

**Brahmavidya Or Knowledge
Of
The Ultimate Reality**

Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series

V



SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

By D. B. GANGOLLI

**ADHYATMA PRAKASHA KARAYALAYA
BANGALORE**

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Foreword

This is the fifth of a series of small books under the head — "*Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti*" or "The Enlightening Words of Satchidaananda". All these booklets contain a free transliteration of 'the enlightening and immortal words and teachings of Shri Satchidaanandendra Saraswati Swamiji, of revered memory, found in his numerous Kannada books. Those readers who do not have the facility and advantage of reading and understanding books in the Kannada language will be immensely benefited by these English publications written in simple language and style.

This small plan of publishing these 'gems of spiritual literature', unrivalled in their esoteric import and teachings of the highest order and based on the pristine pure original Bhashyas of Adi Shankara, was first mooted by Shri D. B. Gangolli, a devotee and admirer of Swamiji. He had brought out the first of the series entitled — "The Relevance of Vedanta in This Modern Age of Civilization" — with the munificent financial help of Subharam Trust (Regd.)

It is an irony of our times that even that great Acharya's immaculate teachings of *Atma Vidya* or Self-Knowledge, purely based on the strength of the *Upanishadic* statements, their veracity based on Intuitive dialectics or ratiocination (called *Anubhavaanga Tarka*) and finally on the strength of the culmination or consummation of all those teachings in one's own Intuitive experience here and now, have been distorted beyond recognition and redemption.

The devoted and discerning seeker of the Ultimate Reality of *Atman* or the Self, of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss (Intuition), is sure to benefit a great deal by studying and cognizing the truths that are taught in these booklets which have adopted a well-planned sequential order of a spiritual theme so as to enable him to get rid of many a deep-rooted misconception that was hitherto proving to be a big stumbling block in his path of spiritual progress. It can be affirmed here that if the student honestly applies his mind and intellect and devotes all his efforts and energies with a high sense of purpose and perseverance, he will never fail to get the conviction and complete satisfaction accruing from this lofty pursuit.

We have great pleasure in publishing this book under the auspices of Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Tyagarajanagar, Bangalore - 560 028 and are thankful to its author, Shri D. B. Gangolli, for making over to us the copyright of this book. We hope that those who are sincerely interested in and devoted to the pursuit of a genuine spiritual path will avail themselves of this opportunity.

K. G. Subraya Sharma, M.A.,
Secretary, Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya,
and Editor, Shankara Bhaskara,
Tyagarajanagar, Bangalore - 560 028.

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BRAHMAVIDYA OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE ULTIMATE REALITY

(Secrets of the precepts and the practice of Self-Knowledge)

I. THE GREATNESS OF BRAHMAVIDYA

In these times when the knowledge about the physical sciences has grown stupendously it has become difficult for the people to show respect towards the philosophical science of Brahman, i.e. knowledge of the Ultimate Reality called in Vedantic parlance Brahman. Now rockets which land on the moon also have been produced, but it has become extremely difficult to attain a state of our mind which can reach out to the world of the Self or Atman.

Really speaking, even in the olden times Brahman was not within the reach of every one. Even in those times some one person among thousands of people was attempting to gain this Knowledge of Brahman; even among those who were attempting thus, some one individual could cognize this Reality of Brahman as It was. In order to indicate that it was difficult to obtain this Knowledge in the olden times there was in vogue a household saying — “What? Do you think it to be Brahman?” This sentence was used by the common people to mean — “Is that task so difficult as Brahman?” In truth, Brahman is not only a spiritual science *par excellence* but also a skillful, profound art. This opinion is implicit in the above saying of the ancient times. In these present times when the interest and attention of the educated masses is increasingly directed towards the natural, physical sciences, the number of people who dabble in Vedanta, which is truly the science of the Ultimate Reality, and query in the manner — “What is meant by Brahman? and What does it teach us?” — is steadily decreasing in the face of the predominant materialistic attitude and approach that the physical sciences advocate and encourage.

“*Brahma Devaanaam Prathamaha Sambabhoova Vishwasya Kartaa Bhuvanasya Goaptaa, Sa Brahman Sarvavidyaapratishtaa Atharvaaya Jyeshthaputraaya Praaha*” — (Mundaka Upanishad 1-1-1). Brahman is the first born earlier than all the other gods or deities; He is the creator and protector of the universe. He taught Brahman, which is the substrate for all knowledges, to His eldest son — Atharva. Brahman is that Knowledge which the omnipotent Hiranyagarbha, who was the primogenitor (Moolapurusha) of the deities or gods, taught His beloved son for the latter's

spiritual prosperity and well-being. This Knowledge is the final goal of all empirical knowledges. It was the belief of our ancient sages or Rishis that if any knowledge was to be fit for the nomenclature of 'Vidya' it should somehow, indirectly at least, lead one to Brahmavidya, i.e. the Knowledge *par excellence* of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman. Therefore, in the olden times the authors of various scientific treatises had to depict as to how the scientific treatise they had formulated or written was a means for attaining Brahmavidya. If it was not done, the honourable nomenclature of a 'Shaastra', i.e. scientific treatise, was not earned by it. For example, if it is asked — "What is the benefit accruing from the science of mathematics?" — the scholars were arguing in the manner — "Those who do not possess the knowledge of that science cannot gain the knowledge of the positions of the planets and stars as also the dimensions and the forms of the brick-laid sacrificial altar which are to be prepared in various sacrifices. By the practice of the religious rites or rituals of Yajna, i.e. sacrifices, etc. alone one gets purity of the mind or heart. By that purity of the heart or mind one gains the Knowledge of the Reality. Thus because it is indirectly a cause for Moaksha, i.e. Liberation, one should necessarily learn the science of mathematics." There is no doubt whatsoever about the fact that if the ancient sages were to be present in these modern times they would have had invariably argued in the manner — "If the physical sciences too are properly utilized they would serve as subservient means leading to or culminating in Brahmavidya."

Even today Brahmavidya possesses such a great value and profound benefit or utility. Answers to the burning question — "What are the benefits accruing from Brahmavidya?" — can be had from some sentences of the Upanishads. (a) "*Brahmavidaapnoati Param*" — (Taittiriya 3-1). It means: "To one who cognizes Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, accrues that fruit of Paramapurusha, i.e. the unrivalled or unparalleled supreme goal which a human being can possibly attain." In this sentence the fruit of Brahmavidya is stated in a commonplace manner. What is meant by 'Paramapurusha', i.e. the prime purpose or goal of human existence or life, is not explicitly explained or elucidated. (b) "*Yadaa Sarve Pramuchyante Kaamaa Ye(s)sya Hridee Shrutaaha, Atha Marthyao(s)mritoa Bhavatyatra Brahma Samashnute*" — (Kathopanishad 2-3-14). It means: "When all the desires which are lurking in a person's heart get released or liberated, then the mortal man becomes immortal; he will attain Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, here itself (while living in this body, i.e. in this very life or birth)." If one listens to this scriptural sentence about the fruit, one gets surprised as well as curious to boot. Is it possible to count and say that a person possesses so many desires in his mind or heart? Can it even be believed that those desires — all of them without exception — will leave us and relieve us? The one thing that is certainly known to all of us is that it cannot be asserted that — "A particular man has so many desires". Let alone their becoming quiescent or coming to an end, as soon as one desire gets fulfilled ten other desires raise their heads invariably. Such being the case, to assert that all the desires become

non-existent is merely to declare a false pronouncement and to make a tall claim indeed! Further, who can say that even one person who claims in the manner — “I do not possess any desire whatsoever; all my desires have been fulfilled” — is met in this whole universe?

Let it be. To say that — “Man becomes immortal” — what sort of a daring, fearless statement it is! In the Amar Kosha, i.e. the ancient Sanskrit lexicon, for the word ‘Manushya’ (which generally means a human being) the synonym is ‘Marthya’, meaning ‘one who is mortal and hence ends up in death’. Can the statement — “A mortal becomes immortal” — ever be accepted? Now whoever that was famous in the past is he alive? Even the Rishi or sage who uttered the sentence — “A mortal will become immortal” — is he alive? Is the person who uttered this sentence a madman or was he pronouncing such a sentence without proper understanding of its true meaning, or are we who believe in such bizarre uncommon statements ourselves madmen?

Another statement of Vedantins which gives rise to our curiosity, nay amusement, is: “Here itself a realised soul (Jnaani) attains Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality.” There are religions which describe colourfully in the manner — “People with merits (Punya) after death go to such and such a celestial region.” But those who wish to ascertain whether this statement is true or not will have to die first. Because of the reason that there is not a single person who after death has returned to this world to report about his posthumous experiences, it is not possible to say whether the meaning of that scriptural sentence is true or not. But in this particular scriptural statement it has been affirmed that — “Here itself he will attain Brahman”! How is it at all possible to attain this Ultimate Reality of Brahman, who is said to be the very substratum of all creation? Is there any person at all who has attained Brahman while being in this life? Is it possible to know or cognize Brahman, get rid of all desires and become one with Brahman here itself in this life? If all this is possible and true, then we should necessarily, without fail and loss of much valuable time, make a sincere effort to attain this Brahmanhood through this Brahmavidya (Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization). If, however, it is untrue and improbable, then one is justified in blaring out that all this is mere mockery and in denouncing it downright! (c) Now listen to yet another scriptural statement about the fruits accruing from Self-Knowledge: “*Bhidyate Hridayagranthishchhidryante Sarvasamshayaaha, Ksheeyante Chaasya Karmaani Tasmin Drishte Paraavare*” — (Mundaka 2-2-9), meaning — “If that all-pervading Supreme Self (Paramaatman) is cognized or realized, then the knot of the heart will be loosened and all the doubts will get destroyed; his deeds too will be exhausted.”

As much the scriptural statement — “All desires disappear” — is a mere fancy or an unnatural conjecture, so much is the scriptural statement that — “A man’s doubts in their totality get dissolved” — also a mere fancy or a wild conjecture. Among human beings there are many intelligent people. The knowledge that they have amassed over the ages is of the magnitude of many

mountains. But just as it is in the experience of everyone of us that even as one desire gets fulfilled many new desires arise in us, in the same way it is a matter which is in the experience of everyone of us that even as one doubt is solved ten new doubts raise their heads. It being so, what sort of a statement, nay exaggeration, is it to say that by means of Brahmavidya (Self-Knowledge) all the doubts get dissolved at once?

Let alone this objection too. Is it possible for all the actions (Karmas) to get exhausted or destroyed? The actions, whether good or bad, that man performs in this very life-span are themselves innumerable; then, who has kept an account or track of the actions that he or she has performed in the past endless lives? If it is compared to these total number of accumulated actions, those actions which are exhausted owing to the person having experienced their fruits are so small in number! Just as a person who takes loans brings day-to-day fresh loans on compound interest and spends them away by enjoying them and thereby his loan amount remains permanently unpaid only, in the same manner among the totality of our actions (Sanchita Karma) however much we exhaust our actions by enjoying their fruits the number of those actions which we have not exhausted remain innumerable indeed. Can there be any person at all then who can say confidently in the manner — “I have no actions at all which remain to be experienced and exhausted”?

So far we have deliberated upon only those doubts that may arise in the minds of those people who are ardent believers in the scriptures and have religious faith in the existence of God (Aasthikas). It is certain that especially for those people who are immensely exposed to the Western ways of living, who are science-oriented in their outlook and are rational and thereby non-believers, these scriptural sentences stipulating certain other-worldly and posthumous fruits (Loakaantara and Janmaantara Phalas) will seem to be ridiculous indeed. Even in the olden times the followers of the materialistic school of philosophy called 'Chaarvaakas' and the non-believers (Naastikas) had raised such objections invariably against Vedanta. Whoever the scholar might have been that had formulated and founded the doctrines of the Chaarvaaka philosophy — he is Brihaspati — in these days of stupendously advanced science and technology there may be scores of such Brihaspatis (modern scholars) who can outbeat and overwhelm the old Brihaspatis. Our present-day youths are themselves forwarding before us all the arguments and disputations of such modern scholars. If Vedanta philosophical science is to be deservedly called a universally acceptable philosophical science (Darshana), then it would become very essential to give a fitting and satisfactory reply to all of those objections or doubts raised by them in the present context.

The mental make-up or the temperament of those people who do not have belief or faith in Vedanta may be of different kinds. Among them some are sceptics, i.e. people who think that it is not possible for any one to get a sense of certainty or conviction of the type — “Here and now the Ultimate Truth is

determined". In Greece in about 300 B.C. one 'Prrho of Elis' was the founder of this school of thought — so the Westerners believe. It is said that he had first of all propounded the teaching that — "Neither the sensuous nor the mental knowledges deserve to be believed nor they were trustworthy." Nowadays in the European countries several schools of scepticism have come and gone. In recent times David Hume, of Scotland, has propounded another theory of scepticism in the manner — "The essential nature of Being which goes by the nomenclature of 'I' cannot be perceived howevermuch we may search for it; the cause-effect categories are untrue or false; all that we know are the ideations or thoughts alone which are produced by our senses." The theory of perception which propounds that only that much knowledge which is perceptible to our senses is certain — that too relatively real — can be called 'Positivism'. This theory was propounded and popularized by a French thinker called August Comte, it is learnt. People who endorse this theory are not sparse in our country (India). There are many people who call themselves 'Humanists' and this theory of 'Humanism' may be defined as: "That which is needed by human beings — particularly those aspects only which are needed for the betterment and progress of the human race in general — should be deliberated upon." The opinion of the followers of this doctrine is that — "The desire to know as to how best we should behave so as to produce exemplary men in the future is very important; individuals are not so very important." These people too are those who refute phenomena like Gods or deities, heaven and hell etc.

