal Bliss in 1623 A.D. at the age of ninety-one in Varanasi. Sri Tulasidas had narrated the powerful work "Hanuman Chalisa" in Awadhi language. If one can recite Hanuman Chalisa with devotion any thing is possible by Lord Hanuman's grace who is an embodiment of faith, devotion and knowledge.

Sthuthi

Hanuman Chalisa

Hanuman Chalisa is the most popular composition of the great Saint Goswami Tulsidas, the author of Tulasi Ramayana (Ramcharitmanas) on Lord Hanuman or Anjaneya Swami in terms of a devotional song and is an Awadi language poem. Now a days Hanuman Chalisa finds place in every home because it is a remedy, solution for all problems despite physical, mental or spiritual. People believe that if they have illness or adversity, chanting of Hanuman Chalisa eleven times or one hundred times will relieve them of their distress. Some recite Hanuman Chalisa on Saturday or Tuesday or on both these days by going to the temple. Thus, we see that this great composition of Saint Tulsidas has become a part of the culture and religious beliefs of a large number of people in India. The word 'Chalisa' means forty. This composition has forty verses in praise of Sri Hanuman.

Hanuman is one of the outstanding personalities in Ramayana epic. Every spiritual sadhaka should imbibe the character of Lord Hanuman, the very rare qualities like serving master with out questioning, courage, undivided faith, strong devotion and strict observance of Brahmacharya.... Sri Hanuman is the adobe of immeasurable strength, service, knowledge, politeness and simply beyond indescribable. The only one character that any fault and criticism don't even dare to touch is Hanuman's in Ramayana epic. His will, actions, devotion and emotions are perfectly pertained to spirituality. Let us all meditate on Him, praise His glories and remember His essence of devotion every second.

Detailed explanation of Hanuman Chalisa by Srinivas:

http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/VedantaDarshanam/Sep09/Hanuman_Chalisa.doc

Sanskrit shiksha

We saw a very brief introduction into Sanskrit in the previous issue. We also learnt that Sanskrit learning can be split broadly into two – learning dhaathu or verbs and learning shabdha or nouns. In this issue we will see briefly about dhaathus and shabdhas and with a few examples from Gita as to how to identify verbs and nouns in a sloka.

Shabdha – nouns

Nouns in a sentence or sloka is an entity upon which an activity is associated. Nouns in Sanskrit can be used in eight different ways called as vibhakthis (in each of these vibhakthis the noun takes a particular form like being the subject or showing possession)

Prathamaa vibhakthi – subject (Rama is walking)

Dvitheeyaa vibhakthi – object (Rama is being walked by Krishna)

Tritheeyaa vibhakthi – by (when we see the noun of Rama in tritheeya then it means “by Rama”)

Chathurthee vibhakthi – for (Krishna instructed for Rama)

Panchamee vibhakthi – from (or “due to” – I learned a lot from Rama)

Shasthee vibhakthi – possession (Rama’s wife is Sita)

Sapthamee vibhakthi – of, to (I am giving to Rama)

Sambodhana – exclamation as if calling out the person (hey Rama!)

The very noun of Rama when used in dvitheeyaa becomes Ramam and shashtee becomes ramasya (the noun isn’t used exactly in a sloka but used in one of its vibhakthis which means the word used isn’t the noun itself).

The seven vibhakthees of a noun can be used in singular, dual or plural thus we get a matrix of 8 x 3 for vibhakthi form of a noun (one rama, two ramas, many ramas).

Nouns are categorized into groups based on they being pullinga (masculine), streelinga (feminine) and napumsakalinga (neutral). And each group has different word (or notation) for their vibhakthi forms (prathamaa of rama is rama whereas prathamaa of vana is vanam).

Dhaathu – verb

Dhaathus are verbs that denote an activity like eating, drinking, walking, jumping etc. It isn't very important (unless we want to be authors in Sanskrit) but just so we know there are 10 different tenses in Sanskrit (past, present, future, present participle etc.). The most common is the present tense called as lat. Every dhaathu is used with either the first person, second person or the third person and in singular, dual or plural. Thus we have a matrix of 3 x 3 for a verb.

Verbs are categorized into groups (like nouns) and thus the 3 x 3 matrix varies depending on the group (as well as for the 10 different tenses).

We have only seen a very brief about shabdha and dhaathu as these in themselves are huge and the learning process really never ends😊.

