

**The Quintessence
Of
Pristine Pure Vedanta**

Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series

VI



SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

By D. B. GANGOLLI

**ADHYATMA PRAKASHA KARAYALAYA
BANGALORE**

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CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
II. The Philosophical Teachings of Vedanta	4
III. For the Cognition of Non-Duality (of Atman) The Scriptural Viewpoint is Needed	7
IV. The Essential Nature of Atman as Indicated in the Shaastras	16
V. Mukhyaatma or the Absolute Self	21
VI. The Non-Duality of Atman	27
VII. Jnaana Saadhanas or Spiritual Practices for Attaining Intuitive Experience	34

VI. THE QUINTESSENCE OF PRISTINE PURE VEDANTA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. What is Meant by Vedanta?

Those portions which are to be found, to a great extent, in the Aaranyakas, i.e. the end parts of the four Vedas, which are devoted to the discriminative deliberation on the Ultimate Reality (Brahman), are together called 'Vedantas'. They have the more familiar or popular nomenclature of 'Upanishads'. In the Bhagavadgeeta both the philosophical or spiritual teachings (Siddhaanta) and the spiritual disciplines or practices meant for the aspirants (Saadhanas), which are found in the Upanishads, are elucidated in a manner so as to be understood by the common run of people. Shri Baadaraayanaarchaarya has systematized the topics and teachings found in both these canonical Vedantic texts, viz. ten principal Upanishads and the Bhagavadgeeta, in the form of aphorisms according to dialectics or pure reasoning. There is a convention of calling all the three categories of spiritual or philosophical texts, viz. the ten Upanishads, Bhagavadgeeta and the Vedanta Sootras or aphorisms, by the name 'Prasthaana Traya', meaning the three approaches or paths to the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman. The philosophical science (Darshana) that is propounded in this manner in the Prasthaana Traya is called 'Vedanta', in truth.

2. What is Meant by Pristine Pure Vedanta?

Which is that philosophical truth that is really hidden, or is implicit, in Vedanta? Which are the spiritual practices or disciplines that are to be observed in order to be able to cognize that philosophical truth? What is the benefit gained, or the purpose served, by the knowledge of Vedanta? — all these questions or topics have been explained from time immemorial to this day by various preceptors, each according to his knowledge. Although all of them are Vedantic philosophies alone, several considerations or tenets which are not to be found in the original authoritative sources of Vedanta, viz.

the Upanishads, are seen to be mixed up in those writings. Shri Gaudapaadaachaarya and Shri Shankaraachaarya have written their Vedantic works enabling the aspirants to comprehend or understand this pristine pure Vedanta, devoid of any mixture whatsoever of extraneous or alien considerations or aspects, without any shadow of doubt. The Vedanta that is known from the Maandukya Kaarikas of Shri Gaudapaadaachaarya and the Prasthanatraya Bhashyas on the three canonical texts, viz. ten principal Upanishads, the Bhagavadgeeta and the Vedanta Sootras (popularly known as Brahma Sootras), by Shri Shankaraachaarya is here, in this context, called 'Parishuddha Vedanta', i.e. pristine pure Vedanta.

3. Which are the Hallmarks of Pristine Pure Vedanta?

In these days many pseudo-texts on various topics called 'Prakarana Granthas' are palmed off on the unwary students or aspirants in the name of Shri Shankaraachaarya. Consequently, various types of interpretations, nay even schools of philosophy, claiming to expound the genuine teachings of that great preceptor have become very popular, and if any one tries to point out the serious types of contradictions when compared to the extant original Bhashyas he is invariably pooh-poohed. But there exist a few hallmarks for us to discern and sift out pristine pure Vedanta teachings taught by this line of traditional teachers. Firstly, any teaching should have the support of any one of the three canonical (authoritative) sources, viz. the Upanishad Bhashyas, the Geeta Bhashya and the Sootra Bhashya. Secondly, although what is taught in that pristine pure Vedanta is mainly on the support of the Shaastras alone, it should be invariably in agreement with Yukti, i.e. dialectical arguments, reasoning, and Anubhava, i.e. Intuitive experience. Yukti means not merely the compilation of sentences full of arguments beginning with 'because', 'therefore', neither the confusion of the maxims or axiomatic lines of logical texts; the system of deliberation which signifies any topic under consideration in accordance with Intuitive experience and in keeping with the acceptance of a dispassionate or unbiased intellect at each and every step of the thought process is alone called Yukti. Similarly, Anubhava is not the cognition or perceptual knowledge which accrues to any particular individual alone exclusively as a consequence of his going into a trance (Samaadhi), nor any abnormal faculty or power attained through the observation of certain austerities or penance (Tapahsiddhi) etc. It is that universal Intuitive experience alone that exists, here and now, in every human being all over the world. Universally every human being is getting the sensuous experience or perceptual knowledge, through the senses, of the external objects or phenomena. In the mind the experience of happiness and grief too are occurring. But what we are now referring to as 'Saarvatrika Anubhava', i.e. universal experience, is the totality of experiences pertaining to the whole

gamut of objects; it is called 'Poorna Anubhava', i.e. the consummate, plenary Intuitive experience which is applicable to all experiences without any restrictions whatsoever of time, space, states of consciousness etc. For the reason that the Ultimate or Absolute (Transcendental) Reality of Brahman or Atman, which the philosophical science of Vedanta teaches or propounds, is in full agreement with this 'Saarvatrika Poorna Anubhava', i.e. universal and consummate (holistic) Intuitive (plenary) experience alone the Vedantic texts are fit to be called 'Pramaana', i.e. the valid means for gaining 'Pramiti', i.e. the correct knowledge or experience. There is no need at all to believe, when one gets this Pramiti which is of the nature of certainty or certitude, and as a result there is no question of any sincerity or faith in having that belief. In fact, even in our empirical workaday world faith desiderates one's experience leading to consummate satisfaction, which is nothing but the fruition of one's desire in course of time.

4. What is the Goal or Prime Purport of this Book?

To present the quintessence of Shri Shankara's pristine pure Vedanta in a succinct manner in simple English so as to be understood by everyone; secondly, to create a persistent hunger among the readers for the 'Aadhyaatmika Vidya', i.e. the knowledge of our innate nature of the Self, by studying bigger and more profound works written by Shri Shankaraachaarya and thereby gain the benefit of Self-Knowledge. These are the only two purposes for publishing this small booklet. The original authoritative statements in the Sanskrit Bhashyas have been minimized to the extent possible (in fact, the earlier books in this series called 'Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series' contain many Bhashya excerpts); but for the sake of those who do not have the facility of understanding the Sanskrit quotations the meaning of those original Sanskrit excerpts are explained in those respective places in a manner to be easily discerned. The reasoning or dialectical arguments which are fully in consonance with Saarvatrika Poorna Anubhava, i.e. universal Intuitive experience, alone are adduced here in expounding various topics of Vedanta. If only there is that 'Shraddha', i.e. sincerity and dedication, towards the deliberation about the Ultimate Reality, the 'Taatparya', i.e. the prime purport or goal backed up by a steadfast unwavering will of the type — "I will definitely know this Reality of Atman at any cost" — and the 'Samyama', i.e. the control or restraint which will not allow or give any room whatsoever for both the external senses and the internal delicate instrument of the mind to get distracted or disturbed by going out towards or in pursuit of the external objects, then these qualifications alone are enough and certainly the topics that have been expounded and explained here will be comprehended by everyone without any doubt.

II. THE PHILOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS OF VEDANTA

5. Advaita, i.e. Non-duality, alone is the Teaching of Vedanta Philosophy

For a long time there has arisen a controversy among Vedantins as to what exactly is the philosophical teaching, about the Ultimate Reality (Brahman), of Vedanta. For the time being, the three principal schools of philosophy, viz. Dvaita (Dualism), Vishishta-Advaita (Qualified Non-Dualism) and Advaita (Non-Dualism) — are very much popular in the southern parts of India. The opinion of Maadhwas, i.e. the followers of Madhwaachaarya, is that — “Dvaita alone is the philosophical teaching of Vedanta”; the belief of the followers of Raamaanujaarchaarya is that — “Vishishta Advaita alone is the genuine spiritual teaching of Vedanta”; while the followers of Shankaraachaarya opine that — “Advaita alone is the indisputable philosophical teaching of Vedanta”. Now among these three main schools Shankara’s is the most ancient one. “*Sadeva Soumye-damagra Aaseedekameva Adviteeyam*” — meaning, “My lad, This was earlier Sat, i.e. the Reality, alone without a second.” — (Chhaandogya 6-2-1); “*Aatmaa Vaa Idameka Evaagra Aaseet*” — meaning, “This was earlier Atman alone” — (Aitareya 1-1-1) — in many other statements of this kind it is affirmed that Atman alone existed first and then He became all this world of duality. In several other scriptural statements of the type — “*Brahmaiva Idam Vishvam*” — meaning, “All this world of duality is Brahman alone’ — (Mundaka 2-2-12); “*Aatmaivedam Sarvam*” — meaning, “All this is Atman alone” — (Chhaandogya 7-25-2) — it has been stated that even now all this universe is Brahman alone. Brahman means the Reality that is endless or infinite and unrivalled in Its pervasiveness or abundance. The teaching that — “That Reality (Brahman) alone is the Ultimate or Absolute Reality of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss” — is in consonance with the Intuitive experience of everyone. Therefore, Shri Shankaraachaarya says that Advaita alone is the genuine philosophical teaching or truth of Vedanta. How Advaita is in full agreement or consonance with universal Intuitive experience (Saarvatrika Poorna Anubhava) will be delineated in due course in this book.

6. What is Meant by Advaita, i.e. Non-Dualism?

Some people think that the two words — ‘Advaita’ and ‘Abheda’ — are synonymous. This is not proper. Bheda means ‘being separate or different’. ‘Horse’ and ‘a male buffalo’ — both these are different; therefore, they have ‘Bheda’ or difference, which also means that they do not have ‘Abheda’, i.e. non-difference. “ ‘Jeeva’, i.e. soul, and ‘Brahman’, i.e. the Ultimate or Absolute

Reality, are both different; both were first, i.e. in the beginning or prior to creation, one Brahman alone; in the future too they will remain as Brahman alone” — in this manner some Vedantins were arguing in ancient times. “From Brahman the Jeevas are born; therefore, from that viewpoint although Jeeva, i.e. the soul, is not different from Brahman, from another viewpoint, he is different also from that (original) Brahman” — this theory of difference-cum-non-difference, called ‘Bhedaabheda Vaada’, was being propounded by a preceptor by name Aashmarathya. “Although now in his present state the Jeeva is a separate individual alone as a Samsaaree i.e. a transmigratory soul, experiencing Sukha, i.e. happiness, and Duhkha, i.e. grief or misery, he can cleanse or purify himself by means of certain spiritual disciplines like meditation (Dhyaana), penance etc. to become perfect and thereby become one with Brahman after death” — thus another spiritual teacher by name Audulomi was propagating (Vedanta Sootras 1-4-20). This topic of the various teachings by ancient schools of philosophy has been discussed threadbare in the Brahma Sootras. Just at present, irrespective of the fact whether there exist the ‘Bhedaabheda Vaadins’ or the ‘Bheda Vaadins’, because of the common teaching by both these schools of philosophy that — ‘When Moaksha or Liberation accrues or is attained, the Jeeva becomes Brahman alone’ — in the ultimate analysis both these schools may be treated as ‘Abhedavaadins’, i.e. theorists who preach or propound non-difference indeed; even so, they are not ‘Advaitins’ in the true sense and import of the term.

Advaita means ‘that which is devoid of Dvaita, i.e. duality.’ Shri Sureshwaraachaarya, the direct disciple of Shri Shankaraachaarya, has explained in his famous Brihadaaranyaka Vaartika 4-3-1807 that — *“Dvidhetam Dveetamityaahustadbhaavoa Dvaitamuchyate; Tanni-shedhena Chaadvaitam Pratyavastvabhidheeyate”* — meaning, ‘That which is divided or separated into two parts is ‘Dveeta’; the quality or special feature of that ‘Dveeta’ is called ‘Dvaita’; because in our Atman, who is the innermost entity compared to all else, there does not exist any ‘Dvaita’, i.e. duality, whatsoever — that Reality (entity of Atman) is called ‘Advaita.’” When it is stated that — “In Brahman there does not exist Dvaita” — it does not at all mean that — “There do not exist two parts or divisions, but there exist more than that number.” In the following Vaartika, Shri Sureshwaraachaarya further elucidates this fact in the manner — *“Dvidhaa Tridhaa Vaa Bahudhaa Kaaranam Sadbhavediha; Tasyaatmani Nishiddhatwaadaatmaa(s)dvaitoa Bhavettataha”* — (Bri. Vaartika 4-3-1808). The purport of this commentary is: “In Atman there does not exist two divisions or parts, three parts or many more numerical divisions at all; in fact, there does not exist in Atman any kind of manifoldness whatsoever; hence, Atman is called Advaitam, i.e. non-dual.” There does not exist another Atman or any other entity whatsoever second to, or separate from, this Ultimate or Absolute Reality called Atman. In truth, not even ‘Anaatman’, i.e. the not-self, which in Vedantic parlance is used quite often only to hypothesize that concept or phenomenon which is likely to be

imagined by the mind or intellect as a contra to Atman (to wit, the mind always swims between, or ponders over, a material object which is 'Bhaava Roopa' and its contra, the 'Abhaava Roopa', i.e. that object's non-existence, but never can it go beyond these categories to the Intuitive level), exists as an entity second to Atman, the Absolute or Transcendental Reality. In this regard the scriptural statement that — "*Aatmaivedam Sarvam*" — meaning, "Whatever exists — all that is Atman alone" — (Chhaandogya 7-25-2) is, in fact, the final judgment. This alone is conventionally called the 'Advaita Siddhaanta', i.e. the philosophical teaching of Advaita or non-dualism.