Let alone the topic of these thinkers or philosophers. Now there are many people who believe in the 'Theory of Evolution' among the followers of the various empirical or physical sciences of the present times. There is no scope of these people having or getting any belief whatsoever in the theories, doctrines or dogmas propounded by the various schools of philosophy or religions. Besides, the number of people who belong to political and ideological groups with large membership and who keep on finding answers — in a very parochial and limited fashion — to questions like — "Keeping the political matters and problems of our nation in view predominantly for the time being, what should we do so that our country prospers and develops?" — and who formulate enchanting 'manifestos' to enlist the membership of scores of people is disconcertingly increasing and the quarrel among these groups seems to be never-ending. These people cannot, by any stretch of imagination, even conceive of an Ultimate Reality as the substrate for this universe, let alone deliberate upon such lofty doctrines.

Thus even in these times of highly advanced technology and science when there exist many kinds of schools of sceptics and non-believers who are extremely materialistic in their outlook, by God's benign grace, it is found that, side by side, there exist many people all over the world who believe in the teachings of this spiritual science of Vedanta and that is a happy augury. These people show an unflinching faith in the Geeta statement:

"Ajnashchaashraddadhaanascha Samshayaatmaa Vinashyati" — (Geeta 4-40), which means: "One who is an ignorant person and who does not have belief or faith in the scriptural teachings and is thereby a sceptic gets doomed without attaining the ultimate purport or goal of all human existence." The fact that even in these modern times one can preach the Vedantic truths so that they are reckoned or cognized by all people can be comprehended by us from the life history of Swami Vivekananda who toured many Western countries and overwhelmed great scholars and thinkers of the West by his enlightening and enthralling lectures.

In the next Chapter we will make an attempt to delineate the method of comprehending the purport of the scriptural statements stipulating certain fruits which were mentioned here in this Chapter.

II. PRACTICAL MEANS FOR INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE OR JNAANA

The greatness of Brahmavidya or Brahmajnaana (i.e. Self-Knowledge) has been delineated in the previous Chapter. Many people do not know the methods or means for this Intuitive Knowledge; some have doubts regarding this fulfilment of this Brahmavidya, i.e. Jnaana, while others entertain non-belief or even indifference towards it. But there do exist some people who have full, unflinching faith in attaining this Self-Knowledge or Brahmajnaana here and now in this very life-span. We will now deal with the question — "What are the spiritual practices or disciplines for this Self-Knowledge?" — for the sake of those who wish to know sincerely the essential nature of Brahmajnaana.

For children, animals and the common run of people there is a natural means of cognitive knowledge. That may be called — 'Naisargika Pravruttsaadhana', i.e. instinct. Some of the functions or empirical dealings occur quite naturally. Children, having taken their food in a drowsy state and having gone to sleep, get up in the morning and ask for food, saying that — "I did not eat food yesternight." This is a natural instinctive knowledge. Just as we know or experience sound, touch, form, taste and smell through our senses, animals and other creatures too instinctively 'know' or 'cognize'. This is Pratyaksha, i.e. perceptual knowledge, of the form of percepts, i.e. Aalochanaaroopa, gained through the functions of the senses. Although animals and creatures carry on their actions and bodily functions based on likes and dislikes as a result of this perceptual knowledge (or sensations), they do not at all use reasoning faculty as man can. If a person who has the habit of giving food or some eatables to a dog puts out merely his empty hand, that dog thinks that that person is going to give it some food or eatable as usual; on

the other hand, if that person holds a stick in his hand, it runs away out of fear. Thus although animals and other creatures too, just like human beings, get external knowledge born out of the five senses, which are called sensations (Indriyajanya Jnaana), and the internal feelings, called Vedanas, like desire for something and hatred towards another thing called Kaama and Krodha, respectively, hunger, thirst etc., they (i.e. animals and creatures) do not have the power or capacity of thinking by means of the mind in the manner — "It must be like this, it cannot be like that" — nor the power of intellectual conviction and judgment of the type — "It is certainly like this and this alone."

This fact the scriptural texts indicate after analysing it in the manner — "*Purushe Tvevaavistaraamaatmaa Sa Hi Prajnaanena Sampannatamo Vijnatam Vadati Vijnatam Pashyati Veda Shwastanam Veda Loakaalokou Martyenaamritameepsatyevam Sampannaha; Athetareshaamashanaa-pipaase Evaabhivijnanam*" — (Aitareya Aaranyaka 2-3-2). It means: "In trees and plants which possess only internal knowledge (Antahsamjna) Atman, i.e. Pure Consciousness, manifests to some extent, but He manifests to a greater extent or a greater degree, measure (than in those insentient things) in movable creatures and animals; but in man alone Atman (i.e. Pure Consciousness) is manifest fully and very clearly. In him Consciousness or Knowledge is manifest quite abundantly and hence a human being understands or knows and talks, knows and sees, knows what will happen tomorrow, knows about other worlds; by means, which are empirical and mortal, he aspires to attain immortality; but for the remaining creatures hunger and thirst and such other instincts and natural bodily functions are knowledges."

Thus in man the means of knowing instinctively, the knowledge born out of his senses, the faculty of knowing directly through his mind or intellect and of gaining conceptual experiences like desire (Kaama), volition or willing (Sankalpa), doubting (Samshaya), dedication (Shraddha), indifference (Ashraddha), morale or courage or resoluteness (Dhriti), irresoluteness (Adhriti), sense of shame (Apamaana, Lajja), Knowledge (Jnaana) and fear (Bhaya) etc. — all these exist.

Man, especially, possesses in addition to the knowledge born out of the senses and the mind the power of gathering together all those knowledges, correlate them, reason out and deduce one particular knowledge from another. This latter kind of deductive, a *priori* knowledge is called inferential knowledge or Anumaanapramaanajanya Jnaana (to wit, inferential knowledge born out of the valid means of reasoning and imagination). Man does not attain every kind of knowledge directly through perception via the senses alone; he is amassing the totality of his so-called knowledge by means of reasoning or inferential faculty bestowed upon his intellect (Buddhi), to boot.

In addition to this, the knowledge born out of sentences found in the written texts or scriptures or spoken words of his well-wishers, forefathers etc. called Vaakyajanya Jnaana too is helpful to him in enriching his knowledge. One

who is capable of communicating to us what he has understood or known through a particular kind of valid means and thereby can indicate and communicate that knowledge to us is called an 'Aapta', i.e. a trust-worthy person, confidante; from his statement too we can know the reality of a thing or phenomenon. For example, by the teaching of those people who have gone abroad and have known the people of a foreign country as well as various things of that country we too can gain, though imperceptibly, the knowledge of those people and the things in that country. In turn we too can communicate in the same manner to others what we have known through their statements. Anyway, it amounts to saying that in this manner through the doorways of instinctive knowledge, senses, mind, intellect, reasoning (logic), trusted friends' or well-wishers' statements — through all such ways we obtain the knowledge of objects or phenomena perceptible in our day-to-day empirical transactions or dealings.

But the scriptures (Upanishads) are stating that Brahmaatmajnaana, i.e. the Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of Atman or the Self, is not, in this sense or aspect, any perceptual knowledge of any object or phenomenon of the empirical, mundane dealings. (a) "*Yatoa Vaachoa Nivartante Apraapya Manasaa Saha; Aanandam Brahmane Vidwaan Na Bibheti Kutaschaneti*" — (Taittiriya 3-9). The purport of this scriptural statement is that we can form a concept in our mind about an object or phenomenon which is perceptible to our senses; besides, we can communicate that conceptual knowledge to others too. Therefore, we can assume that thing or phenomenon is objectifiable or communicable by our speech; to wit, it is either perceptible by our senses or it is capable of being conceived by our mind. But the essential nature of Bliss of Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, is not objectifiable by speech (which means It is not perceptible to our senses, nor is It conceived by our mind or intellect because It is beyond the ken of mental concepts and is, in truth, the very essence of our Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Thus the scripture is also stating that one who cognizes that Blissful Nature or Essence of Brahman or Atman does not fear anything whatsoever!! Now, how is this possible at all? (b) "*Tadvijnaanaartham Sa Gurumevaabhigachhet Samitpaanihi Shroatriyam Brahmanishtham*" — (Mundaka 1-2-12). "*Tasmai Sa Vidwaan Upasannaaya Samyakprashaantachittaaya Shamanvitaaya; Yenaaksharam Purusham Veda Proavaacha Taam Tattwatoa Brahavidyaam*" — (Mundaka 1-2-13).

The purport of this Upanishadic statement is: "In order to know the eternal Reality of Brahman one should reverentially approach a preceptor who is well-versed in the scriptures as also who is established in the Intuitive experience of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman, i.e. his own Self as the Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. In that manner if a disciple, who has approached a teacher as per the stipulations of the scriptures, is having a completely quiescent mind and if he has successfully controlled his sense organs, then the preceptor should teach such a disciple that 'Conscious

Principle' called 'Akshara', i.e. immutable or immortal, also called Brahmavidya, i.e. Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality, as It really is." Since it is stated in this Upanishad that to a qualified or deserving disciple the knowledgeable and Self-Realized preceptor should teach Brahmavidya, i.e. Self-Knowledge, it amounts to saying that it is possible to teach or communicate this Vidya or Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality by a Sadguru, i.e. Self-Realized preceptor. But that Ultimate Reality which is neither perceptible through the means of speech nor is an object for the mental concepts — how at all can that Absolute, Ultimate Reality of the Self (Atman) be taught by the preceptor even? It is true that by the statement of a trustworthy, elderly person or our confidante we normally obtain the empirical knowledge of a thing or phenomenon. But even those trustworthy persons too can only teach or communicate to us that thing or phenomenon which is 'known' by him through another valid means, i.e. Pramaana, namely Aapta Vaakya or Shabda (a true statement or expression of his own Pratyaksha Anubhava, i.e. direct and intimate experience). It being so, however much capable this preceptor maybe, however much compassionate he may be — how can it be possible at all for even such a preceptor to teach or communicate the Intuitive Knowledge or Experience of that Absolute, Ultimate Reality which is Itself not graspable or is beyond all comprehension?

The scripture itself is further stating that — *"Koa Addhaa Veda Ka Iha Pravoachat Kuta Aajaataa Kuta Iyam Visrushtihi"* — (Rig Veda 10-139-6). It means: "Who knows as to how and by whom this creation has been made? Who can at all answer that question?" If Brahman is the cause of the world, then how can it be said that Brahman is beyond the ken of sensuous knowledge or percepts? Further, who can ever clearly know or understand as to what kind of a relationship, if at all there is any, exists between that incomprehensible cause of Absolute Reality of Brahman and Its effect of the empirical world? Besides, that entity which is not an object for speech at all, whoever can expound or express such a phenomenon? The scripture states: *"Na Tatra Chakshurgachhati Na Vaaggachhati Noa Manaha; Na Vidmoa Na Vijaaneemoa Yathaitadanushishyaat"* — (Kena 1-3). The purport of this statement is: "That Reality the eyes cannot contact, the speech cannot indicate, the mind too cannot comprehend — how at all can such a Reality be cognized? How can that Reality be taught? We do not know; we cannot divine!" Thus the scripture, which stressed over and over again that Brahman cannot be cognized through any valid (empirical) means of knowledge whatsoever, itself opines that — *"Aachaaryavaan Purushoa Veda"*, meaning — "One who has procured a highly qualified preceptor will cognize that Reality." The Smriti (Geeta) also suggests that — *"Tadviddhi Pranipaatenā Pariprashnena Sevayā; Upadekshyanti Te Jñānam Jñāninastattva-darśinaha"* — (Geeta 4-34), which means — "Saluting the preceptor and reverentially questioning him as well as serving him, attain that Knowledge of the Reality of the Self". The genuine seekers may get curious to

know as to how at all can a true preceptor teach or instruct about this Ultimate or Absolute Reality!

Now let us see as to what exactly the scriptures say with regard to the means by which we can cognize this Reality of Brahman: "*Manasaiva Idamaaptavyam Neha Naanaasti Kinchana; Mrityoaho Sa Mrityum Gachhati Ya Iha Naaneva Pashyati*" — (Kathopanishad 3-1-11). This scriptural statement has been explained clearly by Shri Shankara Bhagavatpada in his commentary in the manner — (a) "*Praagekatwavijnaanaat Aachaaryaagama Samskritena Manasaiva*" — meaning, "Before the Intuitive Knowledge of the type -- "One and one non-dual Reality alone really exists" — is attained one should learn to cognize this Reality by means of a mind that is influenced and enlightened by a preceptor as also the traditional method of teaching (Agama) alone." In his commentary on 'Bhagavadgeeta' this same teacher has written: "*Shaastraachaaryoapadesha Shamadamaadisamskritam Mana Aatmadarshane Karanam*" — (Geeta Bhashya 2-21). It purports to say that — "Although one cannot by oneself independently know this Reality, with the help of the scriptural instructions as well as the instructions of a worthy preceptor and by getting his (extroverted) mind cleansed and enlightened by the spiritual practices or disciplines like Shama (control over the mind), Dama control over the five senses), Uparati (introvertedness) etc. his mind gets qualified to cognize or Intuit the Self (Atman)." (b) "*Idam Brahma Ekarasam Aaptavyam Aatmaiva Naanyat Asti Iti*" — meaning, "This Brahman, which is indivisible and is of one and the same essence, is our Self (Atman) alone; there is nothing other than this Reality." In this manner one should cognize or Intuit It. (c) "*Aapte Cha Naanaatwa Pratyupasthaapikaayaa Avidyaayaa Nivruttattwaat; Iha Brahmani Naana Naasti Kinchana Anumaatramapi*" — meaning, "After one cognizes or Intuits this Reality of Brahman or Atman, Avidya, i.e. ignorance, which misconceives or brings about differences or distinctions, gets rooted out and hence there does not remain even any vestiges of difference in this Absolute or Ultimate Reality whatsoever at all." (d) "*Yastu Punaha Avidyaatimiradrishtim Na Munchati Iha Brahmani Naaneva Pashyati Sa Mrityoarmrityum Gachhati*" — meaning, "But one who does not get rid of the cataract vision called Avidya, i.e. ignorance, and thereby is seeing or perceiving as if in this non-dual Reality of Brahman there exists difference, he will get death after death."