The first thing a seeker should do while reading a sloka is identify the noun (s) and verb (s). Let us try this with a few examples:

Shaunakah ha vai aangirasam vidhivad upasanna paprachha
Shaunaka approached angiras in the proper way and questioned.

Here we find the nouns of Shaunaka and Angiras, the verb of papraccha (pri is the verb for questioning – generally usages of verbs as vadathi, pricchathi, namathi etc.).

Manushyaanaam sahasreshu kaschit yathathi siddhaye
Yatathaamapi sidhaanaam kaschit maam vetthi tattvatah
Out of thousands of people, few strive for perfection; out of those strivers, few know me in reality.

Nouns - Manushya (human), sahasreshu (thousands), sidhaanaam (strivers)
Verbs – yathathi (strive), vetthi (know)

Generally nouns will be just the word or their vibhakthi forms (aanaam, asya, eshu, aaya, ena, aat – all these will be suffixed to the noun of manushya or rama). Verbs on the other hand will end with ithi, the, e (or no ending like paprachha), aami, aasi etc. We can use our intellectual discretion and a little repository of words that we know to figure out whether it

can be verb or a noun (pata is for read and hence it can only be a verb and never a noun – similarly rama or manushya is a noun and can never a verb).

Sanskrit or interpreting slokas isn't as simple as just identifying verbs and nouns as there are other entities of adjective, adverb etc. which we will see in the next issue.

Ghatanaa

Krishna Jayanthi – 11th Sep

One of the most important teacher or person in this entire planet from whom we can learn a lot (at all times) is the Lord in the avataara of Krishna. Krishna's very life symbolizes our lives – starting from the day of birth till the day of death, the Lord was surrounded by nothing but trouble alone. Wherever he used to be, there would be trouble for people in that place – even people who used to think or support him would face a lot of trouble. Thus an apt one-word for Krishna's life would be trouble. Yet all these troubles didn't make people go away from Krishna but they still loved him and wanted to be always around him or have him in their thoughts – why? This is something worth pondering about – yet another one-word for Krishna's life is "bliss". Irrespective of whether he was being served good food or being cared for relatives/friends or he was facing trouble from Kamsa or his son was being kidnapped for many years, yet he maintained a very smiling face at all times (Niteesh Bharadwaj's beautiful portrayal in Mahabharatha TV serial can be remembered aptly here). This smiling-face even when faced with adverse situations is only possible when a person is always abiding in Brahman with the knowledge that this world is an illusion of names and forms in Brahman (Brahman alone exists). Looking at Mahatmas like AMMA, Prof. Balakrishnan Nair and others we can see as to how this smiling-face is possible even today for us as well. Since we celebrated Krishna Jayanthi this month, let us offer our salutations to the great master of Lord Krishna who maintained a blissful face at all times and thereby try to gain realization through inspiration in order to live life blissfully irrespective of whether facing troubles externally or not.

More info:

<http://www.amritapuri.org/4977/krishna-jayanti/>

Sadguru Mata Amritanandamayi's (AMMA's) birthday – 27th Sep

There has been more than one occasion where we have come across this name of AMMA in Bhagavatham postings as well as the magazine issues. AMMA has been the Sadguru who has been guiding this little disciple of hers throughout and it is AMMA who is working in vedantatattva.org as well as in these magazines to guide earnest seekers to realization in this very birth itself. AMMA has been hailed as the "hugging saint" in the west as she has hugged more than 20 million people in the past many decades. AMMA preaches Vedanta not through just words but through her actions of seeing oneness everywhere, welcoming everyone as her child, embracing, listening to their woes, offering them solutions to their

problems and unknown-to-them guiding to the ultimate goal of moksha. May us bathe in the love of the devotional mother and thereby like jnaana sambandhar drink the milk of knowledge and attain realization.

More info:

<http://www.amritapuri.org>

<http://amma.org>

Durga Astami (navarathri) – 26th Sep & Vijaya Dashami – 28th Sep

Durga is known to all as a fierce deity who kills demons. But unlike our normal notion of external demons or bad people, Durga only kills the inner demons of raga-dvesha etc. (attachment, aversion) and ultimately destroys our Ego and makes us realize our very nature of Brahman. Though not an attractive deity, yet Durga is essential in destroying the bad qualities of the mind (a Guru will always take up the form of Durga in order to help the seeker progress in the spiritual path). Navarathri denotes a strict discipline to realize the Self beyond the external world that poses an obstacle and culminates in the victory day of Vijaya Dashami when we succeed in our goal of eternal bliss.