7. The Identity or Unity of Brahman and Atman alone is the Teaching in Agreement with Vedanta Philosophy

Atman means, in Vedantic parlance, our innate, innermost essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone. If one says — 'My Atman' — it means, in the true sense of the term, the really existing 'my essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss' alone. In the scriptures 'Brahman' has been called 'Atman' alone. Just as it has been repeatedly propounded that all this universe that appears to us is Brahman, similarly it has also been repeatedly propounded that all the world of duality around us is Atman alone. For example, look at these scriptural statements: "*Brahmaivedamamritam Purastaadbhrama Paschaadbhrama Dakshinataschoattarena; Adhaha choardhvam Cha Prasrutam Brahmaivedam Vishwamidam Varishtham*" — meaning, "This which is appearing in front is Brahman alone, that which is appearing behind is Brahman alone, to the left and to the right what exists is really Brahman alone; that which has pervaded below and above and is appearing in that pervasive form is Brahman alone; all this world is that excellent Brahman alone" — (Mundaka 2-2-12). "*Aatmaivaadhastat Aatmoaparishthaadaatmaapashchaadaatmaa Purastaadaatmaa Dakshinata Aatmoattarata Aatmaivedam Sarvam*" — meaning, "That which is below is Atman alone; that which is above is Atman alone; that which is behind is Atman alone; that which is in front is Atman alone; that which is to the right is Atman alone; that which is to the left is Atman alone; all this is Atman alone." — (Chhaandogya 7-25-2).

It should never be reckoned that — "Our Atman is one, Brahman is another different entity; this our Atman on a particular day, as a result of a particular spiritual discipline, becomes (transformed into) Brahman." Wherever and whatever is appearing or is being perceived — all that is really Brahman alone, all that is really Atman alone. Brahman alone is Atman, Atman alone is Brahman. Brahman is not an entity or an object or a substance which exists externally in some particular space or some particular time; our Atman is not one which at present, having been a transmigratory soul, later on, i.e. some

time, in due course, once, somewhere in space or in some region achieves or acquires the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Brahman who is not transmigratory. *"Tadetadbrahmaapoorvamanaparam Anantaram Abaahyamayamaatmaa Brahma Sarvaanubhoohu"* — meaning, "To that Brahman there does not exist any cause prior to It; nor there exists an effect after It; It does not have an interior, nor an exterior; our Atman alone who is experiencing all this is Himself Brahman" — (Brihadaraanyaka 2-5-19). It has been blared out time and again in our Upanishadic lore, without giving any room for any doubt whatsoever, that — 'At all periods of time and in all regions of space whatever exists is One alone, and That alone is Brahman; That alone is our Atman'.

"Ahamaatmaa Gudaakesha Sarvabhootaashayasthitaha' — meaning, "Arjuna, I am that Atman alone who exists in the heart of every creature" — (Geeta 10-20). Thus Bhagavaan Shri Krishna has very clearly indicated in the Geeta. In the Brahma Sootras too this very truth has been brought out in clear terms in the aphorism — *"Aatmeti Toopagachhanti Graahayanti Cha"* — meaning, "In the scriptures there are sentences which signify that Bhagavan should be contemplated upon as our Atman (of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) alone; it has been instructed that it should be cognized or intuited as Atman, i.e. our innermost Self, alone" — (Brahma Sootra 4-1-3).

III. FOR THE COGNITION OF NON-DUALITY (OF ATMAN) THE SCRIPTURAL VIEWPOINT IS NEEDED

8. The Doubt that Arises with Regard to the Vedantic Instructions

The world that appears to exist in our common experience is seen to be various in nature, full of sentient and insentient things; it does not appear to be of unitary or uniform nature; the bodies, forms, sizes etc. of the creatures existing in this world are mutually different, and to them happiness and grief accrue in different measures or degrees; as the happiness and the grief of one category of creatures do not accrue to another category, it appears that their selves (Atmans) must be different and many in number indeed. If the regulation, to which 'the actions seen in this world', 'their means' and 'the fruits of those actions' are subjected to, is observed objectively then it suggests that a Supreme Lord (Parameshwara) who rules over all this world must be invariably different from these Jeevaatmas, i.e. individual souls. The protagonists of various philosophical schools — like Nyaaya, Vaisheshika,

Yoga etc. and the followers of some other ancient Indian schools of philosophy which were not acknowledging Vedas as authoritative or canonical spiritual (scriptural) texts — have affirmatively said; “The world is real, in it there exist many Jeevas; apart or different from these souls a Lord (Ishwara) exists.” Some Vedantins too who are not ‘Advaitins’ have accepted this view. It being so, how at all can it be believed that — “All this is Brahman alone who is non-dual; that Brahman is our Atman alone?” — It is quite but natural for such a doubt to arise in our minds. The dialectic devices (Yukti) and Intuitive experiences (Anubhava) which enable us to solve this great doubt are also mentioned in Vedantas, i.e. the Upanishads. Either in the Upanishads or in the Bhagavadgeeta it has not been taught at all that we should meekly believe the philosophical truths or teachings. To those who listen to these scriptural, authoritative texts, a systematic as also thematic dialectical method of Intuitive reasoning (Anubhavaanga Tarka) which is capable of bringing home their veracity and purports in consonance with universal and comprehensive Intuitive experience alone is taught, rather unravelled.

9. The Need for the Deliberation on the Empirical Viewpoint (Lokadrishti) and the Scriptural Viewpoint (Shaastradrishti)

Those who wish to imbibe the philosophical truths of Vedanta should, first of all, deliberate upon and understand necessarily the two viewpoints called ‘Lokadrishti’, i.e. the empirical, mundane viewpoint, and ‘Shaastradrishti’, i.e. the scriptural viewpoint. It is a phenomenon already known to all of us that if the same object is seen from different viewpoints or aspects its knowledge accruing to us is different invariably. From a far-off distance what appeared to us as a small plant might create in us a feeling that it is a big tree when we approached it and observed it from a nearer or shorter distance. Further, if we approached and observed it from still a shorter distance we might come to know that there are two (and not one) trees. Here because of the difference in the two viewpoints, formed by observing an object from varied distances, the perceptual knowledge of the object accrued differently. In the same way, although when the water contained in a vessel is seen with our bare eyes it appears to be clear and clean; if it is examined minutely through a microscope it may be known to contain many impurities floating in it and many bacteria living in it. Here also because of the difference in our viewpoints, viz. Sthooladrishti, i.e. the gross viewpoint of the bare eyes, and Sookshmadrishti, i.e. the subtle incisive viewpoint, the knowledge of one and the same object of perception was rendered different. The same object appears differently to young people with clear vision when compared to older people with less clear vision and a defective organ of vision. Besides, although there does not exist any defect in our eyes or other organs of perception, still the knowledge that

The Quintessence of Pristine Pure Vedanta

we have formed by jumping to conclusions, as it were, all at once by observing only a facet or small part of an object as against the knowledge that is formulated after examining patiently and meticulously from all sides and exhaustively — between these two knowledges there may exist a great difference indeed. For example, one who has formed an opinion that a fruit is good after seeing it from its front side alone may be shocked to find that the fruit had been rotten on another side only after he picks it up in his hand and examines it by turning it over and over and seeing it from all sides. Here in this case the knowledge of one and the same object became different because of the difference in two viewpoints, viz. partial (Parichhinnadrishti) and the whole, comprehensive viewpoint (Poornadrishti).

Thus from different viewpoints different knowledges of one and the same object accrue. Among them the decision about a particular knowledge being the real or correct one and the other being a wrong or false knowledge has to be arrived at by using dialectical or logical arguments or reasoning as well as actual cognitive experience. In the same manner, in the present context too if from one viewpoint duality and from another viewpoint non-duality is appearing to be real or correct, then the question as to which of these two is the result of proper reasoning and thereby is the real knowledge and the other one evidently is wrong knowledge will have to be decided or determined on the strength of dialectical or logical arguments with the support of one's cognitive experiences. In the opinion of Vedantins there exists a viewpoint needed to determine the Ultimate or Absolute Reality, and this they call 'Shaastradrishti', i.e. the scriptural viewpoint. Here in this context, Shaastra means the Vedas, i.e. the authoritative canonical texts of Hindus. The unique viewpoint delineated in the Vedas is itself the Shaastradrishti. As against this, the common or mundane viewpoint utilized by the common run of people (predominantly materialistic in their outlook and totally extroverted) in their workaday world is called 'Lokadrishti', i.e. the empirical viewpoint of the uninitiated people. Now, when observed from the Lokadrishti the knowledge that Dvaita, i.e. duality, alone is real accrues, but when observed more comprehensively from the Shaastradrishti the knowledge that 'Advaita', i.e. non-duality, alone is real dawns on our mind. But between these two viewpoints also, the Lokadrishti is one which signifies only the appearance of the world of duality quite far off from Reality; it is in truth a Sthooladrishti, i.e. gross viewpoint, which observes with the help of our senses which are exclusively capable of perceiving the external objects only; hence, it is a viewpoint bristling with defects and is partial as it perceives or takes into its reckoning one part of the Reality indeed. On the other hand, the Shaastradrishti is one which takes us very near the Reality, as it were, is Sookshmadrishti, i.e. a subtle incisive viewpoint, is a Nirmaladrishti, i.e. a clear, lucid viewpoint, as also a Poornadrishti, i.e. a complete, plenary and consummate viewpoint. Thus although when seen from the natural Lokadrishti, Dvaita or the world of duality appears to be real, when one adopts the Shaastradrishti, in consonance with the Intuitive experience,

it would become quite convincing and full of certitude that Advaita alone is the Ultimate, Absolute and Transcendental Reality, and this alone is the prime teaching of Vedanta philosophical science.

10. The Essential Nature of Lokadrishti and its Limitations

Lokadrishti means the viewpoint by which we perceive or cognize the objects through our senses. "I have a Shareera, i.e. body; I am a Kartru, i.e. an agent of action, who cognizes the external objects with the aid of my Indriyas, i.e. senses, which are located in this body and acquires what is needed and rejects what is not wanted; Antahkarana, i.e. the inner instrument within me, is known by different names like mind (Manas), intellect (Buddhi), memory (Chitta); this Antahkarana is a valid means which causes happiness and grief to me through Vikalpa, i.e. indecision or doubt, arising in me by virtue of selecting or pursuing the cognitive knowledge accruing through these senses one by one; Nischaya, i.e. determination, in the manner — 'This is such and such a thing or entity' — and Anusandhaana, i.e. examination through natural perception and bringing back to memory, as also through correlating these external experiences one to another and thereby imagining or conjecturing what may happen etc." — in this fashion we acquire all our mundane knowledge or rather it arises in us by virtue of this Lokadrishti indeed.