The principal purport of this commentary is: "Although this Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman is incomprehensible to the unenlightened people either through speech or mind, they can surely Intuitively know It with the help of the statements or spiritual instructions of a well-qualified preceptor. In this context, by the word 'Aachaarya', i.e. a preceptor, it is meant a spiritual teacher who knows or has understood the genuine purport of the scriptural texts so as to be able to explain them and bring home their real essence to the mind of the uninitiated or unenlightened common run of people. In fact, these

teachers are capable of not only inculcating upon the minds of their disciples the importance and necessity of practising strict or rigid spiritual disciplines as stipulated in the scriptural texts but also capable of inducing their disciples to practise them and get proficient in them. This capacity in them can be traced to their own intimate and direct experiences and their own proficiency in having achieved the objective and having got over all the various hurdles that are to be encountered on the path by a practitioner of these spiritual disciplines. Thus it will become evident now that those persons alone, who are able to comprehend, understand the real purport and essence of the scriptural statements signifying the Ultimate Reality of Brahman and who as a result of their having established themselves in this Intuitive experience of the Ultimate Reality are capable of enlightening those disciples who surrender unto them by their soul-stirring teachings, are the genuine preceptors (Aachaaryas). It will also become clear now that as a result of comprehending the real purport of the scriptural texts with the help of the spiritual instructions of the preceptor and thereafter by virtue of his practising the spiritual disciplines like Shama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Shraddha and Samaadhaana etc. when all the dross in the mind has been cleansed completely, that very pure mind attains the qualification or capacity to cognize or Intuit the Ultimate Reality of Brahman and get established in It forever.

Before one Intuits or cognizes this Ultimate Reality of Brahman (Atman) two kinds of differences or distinctions do exist, and they are — (1) the Triputi of the type of the cognizer (Pramaatru), the means of cognition (Pramaana) and the object of cognition, namely the Ultimate Reality of Brahman (Prameya); (2) the world of duality (Prapancha) full of various species of Jeevas or souls, various kinds of insentient objects which we all are experiencing as external phenomena. But when one cognizes or Intuitively experiences the indivisible Brahman or Atman, there exists this non-dual unitary Entity without any other thing or phenomenon second to It and thereby it becomes a plenary experience of one and the same essence of Pure Being (Ekaatma Pratyaya Saaram). In that event not even an iota of difference whatsoever remains.

Since it is stated in the scriptural texts that by merely cognizing Brahman as one's own essence of Being-Consciousness-Bliss as the Self all the above-stated differences get destroyed or rooted out, it becomes self-evident and self-established that the apparent differences that are being seen now are due to Avidya, i.e. ignorance, which is nothing but misconception, delusion indeed. Just as to a person who has developed cataract in his eyes one moon alone appears as many moons; but even while it is appearing in that manner, in reality, there exists only one moon alone, in the same manner as a result of this Avidya this world — which is of the form of the Triputi of the agents of action, the means of action, the various actions and their end results (fruits) of actions it will invariably appear as long as this Avidya of the form of misconception or delusion persists. Only that the belief, or rather the conviction, of the type — "This is Avidya, not the real Knowledge" — will not

be there in us; to the animals and creatures etc., just like us human beings, the functions of the senses are there; just like us, in them also there will be feelings arising of the type — “This thing is beneficial” and “This is disadvantageous” — when they perceive things or objects in front of them. Therefore, just like us human beings they (animals and other creatures) too, thinking that a particular object is beneficial or helpful, proceed towards that object; and thinking that a particular thing seen by them is disadvantageous or harmful to its interests or very existence, they too recede from that thing. Although in all empirical transactions of this type this much similarity exists to be common between human beings, on the one hand, and animals and other creatures, on the other, human beings possess, or rather they have been endowed with, the extra-ordinary faculty of reasoning or discrimination and of arriving at a conclusive knowledge based on such reasoning. This excessive and exclusive faculty of self-reflective Consciousness in all human beings can be traced to their highly developed intellect; man possesses thus the power of conceiving with the help of this faculty of reasoning as to what will happen in the future and in accordance with that conjecture he possesses the capacity to arrange or adapt his Pravrutti, i.e. procedural behaviour in acquiring that thing, or Nivrutti, i.e. his behaviour in getting rid of or receding from that thing. But perhaps even the thought that such a discriminative knowledge or faculty exists among human beings cannot or does not arise in animals and creatures etc. In the same manner, speaking purely from the empirical point of view we cannot possibly entertain a concept, just now in our present uninitiated or unenlightened state, of the type — “Although there appears to be a similarity between the empirical day-to-day dealings of Pravrutti and Nivrutti of the common run of human beings, who are supposed to be discriminative and rational in mundane matters, on the one hand, and the Jnaanīs, i.e. the Realized souls, on the other, the Jnaanīs do not envisage any difference whatsoever to exist at all.” We keep on asking — “How can they ever cognize with this very mind that Brahman, which is the essence of indivisible, immutable non-duality? How can they cognize that Brahman which is beyond words, Pravrutti and Nivrutti as also beyond the reach or ken of the senses?”

Not only that; we are not even capable of thinking or imagining by our mind that there exists a Reality which is beyond the ken of senses. We are getting doubts with regard to the truth — “Cognizing that Reality it is possible to experience or enjoy its fruit as taught in the Vedānta Philosophical Science”. In addition to such a doubt we do not at all hesitate even to establish or prove conclusively by means of all sorts of logical arguments or dialectical criticism referring to the many metaphysical contradictions that the Vedānta Philosophy seems to abound in and even try to prove “scientifically”, pressing into service the manifold physical laws and theories put out by our modern scientists, that — “There is no possibility whatsoever for man to attain the Intuitive Knowledge or Experience of such a Reality beyond the ken of the senses; further it is meaningless trash to accept the Vedāntic doctrine of that one non-dual Reality to exist in everything in this vast universe”. But for

the sake of those few people who earnestly and dedicatedly believe that there may be still a different, separate or exclusive doorway of Knowledge to Intuit or cognize this Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman as also believe that there may be a possibility of instructing about such an Absolute Reality, metaphysical in its very essence or content; further, who are fully prepared to make concerted efforts to gain the proper qualifications needed to Intuitively listen to (Shravana) the spiritual teaching of the scriptural texts and the qualified preceptor so as to be able to Intuitively experience and get more and more rooted or established in that non-dual Reality of the Self — to such a few highly qualified people especially the philosophical science of Vedanta exists as a beacon light, nay a veritable divine boon. Herefore we can delve deep into and Intuitively deliberate upon its unique methodology.

III. THE UNIQUE METHODOLOGY OF INTUITING THE ULTIMATE REALITY OF BRAHMAN

We have so far deliberated upon the possible doorways to knowledge. Now we have to deliberate upon the question of finding out the exact meaning or import of the statement that — "We get knowledge from the perception of the external objects through our senses, from the thoughts, emotions, feelings, reasoning faculty and from statements of trustworthy elders or personalities." People are carrying on their day-to-day dealings in the manner — "Because I saw with my eyes I got the knowledge of the form of an object; similarly, because I heard with my ears, smelt with my nose, touched with my hands or skin, tasted with my tongue, deliberated upon with my mind — I got the knowledge of such and such an object or phenomenon." But how do we realize or reckon in the manner — "This is a body; this is a sense organ; this is an object; this the mind; these are my likes and dislikes"? Before we obtain the knowledge there must necessarily be a volition within to proceed ahead or pursue to obtain that particular kind of 'knowledge' or 'cognition' of that particular volition taking place in our bosom? When we say — "I got the knowledge" — what exactly is the special feature or change that has taken place in us? It becomes quite essential now to discern this transformation in our mind or heart with all our attention, observation and awareness or self-reflective consciousness (which we may call Intuition).

There exists an essential nature of Intuition, i.e. the Absolute, Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of the Self, in every one of us which 'illumines' all phenomena like — the valid means or doorways of all perceptual knowledge, viz. the five senses and the mind; their functioning as well as non-functioning, the sensations gathered by the sense organs, the mental volitions, conceptions or misconceptions etc.; activities like Pravrutti and Nivrutti and

the three states of consciousness like waking, dream and deep sleep. It may be given the nomenclature of 'Siddhaanubhava', i.e. Intuitive experience which is self-established or existing in Itself and by Itself having no dependence upon anything else or having anything second to It. Taking the literary meaning of the word — 'Anubhava' i.e. experience — with its etymological formation in the manner — 'Anu' meaning 'following' and 'Bhava' meaning 'that which has happened or is experienced' — we keep on transacting in the manner — "Now we got the perceptual experience"; "Now we got the experience of hunger"; "Now we got the experience of certainty or conviction" etc. etc. Thus what accrues at the end of these transactions we may call — 'Phalaanubhava', i.e. the experience or enjoyment of the fruit or result. As this 'experience or enjoyment' is the resultant or fruit of a particular valid means or doorway of knowledge (Pramaana) it can also be called 'Pramiti' or 'Avagati'. Just like when a match-stick is scratched against a rough surface the fire manifests instantly and burns, although this 'Anubhava', i.e. Intuitive experience, manifests apparently at the end of the function of its respective valid means (Pramaana), in truth, It is not in the least an experience or Anubhava which has arisen or is born afresh as a resultant fruit or effect; for, our Atman or Self alone, who is essentially of an innate nature of Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss, is per force this 'Anubhava' which apparently is experienced as a resultant fruit by all of us. In order to indicate that It is indeed an ever-existing, self-evident or self-established Absolute or Plenary Consciousness or Awareness, in Vedantic parlance this Reality of Intuition is called 'Anubhooti', 'Shuddha Chaitanya'.

If it is keenly observed, there does not exist any object or phenomenon whatsoever which is not related to this Intuitive experience; to say that this 'exists' relationship with our innate Intuitive experience, i.e. Pure Consciousness, has per force to take place (for, everything is pervaded by this Intuition, just like space pervades everything in it and thereby the existence of anything means the latter's existence in space alone; similarly, this Pure Consciousness or Chaitanya is the substratum for any percept or concept). For this reason alone the scripture states this fact in the following words: "*Ekoa Devaha Sarvabhooteshu Goodhaha; Sarvavyaapee Sarvabhootaan-taraatmaa; Karmaadhyakshaha Sarvabhootaadhivaasaha; Saakshee Chetaa Kevaloa Nirgunascha*" — (Shwetaashwatara Upanishad 6-10). The purport of this statement is: "One and one only Deva, i.e. deity, who is of the essential nature of brilliance lurks inside all creatures from the four-headed creator God, Brahma, down to the immovable pillar. He is pervading everything, He is the innermost Atman or Pure Being of every object or entity. Being the presiding Principle which supervises the dispensation of all fruits of actions, He alone is the Pure Existence at the very core of all beings and objects; He perceives everything directly, Intuitively without any mediate means; He is of the essence of Pure Consciousness, one without a second, i.e. non-dual, devoid of any characteristic or quality whatsoever."

Being pervaded by this Intuitive experience, i.e. Pure Consciousness, alone, all our senses, mind, intellect etc. appear to be 'Chidroopa', i.e. of the nature of Consciousness, meaning sentient, conscious. Just as for the various kinds of fish, which swim about either in a river or an ocean, everywhere — above, below, to the left, to the right — water alone exists, in the same manner our body, senses, mind, emotions, feelings, the external objects etc. all these are submerged, so to speak, in this ocean of Pure Consciousness indeed. Just as the electric bulbs are pervaded, in a manner of speaking, by the light produced by the electric current, similarly the functions of the senses and the mind are pervaded by this Intuitive experience (Saakshi Anubhava, Pure Consciousness) and thereby are associated with the reflection of this Reality alone; because those valid means or instruments of knowledge in our empirical day-to-day dealings or actions are being illumined by the 'light' of that Pure Consciousness, our very core or substratum of our being, all of them are appearing to be 'full of Consciousness', i.e. Chinmaya, alone. Although the knowledges born out of the senses appear to be varied, all knowledge is of one and the same nature. Just like the light of a lamp inside a house diffuses out through the outlets of the windows, in the same way the ever-established, self-effulgent Pure or Absolute Consciousness (Intuitive experience or Anubhava) alone diffuses out through the doorways or outlets of the five senses, the mind, the intellect etc. and gets manifested (Abhivyakta) at the end of the cognitive knowledge being born or produced through the respective valid means or instrument of knowledge. We presume that an empirical transaction of the type — 'I got such and such a knowledge' — of sound, touch, form, taste and smell etc. is taking place. If one keenly observes, it becomes quite evident that Jnaana, i.e. knowledge, meaning the resultant fruit of 'Avagati', i.e. end product of Intuitive experience, is not at all caused or produced afresh. In truth, Pure Consciousness or Chaitanya Itself, which already, eternally exists and is self-established, gets manifested very brightly or effulgently at the end of the cognitive process or sense perception through the medium of the respective sense organs, and this we call knowledge. Just as the common run of people transact in the manner — "Look, the moon has come this side" — when the cloud which had covered up the moon moves away to a side, in the same manner the common people in this present context too transact in the manner — "I got the knowledge of such and such a thing or object" — that is all. In truth, if one keenly observes, what has occurred afresh is only the change of the respective form of cognitive knowledge; Jnaana or Intuitive Knowledge as such is manifest (or rather, has become effulgent) in the respective form of the resultant Intuitive experience or Avagati alone, but is not born afresh in the ultimate analysis. To give an analogy, just as by virtue of the green, red or yellow colour of the electric bulbs the light inside appears to have assumed the various colours of the outer covering, in the same manner in the case of the specific type of knowledge, especially of the type — "This is the knowledge of smell"; "This is the knowledge of taste" etc. — the specific forms of the respective functions of

the senses, mind, intellect etc. and their resultant assumed forms of knowledge or consciousness are superimposed on the substratum of Jnaana Swaroopa, i.e. the very essential nature or fountainhead of Pure Consciousness or Intuitive experience. This is the secret of all knowledges, indeed.