More info:

<http://archives.amritapuri.org/bharat/festival/navaratri.php>

<http://archives.amritapuri.org/bharat/festival/dussehra.php>

Vedanta Pariksha

- 1) Who is known as the vartikakaara of Vedanta?
 - a) Sankaracharya
 - b) Anandagiri
 - c) Sureshwaracharya
 - d) Padmapadacharya
- 2) Who is known as the bhashyakara of Vedanta?
 - a) Sankaracharya
 - b) Sureshwaracharya
 - c) Veda Vyaasa
 - d) Vidyaranya
- 3) The trinities of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are brothers with one each of Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Parvathi. Name the three brother-sister pairs.
- 4) Name the master-work of Padmapadacharya
- 5) Guru Poornima is celebrated as the birth day of
 - a) Veda Vyaasa
 - b) Vasistha
 - c) Brahma
 - d) Sankaracharya
- 6) What is the sub-school of Vedanta that defines jeeva as a reflection of Brahman?
 - a) Bhatta school
 - b) Vartika school
 - c) Vivarana school
 - d) Bhamathi school
- 7) Name the vartikas written by Sureshwaracharya
- 8) Name the acharya who wrote commentaries on both Bhamathi and Vivarana school (hint: he wrote the famous kalpatharu commentary)
- 9) The author of Nyaayamritham is:
 - a) Madhusudana Saraswathi
 - b) Vyaasa Teertha
 - c) Narayana Teertha
 - d) Vidyaranya
- 10) Name the four chapters of Mandukya Karika of Gaudapadacharya

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

Answers to previous quiz

- 1) C - The word Upanishad is from the dhathu (Sanskrit verb) - Sad
- 2) D - Name the bhaktha/jnaani who didn't even know he was protected by the Lord's Sudarshana Chakra until sage Durvaasa got angry with him - Ambariksha
- 3) C - The great jnaani Mahabali was sent by the Lord to this loka - Rasathala
- 4) C - The three words uttered by Brahma while creating the world and standing for the three letters of A (akara), U (ukara) and M (makara) in AUM - Bhoor, Bhuvah, Suvah (called maha vyaaharithis)
- 5) C - We all know of the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra doing creation, protection and destruction respectively. There is a fourth and fifth deity as per the Shaaktha system. They and their duties respectively are - Ishwara with vanishing and Sadasiva with blessing
- 6) C - The great commentary of Sowbhagya Bhaskara on the Lalitha Sahasranama was written by - Bhaskararaya
- 7) Seven chiranjeevis - aswattama, bali, vyaasa, hanuman, vibhishana, kripacharya, parasurama
- 8) Fill: chatur veda, pancha indriya, shad aadhara, saptha rishi, ashta siddhi, nava - rasa or dhwaaram
- 9) D - The prakataartha vivarana commentary on Brahma Sutras was written by - Anubhuthisvarupa
- 10) Anubhuthisvarupa - Who was the guru of Ananda Giri (the great saint who wrote tikas on Sankara's bhashyas), what was the name of his commentary on Brahma Sutras and to which Upanishad's Sankara bhashya did he write a sub-commentary?

Scores

Aparna - 4

Sunanda - 6

Rajesh - 7.5

Kudos to those who replied to the tough questions of the previous month.

Anukramaanika Nirdesham

1. Editorial – a general message
2. Guru Mahima – Guru Gita explained in parts from the beginning
3. Mukhya Vishayam – main topic wherein a detailed explanation of a Vedantic concept
4. Sankshiptha Vedanta – brief summary of a Vedanta grantha
5. Gitaamritham – one sloka of Gita explained
6. Upanishad Prachaaram – summary of a minor Upanishad
7. Raga Varsha – analysis of a raga (both Hindustani and carnatic equivalents)
8. Praadeshikam – one sloka of a work from regional languages
9. Charitham – brief life-history of a Mahatma
10. Sthuthi – a devotional work explained
11. Sanskrita Shiksha – few simple and useful lessons of Sanskrit (useful to learn Vedanta)
12. Ghatanaa – days of spiritual significance in the month
13. 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)

Mail admin@vedantatattva.org.

Feel free to forward this to anyone who might be interested.

Online download of the magazine can be found at <http://vedantatattva.org/vedantagroup/VedantaDarshanam>

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Visit <http://vedantatattva.org/vedanta/mp3.html> for discourses on Vedanta.