This Lokadrishti is a means of carrying on the empirical, day-to-day dealings using the valid means of cognition, viz. Pramaanas, like Pratyaksha, i.e. perception, Anumaana, i.e. inference, Upamaana, i.e. illustrations, and Aapta Vaakya, i.e. statements of elders or our well-wishers. In fact, for the empirical transaction of the type — "To acquire knowledge of the external objects in order to procure what is desirable and to keep away that which is undesirable" — Lokadrishti is the foundation stone or the substrate. By the enjoyment of external objects we are experiencing either happiness or grief; the objects which cause grief are disliked by us, while those which cause happiness are dear to us or liked by us. While we develop attachment towards things that are liked by us, we develop hatred towards things that are disliked by us or are undesirable to us. All these are experiences (Anubhava) that accrue to all of us through the valid means of perception (Pratyaksha) alone and they are either of these two experiences, viz. externally the perceptual knowledge gained through the senses and internally the cognitive or conceptual knowledge occurring in the mind. Besides, by the Anumaana Pramaana i.e. inferential knowledge, not only the external objects but the cognition of human beings and other creatures etc. who are all carrying on similar empirical transactions like us is conjectured

by us. By this inferential faculty we are imagining that to those other human beings and creatures (i.e. all sentient beings) too all experiences like certain things or objects being desirable and certain other things being undesirable (in other words, things being lovable or hateful giving rise to happiness or grief, respectively) are occurring. On the strength of this belief alone we assumed that the human beings and other creatures that exist in this world of ours belong to various categories, viz. those whom we like and thereby want, and those whom we dislike and thereby we do not want, and those towards whom we are totally indifferent; we may love them or hate them or may be indifferent towards them. All these come under the name of 'Iha Lokavyavahaara', i.e. mundane empirical transactions. Evidently, for all such mundane dealings this Lokadrishti alone is the support or substrate.

Thus though Lokadrishti is beneficial and useful in our workaday transactions it is not adequate enough for determining the Ultimate Reality. For, the viewpoint of the type — "We are endowed with a body; we are capable of utilizing the senses and the inner instrument of mind; we are capable of acquiring external objects desired by us and of keeping away things which are not desirable or of solving all our problems causing any grief or misery; we are capable of gaining happiness" — is existing in all of us quite naturally, rather instinctively, just as in the case of mute creatures, but it is not an instrument or means which is sharp enough or cultivated enough to discriminate or deliberate in the profound task of determining the esoteric question of — "Which is that Ultimate Reality behind this whole universe?" None of us has discriminated upon or discerned metaphysical questions like — "Are these (adjuncts of) body, senses, mind etc. really (i.e. in the ultimate analysis) related to us at all, or else are they merely appearing as if they are belonging to us only?" It is true that quite naturally too it seems to all of us that — "That entity which is endowed with this conglomeration of these parts like the body, the senses, the mind etc. is myself; these objects are mine; all the rest of the things are not belonging to me at all; they are belonging to other human beings or creatures too." But none of us ever believes that all the things which appear in this manner are real. Take for instance, the dream experience in which so many scenes or visions do appear to us. During that dream period we invariably believe that human beings, creatures, objects, earth, ocean, mountain, sun, moon etc. which appear therein are really existing indeed. What if? As soon as we wake up, all those things become false in a jiffy, so to speak. For the sake of solving or overcoming such anomalous questions based on universal experiences, we will have to perforce deliberate upon them more in depth or incisively and upon the fundamental question that — "Is all that is appearing to us to be real from the Lokadrishti (i.e. empirical viewpoint), in reality, true or is it merely appearing to be true?" If we meekly believe, without proper in-depth or incisive deliberation on the strength of universal experiences, all that is handed down to us conventionally, then it cannot be said or claimed by any stretch of imagination that all that we have believed to be true is actually true and we cannot either

lay claim to have known 'the Ultimate Reality' behind all this manifested universe or behind Nature itself.

11. Two Types of Adopting the Shaastradrishti

The common Lokadrishti is related only to Ishtapraapti, i.e. acquisition of desirable things, and Anishthanivrutti, i.e. keeping away from or getting rid of undesirable or unwanted things, which occur to us in this mundane life. The physical sciences are encouraging and enhancing the knowledge of various objects of enjoyment which are wanted or desired by us by the use of and the help of many appliances, gadgets and machines; they are producing some amenities and facilities to provide a great number of creature comforts, as they are called, to make our day-to-day life very convenient and comfortable indeed. In fact, science in general has 'created' new wants and enjoyments which were unknown to the primitive people. It is an accepted fact that just as the level or degree of knowledge and dealings of the civilized people is higher than that of the uncivilized or uncultured people, similarly the level or degree of knowledge of scientists in general is acknowledged everywhere to be superior to that of the common run of people; on the same reasoning, the level of dealings or transactions and behaviour of the people who utilize or put to use that scientific knowledge (or technology) too is evidently higher. However, even the familiarity with those empirical or physical sciences and their techniques can, at best, boost up the common Lokadrishti alone and may procure a higher knowledge of subtle phenomena or laws and theories of Nature in consonance with those facts based on our scientific examination and study, but all that cannot give us, or help us, in acquiring the knowledge of things or entities which are not directly related to this our mundane life or Nature as such. Questions like — "Before we were born in this world where did we exist? After we leave this world (posthumously, so to say) where do we go? In other lives and other worlds too are the pairs of opposites like happiness and grief or misery occurring just as they do here in this life and in this mundane world? If they are occurring in that manner, in those lives and worlds (of duality) too what are the devices for acquiring happiness and keeping away or avoiding grief? — etc. etc." cannot be imagined and conjectured; nor can they be solved by people at large by themselves who entertain this predominant Lokadrishti. To them the imaginary or conceptual theories of such other lives and other 'bizarre' worlds do not by themselves flash before the mind. In the Kathoapanishad there is a statement made by Yama, the God of Death, that — "*Na Saamparaayaha Pratibhaati Baalam Pramaadyantam Vittamoahena Moodham; Ayam Loakoa Naasti Para Iti Maanee Punahpunarvashamaapadyate Me*" — meaning, "The question as to which is that means or device of attaining the bliss of the other world does not at all flash to the mind of one who is incapable of discrimination; for, there

does not exist any alertness in his mind; being deeply attached to things like wife, children, cattle, monetary wealth or assets like land holdings and buildings etc., a stupidity or foolishness has (naturally) attached itself to his mind; and he thinks in the manner — 'This life itself which is beset with enjoyments and pleasures accruing from wife, children, food and drink etc. is the real life; this world alone is the real world (of enjoyment) and there does not exist another life and there does not exist another world' — he becomes a prey over and over again to death (i.e. me) alone" — (Kathopanishad 1-2-6). Just as to the people without any discrimination, who say: "Whatever is acquired at present is itself enough" — even the forethought in this very life itself of the type — "In the future at the time of our old age what will be our plight?" — does not at all flash to their mind, similarly for those who trust only the enjoyments of objects that accrue in this life alone the forethought of happiness and grief that accrue in the future life does not at all flash to the mind. Only to those wise people who have a discriminative far-sight the deliberation of the type — "It is certain that for the present actions of mine there will be fruits in the next life and in the next world indeed. Whether it is a good action or a bad one, it will not fail to give its fruit. Therefore, I must deliberate upon the happiness and the grief that may accrue in the next life and in the next world in which I may be born again (based on the rigid, incontrovertible Law of Nature of cause and effect)" — will loom large before the mind. It should be reckoned in this context that such far-sighted people are those who have risen to the first stage or rung of the ladder of Saadhana, i.e. Shaastradrishti, which is in accordance with the guidance of the scriptural texts and their indubitable methodology.

Shaastradrishti, i.e. the scriptural viewpoint, is that viewpoint which the Vedas provide us with. The real Shaastras or scriptures are the Vedas alone. The Smriti, i.e. religious or spiritual works by sages (Rishis), and Puraanas, i.e. epics written by sages, which shadow, or follow in, the footsteps of the Vedas (to wit, they are always expected to be in consonance with the teachings or truths enunciated in the Vedas and hence should per force be in consonance with them) are also called, in a secondary sense, 'Shaastras', because they explain or elucidate the teachings of Vedas alone, in the ultimate analysis, but through allegory or a subtle method of symbolism. The religious obligations or duties and their opposites (i.e. infringements, disobedience towards them), in other words, 'do's and 'don't's of religion, which are not within the ken of the senses, have to be known or understood from the scriptures alone and their viewpoint. "*Indriyasyendriyasyaartho Raagadveshou Vyavasthithou; Tayoarna Vashamaagachhettou Hyasya Paripanthinou*" — meaning, "To each and every sense organ, sound, touch etc. which are their respective objects — if they are desirable, there will be attachment or attraction; and if disliked, there will be hatred without fail. This is a subject-matter for the Lokadrishti. But that person who does not become a victim to the natural instincts in this manner and who adopts or follows only the Shaastradrishti he will remain without being a victim to those attachments or

attractions and dislikes or hatreds. Like the highway robbers who obstruct the passersby these attractions or attachments as well as dislikes or hatreds come in the way as obstructions on the path of Shreyas, i.e. spiritual enlightenment” — (Geeta 3-34). Thus Bhagavaan Shri Krishna has told Arjuna. Not only in this life but also in other lives too we get happiness and grief. For happiness and grief the external objects alone are not the cause; they are merely the pretext. If properly examined, religious and irreligious acts alone are the cause for happiness and grief, respectively. Religious actions, which are always considered to be ethical, right actions, give rise to happiness, while irreligious actions, which are always immoral and unrighteous actions, give rise to misery or grief. We are not merely a conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect; quite different from these and subtler and more sublime than these, we are of the essential nature of Atman (Self, Pure Consciousness) indeed. “Atman is eternal, while happiness and grief are non-eternal” — such a supra-sensuous meaning or import is indicated to us by the Shaastra alone.

The Shaastradrishiti is a means for us to sublimate or get rid of the misconception or the basic wrong viewpoint that we are really the body, the senses etc. (i.e. the whole conglomeration as a unit) and to attain the correct knowledge or cognition that the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss — different from the body, the senses etc. — is our real core of Being, in truth. We should not believe that the knowledge that we gain from the scriptural viewpoint is merely (i.e. in a restricted, limited sense) that — “By virtue of our religious or morally right actions and irreligious or immoral actions we keep on getting happiness and misery or grief, respectively, in recurring lives.” That is indeed only the first step (rung of the ladder) of that Shaastraic knowledge, that is all. In truth, our Atman (Self) transcends Dharma, i.e. religious or morally sound righteous actions, and Adharma, i.e. irreligious or immoral unrighteous actions. The boy Nachiketa, in his question put to Yama, the God of Death, has asked about Self-Knowledge, which is the second step (rung of the ladder) of this Shaastraic viewpoint; *“Anyatra Dharmaadanyatra Adharmaadanyatraasmaakritaakritaata; Anyatra Bhootaaha Cha Bhavyaachha Yattatpashyasi Tadvada”* — meaning, “It should be One which has transcended Dharma and Adharma; One which has transcended cause and effect; One which has transcended the three forms, viz. past, present and future, of time — Such an Ultimate Reality of Atman you please teach me” — (Kathopanishad 1-2-14). It is worth analysing that esoteric question raised by that boy. We are not the body, the senses etc.; we are neither the Jeevas, i.e. transmigratory souls, who are the victims of Dharma and Adharma, and are beyond and separate from the body, the senses etc. In the case of one who has intellectually reckoned or discerned that in the future lives too there accrue Dharma and Adharma, at best it amounts to his merely knowing that it is necessary to cognize that — “Atman is eternal and one should know per force His essential nature” — but, in any case, it will definitely not amount to his actually Intuiting Atman’s real and essential nature of Pure

Being-Consciousness-Bliss in the least. Unless and until one really Intuits here and now that essential nature of Atman so as to culminate in his plenary or comprehensive experience of the type — “Really Atman is ever bodiless, one who is neither having any relationship whatsoever with Dharma or Adharma, nor with happiness or misery, which are caused by them, respectively” — it cannot be said that one has cognized or Intuited the Ultimate Reality of Atman or Brahman. In fact, when we cognize or Intuit that essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman, the perceptual knowledge of Dvaita, i.e. duality, which is at present appearing to us in the manner — “Atmans (selves) are many; they are performing actions of Dharma and Adharma and reaping the respective fruits of the forms of happiness and misery; and further, in this world of duality the objects of enjoyment wanted by them, i.e. the selves, are in abundance” — will be rendered false (sublated) in content or substance very clearly and convincingly. **This then is the true ‘Knowledge of Advaita’, i.e. the Intuitive Knowledge of the really existing non-dual Reality of Atman. This is indeed the second level of Shaastradrishti.**

12. Vyaavahaarika Drishti and Paaramaarthika Drishti

Both the viewpoints needed for the dealings concerning this life and for those of other lives and worlds hereafter can be together included in one and the same word, viz. Vyavahaaradrishti, i.e. empirical viewpoint. Because of the fact that without any relationship with the body, the senses, the mind etc. it is not possible at all to perform actions in accordance with Dharma or Adharma, and because of the fact that performing Dharmic or Adharmic actions and obtaining fruits wanted by us or avoiding results unwanted by us, respectively, are themselves called ‘the dealings pertaining to other lives or births hereafter’ — this viewpoint with regard to the whole gamut of dealings and their respective fruits in lives or worlds hereafter stipulated by the Shaastras is also evidently included in the Vyavahaaradrishti alone. Further, all the transactions concerning the attainment of wanted results or fruits as well as the avoidance of unwanted results or things in this very life are themselves categorised under ‘Loukika Vyavahaara’, i.e. mundane, empirical transactions; the transactions concerning the attainment of wanted fruits and the avoidance of unwanted fruits in future lives or births and future worlds are called ‘Vaidika Vyavahaara’, or ‘Shaastreeya Vyavahaara’, i.e. the religious or ritualistic (scriptural) transactions. In any case, these are not ‘absolutely’ real; they are not the fruits of correct or real knowledge. In order that the feeling or belief of the type — “I am the one who after performing such and such a Kriya (action), by means of such and such a Kaaraka (means of action or instrument or device) enjoys such and such Phala (fruit)” — to be gained, the

misconception of the type — “I am the body and the senses are mine” — alone is the root cause or substrate. Hence this misconception is called in Vedantic parlance ‘Avidya’; and that correct, real knowledge which proves or shows up this misconception as such (i.e. it is truly a misconception or delusion) is called ‘Vidya’ i.e. the correct, Intuitive Knowledge. Those who wish to attain this ‘Vidya’ which reveals the Ultimate Reality of Atman (Self, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) should follow the ‘Paramaatha Drishti’, i.e. Absolute, Transcendental Intuitive viewpoint, which is provided by the Shaastras, i.e. Upanishadic texts.