One should not get deluded that these special forms of knowledge are themselves the real forms of Atman, i.e. Pure Consciousness, Itself. This truth is indicated by the scriptures in the statement: *"Sa Esha Iha Pravishthaha; Aa Nakhaagrebhya Yathaa Kshuraha Kshuradhaane(s)vahitaha Syaata Vishwambharo Vaa Vishwambharakulaaye Tam Na Pashyanti; Akritsnoa Hi Sa Praananneva Praano Naama Bhavati; Vadan Vaak Pashyanschakshuhu Shrunvanshroatram Manvaanoa Manastaanyasyaitaani Karmanaamaanyeva; Sa Yoa(s)ta Ekaikamupaaste Na Sa Vedaakrustnoa Hyeshoa(s)ta Ekaikena Bhavatyaatmetyevoapaaseetaatra Hyete Sarva Ekam Bhavanti; Tadetat Padaneeyamasya Sarvasya Yadayamaatmaa(s)nena Hyetat Sarvam Veda; Yathaa Vai Padenaanuvindedeavam Keertim Shloakam Vindate Ya Evam Veda"* — (Brihadaraanyaka 1-4-8).

The purport of this scriptural text is: "The world remaining unmanifest (Avyaakrita) in states like Sushupti, i.e. deep sleep, and Pralaya, i.e. dissolution, etc. gets separated or spread out as names and forms in the waking state and creation etc. The conglomeration of means of action and actions (Kaarya Karana Sanghaata) — which all of us have been endowed with in the forms of our body, senses and mind — is a mutation alone of this unmanifest primordial matter (Avyaakrita Prakriti) indeed. In the eternal stateless Atman — because of the difference in forms or appearances caused by the manifestation and unmanifestation of names and forms which are projected or superimposed by Avidya — the different states of consciousness are appearing. Atman, i.e. the Self, who was first existing by and unto Himself appears to have entered into this manifest world. This should be reckoned in the same manner as in the example of space, which first existed as empty mere space alone in the house of a potter and itself later on appeared separately or differently as the pot-space, pitcher-space, lid-space etc. Although these different kinds of conglomerations of our body, senses, mind etc. are born in Atman alone — who is eternally existing and is of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness (Intuitive experience) — that Self Consciousness (Atma Chaitanya) — just as space appears to have entered inside the pot, the pitcher etc. — in the same manner appears to have entered into these different conglomerations."

The fact of Pure Consciousness (Chaitanya) having entered into (pervading) the conglomerations appears to us in two kinds. (1) Just as the various razors that a barber has kept in his bag are separate or distinct, in the same way the Pure Consciousness appears to have entered into the conglomerations in the form of separate distinct consciousness or knowledges in distinct places. (2) Just as fire that has entered into (pervaded) the whole of a piece of firewood in an unmanifested (potential) form, Pure

Consciousness seems to have engulfed the various conglomerations in a genus form too. The intellect, the mind, the senses, the body — in the conglomeration of all these parts or varied phenomena Pure Consciousness has pervaded in the form of a 'genus' as also It appears in each one of those phenomena or parts in a 'particular' or distinct form or aspect to boot. As to how Pure Consciousness manifests Itself in a particular or distinct form in our conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind etc. is evident from the statement of the common people that by virtue of the functioning of Praana, i.e. the vital force, a Jeeva, i.e. a soul, is said to be "alive"; if he is speaking they say he is a "speaker". In the same manner, when he is seeing he is said to be a "seer", while hearing he is called "hearer or listener", while discriminating or reasoning out he is called a "discriminator or deliberator" etc. As in the illustration already mentioned, among the three electric bulbs that exist in one particular room one may 'appear' to be green, a second one may 'appear' to be yellow and the third may 'appear' to be red. Although apart from these three particular forms pure electric light pervades the whole of the room (nay, the whole of the house) in its unmanifested or genus form, it (i.e. electric light) is perceptible to us only in the particular forms (through those coloured bulbs which are the doorways, so to speak, for the genus of the electric light) alone. In the same manner, our essential nature of Pure Being or Pure Consciousness — by virtue of Its association, as it were, with each adjunct of a sense organ — is manifesting Itself in the particular functions or actions seen or perceived in the various parts of the conglomerations, namely, seeing, hearing, reasoning etc.

If we reckon that these particular forms are themselves our essential nature, then our knowledge becomes incomplete or restricted. If a person is knowing the various Raagas, i.e. tunes, in music, it may be said that the power of his ears is subtle or keen; if he is singing well, he may be called an "exponent of music" or "excellent musician". In the same way, by virtue of his manual skill in painting he may be called an "artist" and if he is skilful in making carpentry goods we may think that he is a good "carpenter". In the same manner, we may call a person who is skilled in various jobs a "potter", "painter", "weaver", "druggist", "oil technologist", "scientist" etc. according to the job or profession that he pursues. In all these cases we may think that he is proficient in the respective jobs indeed, but will it be proper to think that each one of those skills is his "complete or consummate" essential nature? Never. Therefore, to cognize or reckon our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss (to wit, the genus of our totality of Being) to be restricted or confined to the particular percept or concept like seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, feeling, thinking etc. (in other words, the species or part function restricted to a sense organ as well as the psychic functions) will be tantamount to 'incomplete or imperfect' knowledge. This latter restricted, mediatory, imperfect knowledge alone is called Avidya or Adhyaasa, i.e. misconceived knowledge, in Vedantic parlance.

In that case, how can we really cognize our complete, consummate or perfect essential nature of Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Brahman or Atman? The answer is: Because of the reason that our core of Being is Pure Consciousness — i.e. the eternally established essential nature of Intuitive experience as Pure Consciousness-Being — which we have taken pains to describe in all sorts of ways so far and which, in truth, has pervaded all these particular (empirical) knowledges of percepts and concepts and hence is all-pervasive subsuming and consuming as it were — everything that is perceived or conceived by our senses or the mind, respectively, we have to per force cognize or Intuit as this Ultimate Reality so as to culminate in our Intuitive experience of the form of — “This alone is our Atman, i.e. the Self”. In fact, that form or nature of Intuitive experience heretofore ‘pervades’ and subsists, as it were, in all particular (empirical) forms; to wit, in that one plenary Intuition all these particular varied forms are subsumed and sublated for that reason alone; the ‘I’ notion, which is the basic and the *a priori* cognitive form of Atman, i.e. the Self, (Aatma Pratyaya) exists, or rather persists, in all the particular forms in the manner — “I am smelling”, “I am hearing”, “I am seeing”, “I am touching” and “I am tasting” etc. As Shri Ramana Maharshi has stated, this basic ‘I’ thought is behind, or is the substratum of, every other thought form in our day-to-day dealings (i.e. in all our waking transactions this ‘I’ thought persists and similarly, by an analogous Intuitive reasoning, we can cognize that the ‘I’ thought persists throughout the dream transactions). Although the particular forms, each being different from the other, are distinct, the genus form subsumes in itself all the particular forms. Just as a person, who is in search of an ox, attempts to find it out by the foot-marks or pugs of that animal alone left behind on the ground, similarly by means of the signs or marks of the cognitive form of Atman which has accompanied constantly, as it were, everywhere in the manner — “‘I’-‘I’-‘I’.... — alone we must needs cognize our essential nature of Pure, Transcendental Being-Consciousness-Bliss. For this reason alone, Shri Ramana Maharshi used to ask his votaries to trace back the rising point or source of this basic, persistent ‘I’ thought in us. His query — “Who am I” — thus became world-famous in spiritual circles and pertains to this above dissertation.

Now, let us consider as to what exactly is meant by “Brahma Vidya”, i.e. Self-Knowledge. The scripture has stated: “*Brahma Vaa Idamagra Aaseet Tadaatmaanamevaavedaham Brahmaasmeeti; Tasmaat Tatsarvamabhavat*” — (Brihadarnnyaka 1-4-10), meaning — “Brahman alone existed at first (in the beginning, before creation), indeed; then It cognized Itself in the manner — ‘I am Brahman’; thereafter It became everything.”

Because we are thinking (or rather misconceiving) that — “We have to know (objectively, that is) Brahman” — and for that reason we are trying to ‘search’ for It alone, we are arguing in the manner — “To see that Brahman is, in fact, an impossible task; there is no valid means whatsoever available for cognizing It” etc. The purport behind the scriptural statement is: “*Even now*

— *I.e. even before cognizing or Intuiting It, I.e. Brahman or Atman — we are all Brahman alone.*” In that case, what is meant by saying that — “It, i.e. Brahman, should be known or cognized”? Our Atman (Self) alone should be cognized or Intuited as Brahman. Just as it is explained above that — “I alone am Brahman” — to Intuit or cognize our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss as Atman (Self) who is all-pervading as Brahman alone is called “Brahma Vidya”. If this Brahman is Intuited, nothing else which is to be cognized or known remains; we alone would become, in a manner of speaking, everything.

“Tadyoa Yoa Devaanaam Pratyabuddhyata Sa Eva Tadabhavat Tathasheenaam Tathaa Manushyaanaam; Taddhaitat Pashyan Rishihi Vaamadevaha Pratipede(s)ham Manurabhavam Sooryascheti” — (Brihadaraanyaka 1-4-10). It means: “Whichever deity cognized that Truth or Reality He alone became That; similarly, among the Rishis and men too; Rishi Vaamadeva thus established in that Reality, saw and declared — ‘I have verily become Manu, the Sun also.’”

We must give up the individualistic knowledge of the type — “I am such and such a person”; the knowledge of the type — “I am a deity”; “I am a Rishi or a sage”; “I am a man” — is an incomplete, finite and limited knowledge indeed. *If we have to attain a ‘complete, consummate’ knowledge, then we must cognize or Intuit in the manner — “I am Brahman”, “I am the Self or Atman of everyone”, “everything is the ‘I’ — the Self alone”.* Merely by that, i.e. by cognizing or Intuiting in this manner alone one attains the Intuitive experience of getting the innate ‘identification’ with Brahman, the Ultimate or Absolute Reality behind all empirical existence of the various phenomena in this expansive universe. When it is stated in the scriptures that - *“Manasaivedam Aaptavyam”* — meaning, “One should attain It by means of the mind alone” — it purports to indicate this truth alone. One should per force acquire the Intuitive experience of the type — “The ever-present or eternally-attained non-dual (Transcendental, i.e. beyond the time-space-causation categories) Brahman alone is myself, i.e. my real essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss.” That is all. One should give up or shed the present deep-seated and innate sense of identification which we all entertain in the form of — “I am such and such a person” — which is projected or caused by Avidya, i.e. ignorance. To one who has become a deity, who has become a Rishi or sage, who has become a man — to all of them Brahman alone is their Atman or Self. Rishi Vaamadeva attained the identification with the all-pervasive Self-Consciousness merely by Intuiting in the manner — “I alone am Brahman”. Even in these modern times whosoever Intuits in that manner alone he will attain that very identification with the all-pervasive Self-Consciousness indeed.