IV. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF ATMAN AS INDICATED IN THE SHAASTRAS

13. Atman is Eternal, Devoid of Mutation (Immutable)

Although the knowledge of the type — “I am different from the body” — is gained from the Shaastras alone, it has already been stated that the scriptures do not have the ultimate goal or purport of teaching that — “I am one who is endowed with a body.” The knowledge that — “I am a doer; an enjoyer” — exists in man quite naturally. Hence it is natural for the common run of people to identify themselves with any one aspect of the following — the body, the senses, the mind etc. — in accordance with a particular circumstance and carry on transactions in their day-to-day life. People keep on saying in the manner — “I am going; I am coming; I perceive an object; I am grabbing an object; I am hearing a sound; I am thinking; I am determining; I am experiencing happiness or grief” — and so on, but in their transactions of the type — “I am going; I am coming” — the identification of oneself with his body is evident; in their dealings of the type — “I am perceiving; I am hearing” — the identification of oneself with his senses is evident; similarly, in transactions like — “I am thinking; I am determining; I am experiencing happiness or grief” — the identification of oneself with his mind is evident. Thus, to the question — “Which is that entity called ‘I’?” — there being no proper discrimination or determination the common people are carrying on their day-to-day transactions. In fact, this ‘I’ notion persists in all our mundane dealings without any hindrance or interruption as the very basic phenomenon about which no one seems to have diverted his or her attention with all concentration with a view to solving its ‘riddle’. Hence, the Shaastras step in, as it were, to indicate the subtle or esoteric fact that — “This basic ‘I’ notion itself is false knowledge or a misconception” — and to bring home this truth in the minds of the common, uninitiated, ignorant people they depict and explain the transactions pertaining to other births or lives hereafter. *“Dehinoa(s)sminyathaa Dehe Koumaaram Youvanam Jaraa;*

Tathaa Dehaantarapraaptirdheerastatra Na Muhyati” — meaning, “Just as while living in one body alone one passes through the states of Baalya, i.e. childhood, Koumaarya, i.e. boyhood, Youvana, i.e. youth, Jaraa i.e. old age, similarly after death one begets yet another body” — (Geeta 2-13). To explain, the Shaastras have the predominant purport of teaching humanity that — “Although the body in this present life is changing or undergoing mutations of various states of the type of childhood, boyhood, youth etc. Atman (Self) exists eternally without any change or mutations whatsoever; in the same manner, even if in other lives or births other bodies are acquired Atman continues to exist without any change or mutations whatsoever indeed.” Therefore, to the extent this Intuitive knowledge or cognition of the type — “I am not these phenomena like body, senses, mind, intellect etc.” — is imbibed the seekers of Self-Knowledge should continue with all dedication and fervour to utilize this unique methodology of teaching the Ultimate Reality of Atman provided by the Shaastra and its exponents, the knowledgeable preceptors.

14. Atman is ‘Ahampratyayagamyā’, i.e. the Object of the ‘I’ notion

Even if the knowledge of the type — “I am not the body, nor the senses, nor the mind” — accrues, wise people with discrimination cognize in the manner — “Being other than these phenomena, I am using them; I am cognizing myself alone; for this self-reflective consciousness which is of the form of cognition of ‘I’ notion alone is the valid means or instrument”. Keeping this belief alone as the basis the Karma Shaastra, i.e. the ritualistic portions of the scriptures, as well as the Tarka Shaastra, i.e. treatises on dialectics or logic, have been formulated. Thus the Atman who is cognized in the form of ‘I’ is called ‘Ahampratyayagamyā Aatma’, i.e. the ‘I’ notion or concept which is having the stamp of certitude. But this Ahampratyayagamyā Aatman, i.e. the ‘I’ notion believes or conceives that — “I am a Kartru, i.e. an agent of action; by doing or performing actions I keep on changing”; further, he believes that — “I am an enjoyer or Bhoktru, too; I enjoy external objects and having experienced happiness or grief I keep on changing.” Just as to reckon that — “By virtue of the changes in the body, senses etc. I myself am undergoing changes” — is not proper, (as it is based on a wrong premise or misconception), similarly to reckon in the manner — “By the relationship of the change in the ego or ‘I’ notion I am myself undergoing a change” — is not proper; it is truly a misconception. This truth Shri Krishna has taught in the Geeta in the following manner — *“Ya Enam Vetti Hantaaram Yaschainam Manyate Hatam; Ubhou Tou Na Vijaaneetoa Naayam Hanti Na Hanyate”* — meaning, “The person who thinks that — ‘I am killing’ and believes that Atman (Self) is the agent of that action of killing and that person who thinks that —

'This man will kill me' and believes that very action of killing is a Karma — both these persons do not know the truth; in reality, Atman does not at all kill nor is He killed by anything else. He is not a Kartru, nor does He enjoy or experience the fruit of any action whatsoever" — (Geeta 2-19). In order to inculcate this teaching of the very basic 'I' notion being a misconception, here in the Geeta the action of killing or 'Hanana' is illustrated by way of an example. Man has reckoned that — "Right from the time I was born and till I die I am undergoing some kind of change or other." This is the result of his misconceiving in the manner — "I am Ahampratyayagamyā, i.e. this entity which is reckoned by the 'I' notion or concept." Now it should be evident from this Intuitive deliberation that this kind of conceptual, though deep-seated, knowledge is not the correct, factual one; the scriptures have the paramount purport of indicating or teaching that — "Atman, i.e. the Self, is Avikriya, i.e. changeless, immutable, alone."

15. For Atman there is no Fruit whatsoever to be gained from Karma

If any particular action is performed, as a result of that any substance or thing that did not exist before may accrue afresh; or, in the alternative, the existing substance or thing may be changed; the performer or agent of action may reach, in due course of time and in another place, where the substance exists; or, he may remove a defect that is existing at present in a substance and create a new quality or characteristic in it. For Atman none of these four kinds of fruits of action can accrue in the least. Only those who have believed Atman to be Ahampratyayagamyā, i.e. the object of the 'I' notion (ego), think that by action (Karma) there will accrue any particular fruit to Atman (Self, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Therefore, in order to root out or shatter this deep-seated conception, rather misconception, it has been taught in the Shaastras that — "Atman is an Entity devoid of any relationship whatsoever with action (Karma), the means of action (Karakas), fruit of action (Phala)."

16. Upanishad Purusha, i.e. the Self taught by the Upanishads

There exists an Atman (Self) who is quite different from the Atman (self, ego) who is Ahampratyayagamyā, i.e. the object of 'I' notion. Just as that person, who has misconceived the body, the senses etc. to be himself with the aid of the Karma Kaanda, i.e. the ritualistic portion of the Vedas (Shaastras), can reckon that he is the Kartru-Bhoktru, i.e. doer-enjoyer, who is quite different from those phenomena like the body, these senses, the mind etc. — similarly the seeker of the Ultimate Reality of Atman or Brahman can cognize

with the help of the Upanishads, i.e. the end portions of the Vedas (whatsoever, that there exists an essential nature of Absolute, Pure Reality of his which is quite different from this familiar Ahampratyayagamyia Atman, i.e. the limited self reckoned by the 'I' notion or concept.

In a debate that ensued between Yaajnavalkya and Shaakalya, the former is questioned by the latter in the manner — "*Tam Twoupanishadam Purusham Pruchhaami*" — meaning, "Who is that Oupanishad Purusha? Tell me" — (Brihadaraanyaka 3-9-26). Then Yaajnavalkya has explained while answering him that — "That Purusha, i.e. Self, cannot be grasped or comprehended by any valid means or instruments of knowledge; in other words, by the senses. He does not have any kind of bondage whatsoever from anything; He does not get destroyed by anything else." There in that context, it has been further indicated that that Purusha can be described in the manner — "He is the Atman, i.e. Self, who is '*Neti, Netyaatmaa*', i.e. 'not this, not that'." Thus that Atman alone who does not have any relationship whatsoever with any action or Karma and who is not Ahampratyayagamyia is that 'Oupanishad Purusha'. This Atman cannot at all be known or cognized by any other means whatsoever other than the Upanishads.

17. The Essential Nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Saakshi, i.e. the Witnessing Principle

What Pramaana is there to prove that this Purusha, signified in the Upanishads, exists? Should we believe that only because it has been stated so in the Upanishads or the Shaastras? Such questions may be raised by anybody. Here there is no injunction or scriptural stipulation or restriction whatsoever to the effect that because of the mere reason that Shaastras are the acknowledged authoritative or canonical texts or sources to decide such issues exclusively we should per force believe them. In fact, the Shaastras are the valid means of knowledge (Pramaanas) because that Entity or Reality which cannot be known or cognized through any other empirical means of knowledge (i.e. any other Pramaana) is signified by them emphatically. We do not need any valid means (Pramaana) or medium to know or Intuit that 'Atman exists'; for, Atman really means 'one's essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss' alone. There is never any possibility whatsoever of one cognizing that he does not exist. For, if any one sublates one's existence in the manner — "I do not exist" — then that one who tries to do so himself becomes the one (existing already) who is trying to be the 'sublator' indeed. In other words, the Self can never 'jump out' of Its essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss and thereby It cannot ever be 'sublated' or lose Its existence. Now, the question — "Am I the Ahampratyayagamyia, i.e. 'I' notion, or not?" — remains to be considered decisively. Whether this

Ahamratyayagamyā Aatma, i.e. 'I' notion or concept, is there or not (i.e. irrespective of its being there or not) our essential nature of Being (i.e. Atman as Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss) exists invariably and immutably. This fact is in the experience of every one of us indeed. Even before we get the knowledge or cognition of the type — "This is Ahamratyayagamyā, i.e. 'I' notion," — we, intuitively speaking, should have had invariably the experience of It, and this subjective aspect of our Being or the Witnessing Principle in all of us which, in truth, experiences or witnesses this 'I' notion as an 'object' is the true, really real Atman; That alone is the Oupanishad Purusha, i.e. the Self signified by the Upanishads.

The 'I' notion which is of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman, whenever it wants or desires to cognize or know anything, it needs an instrument or means of knowledge. That Atman cognizes Himself by means of, rather in the form of, the Ahamratyayagamyā Rōpa, i.e. the 'I' notion, alone. (To wit, Atman though in the ultimate analysis is of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone He projects Himself in the Vyaavahaaric form of the 'I' notion while any mundane or empirical transaction is being carried out). Thus in the Vyaavahaaric sphere when Atman descends, as it were, He assumes the empirical form of the 'I' notion, which is nothing but the Pramaatru; and when this Pramaatru, i.e. the cognizer (who is really self-established just like his substrate, Atman), wants to know anything other than itself, especially things or phenomena external to him in this manifold universe, in the manner — "This is such and such a thing" — he utilizes either the senses or the mind and thereby 'cognizes' the external object. Thus what is perceived through the senses is called Pratyaksha Jnaana, i.e. perceptual knowledge; therefore, the senses are called Pratyaksha Pramaanas, i.e. the perceptual means of knowledge. In the same manner, after perceiving any special features or characteristics through the senses, to imagine or guess about something on the strength of that perceptual knowledge is called Anumaana Jnaana, i.e. inferential knowledge; therefore, the mind, which is endowed with the faculty of analysing or synthesising (i.e. both deductive and inductive reasoning) and thereby which can infer and theorize all sorts of conceptual laws, is called the Anumaana Pramaana, i.e. the inferential means of knowledge. There are still some more valid means of knowledge in vogue in dialectics which totally depend upon Pratyaksha, i.e. perception, alone. Whenever Atman, who is Ahamratyayagamyā, is cognizing objects through the valid means of Pratyaksha, i.e. perception or Anumaana, i.e. inference, etc. there ensues some kind of a change or mutation in him. But when our real Atman (Self, Pure Consciousness) who is the Oupanishad Purusha 'cognizes' He does not need any valid means whatsoever, no mediatory instruments at all, and hence, quite reasonably, there does not occur any change or mutation whatsoever in Him. Thus because He cognizes directly without desiderating any medium like the intellect or mind and the senses and without undergoing any changes or mutations whatsoever, this Atman, who is the Oupanishad Purusha, has been nomenclatured as Saakshi, i.e. the Witnessing Principle.

V. MUKHYAATMA OR THE ABSOLUTE SELF

18. Saakshi, i.e. the Witnessing Principle, alone is Mukhyaatma

We have invariably a delusion, a misconception of the type — “I am this” — with regard to the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect. Thus the limited self or the ‘I’ notion (called Jeevaatman in Vedantic parlance) who is the subject-matter for this type of delusion or misconception is called by Vedantins — ‘Mithyaatma’, i.e. the false Atman. As a result of the relationship with the body, which is the Mithyaatma or the false (unreal) Atman which appears as the ‘I’ notion (with which every one is very deeply associated), an innate identification of the type — “These are mine” — or a deep-seated sense of belonging (or possession) with regard to one’s wife, children, house, property, wealth etc. is engendered. When this identification gets intensified to an excessive degree and manifests itself, it does so in the form of the person feeling as if he himself has experienced any progress or regress occurring actually to those belongings or possessions. This is so very evident to every one since it is a common and frequent experience of our mundane, workaday life. Thus that object which is clearly objectified by our ‘I’ notion (Pramaatru) and which is external to and apart from us is misconceived to be either ‘part and parcel’ of ourselves or a thing intrinsically belonging to us without which this ‘I’ in us is rendered incomplete or miserable. This secondary self (which actually appears as an extension of ourselves because of the innate identification and a high sense of belonging) is called by Vedantins by the pseudonym of ‘Gounaatman’, which means that Atman (here in this context the ‘I’ notion in us, Ahampratyayagamyā) whom we have misconceived to be innately identified with those things external to us despite the fact that we can very well discern that they are separate from us. In fact, with a little more ratiocination we can realise that those things are falsely associated with, or wrongly identified with, our own ‘I’ notion. Thus it should be quite evident here that both Mithyaatman and Gounaatman are in truth only the misconceived forms of the really real Atman, of the essential nature of Absolute, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Further, while Gounaatman can be reckoned distinctively in two ways as ‘I’ and ‘mine’, Mithyaatman cannot be possibly reckoned in that fashion. To explain, it is not possible at all for anyone to discern separately in the manner — “This is myself, this is the body”. There, the ‘Aatmabuddhi’, i.e. innate consciousness of identification as ‘part and parcel’ of one’s own Self, extended to external phenomena like the body, the senses etc. is verily ‘Mithyaabuddhi’, i.e. consciousness of misconceived identification alone; and because to such a consciousness these phenomena are appearing as objects or percepts the body, the senses, the mind etc. are called together ‘Mithyaatmas’. In the Shaastras even that ‘Atman’ who is

tentatively accepted as one separate from the conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind etc. and who is correlated to the concepts of Dharma and Adharma is verily this 'Mithyaatma' alone. In fact, for his sake alone the fruits of Dharma and Adharma have been indicated in the Shaastras. Apart from all these various categories of 'Atmas', i.e. Gounaatman, Mithyaatman and the Jeevaatman who goes to other worlds in other births or lives to enjoy the fruits of his Dhaarmic or Adhaarmic actions in this life, the Saakshi, i.e. Absolute, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss as the Witnessing Principle in all of us, is itself the really real Atman; and that Absolute essence of Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman alone we have to Intuit or cognize by means of this 'I' consciousness (to wit, through the doorway of the 'I' notion, ego). The philosophical or spiritual science of Vedanta has undertaken this task of delineating this Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman alone. Such an Atman alone is called in Vedantic parlance 'Mukhyaatman'.

19. The Nature of the Consciousness of the Saakshi

The Saakshi, i.e. Witnessing Self, who is the Mukhyaatman, Intuits directly everything; there does not exist anything else whatsoever which has the capacity of cognizing this Witnessing Self. Cognition by the Saakshi is not through any mediatory instruments or means of knowledge like the senses or the mind. Besides, by such a 'cognition' there is no change whatsoever occurring in the Saakshi. When it is stated — "The Sun illumines the entire earth planet" — there does not occur any change at all in the Sun". When people perceive the external objects with their eyes and cognize them in the manner — "These are such and such things" — they invariably need the help of light, but when the Sun 'illumines' the objects he does not need the help whatsoever of anything else. In the same way, it should be understood here in this context when it is said that — "Saakshi, i.e. the Witnessing Self, cognizes the external objects which are 'Anaatman', i.e. not-selves," — He does not need any outside help or medium to cognize. Neither does any change whatsoever take place in the Saakshi, nor is there any need for Him to seek the help of the mind, the intellect, the senses etc. at all. This direct intuition by the Saakshi Chaitanya, the Witnessing Consciousness, is explained in the previous Chapter itself.

The Ahamratyayagamy Atman, i.e. the 'I' notion (Pramaatru), cognizes the external object through the media of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. Then all the external phenomena appear or manifest themselves in time and space alone. The Mithyaatmaa, i.e. the false self or 'I' notion (ego) cognizes the external objects in the form of — "This object is here in this place now; it was there in that place before or previously". But for the Saakshi, i.e. Witnessing Consciousness, there is no need whatsoever of these categories of time and space at all. Without desiderating both these categories in the least, He makes everything (external to or other than his essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) as an object to His Pure Consciousness.

Even time and space categories are made directly the objects of perception or cognition without the help of any mediatory principle whatsoever and Intuited by Him.

20. Saakshi is not an Object of Perception to any other Entity at all

It has been already stated that Saakshi cognizes or Intuits directly by means of the 'light' of His Pure Consciousness without the help of, or dependence upon, the internal instrument of the mind. Yet another special characteristic feature of Saakshi is that all the thought forms which occur in the mind all at once or simultaneously become an object for His light of Pure Consciousness (Intuition). When the Sun illumines the objects on earth, he does not do so by illumining them one by one; he illumines them 'all at once', in a manner of speaking. Cognition by Saakshi or the Witnessing Self too is to be reckoned in the same manner. In the case of the Kartru, i.e. the agent of action, because of the reason that whenever he has to cognize the external objects by his self-effort each one of the actions (which are consequent upon such efforts) is born, and they get exhausted one by one, it is not possible for him, i.e. the Kartru, to cognize all the objects all at once. But where cognition (Intuition) is the very essential nature of Being-Consciousness Itself of the cognizer (here in this context the Saakshi), there it may be possible for Him to illumine by His light of Consciousness (which is in fact self-illumining and self-effulgent) all the objects all at once, *in toto*, without any self-effort whatsoever just like the Sun. Thus the Ahampratyayagamy Atman (the 'I' notion, ego) cognizes the objects step by step, but Mukhyaatman (i.e. the Witnessing Self) cognizes them all at once, and in order to elucidate this special feature these categories can be distinctively nomenclatured in the manner — 'I' notion or Ahampratyayee can be called 'Vishayee' or the subject; the objects perceived by him can be called 'Vishaya' or the object. In the same manner, Mukhyaatma can be called 'Saakshi', i.e. the Witness, all that is manifest by His Consciousness can be called 'Saakshya', i.e. the witnessed object. Although Saakshi is the Vishayee for the Saakshya, i.e. the witnessed object, the special characteristic quality of 'Vishayitwa', i.e. subject-hood, does not exist in the Saakshi separately. He is 'Chidaatmaka' i.e. of the very essence of Pure, Absolute Consciousness. Even the cognitive knowledge of the type — "Atman who is Ahampratyayagamy (ego) is this one" — is 'illumined' by the Saakshi alone and is manifest by virtue of His self-effulgent Consciousness alone. When it is taught in Vedanta that — "For the Ahampratyaya, i.e. 'I' notion, Atman is the Vishayee" — we Intuit this fact by virtue of the 'light' of Consciousness of the Saakshi alone. But, on the same vein, it cannot be deduced that Saakshi is Himself an 'object' of cognition (Vishaya) for any other entity whatsoever; **He can be said to be a "Vishayee" who is Avishaya, i.e. a subject who is never an object to anything else,**

meaning He can never be objectified (Aprameya). He remains ever and eternally as a Vishayee.

21. Saakshi is Swayamjyoti, i.e. Self-illuminating

Thus because Saakshi, who is the Mukhyaatman, while illuminating everything with the light of Consciousness, does not undergo any change or mutation whatsoever and exists without any relationship whatsoever with the object which He illumines as also manifests He is said to be 'Asanga', i.e. unrelated. In other words, He is Absolute and Transcendental. By the light of Consciousness of Atman alone everything is manifested. Everything, existing in His 'vicinity' or 'presence' alone, performs its allotted or known functions. There is a statement in the spiritual or philosophical dialogue between Janaka, an emperor of ancient times, and his preceptor, Yaajnavalkya: "*Astamita Aaditye Yaajnavalkya Chandramasyastamite Shaante(s)jnou Shaantaayaam Vaachi Kimjyotirevaayam Purusha Ityaatmaivaasya Jyotihi Bhavateeti Aatmanaivaayam Jyotishaa(ss)ste Palyayate Karma Kurute Vipalyeteeti*" — To explain: Janaka's question was: 'When there does not exist any light whatsoever how does this Purusha, i.e. man, with the help or support of which entity carry on his transactions?' All of us keep on carrying out our empirical transactions in the light provided by the Sun and the Moon. When the Sun sets and when further the Moon also does not exist, the light of fire becomes the means of getting our light. When no external source of light whatsoever exists, Shabda, i.e. sound, etc. are helpful for carrying on our workaday transactions. But even if none of these empirical means of light is available, with the help or support of which light does this conglomeration of our body, senses, mind etc. carry out its functions? To this question by Janaka, the answer given by Yaajnavalkya is: "Atman alone is the light for all this. By means of His light of Consciousness alone our body, senses and mind — all these are illumined or sustained and are able to perform their respective functions." — (Brihadaraanyaka 4-3-6). Hence, Atman is 'Swayamjyoti', i.e. self-illuminating; He must necessarily be acknowledged to be illumining by Himself (to wit, He is of the very essence of Knowledge, Consciousness desiderating no other source outside or external to Him for any kind of knowledge, experience or consciousness in the empirical sphere).

22. Mukhyaatman is One and One only

Because Mukhyaatman is of the very essence of Pure Consciousness (Intuition) alone, He is self-effulgent or self-illuminating. Evidently, as a consequence of this fact it means that — "In order to establish His existence there is no need whatsoever of any other light" — and one should not really seek a 'cause' for His self-effulgent nature as that is in one's own Intuitive experience. Then, questions of the type — "Is this Atman one alone?" or on the basis of the axiom — "One Atman for one body" — "Are there many such

Atmans?" — may raise their heads in our minds. Although Saankhyans and other philosophers have acknowledged the fact that there is no association or relationship of the body, the senses with Atman, they teach that — "For each body there exists one Atman." That their doctrine is not based on correct knowledge can be elucidated with the help of a dialectical discussion in consonance with universal (i.e. everyone's) Intuitive experience in the following manner — "Just as we have explained so far, Atman is the Saakshi, i.e. the Witnessing Self (of the very essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss), who is self-effulgent or self-illuminating; He is not an object to any other entity (Aprameya) whatsoever. It being so, how can it be proper or justifiable to count Him as one, two etc. at all? The numerical epithets of one, two etc. are appropriate and are applicable only to objects or phenomena which exist either in time or space. Because the events taking place in time occur one after the other they can be counted as one, two etc.; in the same way, because the external objects or phenomena exist one by the side of the other in space they too can be counted. But Saakshi or the Witnessing Self who illumines by means of His Pure Consciousness even these categories of time and space cannot possibly be acknowledged to exist on the strength or support of these empirical categories of time and space. In fact, because these categories of time and space themselves have per force to get manifested and illumined by that 'light of Pure Consciousness', in one sense, it can be said that for both of them He alone is the substrate or support. Therefore, in Atman who is of the nature of Saakshi, i.e. Witnessing Self or Consciousness, there does not exist any numerological dealings at all. It has to be accepted inevitably and incontrovertibly that Atman, the Witnessing Consciousness, is one and one alone (i.e. non-dual), one without a second entity other than Himself."