The purport that is implicit in scriptural statements like — *“Manasaivedam Aaptavyam”* — meaning, “It should be obtained by means of the mind alone”; *“Manasaiva Anudrishtavyam”* — meaning, “It should be cognized by the mind

alone" — is: As a result of the deep-seated habit or practice of looking out through the senses, the mind has acquired an innate hankering after the distinct extroverted knowledge of the external objects alone. The deep dent or impression of the empirical things on the intellect (to the effect) of the type — "The senses are known by the mind (which is subtler in its functioning); the external objects are known or objectified by the senses" — is very strong in all of us. Keeping the knowledge born out of the senses as the basis and piling up a mass of varied concepts we have begun to mutter, in a manner of speaking, using phrases like — "Physical Science", "Evolution Theory", "Big Bang Theory", "Relativity Theory", "Quantum Theory" etc. etc. The practice of 'looking within' merely by the mind alone introspectively or introvertedly is not attained by us at all. For this reason alone, the scripture is saying: "*Tasmaadevamvichhaantō Daanta Uparatastiteekshuhu Samaahitoa Bhootwaa(s)tmanyevaatamaanā Pashyati; Sarvam Aatmaanā Pashyati*" — (Brihadāraṇyaka 4-4-23). The purport of this statement is: Therefore, by means of such spiritual practices or disciplines like Shama (control of the mind), Dama (control of the senses), Uparati (introvertedness), Titeeksha (mental equanimity irrespective of, or in the face of, the external good or bad circumstances or experiences), Samaadhaana (state of a mental equipoise having been rooted in the plenary or unitary experience of the Ultimate Reality of the Self) etc. — which help a seeker to 'recede unto himself' towards his essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone, he Intuits or cognizes the Self, his very core of Being in himself indeed; thereby he Intuits that everything is Atman or Self alone." There is no wonder whatsoever if in the case of a person, who is habituated in perceiving everything from the empirical or mundane viewpoint of Anaatman, i.e. not-self, alone, it is not possible at all to cognize or Intuit the metaphysical or transcendental Reality of Atman, i.e. the Self of all. Therefore, it would be evident from this fact that people who say or affirm from their extremely extroverted or divisive viewpoint in the manner — "For man the metaphysical or supersensuous knowledge is not possible to attain or obtain; we cannot acquire definite and conclusive knowledge; it is better to give up other considerations and to deliberate only upon topics which concern, or are related to, matters of this workaday world alone" — are not, in truth, the people qualified for this Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality at all. The story that four blind persons touched an elephant at various places and misconceived its figure in four different ways is applicable to these people who are not fully qualified for this metaphysical Knowledge. The purport of the scriptural statement — "*Manasaivaanudrishtavyam*" — meaning, "By the mind alone It should be cognized as It is" — being grasped as if in a flash (i.e. Intuition) by their minds (of course, because they are immature and incapable to receive the higher suggestions at the Intuitive level, so to say) their is hardly any scope. We should remember and fully understand the purport of the Upanishadic story that Naarada who knew all the empirical sciences of the external objects approached Sanatkumaara and bemoaned that — "Although I know so many sciences, as a result of my not

knowing the science of the Self (i.e. Aatma Vidya or Brahma Vidya) I am stricken with grief.” There it is stated that Naarada followed the spiritual instructions of Sanatkumaara and thereby became a Liberated soul, i.e. Jnaani. Similarly, we too — the true seekers — should follow the path advised by the scriptures as also the preceptor (who is fully qualified) and acquire the introverted viewpoint or introspection needed for attaining this sacred and superlative Brahma Vidya, i.e. science of the Spirit, Atman. This alone is called “Anudarshana”. By this the truth that in the Reality of Brahman or Atman, i.e. Pure or Absolute Consciousness, there is no distinction or manifoldness whatsoever will be instantaneously Intuited.

What is the method of this “Anudarshana”? In answer to this question the scripture says: *“Esha Sarveshu Bhooteshu Goodhoa(s)tmaa Na Prakaashate; Drishyate Twagryayaa Buddhya Sookshmayaa Sookshma Darshibhihi; Yachhedvaangmanasee Praajnastadyachhejjnaana Aatmani; Jnaanamaatmani Mahati Niyachhetadyachhechhaanta Aatmani”* — (Kathopanishad 3-12; 3-13). The purport of this spiritual discipline (Saadhana) is: Giving up Anaatman, i.e. not-self, one should establish oneself in Atman, i.e. the Self alone; that Atman alone should be cognized or Intuited as Brahman; Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, is readily and eternally available in all of us; in a manner of speaking, or from a certain viewpoint, we do have “Aatmaanubhava”, i.e. the Pure Consciousness of the Self, for that Pure Consciousness alone we have called here ‘already and eternally available Consciousness’, viz. Self-reflective Consciousness or Intuition. Even so, for people who are habituated in perceiving the external objects or phenomena alone there is no ‘cognitive or Intuitive knowledge’ that within themselves this Pure Consciousness called “Brahmaatman” ever exists in the form or essential nature of Intuition. If it is said that — “They have kept the Sun in a cage and locked it up” — how ridiculous it would sound! Similarly, if we say that — “We do not cognize our Atman or the Self, of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness” — it would seem to be as ridiculous indeed. This Atman of the essential nature of Pure, Absolute Consciousness (Intuition), although He is hidden in every being, He does not ‘shine’. Therefore, we should first of all give up the deep-seated habit of ‘looking outside’, i.e. the common habit of being extroverted; “The speech should be ‘held firm’ in the mind — meaning, we must merge all our senses of perception in our mind. Really speaking, mind alone exists as all the senses but only in a grosser form. In the dream our mind alone adorns or puts on, so to speak, the forms of all the senses and is pushing us into the extroverted viewpoint towards the external objects, and this is vouched for by our own experience. There cannot be a better evidence or a judge for this fact of life than our own experience. It amounts to saying that the mind, while it can make volitions, propositions and get doubts or uncertainties, can manifest itself as the external objects or phenomena also. Therefore, this mind should be merged in the intellect. We should strengthen the decision that the intellect is ‘subtler’ than the mind, as

also being the 'cause' for the mind it is the 'Atman' i.e. the very essence of Being, of the mind which it (i.e. the intellect) has pervaded or engulfed. Just like the water of a river filled in a vessel and lifted up is poured back into the river alone, we should attempt to merge (sink) all the mind's doubts and uncertainties in the intellect (which is, in fact, the basic faculty of determining or ascertaining the veracity of any concept in all of us, i.e. universally). For this the capability of introspection (Pratyagpravanata) — i.e. the practice or habit of introverted vision — as well as the mental capacity of ascertaining or comprehending the full import of the Vedantic axiom that — "The effect is not at all different from the cause" — is essential. We are calling the clay itself as an earthen pot or pitcher. Similarly, the intellect alone we are 'misconceiving' as mind, senses etc. We should 'Intuitively' cognize that this intellect is really not different from Atman, of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Apart from the Sun do the Sun's rays exist? Although it is true that Atman, our very Being as Self, is not different from the Supreme Self (Paramaatman), devoid of the manifest, manifold world of duality, we should 'abide in' the steadfast Intuitive experience to the effect that — "He, i.e. our Atman, appears to be different because of the adjunct of the body alone." The Geeta sentence — "*Aatmanyeva Manaha Kritwaa Na Kinchidapi Chintayet*" — meaning, "Establishing the mind in Atman, i.e. the Self, alone one should remain still or abide in that Pure Consciousness (Intuitive experience) without thinking about anything whatsoever" — has this very purport for teaching.

Thus when everything is submerged in the ocean of Intuitive experience, i.e. Pure Consciousness, we have 'Intuited' Atman alone as Brahman, it is said. Just as to see a light there is no need of another light, to Intuit Atman who is of the very essence of Intuition, i.e. Pure Consciousness — self-established and self-effulgent — there is no necessity of any other experience whatsoever. This alone is called Brahma Vidya. As this is totally different or unlike all other 'empirical knowledges', it is essential to understand this alone in some more detail in the next Chapter.

IV. INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NATURE OF DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN ATMAN AND ANAATMAN

Atman has pervaded or engulfed everything in the form of Intuitive experience or Consciousness. All the transactions in his day-to-day life of the Jeeva, i.e. the soul, is going on in the light of this Atman (of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) alone. This truth is affirmed by the scripture in the manner — "*Aatmanaivaayam Jyotishaa(s)te Palyayate Karma Kurute*"

Vipalyeteeti" — (Brihadaaranyaka 4-3-6) — meaning, "Our functions like squatting, roaming about, doing work, returning, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching — all these desiderate, or are taking place per force in, Atman's 'Light of Consciousness' alone (to wit, without His 'Light' called 'Intuition' which is existing in everyone, nay everything, eternally but in a potential form or a latent state like the very substratum *in esse*, all-pervading — like, for the all-pervading space or Sun's light there is no activity whatsoever, no dynamic life, no being at all). To know the essential nature of Atman through individual or separate functions enumerated above amounts to a partial or incomplete perception; but to Intuit or cognize that Atman Consciousness is one which pervades everything that is within the ken of all perceptual and conceptual knowledges or experiences and in truth is the complete, consummate and plenary perception or Intuitive experience. All this we have taken into our reckoning and explained so far.

What is the difference between 'the attainment of the Knowledge of the Self or Atman' and 'the attainment of the knowledge of the not-self or Anaatman'? In both the cases the knowledge accruing is experience alone of the form of the result or fruit, and it is already mentioned that this alone is called by wise people "Avagati", i.e. the attainment of the end result of Intuition. In fact, Shri Shankaraachaarya, while commenting on the above scriptural statement has opined that — "*Jnaanena Hi Pramaanena Avagantumishtam Brahma; Brahmaavagatirhi Purushaarthaha, Nihssheshasamsaarabeejaavidyaadi Anarthanibarhanaat*" — (Bri. Bh. 4-3-6), meaning — "By the valid means (Pramaana) of Knowledge called 'Jnaana', Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, has to be cognized or Intuited, is it not? The attainment of the Intuitive Knowledge of Brahman alone is the goal of human life or existence (Purushaarth); for, that destroys or sublates (falsifies) all the impediments like Avidya, Kaama, Karma etc. which are the cause for the transmigratory existence, i.e. Samsaara". But what is meant by the statement — "Brahman should be cognized or known by means of Jnaana, i.e. Intuition or Intuitive Knowledge"? Brahman means Atman or the Self of all of us; knowledge can comprehend only that which is of the form of an object; but Atman does not have any form whatsoever. In that case, what is the import of this statement? Such a doubt may arise in our mind quite naturally and justifiably too. In this regard Shri Shankara further writes that — "*Sarvatra Hi Buddhyaadidehaante Aatma Chaitanyaabhaasataa Aatmabhraantikaaranam Iyatashcha Aatma-vishayam Jnaanam Naamaroopaadyanaatmaadhyaaaropananivruttireva Kaarya, Naatmachaitanyavijnaanam Kaaryam; Avidyaadhyaaaropita-sarvapadaarthaakaaraihi Avishishtayaa Drishyamaanatwaat*" — (Geeta Bhashya 18-50), meaning — "This illusion (Abhaasa) of Aatma Chaitanya, i.e. Pure Consciousness of the Self, first of all gets manifested in the intellect; for, intellect is — just like Atman or the Self — extremely pure, highly transparent and extremely subtle. The illusion of that intellect is the mind; that mind's illusions are the senses; the latter's illusion is the body. Therefore, different

people have acknowledged everything from the intellect down to the body as Atman or the Self alone. This being the case, along with all objects which are superimposed or misconceived because of Avidya, i.e. ignorance, Aatmachaitanya, i.e. the Pure Consciousness of the Self, is ever appearing indeed. Hence, the knowledge (Intuitive experience) called "Atman" is not to be procured afresh at all; only the superimpositions of "Anaatman", i.e. not-self, of the types of 'Naama', i.e. names, 'Roopa', i.e. forms, etc. on Atman, of the essence of Pure Consciousness, have to be sublated or falsified. In the manner — 'I am not the body; I am not the senses; I am not the mind; I am not the intellect' — if the seeker observes (Intuits) with a one-pointed concentration of the (introverted) mind and determines, then that is enough. Because of the reason that Brahman is extremely popular or familiar in the form or nature of 'Chaitanya', i.e. Consciousness, there is no necessity whatsoever of attempting to cognize or Intuit that Chaitanya afresh or anew." This, then, is the purport of the Bhashya sentence mentioned above. For this reason alone, in all the Upanishadic texts there is no effort whatsoever made to indicate the essential nature of Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, of the essence of Pure, Absolute Consciousness as 'such and such' by means of any injunctions or stipulations (to wit, Pure Consciousness of our Self, which is our innermost, innate essence of Being, cannot ever be brought under the limitations, restrictions or constraints of time-space-causation categories and hence It cannot be subject to injunctions or stipulations; It, i.e. Brahman or Atman, as Pure Absolute Consciousness is infinite, absolutely free, immutable and non-dual having nothing second to It). And hence, Brahman or Atman has been signified — on sufferance and for purposes of teaching — by merely refuting or sublating, throughout, those qualities or characteristics which do not exist in It or pertain to It in any manner whatsoever by expressions like — "Not this, not that." The 'Adhyaatma Yoga' method of practice that has been taught in the 'Kathopanishad' in order to help cognize or Intuit our Supreme Self is also, if analysed properly, for merely sublating or refuting the apparent superimpositions that we all quite naturally have misconceived in the Ultimate Reality of our Self.

There is immense benefit accruing to Jijnaasus, i.e. true seekers, from deliberating on another such sentence found in the Geeta Bhashya of Shri Shankara: *"Avidyaa Kalpita Naamaroopa Visheshaakaaraapahrita Buddheenaam Atyanta Prasiddham Suvijnyeyam, Aasannataram Aatmabhootamapi Aprasiddham Durvijneyam Atidooram Anyadiva Cha Pratibhaati Avivekinaam; Baahyaakaara Nivrutta Buddheenaam Tu Labdhagurvaatma Prasaadaanaam Naataha Paramsukham Suprasiddham Suvijyeyam Swaasannataram Asti"* — (Geeta Bhashya 18-50). The purport of this Bhashya sentence is: "If properly observed, although Atman, i.e. our Self, is extremely popular or familiar, very easily knowable or cognizable, nearest or most intimate compared to all other things or phenomena and the very Atman, i.e. essence of Being alone, of the people in general, for those who

lack discrimination this Brahman or Reality of Pure Consciousness appears to be unfamiliar or unpopular, to be very difficult to cognize or know, to be far off from them and an entity different (or apart) from themselves. But for those who have the intellect which has withdrawn itself from the external forms of objects (i.e. intellect which has become introverted) and who have acquired the grace of the preceptor as well as the Supreme Self there does not exist any other entity which is easier to comprehend, which is more popular or familiar, which is easier to know or cognize and which is extremely nearer than anything else to oneself."