23. In all Creatures this Non-dual Atman alone Exists

If perfunctorily, superficially observed, it appears as if the phenomenon of — "One separate Atman exists in each body" — alone is proper and reasonable. In the world the human beings and the remaining movable and immovable creatures appear in the manner — 'I', 'You', 'this man', 'that man', 'they', 'this creature', 'that creature', 'this plant' and 'that plant' etc. In our empirical dealings, i.e. in our workaday world, it appears as if all of them have one separate Atman for each creature. For, each human being entertains a different set of 'likes' and 'dislikes'; each creature has a different set of 'likes' and 'dislikes' too. It is in the experience of each one of these human beings or other creatures that because of those likes and dislikes each one of them has been having separate, individually different happiness or grief. Thus it may appear at first sight. But the root cause for this appearance of different Atmans existing in this manner is nothing but our misconception that — "The one who is Ahampratyaagameya Atman, i.e. 'I' notion, is himself the real Atman (Mukhyaatman) alone." If observed with deep insight and introspective

deliberation, it becomes clear that — “This Atman whom we have all (i.e. universally) cognized as ‘I’, ‘I’, is in truth the Mithyaatman, i.e. false self (ego). To wit, this Mithyaatman is in essence the Mukhyaatman (Witnessing Self) who appears in that fashion because of, or as a consequence of, a wrong knowledge (misconception).” When we have not distinguished between the body, the senses, the mind, on the one hand, and Saskshi, i.e. the Witnessing Consciousness or Self, who is illumining all these (in accordance with the teaching of the Shaastras and adopting the Shaastraic viewpoint), on the other, we entertain, quite naturally too, this ‘wrong or defective’ knowledge or misconception which has already mixed up the entity of ‘Atman’ and the appearance of ‘Anaatman’, i.e. the not-self and we have, in the process, completely mistaken one for the other and super-imposed the qualities or characteristics of one on the other mutually. Not only do we remain without having cognized or Intuited the Saakshi (i.e. we are not aware of our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) as distinct from Anaatman, but also we innately believe that Atman (Saakshi) is ‘tied down invariably to this conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind etc.’ We believe that Chaitanya, i.e. Pure Consciousness, Itself exists in the visible or perceptible conglomeration of the body, the senses and the mind. As a result, we get deluded that they alone are, in truth, Atman. Even though Atman (the Witnessing Self or Consciousness) who illumines all of them, nay manifests all of them, who is ‘Asanga’, i.e. unrelated to them and is beyond all relationships with any empirical, mundane phenomea second to It, we have wrongly understood or misconceived that Atman is affected by the changes or mutations of these empirical phenomena like the body, the mind and the senses. Thus this natural misconception of the nature of delusion alone and a basic lack of Intuitive reasoning which can enable us to distinguish and discriminate between the real and the unreal, i.e. Atman and Anaatman, respectively, as also their innate, intrinsic Dharmas or special features — Vedantins call ‘Anyoanyaadhyaasa’ or ‘Avidya’. When we follow quite assiduously and adopt the Shaastra Drishti and cognize or Intuit this essential nature of Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman on the strength of our own Intuitive discrimination and experience, it is immediately discerned or divined that — “Atman, the Witnessing Self, is one alone, non-dual.” It becomes quite clear to our mind that just as it is wrong to think or believe meekly that — ‘Because the Sun appears to exist in front of everyone’s house, a separate Sun exists in front of each house’ — in the same way because in the body of each one of us there appears to exist a separate Atman, the apparent conclusion that in each one of us there exists a separate Atman is false, a misconception indeed. By the help of Shaastra Drishti this truth is very clearly discerned or divined. Vedantins have given the name of ‘Vidya’ or ‘Jnaana’ to this kind of Intuition of the oneness, unity, non-duality of Atman (Witnessing Self) by an introspective distinction between Atman, the really real Entity, and Anaatman, the apparent, misconceived reality of the empirical world, or the not-self.

VI. THE NON-DUALITY OF ATMAN

24. Mukhyaatman alone is Paramaatman, i.e. the Absolute Supreme Self

The essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman which has been explained in the previous Chapter has been briefly paraphrased in the Bhagavadgeeta in the manner: "*Upadrashtaanumantaa Cha Bhartaa Bhoaktaa Maheshwaraha; Paramaatmeti Chaapuktoa Dehe(s)min Purushaha Paraha*" — meaning, "This Atman who appears to reside in our body is 'Upadrashtu', i.e. He is the Drashtu or Witness who observes directly everything by existing very near to us, nearer than body, senses, mind etc. Therefore we call Him Saakshi. Although the senses are performing their respective functions, since He remains Asanga, i.e. unrelated or unaffected, and does not bring about or cause any hindrance to their functioning He is 'Anumantru', i.e. one who gives His consent readily. He is 'Bhartru', i.e. one who supports and patronises by providing the 'Chaitanya Aabhaasa or the pseudo-Pure Consciousness (i.e. the reflection of Pure Consciousness, so to speak), needed for the (apparent) functioning of the body, the senses, the mind etc. He is a 'Bhoaktru', the grand, ultimate enjoyer. All the enjoyments caused in all the creatures, i.e. the whole gamut of cognitive experiences of the forms of happiness, grief, attachment are caused so as to become the food to be devoured or gobbled up by His Chaitanya, i.e. Pure Consciousness, alone. From a comprehensive or holistic viewpoint Atman consumes everything in the ultimate analysis; rather, every enjoyment or experience in every creature (created by Him alone) returns to Him and merges in Him, so to speak. There is no possibility whatsoever of these enjoyments or experiences being caused without their being 'pervaded or permeated' by His Pure Consciousness (Chaitanya). He alone is 'Maheshwara', i.e. the Great Lord. For, as He is the Atman of everything and everyone He is 'Mahanta', i.e. the Great One; because He exists independently all by Himself without being restricted or controlled in the least by anyone or anything else and reigns supreme over the body, the senses, the mind etc. He is 'Ishwara', i.e. the Lord. He alone is 'Paramaatman', i.e. the Supreme Self. For, as the people have misconceived the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect — the whole conglomeration in the manner — 'I am these' — they are 'Mithyaatmans'; but because this pseudo-Atman is imbued or endowed with forms and natures like 'Upadrashtu', 'Anumantru' etc. mentioned above He is 'Mukhyaatman', who is 'Akalpita', i.e. one who is beyond conception or imagination. He alone is 'Parama Purusha', i.e. the Supreme Being. For, people call the conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind etc. by the name of 'Purusha' for name-sake only, but in reality because this Atman (Saakshi Chaitanya) alone is greater than and supreme

over all these pseudo-Purushas the former is called 'Parama Purusha' only for the purposes of distinguishing the two. In fact, in all those pseudo-Purushas or empirical beings He (Atman, the Witnessing Self) is existing consummately, in His full grandeur. The word 'Purusha' connotes this meaning alone. — (Geeta 13-22).

25. Mukhyaatman is Mahaan (Great), Vibhu (Endowed with Great Power)

The benefit that accrues on cognizing the truth that — "This Atman pervades everything" — and realizing in that manner is indicated in the scriptural texts in the manner — "*Swapnaantam Jaagaritaantam Choabhou Yenaanupashyati; Mahaantam Vibhum Aatmaanam Matwaa Dheeroa Na Shoachati*" — meaning, "That One Entity with whose strength people cognize both the dream state and the waking state — He alone is Mahaanta, i.e. the Great One, Vibhu, i.e. the One endowed with great power; One who Intuits in the manner — 'That One alone I am' — does not grieve" — (Kathopanishad 2-1-4). To explain, when the waking state exists, the dream state does not exist; when the dream state is being experienced, the waking state is not there at all. The world that exists within the waking state does not exist apart from the waking state; similarly, the world that exists within the dream state does not exist apart from the dream state (this truth is quite evident in everyone's experience and does not need any other convincing proof or Pramaana). On the same vein of reasoning, the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect which appear in the waking do not exist in the dream and vice versa. It being so, to say that — "I cognize everything by means of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect" — is evidently a 'misconception'; even basing all our arguments on universal belief alone, the popular concept that the mind 'pervades' everything and cognizes also is a misconception indeed. Even the Ahampratyaya Roopa, i.e. the 'I' notion or concept, which we have assiduously believed to be of the form of 'I', 'I', and to be one common phenomenon in both the waking and the dream states, is in truth confined to its respective state and hence is separate, but this 'I' notion, either of the waking or of the dream, is never related to or associated with Atman (the Witnessing Self of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss). If the same vein of Intuitive reasoning is continued further, one can easily discern that when these two 'apparently distinct' states of Consciousness, viz. waking and dream, occur they appear to be completely controlled by the rules and regulations of time, space and causation categories, but on the basis of closer scrutiny supported by our Intuitive experience it becomes evident that nothing that exists in one state exists in the other absolutely and incontrovertibly. If we cognize this truth of Vedantic method of teaching the profound Reality of Atman, beyond all Vyaavahaaric or empirical transactions, then another subtle truth or fact of life, when

considered by adopting a comprehensive, plenary and holistic viewpoint, 'flashes to our mind' (Intuited) and that is: "Our real Atman, who is quite different from the Ahampratyayagamyā, i.e. 'I' notion, is the valid, genuine means, for everyone of us, which helps 'illumine' as also 'manifest' both these states and their respective worlds within. Now then, the truth that — "Atman, the Witnessing Self in every one of us, pervades both these states and 'illumines and manifests' them both." — will be Intuited. Consequently, there is no existence whatsoever for these two states of waking and dream without 'being pervaded by Chit or Chaitanya, i.e. Pure Consciousness'.

By virtue of this fact Atman is called 'Mahaantaa', i.e. the Great One, 'Vibhu', i.e. the One endowed with superlative power. Further, not only is Atman more pervasive than the two states of waking and dream and their respective worlds within but also He is 'independent' absolutely of both of them. Both in deep sleep, which is devoid of dream, and in 'Samaadhi', i.e. spiritual trance, which accrues on 'Dhyaana' or contemplation, this essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman, the Witnessing Self, is Intuitively 'experienced'. To those who have discerned and divined this Ultimate Reality of Atman (Brahman) neither the happiness or the grief, which occur to exist in the waking, nor the 'reflection' or Abhaasa of the happiness and the grief which appear to occur in the dream, is in reality related in the least. Thus, the ultimate purport of the teaching of the scriptural text is: "To one who has cognized that — 'Such an Atman alone is myself' — how can the miseries and attachments of Samsaara, i.e. transmigratory life, affect or trouble at all?" — meaning, they can never bother him, for he is a 'Mukta' or liberated soul.

26. The Different Methods by which the Essential Nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Paramaatman is Indicated

In order to signify the truth that — "Paramaatman is non-dual, i.e. one alone without a second to Him" — many methods have been adopted in the Upanishads. "Brahman is the cause for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world"; "It has entered into the world, which It has created, in the form of the Jeeva, i.e. transmigratory soul"; "Therein, i.e. in Its form of Jeeva, It appears to have been covered up by the five sheaths like Annamaya Koasha, Praanamaya Koasha, Manoamaya Koasha, Vijnanamaya Koasha and Aanandamaya Koasha"; "It appears to be experiencing the three states of consciousness, viz. waking, dream and deep sleep" — etc. etc. These are the most important among the methods.

We have briefly indicated the essence of the 'Avasthaatraya Prakriya', i.e. the method of the three states of consciousness. The essence of that method is: "Even though Atman appears to be transmigratory soul (Samsaaree) who experiences the three states, in reality the states do not exist apart from Him

at all; He (Atman) is non-dual, i.e. one without a second.” Similarly, the method of ‘Jagajjanmaadikaaranatwa’, i.e. the theory of Atman (Brahman) as the cause of the world’s creation, sustenance and dissolution. Its essence is: “The world that appears to us in the waking becomes one with Atman in Pralaya, i.e. dissolution; gets created by Atman alone and in Atman alone it is sustained and it subsists; therefore, the world does not exist apart from or separately from Atman.”