Now we can understand as to what difference there exists between the Knowledge of the Self (known as Self-Knowledge in Vedantic parlance) and the knowledge of Anaatman, i.e. not-self. First of all, because the phenomenon of Anaatman is external to ourselves the person who wants to know or cognize it — just as one wishes to know an earthen pot which exists externally or outside himself as an object — has to acquire the mental concept (Antahkarana Vritti) of the form of that object of perception (Prameya). The mental concept (thought) should become that form and pervade it; at the end of this empirical transaction involving the valid means of knowledge (Pratyaksha Pramaana) or sensuous perception the knowledge of the earthen pot — or its experience — should per force manifest itself. But in the case of Atman, on the other hand, because He does not have any form whatsoever (in fact, is subtler than even the concept of space) **the empirical dealing or transaction of the valid means of cognition (Pramaanavyaapaara) is of no avail.** It should be determined with all certainty that the empirical transaction of using the valid means of knowledge itself is the result or fruit of superimposition or misconception, which means that those special features or characteristics are misconceived to exist in Atman, of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. The certainty or conviction that Atman alone is real should accrue; that means, the usual faith that — "Only when the real valid means of cognition are utilised to know or perceive their respective real objects then alone a real thing or entity is cognized " — becomes a hindrance. In other words, our deep-seated and long-cherished belief (Abhinivesha) of the type — **"Using this valid means of knowledge (Pramaana) I will know or cognize this particular object of knowledge (Prameya)" — is a misconception, and this fact looms large very clearly before our intellect.** Evidently, the anomalous proposition confronts us in the manner — "How is it possible to cognize Brahman or Atman who is the very essence of Being of the valid means of cognition (Pramaana) by means of these very valid means?"

Secondly, when the knowledge of Anaatman, i.e. not-self, accrues, the result of the empirical transaction of utilising the valid means of knowledge alone is called the Anaatman's experience (Anubhava); this should invariably manifest itself at the end of the empirical transaction of utilising the valid means of knowledge alone; but in the case of Atman, on the other hand,

the cognition or Intuitive experience of Atman 'accrues', in a manner of speaking, only after the sublation or disappearance of the knowledge of the cognizer (Pramaatru). In this regard Shri Shankaraachaarya has exemplified a verse quoted by those who are well-versed and are adepts with the Sampradaaya, i.e. the traditional methodology handed down through the ages from the Guru to the Shishya, and that verse runs as follows: "Anveshtavya Aatmavijnaanaat Praak Pramaatrutwam Aatmanaha; Anvishtaha Syaata Pramaataiva Paapmadoashaadi Varjitaha" — (Sootra Bhashya 1-1-4-4). Its purport is: "Before the attainment of the Self-Knowledge which is to be searched out, Atman has Pramaatrutwa, i.e. cognizership. But when It is searched out, i.e. Intuited, Pramaatru, i.e. cognizer, alone becomes rid of Paapmadoashaha, i.e. the defects of sins, demerits and such other defilements of the transmigratory self or soul."

A person, who is searching for his lost cow, even after finding it out remains or continues to be its owner or lord indeed. But searching for Atman and finding Him out are not like that empirical transaction; for, Atman is the very essence of Reality or Being alone of that person who is searching. Unfortunately, as things stand and quite naturally, all of us have known Atman, i.e. our Self, wrongly as the Pramaatru, i.e. the cognizer, one who invariably uses the body, the senses and the mind because of Adhyaasa, i.e. misconception or delusion. **Therefore, when we cognize or Intuit Atman as taught in the scriptures not only do we come to know that our Pramaatrutwa, i.e. cognizership, is superimposed upon, or misconceived in, our essential nature of Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss but also attain the plenary Intuitive experience of the type — "I alone am the Supreme Self (Paramaatman), who is beyond Dharma (all religious merits) and Adharma (religious demerits or sins), who is eternally Pure, Conscious and Liberated or Free and who is of the very essence of Pure Consciousness or Intuition" — is attained.** Here the already existing or eternal Siddhaanubhava, i.e. ever-existing Intuitive experience, alone 'manifests' itself or becomes self-effulgent, so to speak, at the end in the form of a result or fruit. This is a special feature in this regard. **One, by oneself, knows or cognizes oneself by means of oneself.**

Thirdly, in the case of Anaatman, nescience, i.e. not knowing, as also knowing it wrongly (misconceiving) — together called in Vedantic parlance 'Ajnaana' — is destroyed or falsified by its knowledge. For example, having seen a rope lying at a distance without knowing its reality (to be rope) we believe, or rather misconceive, it to be a 'snake' and consequently experience the 'hardships of fear and trembling etc.' All these are sublated or falsified (removed) by the proper knowledge of the rope. But this knowledge cannot prevent the same kind of rope-snake delusion occurring on another occasion. However, it is not so in the case of Self-Knowledge. After the conviction of the type — "Eternally pure, conscious and liberated Supreme Self alone is myself" — is gained by us, neither the delusion of the type — "I am

a transmigratory soul" — nor the ill-effects that may be caused by that delusion can ever possibly arise. For, the misconception or delusion with regard to an object of knowledge (Prameya) and the knowledge gained through the valid means that can falsify or sublimate that delusion (Pramaana Jnaana) — both accrue to the cognizer (Pramaatru) alone. Therefore, even after the cognition or perception of the object is gained the cognizership (Pramaatrutwa) of the cognizer remains as it is. But our ignorance (Avidya or Ajnaana) that is caused with regard to our essential nature of Atman and the conviction to the effect — "I am eternally a liberated entity" — are both phenomena which are misconceived in, or superimposed upon, our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Supreme Self. Now the concept or belief of the type — "I am a cognizer (Pramaatru)" — is very strong or steadfast in us, but after Self-Realization as much strong or steadfast, perhaps even more strong or steadfast, will there be a conviction born out of the Vedantic Intuitive experience of the type — "I was not a cognizer in the past, even now I am not and I cannot become one in the future" — for, cognizership, time and the divisions or distinctions of 'valid means of knowledge' and 'objects of knowledge' are all extremely false; they do not possess any existence whatsoever apart from that Atman. For one who is not a cognizer wherefrom can delusion accrue? Therefore, **It is quite certain that by Self-Knowledge Avidya, i.e. Ignorance, is completely (forever) sublated or removed.**

Fourthly, after the knowledge of an object which is Anaatman has accrued not only does the perception of the type — "I cognized this thing" — take place but also, with regard to it, Heyatwa, i.e. the concept that — "This is bad; it is the cause for my grief and so I must avoid it" — or Upaadeyatwa, i.e. the concept of the type — "This is good; it is the cause for my happiness; hence I must acquire it" — will arise. Thus between these two concepts viz. to acquire a thing or to avoid it, in accordance with it, either Pravrutti, or Nivrutti, respectively, is bound to occur. When Atman is not intuitively experienced but is misconceived as Pramaatru, i.e. the cognizer, because of the reason that Avidya or Ajnaana of the form of misconception (Adhyaasa) still remains — as a result of this — there subsists a desire of either acquiring desirable things or avoiding undesirable things indeed; having attachment (Raaga) or hatred (Dvesha) towards the external objects alone is the cause for this. And then as the effect of this Avidya alone, concepts like Kartrutwa (doership) and Bhoktrutwa (enjoyership) remain. The belief of the type — "I should perform good or meritorious acts or deeds; acquire what is desirable and enjoy it; I should see that I do not experience undesirable fruits by performing bad acts or deeds" — existing quite naturally in man is due to this Avidya alone. Therefore, the knowledge of the object which is Anaatman, i.e. not-self, is the cause for both Pravrutti and Nivrutti. But it is not so in the case of Self-Knowledge at all; the Intuitive experience of the type — "I am not the doer, not the enjoyer or experiencer of an object; but I am the Supreme Self

alone who is beyond, or who has transcended, Dharma, i.e. religious stipulations or rites, as also its empirical opposite, viz. Adharma, i.e. religious prohibitions” — is itself Self-Knowledge. Even after the knowledge of Anaatman is acquired there exists grief (Shoaka), but after Self-Knowledge is attained there does not exist any grief, for there is no attachment (Moaha) at all. After that Self-Knowledge is attained, the scriptures state that — *“Aatmanyeva Avasthaanam”* — meaning, one’s Self exists in Itself by Itself. Just as when an illness disappears in a person’s body there is no incongruity or discordance whatsoever of the elements of the body and thereby health is stated to have been revived, similarly on the disappearance of the undesirable hindrances like Avidya and its consequent effects like Kaama (desires), Karma (action), Bhoaga (enjoyment), Vaasana (latent impressions) the ‘eternal healthy state’ of one’s own Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss accrues or is revived. For that reason alone, **after this Knowledge of the Self is attained the doership (Kartrutwa) and enjoyership (Bhoktrutwa) both do not exist whatsoever; therefore, then in that event there is no room or scope for either Pravrutti or Nivrutti indeed.**

Shri Shankaraachaarya has stated: *“Brahmaavagatirhi Purushaarthaha; Nihshesha Samsaara Beeja Avidyaadi Anartha Nibarhanatwaat”* — meaning, “The Intuitive experience of Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, is the supreme or paramount goal of human existence or birth (Paramapurushaatha); for, it destroys completely Avidya, i.e. ignorance, and such other causes for transmigratory lives or existences (Samsaara).” He further says: *“Etad Buddhwa Buddhimaan Syaata Kritakrityascha Bhaaratata”* — (Geeta 15-20) — meaning, “If this (i.e. Self) is known or Intuited one becomes a Jnaani, i.e. Realized Sage, as also one becomes an embodiment of the fulfilment of human life’s purpose.” In this regard there is no room for any disputants having any doubts or for any other types of non-believers or atheists; for, this is a knowledge of certainty or certitude which culminates in Intuitive experience. **Hereafter there is no Ajnaana, i.e. nescience, which has to disappear, nor there is any Knowledge that is to be attained or acquired afresh.**

In this context questions or doubts pertaining to Jnaanis of the type — “Don’t they perform any Karma, i.e. any action, at all? Don’t they work for the betterment or well-being of the human society?” — become redundant, nay ridiculous, indeed. We can recall that statement made by Swami Vivekananda, viz. — “What we call ‘betterment of society’ is ‘the work of sweeping the debris lying on the road’ by scavengers”. To explain, although a Jnaani is one who is firmly established in Atman Consciousness, i.e. the very essence of all existence — both the insentient and the sentient beings in Nature — speaking from the empirical viewpoint, the common people too get the benefit of the ‘humanitarian service’ from the Jnaani. Though the Sun remains in the sky as he is in all his glory and brilliance, for people who live on earth it can be said, in a manner of speaking, that the Sun renders immense

benefit and help to carry on their day-to-day transactions. In the same way, from one who is established in Self-Knowledge too the world at large keeps on getting a great deal of help, i.e. spiritual solace, indeed. It is known from historical and mythological texts that there exist great, stupendous, nay Herculean, tasks or mystic acts performed by spiritual luminaries who are like ordained incarnations of God Himself for the general well-being of the society. Thus a Jnaani, i.e. a Realized Soul, attains fulfilment of life's purpose by getting rid of Ajnaana, i.e. nescience, once for all.

V. REMOVAL OF MISERY BY THE KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAATMAN, THE ULTIMATE REALITY

'Brahma Vidya', 'Brahma Jnaana', 'Brahmaatma Jnaana', 'Aatmaikatwa Vidya' — all these terms are synonyms. This Knowledge or cognition extends up to Intuitive experience of Pure Consciousness (Avagati); it is that which culminates in Intuitive experience (Anubhava) here and now. The scriptures say: "If Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, is known, the paramount goal of human existence (Purushaartha) accrues"; "If Atman is known the knot of the heart (Hridayagranthi), i.e. Avidya, is destroyed." But there are not three entities like Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, the one who cognizes It and the attainment of that Reality; neither there are three distinct phenomena like the cognizer, the instrument or valid means of cognition and the cognized Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. It may appear to be so from the interpretation of the scriptural sentences; or by the process of sublation it may seem to be like that to the Jnaani also. Although the reflection appearing in a mirror may seem to be in the manner — "It is so far away from the mirror; hence, I am also that much distance away from the mirror" — the real situation need not be according to that appearance alone. The difference that exists between Aatmajnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge, and Anaatmajnaana, i.e. the knowledge of not-self, has already been reckoned. In the Knowledge of Anaatman the division of the type — "The knower" (Jnaatru), "The valid means of knowledge" (Jnaana) and "The object of knowledge" (Jneya) — exists; however, in Aatmajnaana it is not so; everything is one, unitary or plenary intuitive experience alone.