The world does not in reality get born or created or caused by Brahman; for, even as it appears to have been born, created or caused it does not at all exist in any manner as a separate, independent entity apart from Brahman. This truth has been determined and established beyond all doubt in the Brahma Sootras (2-1-14) by the Sootra: “*Tadananyatwam Aarambhana Shabdaadibhyaha*” — meaning, “The world which is an effect is not different from Brahman which is the cause; for, in the scriptures the words ‘Aarambhana’ etc. are there.” In the scriptures the non-duality of Atman has been established by virtue of an illustration in the manner — “*Yathaa Soomyaikenaa Mritpindena Sarvama Mrinmayama Vijnaatama Syaataa Vaacha Aarambhanama Vikaaraa Naamadheyama Mrittiketyeva Satyama*” — meaning, “Just as if the reality of a lump of clay is cognized it is tantamount to have cognized all the effects produced out of that (cause of) clay and it further amounts to saying that the ‘effect’ is nothing but ‘Vaachaarambhana’, i.e. a mere play of words, that which has to be indicated by mere words, that which is a false appearance, the ‘clay’ alone is the real entity that exists — in the same way, the world is ‘Vaachaarambhana’, i.e. a false appearance, Brahman (Atman) alone is the Reality.” — (Chhaandogya 6-1-1). Thus, the real purport of this Brahma Sootra is that the world really does not exist separately, apart from Paramaatman, i.e. the Supreme Self, of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

The purport of the scriptural statement that — “Paramaatman has entered into the creation” — is: “By virtue of a relationship with Antahkarana, i.e. the inner instrument or adjunct of the mind, Atman appears as if He has special features or characteristics of knowledge or cognition like seeing, hearing, thinking etc. and as a consequence he has become a ‘Samsaaree’, i.e. a transmigratory soul. But if observed more incisively with Intuitive reasoning, even while He seems to be endowed with such special characteristics He exists as of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness, i.e. Shuddha Chaitanya, and He is witnessing everything unconcerned and unrelated as the Witnessing Consciousness (Saakshi Chaitanya) alone. For that reason alone, the scripture is teaching in the manner — “*Ya Yeshoa(s)nimaaitataa Aatmyamidama Sarvama Tatsatyama Sa Aatmaa Tattwamasii*” — meaning, “This subtle Truth that exists, my boy, is Itself the Atman for the entire world; That alone is the Ultimate Reality; That alone thou art” — (Chhaandogya 6-8-7).

Further, the ‘Pancha Koasha Viveka Prakriya’, i.e. the method of deliberating on the five sheaths of our organism is as follows: The five

adjuncts (Upaadhis) of the body are in the order of, first, the 'Annamaya Koasha; i.e. the sheath produced out of the essence of Anna, i.e. food, eaten by us and hence called the 'food sheath'; the second sheath is 'Praanamaya Koasha', i.e. that which is produced out of the Vrittis, i.e. functions, of Praana or the vital force (five in number called Praana, Apaana, Vyaana, Udaana and Samaana); the third sheath of 'Manoamaya Koasha', i.e. the mental sheath, which is produced in the form of volitions (Sankalpa) and misconceptions (Vikalpa) in the mind; the fourth sheath called 'Vijnaanmaya Koasha', i.e. the intellectual sheath, which is the level of our being at which the intellect endowed with functions of cognizing percepts or sensations of sound (Shabda) touch (Sparsha), form (Roopa), taste (Rasa) and smell (Gandha) and the fifth sheath called 'Aanandamaya Koasha', i.e. the sheath of happiness, which is the level at which experiences of Priya, i.e. happiness, Moada, i.e. lust, etc. are produced. These five sheaths, which are actually Upaadhis or adjuncts, make it appear that Atman is imbued with those respective forms of experiences. They further appear as if they exist one within another and as if each one is subtler and more pervasive than the other in that order. Our innermost, essence of Being of Atman beyond all these five sheaths, who is in truth the all-pervasive Reality permeating all of them, is of the very essence of Absolute Bliss (Paramaananda Swaroota). To wit, He does not have any trace of grief or misery whatsoever which is experienced in Samsaara, i.e. the transmigratory life.

Thus in the scriptures through various methods of teaching it is propounded that — "Our Atman is devoid of any characteristics whatsoever associated with the empirical, mundane world, is devoid of any blemishes or stigma whatsoever of Samsaara and He exists by Himself and unto Himself *per se*" — In such a manner He can be Intuitively experienced by everyone.

27. The Absolute Nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman

By the deliberation on the distinctive natures of Atman and Anaatman described so far, the truth that is fully established can be clarified by means of a scriptural sentence: "*Ekoa Devaha Sarvabhooteshu Goodhaha Sarva Vyaapee Sarvabhoota Antaraatmaa; Karmaadhyakshaha Sarvabhootaat Adhivaasaha Saakshee Chetaa Kevaloa Nirgunascha*" — meaning, "There exists one Devaha, i.e. deity of the essential nature of brilliance or illumination, in all the phenomena or creatures; He is all-pervasive; He is the innermost essence of Being in all the creatures; He is the presiding deity or authority for all the actions; He is the indweller in all the creatures; He is the Witnessing Self or Consciousness; He is of the very essence of Pure Consciousness; He is Absolute or Transcendental beyond all categories of time-space-causation etc.; He is devoid of any qualities or features whatsoever." —

Swetaashwatara Upanishad 6-11). Let us now consider each one of these qualifications of Atman one by one:

- i. There exists one Devaha (Atman) In all the creatures:** To the empirical viewpoint it appears as though all the creatures right from the four-headed Creator (Brahmaa) to the movable and immovable creatures, by virtue of the differences in their merits (Punya) and demerits (Paapa) or also called Dharma and Adharma, respectively, obtain various births with various conglomerations of body, senses, mind etc. and are experiencing different kinds of happiness and misery. But when Intuitively analysed or introspected it becomes evident that in all creatures one and one deity alone exists equally; it becomes clear also that this Atman does not suffer or is affected by any kind of difference or mutation whatsoever as a result of those apparent differences pertaining to the body, the senses and the mind etc. at all.
- ii. Atman Is all-pervasive:** The objects in the external world are, with the advent of modern science, more and more pervasive. The senses, then the mind, and then the intellect appear to be pervading or permeating all the external objects by virtue of their own 'light of awareness or consciousness'. But on Intuitive deliberation or introspection we can realize the truth that this innermost deity of Atman (Self) is pervading the whole gamut of phenomena right from the 'I' notion to the external objects as also the concepts of time, space and causation and 'illumines and manifests' by His light of Pure Consciousness (Chaitanya). In fact, there does not exist any other entity whatsoever which can even be imagined to be more pervasive or comprehensive than this Atman (who is of the essence of Pure Consciousness).
- iii. Atman Is the Innermost essence of Being of all creatures:** Quite naturally all the creatures have 'misconceived' any one of the phenomena like the body, the senses, the mind etc. as their own intrinsic Atman; and this misconception is proportionate to or in accordance with the difference in the degrees of viewpoint held by the respective creature. Consequently, those 'Mithyaatmas', i.e. false or misconceived selves, which those creatures have wrongly assumed to be their 'real Atman' are considered to be proportionately subtler, one more than the other. But when Intuitively deliberated upon, the real Atman of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss seems to be the innermost when compared to the selves which the creatures have thus misconceived to be the Mithyaatmas; this Absolute Self is called 'Mukhyaatman' or the Witnessing Self and is the real Atman, i.e. essence of Being, of every creature indeed.
- iv. Atman Is the persisting deity or authority for all the Karmas of all creatures:** The Jeevas, i.e. transmigratory souls, believe that they enjoy the fruits of their actions which they have performed in the workaday

world. (To wit, based on a general principle like 'every action should have a reaction' the common run of people meekly believe that all their mundane, empirical actions should yield a fruit, either good or bad according to the action itself; thus the concepts of 'Dharma' and 'Adharma' as also 'Punya' and 'Paapa' i.e. merits and demerits, are inculcated in their minds). But if we deliberate in keeping with the teachings of Vedanta texts and pursue that Intuitive reasoning to its fruition, then it becomes evident that Atman, who is the Witnessing Self or Consciousness, alone is the presiding deity or authority over all their actions; He is the Saakshi, who 'observes' unbiassed, dispassionately all those actions by the 'light of His Pure, Absolute Consciousness' and is the Lord, i.e. the chief controller, who provides or procures all the fruits that have to accrue for all those actions as a matter of a general rule. In a manner of speaking, His Pure Consciousness (Chaitanya) alone has 'lent or loaned out' Its existence and vitality to all those actions as well as to all those fruits of actions. Despite all these, Atman especially exists or remains without any taint whatsoever of any action.

- v. **Atman alone is the Indweller in all the creatures:** Atman is the one and only entity or Reality who exists in every creature. The Ahampratyayagamyā, i.e. 'I' sense or ego, who has a pronounced 'identification' with the body, the senses, the mind etc. (which go to form the conglomeration), exists in all those bodies indeed. Further, that Ahampratyayagamyā Atman has developed either love or hatred towards other bodies different from and external to him according as the latter are helpful or convenient to himself or troublesome and inconvenient. This Ahampratyayagamyā Atman remains indifferent towards those external bodies or beings who are neither convenient nor troublesome to himself. But, as a contrast, this Sarvaatman does not have any identification or sense of pride and belonging towards anybody whosoever he may be; He exists with Absolute equipoise without any love or hatred (i.e. the Dwandwas, pairs of opposites) towards any of those external creatures or beings, so to speak.
- vi. **Atman is the Witnessing Consciousness:** For the above reason alone. He is the plenary, Ultimate, Absolute Consciousness who is simply a 'Witness' to the deeds as also inactions and misdeeds of the Jeevas or creatures.
- vii. **Atman is Chetana, i.e. a sentient Being:** He is in truth the One Reality who as the very essence of Shuddha Chaitanya, i.e. Pure, Absolute Consciousness, has lent or loaned out both 'existence' and 'appearance', i.e. manifestation, to each and every substance and being in the whole world which appears before each one of us.
- viii. **Atman is Kevala, i.e. Absolute, Transcendental:** Because of the reason that He does not depend upon anything else whatsoever for the sake of His own existence or being and because He is not confined or

controlled by categories like time, space and causation or other objects, He is the One Reality who is of the essential nature of Absolute, Transcendental, unrelated Being. Any other thing, whatever it may be, which appears apart or different from Him, desiderates His support and subsistence for their own 'existence' or 'manifestation', and for that reason alone in Vedantic parlance all the phenomena other than Atman are not 'real' in the form they appear or manifest and they are 'Mithya', i.e. false, 'Anrita', i.e. not real. Thus, Atman is 'Kevala', i.e. Absolute, Transcendental beyond all empirical existences or appearances, 'Advaita', i.e. non-dual, One and One alone without a second to it.

- ix. **For that reason alone, Atman Is Nirguna, i.e. devoid of qualities or characteristics:** Atman is One, Absolute Entity or Reality who does not give any scope or room for any kind of increase or decrease, in other words, any kind of change or mutation whatsoever, in His essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss to be caused in terms of any empirical qualities or characteristics (Gunas) or Dharmas. For that reason alone He can be described positively by means of the technical terminology of Vedanta as of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat Chit Aananda Swaroopaa) and negatively in the manner of 'Neti, Neti', i.e. 'not this, not that' denying all empirical qualities or characteristics.

VII. JNAANA SAADHANAS OR SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR ATTAINING INTUITIVE EXPERIENCE

28. The Fruit of Vedantic Knowledge is to be Intuited here in this Life alone

So far on the strength of Prasthaanatrayi, i.e. the three canonical and authoritative sources of Vedantic teachings, viz. ten principal Upanishads, Bhagavadgeeta and the Brahma Sootras, we have indicated in a brief manner the essence of pristine pure Vedanta. Many Aachaaryas, i.e. spiritual preceptors, who were calling themselves 'Advaitins', i.e. non-dualists, had, even before Shri Shankaraachaarya, written their respective commentaries or explanatory treatises on these Prasthaanatrayi. Many among them had believed in the validity of the Vedas merely on innate faith (Shraddha) and in accordance with their respective traditional methodology belonging to their own school of philosophy they had written their respective, individualistic commentaries.

Followers of the school of philosophy called 'Dvaitaadvaita', i.e. dualism-cum-non-dualism (analogous to the present-day 'Vishishtadvaita' or 'Bhedaabhedavaada') and the 'Dvaita' school of philosophy existed even before the advent of Shri Shankara and they exist even today. But those who affirmed that the teachings or truths of Vedanta are established by means of logical or dialectical devices and arguments in consonance with universal experience (Saarvatrika Anubhava) alone, exclusively, are Shri Goudapaada Aachaarya, his Pra-Shishya, i.e. grand-disciple, Shri Shankara Aachaarya, and the latter's direct disciple, Shri Sureshwara Aachaarya.

These teachers belonged to this unique school of ancient philosophy and professed and taught this pure Advaita Vedanta. All the three have affirmed unequivocally and incontrovertibly that the Vedantic teaching that — "One Parameshwara, i.e. Supreme Lord, alone is the real Atman of all creatures" — can be, here and now while living in this body, reconciled and made applicable in consonance with our Intuitive experience and can be realized to be the Ultimate Reality. Those people who base their deliberations upon the perfect methodology indicated in this small booklet will unfailingly get fully convinced of the validity of the scriptural texts and of the fact that it is not at all contradictory to one's own Intuitive experience, as also of the fact that the supreme or paramount benefit or purport that accrues from this highly pragmatic spiritual science of Vedanta can be achieved in this very life so as to culminate in one's own Intuitive experience desiderating no other proof for further conviction. We are sure of this result and have full faith in the efficacy of this perfect methodology of Shri Shankara Bhagavatpada.

29. How can this Intuitive Experience of Atma, i.e. Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, be Attained

Those who sincerely aspire to attain this Self-Knowledge (Aatma Jnaana) so as to culminate in their own Intuitive experience here and now should necessarily undertake 'Shravana', i.e. listening to Vedantic dissertation with the help of a qualified preceptor (Sadguru); they should then proceed to do 'Manana', i.e. ratiocinate or reason out based on one's own Intuitive experience which is of a plenary nature and check up its validity and veracity by means of Yukti, i.e. dialectical argumentation, to find out whether there exists any contradiction whatsoever from the beginning to the end; thereafter, they should practise 'Nidhidhyaasana', i.e. one-pointed Intuitive contemplation on their own innermost Self, of the very essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. They should devote all their attention and bend all their energies and efforts towards this Atman unflinchingly, observe introspectively and be one with the Intuitive experience as long as they can. Yaajnavalkya, while instructing his wife Maitreyi, says: "*Aatmanoa Vaa Are Darshanena Shravanena Matyaa Vijaanenedam Sarvam Viditam*" —

meaning, "If one cognizes (Intuits) Atman through Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyaasana, it is tantamount to cognizing everything; for, Atman alone is everything; He is Adviteeya, i.e. non-dual; to wit, the One Reality without a second" — (Brihadaraanyaka 2-4-5).

30. Qualifications Necessary for the Intuitive Deliberation on the Reality of Atman

To cognize, Intuit Atman the direct spiritual means or practices are Shravana (listening to Shaastras), Manana (reasoning based on Intuition) and Nidhidhyaasana (contemplation one-pointedly or Intuitively on Atman); but in order to gain the necessary qualifications or mental make-up to practise these Saakshaat Saadhanas, i.e. direct spiritual disciplines, it has been mentioned in the Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad that the aspirant should, prior to his undertaking these direct practices, acquire per force six other Saadhanas, or spiritual disciplines. They are: Shama, i.e. control over the mind, Dama, i.e. control over the senses, Uparati, i.e. introverted mind, Shraddha, i.e. one-pointed dedication and devotion towards attaining this goal of Self-Knowledge, Titiksha, i.e. equipoise of the mind or maintaining one's general temperament equanimous in all kinds of good or bad external circumstances, Samaadhaana, i.e. a sense of fulfilment having been established in the Ultimate Reality of Atman. The Bhagavadgeeta, the principal Smriti text, mentions spiritual practices like Amaanitwa, i.e. non-egoism, Adambhitwa, i.e. being devoid of pride etc. — about 20 of them — only with a view to gaining this qualification prior to the direct practices. Both the outer instruments of our senses and the inner instrument of our mind are full of dross, and only to those among us who have practised relentlessly and unflinchingly to control both these sets of instruments (i.e. physical and pshychic) without allowing them to get distracted and whisked away by all kinds of temptations from the external surroundings and further have developed the capacity to maintain our mind one-pointed and undisturbed (like a light in a lantern) these direct spiritual practices like Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyaasana are possible to practise so that they yield the desired fruits. Evidently, only such highly and properly qualified people alone can possibly attain Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization.

31. The External Spiritual Practices that Mumukshus, i.e. Seekers of Emancipation, have to Observe first of all

It should now become quite evident that only to those people who have developed an 'introverted mind', meaning, who have developed or cultivated an introspective viewpoint of cognizing or reckoning the subtle changes or

mutations that occur within their minds or hearts, the spiritual disciplines or practices enumerated above, viz. Shama, Dama etc. as also the direct variety of Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyaasana become fruitful. But those who have not yet got rid of 'Bahirmukhatwa', i.e. extroverted outlook, and who are still imbued with the misconception of the type — "We are all people who perform our Karmas with our bodies, senses, mind and intellect" — such people should become 'Nishkaamis', i.e. devoid of desires, and with devotion perform all their actions 'to please the Lord' (to wit, work should become worship). This dual approach of performing all actions with Nishkaama and Ishwara Arpana Buddhi is called in Vedantic parlance 'Karmayoga'. In the Bhagavadgeeta it is stated that: "*Yataha Pravrittirbhootaanaam Yena Sarvamidam Tatam; Swakarmanaa Tamabhyarchya Siddhim Vindati Maanavaaha*" — meaning, "If men worship that Supreme Lord through their respective Karmas (both secular actions and scriptural rituals), who is the 'Antaryaami', i.e. indweller in all creatures, and by whom all the creatures are sustained so as to engage themselves in their respective empirical, mundane transactions and who has pervaded this whole world of duality, then only such people will attain the resultant fruit (Siddhi) of gaining the proper and necessary qualification for 'Jnaana Nishtha', i.e. the capacity to get fully established in Self-Knowledge, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman" — (Geeta 18-46). Therefore, those who are seekers of Self-Knowledge (Emancipation, Beatitude) should, through Bhakti (devotion) to the Lord, perform Nishkaama Karma (selfless, desireless service) and by virtue of such self-less, desireless worship of the Lord should gain — through the Lord's benign grace — 'Chitta Shuddhi', i.e. cleansing of the heart or mind of its dross. (To wit, this dross comprises, if analysed properly, our extrovertedness towards the external objects and possessions resulting in our mind having manifold desires and attachments so as to defile it by all kinds of distractions and disturbances). As a result of this Chitta Shuddhi one gets the unique qualifications of persevering with all dedication in the spiritual practices or disciplines of Shama, Dama etc. Continuing this line of thinking and spiritual advice, the Bhagavadgeeta instructs: "*Aarurukshoarmuneryoagam Karma Kaaranamuchyate; Yoagaaroodhyasya Tasyaiva Shamaha Kaarnam Uchyate*" — meaning, "One who wishes to raise himself to the state of 'Dhyaanayoga', i.e. Intuitive contemplation on the Ultimate Reality (also called Nidhidhyaasana), Karma alone becomes the spiritual practice; one who has risen to that high state of spiritual progress Shama, i.e. control over the mind, alone becomes the prime spiritual discipline" — (Geeta 6-3). This is the main purport of teaching of this Geeta verse.

32. Saadhana Easier than Jnaana Maarga, i.e. Path of Intuitive Knowledge

In this Chapter an outline of the philosophical or spiritual teachings of Advaita, i.e. non-dualism, needed by a superior class of seekers only has

been described. Both in the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgeeta, Upaasana, i.e. meditation, of the basic nature of feelings or emotional devotion (Bhavanaa Roopa) has been recommended for the sake of the middle-class seekers. Those seekers of Emancipation (Mumukshus) to whom the Jnaana Maarga, i.e. path of Intuitive Knowledge of the Self, mentioned and described above, seems to be very difficult or severe should meditate upon the Supreme Lord (Parameshwara) through any one of the Upaasanas (methods of meditation stipulated in the Upanishads), taught by a knowledgeable preceptor. Such people will attain 'Brahma Loaka', i.e. the celestial world of the four-headed deity, Brahma, who is the Creator of the universe, according to a statement in the Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad. There these people will attain 'Jnaana' (here, in this context, the necessary intellectual knowledge) which enables them in due course to qualify for 'Kramamukti', i.e. graded emancipation; these Upaasanas (methods of meditation) may become instrumental in helping the aspirants to attain the ability or qualification (mental make-up) to follow here and now (in this very life span) the 'Jnaana Maarga', i.e. path of Self-Knowledge (Intuition).

33. Sarvaatma Bhaava, i.e. the Outlook of Reckoning Atman (Pure Consciousness) in Every Thing

Those people who read this booklet, whosoever they may be, should not become diffident and feel or say in the manner — "To people of our type or class who are of insufficient, limited intelligence and moral courage this 'Advaita Jnaana', i.e. Intuitive Knowledge of the non-dual Reality of Atman, will never be attainable; its lofty benefits and profound fruits too will not be within our reach or grasp". The fruit or benefit that accrues from this Jnaana is called 'Sarvaatma Bhaava', i.e. a unique outlook of reckoning or realizing that everything (in this world) is Atman or Pure Consciousness alone. Really speaking (on the basis of Intuitive reasoning adopted by Vedantic deliberation as depicted in the foregoing Chapters), all this world of duality that appears before us or perceived by us is 'One, non-dual Paramaatman', meaning, it is pervaded, permeated by Absolute, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone; in this world of our perception there does not exist, in reality, any manifoldness (Naanaatwa) whatsoever (to wit, the apparent manifoldness seen is the result or effect of a deep-seated misconception indeed); in the ultimate analysis, Paramaatman, i.e. the Supreme Self, is my real essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Such a sublime Intuitive experience alone is called Sarvaatma Bhaava, for which the only exclusive 'stratagem' or 'device' is to attain this Intuitive Knowledge (Consciousness) of the type — "I am myself the non-dual Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, without a second"; for, as a result of Ajnaana, i.e. ignorance, alone we seem to be riddled with 'Abrahma Bhaava', i.e. the feeling that we are not the Supreme Self, and 'Asarvatwa', i.e. innate sense of finitude or incompleteness. One should be steadfast in his

faith that if the proper spiritual disciplines as instructed in our Shaastras are practised with one-pointed devotion and perseverance, then the misconceived adjuncts of the body, the senses and the mind are all cleansed of their respective dross and one can realize for himself that all of them are brought fully under his control, in a manner of speaking. In due course he can get the necessary conviction and confidence that anybody who follows this path can unfailingly attain this Atma Jnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge. At least, if not in this very life span, he will be buoyant with such enthusiasm that he will be sure to attain that Jnaana in another life-span or birth, for any effort put in this direction can never possibly go without yielding its fruit (which means, if the supreme effort needed for this Intuitive Knowledge is put in, there is no question at all of any failure or disillusionment). It can be affirmed, then, that no spiritual practice observed or Intuitive discrimination carried out by any true seeker for the sake of attaining this Self-Knowledge will ever go waste or become futile. It can also be asserted that as a consequence of this spiritual progress and Intuitive discrimination here in this life as also hereafter in other lives or births happiness *par excellence* (Bliss) is assured indeed; in due course of time, both the Advaita Jnaana and its fruit of Sarvaatma Bhaava will certainly be attained by the genuine, devoted seeker.

Therefore, for the sake of this unique Self-Knowledge one should necessarily make sincere efforts. In the Upanishadic lore this Self-Knowledge or Advaita Jnaana has been eulogised profusely. It is stated that even Devatas, i.e. deities endowed with many Siddhies, i.e. mystic powers, who are praised as the 'great ones', this Bliss *par excellence* which is gained as a result of Advaita Jnaana has not been availed; similarly, even the Rishis or sages, who had gained superlative premonitory knowledge by means of their sustained penance, were denied this Self-Knowledge. Especially in the case of Indra, i.e. the Lord of the deities, and sages like Vaamadeva etc. only through the attainment of this Jnaana of the type — "I am that non-dual, Absolute Brahman alone" — they could attain the consequent Blissful Sarvaatma Bhaava, which yields the Paramaananda, i.e. the supreme Bliss or Beatitude. To generalize then, it can be emphasized that whosoever has attained this Self-Knowledge he alone can be called the 'Mahaatma', i.e. great one; to such persons alone the *summum bonum* of Sarvaatma Bhaava has necessarily accrued. The same truth holds good for any human being who has attained this unique Intuitive experience in these present times. If this fact is fully realized, then it can be affirmed without the fear of being contradicted or falsified that in this Kallyuga also, even today any human being, irrespective of the fact of his creed, race, sex, status etc., can through proper efforts possibly attain this Advaita Jnaana. It also implies that to such people the Paramaananda of Sarvaatma Bhaava assuredly accrues. Both the canonical texts of the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgeeta have unequivocally proclaimed this truth; in the Brahma Sootras too this has been determined beyond doubt taking recourse to Intuitive ratiocination.

34. Concluding Remark

Let this small treatise create more abiding interest and an ever-increasing hunger to know this pristine pure Vedanta in those seekers who have innate faith and reverence for this unique Vedantic discrimination. Such people will immensely be benefited if they read and digest Vedantic treatises and the transliterations of the original Sanskrit commentaries by Shri Shankara published by Adhyaatma Prakaasha Kaaryaalaya, Holenarsipur, Hassan District, or its Bangalore Branch at Tyagaraajanagar, Bangalore — 560 028, and such other Dharmic institutions. Let all Mumukshus gain this profound Self-Knowledge through the benign grace of the Supreme Lord who is the indweller in every creature and of a genuine preceptor; let those implicit secrets, subtle methodologies and proper spiritual practices and disciplines be revealed to those Mumukshus.

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