There is no rule of law or regulation that all the knowledge that accrues from the scriptural texts should be initiatory or prompting in its import. The knowledge that accrues from the sentences in the Karma Kaanda prompts a person into any one particular type of Karma, i.e. ritual or rite, or relieves him from a particular kind of Karma. Those qualified or fit persons who have

a deep-seated, obstinate identification of the type — “I am a doer; am an enjoyer” — indulge in Karmas. There is no restriction whatsoever that in those scriptural sentences the commanding or compelling forms of verbs like — “Do this Karma” — alone should exist. Even if it is stated in the manner — “For such and such a Karma, such and such a fruit accrues” — the person who has a desire or hankering for such a fruit alone will indulge in or will be motivated to do such an action without fail. All of us might have heard the story, written in the Panchatantra, of a Brahmin who, being very greedy, heard the statement of an old tiger which yelled out in the manner — “I will give in charity this bracelet to anyone” — and who, believing that statement, went in that direction and then on the way his leg slipped and he fell in loose sand and got stuck. We all know very well that avarice induces a person into action or Karma. Hence the sentences of the Karma Kaanda too are not really initiatory or prompting or compelling in their import; they merely indicate to those who have a greed for a particular fruit or result in the manner — “For such and such a fruit, such and such Karma is the device or stratagem”. Those who have an innate greed for a particular fruit naturally perform the respective or relevant Karma in order to obtain that fruit, that is all.

In that case, what about the Vedantic (Upanishadic) sentences found in the Jnaana Kaanda? How are they to be interpreted or understood? To these questions the answer is: When their knowledge accrues one does get prompted or motivated towards either Pravrutti or Nivrutti; he exists unto himself, that is all. For that reason alone, the scripture is expounding in the manner — “When the Supreme Self (Paramaatman) is cognized the knot of the heart (Hridayagranthi), which goes by the name of Ajnaana in the Vedantic parlance, is destroyed; doubts disappear; all the Karmas are destroyed.” The ‘knot’ which ties up Atman (Self) with the mind, the senses and the objects is itself the Hridayagranthi; by this alone we get Kaama, i.e. desires, Karmas, i.e. actions, and consequently a hindrance, as it were, is caused for our Self-Knowledge. For the attainment of Self-Knowledge the untying of this ‘knot’ (i.e. removal of this hindrance, viz. Avidya or Ajnaana of the nature of misconception) alone is the hallmark. In reality, in Atman there does not exist cognizership (Pramaatrutwa). Therefore, He, i.e. Atman or the Self, is neither of the nature of indulging in anything whatsoever, nor of the nature of giving up, or receding from, anything whatsoever. Atman (of the essential nature of Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss) cannot either be given up or acquired afresh.

To those who ask the question — “What should be done to attain Brahma Jnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge?” — an answer can be given with the help of an illustration. What should be done to get sleep? If you make an attempt so as to get sleep, then can it come? Doing nothing alone — keeping quiet, receding unto oneself within alone — is the device for getting sleep. This is also in the experience of everyone of us. In the same way, the knowledge of Abrahman or Anaatman — i.e. the empirical knowledge of the type — “I am of

the essential nature of something other than Brahman (Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss)" — should be sublated or given up; merely by this means Brahma Jnaana (Self-Knowledge) accrues. Just as without lifting the feet one cannot swim in water, in the same way without giving up the meditation or contemplation upon the external objects the Self-Knowledge does never accrue. Really speaking, even while we perform our routine actions like seeing, tasting, smelling etc. we exist in our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone. Listen to what the scripture is saying in this regard: "*Yena Roopam Rasam Gandham Shabdaan Sparshaamscha Maithunaan; Etenaiva Vijaaanaati Kimatra Parishishyate, Etad Vai Tat*" — (Kathopanishad 2-1-3), meaning, "That essential nature of Pure Consciousness, i.e. Intuitive experience, by which alone form, taste, smell, sound, through contact with the object the perception of pleasure (happiness) — are all cognized and That by which any phenomena or things which cannot be cognized do not remain in the least — That Entity (Reality) alone is this Ultimate Reality of Paramaatman, i.e. Supreme Self." In all the mundane actions or transactions of our external senses and the internal instrument of the mind this Atman (Self) of the essential nature of Anubhava, i.e. Pure, Absolute Being-Consciousness or Intuitive experience, has pervaded or permeated, so to speak; by the strength of that Intuitive experience or Pure Consciousness alone we are cognizing the objects. Just as by means of the Sun's light alone people cognize or know everything and are carrying out all their routine transactions, similarly by means of the light of the nature of Pure Consciousness of Atman (Self) alone we are all knowing or cognizing everything. As per the Geeta statement — "*Yena Sarvamidam Tatam*" — meaning, "That Aatmachaitanya or Pure Consciousness of the Self by which everything is pervaded" — in order to cognize or know That, which separate effort can there at all be needed? It is sufficient if we exist or keep quiet within ourselves, i.e. our real Being, that is all. So much alone is enough. Therefore, the meditation or contemplation upon external objects or even concepts totally extraneous or alien to our essential nature of Pure Consciousness should necessarily be given up; to wit, we should give up consciously our innate identification with our senses — as it exists involuntarily — and recede within; withdraw the mind inwards stage by stage. If this mixing or blending of the senses with the external objects, on the one hand, and of the mind with the senses and their sensations, on the other, vanishes — then alone we can remain established in the Pure Consciousness, i.e. Intuitive experience, of Atman (Self) which alone is the substrate or the Reality of all existence.

What is meant by the expression — 'introverting the mind'? What is meant by — 'withdrawing the senses'? The real significance or import of these expressions in the above context is: "**Leave the external objects outside alone; do not get associated with or involved in their contemplation in your mind. You stand aloof with all equipoise in yourselves.**" This alone

Is Aatmajnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge. The subtle meaning of the statement — “I got established, or stood still in myself” — should be fully and clearly understood, discerned. For, all of us being Pramaatrus (cognizers), like the bilingualists (Dvibhaashis), have undertaken or assumed the external empirical dealings, on the one hand, and at the same time we exist in our essential nature of the Witnessing Principle (Self) who cognizes or Intuits everything, on the other. If we Intuitively reason out and check up our own plenary experiences *in toto* it would become evident that the entity of the form of the ‘I’ notion — which is called ‘Pramaatru’, i.e. cognizer, in Vedantic parlance and also ‘Ahampratyaya Goacharaha or Gamyaha’ — is, in truth, shining in the ‘light’ of Pure Consciousness of Atman (Self) which is of the innate nature of Intuitive experience. Further, that ‘I’ notion or Pramaatrutwa alone has been inexplicably and unconsciously misconceived or believed to be our Atman or Self, the real essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, with the result that we are all quite naturally under a ‘delusion’. Just like the fools who, on seeing a round tin piece lying on the ground but shining brilliantly in sunlight, say: “The Sun has fallen to the ground” — we, all of us, cheated by the power of delusion, as it were, presume this misconceived form of Pramaatru, i.e. the cognizer, alone — which is, in truth, basking in the borrowed ‘light’ of Pure Consciousness (Saakshi Chaitanya) of Atman and apparently appears to be our own essence of Being — to be the ‘I’, the real entity. As a result of this misconception, we have become susceptible to the misery (Shoaka) and attachment (Moaha), which accrue from that delusion. But the ‘real I’ exists as the substratum behind, so to speak, this apparent reality of ‘I’ notion or the Pramaatru, i.e. cognizer, in all of us. Listen to the scriptural statement — “*Swapnaantam Jaagaritaantam Cha Ubhou Yenaanupashyati; Mahaantam Vibhum Aatmaanam Matwaa Dheeroa Na Shoachati*” — (Kathopanishad 2-2-4), meaning, “One who cognizes that great all-pervasive Atman alone who, by virtue of His being of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness or Intuitive experience, is witnessing (objectifying) both the dream state and the waking state — such a one will not grieve.” Here in this context too for the ‘I’ notion which exists in the form of the cognizer or Pramaatru in the waking state does not possess the qualification or capacity to traverse to or enter the dream state. We are saying — “I saw a dream” — but that Witnessing Pure Consciousness (Saakshi Chaitanya) with whose strength or ‘light’ we are all saying in the above manner — that Witnessing Principle alone is our real Atman (Self) who has pervaded both these states by His essence of Pure Consciousness, i.e. Intuitive experience or Saakshi Anubhava. To one who has cognized that Pure Consciousness, i.e. who has gained that Intuitive experience, of the type — “I am that essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss alone” — what misery can there be? Why, for what reason, can there be grief? Now, if we see from one viewpoint we ourselves, who are the cognizers (Pramaatrus) are seen, from another viewpoint, existing as of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. If we analyse and separate our nature of cognizership

(Pramaatrutwa) and get ourselves 'established in' our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of the Self — which is our birthright and an eternal infallible fact of our life — then it is tantamount to saying that our 'Avidya', i.e. ignorance or nescience, is removed and we have attained 'Self-Knowledge'. In fact, the scriptural texts have described such a culmination of Intuitive experience as a result of the removal of 'Avidya' in various ways like — "One who cognizes that this Avidya exists in the heart will untie the knot of Avidya"; "You showed us the other bank of this river called 'Avidya'; you alone are our father!" All such statements should necessarily be interpreted or understood in this manner alone. "Vidyaapraapti", i.e. attainment of Self-Knowledge, 'Avidyaanivrutti', i.e. removal of ignorance or nescience, "Brahmapraapti", i.e. attainment of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman, — all these are not phases or transformations which occur stage by stage, one by one; they occur or happen all at once and together, so to speak. They should not be reckoned or discerned as 'events' in time and space nor with any causality, for the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman is an Eternal Entity beyond or transcending all categories and relationships of time-space-causation indeed. Just as for a person who is eating food every morsel of food taken gives him satisfaction, strength and removal of hunger (all together at once) — in that same sense here too it should be understood. Really speaking, there is no difference or distinction whatsoever between the Ultimate Reality (i.e. Brahman or Atman) and the empirical phenomena; one Entity alone — seen from different viewpoints — seems to be, rather appears to have split up into, the Ultimate Reality as also the empirical phenomena and dealings, that is all.

"Yaa Nishaa Sarvabhootaanaam Tasyaam Jaagarti Samyamee, Yasyaam Jaagrati Bhootaani Saa Nishaa Pashyatoa Munehe" — (Geeta 2-69), meaning: "That which is a night of darkness for all creatures — in that the Samyamee, i.e. one who has conquered his senses (a Yogi) is awake; that in which all creatures are awake — to the Muni or the realized-soul (i.e. one who has attained Self-Realization) who is witnessing all that, it is a night of darkness (i.e. Avidya) alone."

Paramaatha, i.e. the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman, is for the common run of people like a night of utter darkness. To them there is no possibility of any knowledge or understanding of the question: "What is meant by the Ultimate Reality? and Where is It?" Just as to those who are groping about in utter darkness everything seems to be of a pitch black colour alone, and it is not known in the manner — "It is such and such a thing" — with some sense of certainty, in the same way for those who are immersed in the utter darkness of Ajnaana, i.e. ignorance, if it is indicated that — "There exists an Ultimate Reality which is of undivided essence of Being, of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness and Supreme Bliss" — they are astounded. They feel in the manner — "These people (i.e. Vedantins who propound in that manner) say that this world, which is full of such differences and is

enveloped by happiness and misery, is an entity which is undivided and full of Consciousness and of the nature of Bliss or unalloyed happiness; how can it be true?" But that divided or differentiated world which the common run of people divide or differentiate in the manner — "This is mine; this is yours; if an action or a transaction is carried out in such and such a manner, such and such a result of fruit accrues" — and deal with persons and things as if they are perceiving such phenomena quite clearly — now that empirical world is not visible at all to one who is a Realized soul or Jnaani. He feels, on the other hand, in the manner — "When one looks everywhere he finds one and the only Reality of the essence of, rather as the very embodiment of, Bliss existing; then, how can it be that these people are perceiving these differences in all such ways and which entity could it be all about? It must be that these ignorant people are muttering or talking in their sleep or obsessed by such deluded ideas." Thus the Vedantic (philosophical) dictum in this regard is: **What exists is one Reality alone. From a different viewpoint of the unrefined or uncultured people that very non-dual or Absolute Reality itself appears as the differentiated or variegated world; to the Jnaani, i.e. the one who has attained Self-Realization, that Absolute Reality alone appears as an undivided (Akhandā) embodiment of Consciousness (Chinmaatra).**

If in Vedantic parlance it is stated that — "One attained Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization" — it means that the misconception (Vipareetajnaana) or Avidya, i.e. ignorance of the nature of superimposition, is removed or has vanished; if it is said: "One attained Atman or Self-hood" — then, it means that he attained Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization alone. Once again the Vedantic dictum in this regard is: **The disappearance of Ajnaana or Avidya, the attainment of Self-Knowledge or Self-Realization, finding out or searching out Atman, i.e. the Self, attainment of Atman, i.e. the Self — all such empirical expressions are mere misconceptions indeed, in the absolute sense or in the ultimate analysis from the Saakshi Chaitanya standpoint. To cognize or Intuit *per saltum* that all this is Atman alone of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness or Intuitive experience *per se* is the mitigation of all miseries or ills of life, and, at the same time, that is, attainment of all the purposes or goals of human existence *in toto*.**

VI. THE TEACHING METHOD ADOPTED BY THE SHAASTRAS

So far it has been clarified as to what doorways of knowledge exist to perceive the external objects and then it has been indicated as to how through those

doorways alone we acquire the knowledge of the external objects. It has also been mentioned that the Intuitive experience or Consciousness that runs through, nay pervades, all those doorways is also an important 'doorway', and then it has been stated that the resultant Intuitive knowledge or experience called 'Pramiti', 'Avagati' — which manifests at the end of the transactions of Pratyaksha Pramaana, i.e. perceptual means, made use of to know the Prameya, i.e. object of perception, is also that very Intuitive experience or Consciousness alone. But in the case of Self-Knowledge there is no need of any 'knowledge' to occur or to be acquired; for, Atman (Self) Himself is of the essential nature of Intuitive experience or Pure Consciousness.

Then, questions like — "What is meant by 'knowing' or 'cognizing' such an Atman (Self)? How is it possible to know or cognize Atman of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness who 'cognizes' everything? What is the purport of the statement made in the scripture — 'He should be cognized with the mind alone'?" — have been raised and in answer to them we have also indicated that 'to know or cognize Atman or the Self' means 'to sublimate or remove all the superimpositions made on Atman alone'; most important among those superimpositions, viz. Pramaatrutwa, i.e. cognizership, which is misconceived in the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman, should be sublated; for this purpose alone the mind should be 'cultivated' or 'cultured' properly by adopting certain rigid spiritual disciplines and then when the mind is highly qualified to pursue subtler truths the aid of (or the spiritual practice of) 'Adhyaatma Yoga' should be sought.

Now, we have to deliberate on the question — "How do the scriptural texts teach such an essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman?" Just as we came to know that although Atman is not perceptible or cognizable by the mind, if we, with a cultured or cultivated introspective mind, follow or pursue a viewpoint which is introverted and Intuitive at the same time we can surely get rid of or remove all misconceptions and get 'established' in Atman-Consciousness; that alone is Aatmajnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge — in the same manner, although Atman is not to be comprehended by means of words there is scope for conceiving or imagining in the manner — "Vedas, which are of the form of words and sentences (Shabda Pramaana), may be capable of teaching or expounding such an essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman in an uncommon or extra-ordinary manner." In order to indicate this purport alone to us the scripture has translated the common people's opinion in the following manner — "*Na Tatra Chakshuhu Gacchati, Na Vaak Gacchati Noa Manaha; Na Vidmoa Na Vijaaneemoa Yathaitadanushishyaat*" — (Kena Upanishad 3), meaning — "There the eyes cannot go or reach; It is an entity which is not perceptible to any sense organ. It cannot be indicated by Vaak, i.e. speech; for, none of the particular features of characteristics like Jaati, i.e. species, Dravya, i.e. substance, Guna, i.e. quality, Kriya, i.e. action, Sambandha, i.e. relationship, etc., which are the causes for the transaction of words, exists in It, i.e. Atman;

It cannot be cognized by the mind too; for, the mind can objectify the external objects (Prameya) alone. It being so, how can this Atman be cognized or known? How can It be taught or expounded at all? We are not at all able to think" — This opinion of the common run of people alone has been mentioned here in this context by the scripture.

Another doubt. In the Supreme Self alone (Paramaatman) everything has been misconceived, says the scripture: "*Asya Mahatoa Bhootasya Nishwasitametad yadrugvedoa Yajurvedaha Saamavedoa(s)tharvaangeerasa Itihaasaha Puraanam Vidyaa Upanishadaha Shloakaaha Sootraanyanuvyaakhyaanaani Vyaakhyaanaanyasyaivaaitaani Nishwasitaani*" — meaning: "Vedas like Rigveda, Yajurveda, Saamaveda and Atharvaveda and history, mythology, Vidya, Upanishads, Shloakas, i.e. verses, Sootras, i.e. aphorism, Anuvyaakhyaanas, i.e. explanatory commentaries, Vyaakhyaanas, i.e. commentaries or expositions — all these eight kinds of portions of Brahmanas are the very breath of that Paramaatman, i.e. Supreme Self. Thus the scripture is affirming. How can the Shaastra, i.e. scripture, at all teach that Reality of Brahmaatman, which is the very source of the Shaastra? There is also a statement in the Vedas to the effect — "All the Vedas teach Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality." How is this possible? However much excellent or efficient words or sentences the Veda may contain, how can it give up its capacity of being words or sentences and signify Atman who is devoid of any particular features or characteristics whatsoever?

The solution for this doubt is: It is true indeed that it is not possible to indicate Atman in the manner — "He is like this, like that" — for, in whichever manner we conceive Atman to be it amounts to our dividing or limiting Him. At one place Shri Shankara has written in his commentary in the following manner — "*Astinaasti, Ekam Naanaa, Gunavad Agunam, Jaanaati Na Jaanaati, Kriyaavad Akriyam, Phalavad Aphalam, Sabeejam Nirbeejam, Sukham Duhkham, Madhyam Amadyam, Shoonyam Ashoonyam, Paraha, Aham, Anyaha — Iti Vaa Sarvavaakpratyayaagoachare Swaroope Yoa Vikalpiyitum Icchati Sa Noonam Khamapi Charmavad Veshtayitum Icchati; Soapaanamiva Cha Padbhyaamaaroadhum, Jale Khe Cha Meenaanaam Vayasaam Cha Padam Didrukshate, 'Neti Neti', 'Yatoa Vaachoa Nivartante' Ityaadishrutibhyaha; 'Koa Addhaa Veda' Iti Mantravarnaat*" — (Aitareya Bhashya — Introduction to 2nd Chapter). The meaning of this excerpt of the commentary is: "The task of conceiving or imagining in the manner — "The Supreme Self is such and such; He is like this' — is not a feasible one. 'He exists, He does not exist; He is one, He is many; He is with qualities, without qualities; cognizes, does not cognize; is endowed with action, is not endowed with action; is endowed with fruits, is not endowed with fruits; having a cause, not having a cause; of the nature of happiness, of the nature of grief or misery; one having a middle, not having a middle; is essenceless, is not essenceless; the Supreme Self (Paramaatman), I, another person' — in this manner that essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss which exists without

being comprehended by speech or by any concept — despite this fact if any one attempts to 'conceive' It (i.e. this Reality of Atman) he will be like one who presumes that he can 'really' roll up even the sky just like a sheet of hide can be rolled up or that he can climb up the sky just like climbing up a staircase or that he can find out the tracks of fish in water and the tracks of birds in the sky. For, 'Not this, not this', 'From Him speech (and mind) return' — thus also there are scriptural texts. There is a statement in the Mantravarna like — 'Who can at all know (Him) clearly?'"

Therefore, whatever extra-ordinary or especial conception one may form will fizzle out without it being 'really' Brahman, i.e. the Absolute Reality. Therefore, remaining without having or forming any mental concepts whatsoever is itself the best thing or solution for us to adopt.

In that case, one may ask a question in the manner — "How can the scriptures teach or indicate Atman at all?" To this question, whatever we have stated already has indeed provided an answer in so many words. Just as to cognize or discern that — "Atman is one entity devoid of any mental concept whatsoever" — can, for this purpose, be said to be a way or device of Intuiting Atman (Self), in the same manner to indicate or teach that — "In Atman there is no room or scope for any mental concept whatsoever" — is in itself a stratagem for the scriptures to signify this metaphysical truth of Atman. This methodology is called 'Aagama'.

"Satyamevam Pratyakshaadhibhihi Pramaanairna Paraha Pratyayitum Shakyaha; Aagamena Tu Shakyata Eva Pratyayayitum; Tadupadeshaarthamaagamamaaha" — (Kena Upanishad 1-4). Meaning, "True, it is proper (to say) that It (i.e. Atman) cannot be indicated through perception, inference and such other Pramaanas, i.e. valid means of knowledge. But by means of 'Aagama' (i.e. the traditional method of sublating or negating all the distinctions or characteristics which apply to not-self in the manner of — 'Not this, not this' — and thereby help Intuit the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman) the Reality, viz. Atman, can undoubtedly or invariably be signified."

Therefore, the Upanishad further states: *"Anyadeva Tad Viditaadathoa Aviditaadadhi"* — meaning, "It (i.e. Atman or Brahman) is different from Vidita, i.e. thing that is known, and Avidita, i.e. thing that is not known." Thus Shri Shankara has written in his commentary that in this above manner 'Aagama' has been expounded. Aagama does not mean Shastra or scripture, in truth; this is the traditional methodology used for indicating (Aagamayitum) the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman. For example, Brahman is different from that which is cognized or known (Vidita) but at the same time It is different from that which is not cognized or known (Avidita). Thus the scripture itself is stating. Vidita means any 'substance' existing anywhere (in empty space and time) will be known or perceived (Vidita) to some one or other indeed and because it is fit to be known invariably the manifested (Vyaakrita) Prapancha, i.e. world or universe of duality, which is

suitable to be known is called 'Vidita'. On the other hand, Avidita means the unmanifested seed form (Avyaakrita) that is the cause for the manifested world of duality but which is projected or conjured up by Avidya, i.e. ignorance. By stating that — "Apart from both these, viz. Vidita and Avidita, is Atman, who is quite different" — the scripture purports to indicate that — "The Supreme Self or Paramaatman who cognizes both these by the light of His Pure Consciousness." Thus by virtue of this particular statement — "It (i.e. Atman) is different from both the manifested and the unmanifested world which is an object" — alone, it amounts to the scripture having stressed in clear terms that the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss is that of Atman or Brahman alone. In the Bhagavad Geeta this very Reality of Atman alone has been taught as 'Purushoattama', i.e. the Supreme or Greatest Self, as that Reality which is different from Kshara, i.e. perishable, and Akshara, i.e. that which is not perishable.

In that case, by the valid means (Pramaana) of Shaastra, i.e. the scriptural texts, how is the Reality of Brahman to be known or cognized? If Shaastras are Pramaana exclusively, how can the scriptural statement that — "Through no valid means (Pramaana) whatsoever That (Atman or Brahman) can be objectified, and neither is it possible to indicate Atman as such and such (a thing or phenomenon)" — be proper or justifiable? Shri Shankara has raised this very doubt (or objection) and has written this following satisfactory answer: "*Avishayatwe Brahmanaha Shaastrayoanitwaanupapattiritichet? Na. Avidyaakalpitaabhedanivruttiparatwaat Shaastrasya; Na Hi Shaastram Idantayaa Vishayabhootam Brahmapratipipaadayishati; Kim Tarhi, Pratyagaatmatwena Avishayatayaa Pratipaadayat Avidyaakalpitam Vedyaveditruvedanaadibhedam Apanayati*" — (Sootra Bhashya 1-1-4). *Meaning*, "The scriptures do not indicate Brahman in the manner — 'It is such and such'; they denote that It is not an object of knowledge, it (the scripture) sublates the differences or divisions such as the triad of 'the knower', 'the knowledge' and 'the known object' etc. In the same way, the scriptural sentences do not at all indicate It (i.e. Atman or Brahman) by assuming the distinctions or divisions of the kind — 'the teaching scripture', 'the teaching or propounding medium' and 'the object of teaching'; the scriptural sentences invariably and consistently propound that — 'This Brahman is not an object to be taught; in fact, It is the Atman, i.e. the very essence or core of Being of the teaching scriptures themselves.'" Thus there is no defect whatsoever, nor is there any room for a doubt now.

To the question — "By teaching in this manner what is the benefit accruing?" — the answer is: By sublating all the distinctions or differences of the external world of duality the aspirant is helped to establish himself in his own essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman. When the scriptures state: "*Athaata Aadeshoa Neti Neti*" — meaning, "Herefore, the teaching of Brahman (commences); Not this, Not that." — the spiritual

instruction enables us to sublimate all those misconceptions which are likely to be imagined in or superimposed upon Brahman and thereby helps us to establish ourselves in our innate or intrinsic and essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman (Self). Thus it amounts to saying that the scriptures have actually taught us all about Brahman or Atman.

One particular person had even asked the question — "Does it not mean that by the sentences of the form of sublation in the manner — 'Not this, not that' — the negative meaning of 'Abhaava', i.e. 'non-existence', is denoted?" To that question some people gave the answer — "We have accepted 'Bhaavaadvaita'". This is not proper, not correct. For, whether it is Bhaava, i.e. existence, or it is Abhaava, i.e. non-existence, both are subsumed in Prapancha, i.e. the empirical world of duality, alone; while teaching Atman who is devoid of the empirical world of duality (Nishprapancha Atman) quite different from the empirical world of duality (Prapancha Vilakshana), how can it be proper at all if one gets doubtful saying that it is 'Bhaavaadvaita'? The purport of the scriptural sentence of the type — "Neti, Neti" — is to sublimate whatever is conceived either as 'Bhaava', i.e. an existing entity, or as 'Abhaava', i.e. a non-existing thing. Therefore, if it is said in the scriptural texts that Atman is 'Asthoolam', i.e. not gross, the common people may take it to mean — 'small' or 'subtle'. For this reason, that is negated by saying — 'Ananu', i.e. not small or infinitesimal — which is clearly opposed to or contrary to the earlier statement. To the negative word of 'Nai' in Sanskrit used to negate or contradict a particular concept or meaning of the type — "A thing's non-existence (Abhaava)" or "something different from it (Bhinna)" or "A thing's opposite or contra (Viruddha)" — may be connoted, but it will not be sufficient; **the scriptures have come into existence to negate or sublimate all misconceptions or superimpositions.** In truth, in order to indicate or propound that there exists no misconception or superimposition whatsoever in Absolute Reality of Atman there are several statements made in the scriptures and they are of the type — "*Tadejati Tannaijati*", i.e. "It moves or shakes; It does not move or shake" — which indicate opposite or contrary characteristics or features. In that case, how can this Absolute Reality of Atman at all be taught by the scriptures? Further, how can that Reality be 'known'? To keep still or tranquil (in mind) or 'Tooshneemavasthaa' is the best device or stratagem either 'to teach' or 'to know' It, i.e. Atman. In this context the scriptures mention an anecdote: When Baashkali, a student by that name, questioned his teacher or preceptor by name, Baadhwa, the latter taught the former this Reality of Brahman or Atman without talking, keeping silent. When Baashkali asked and pleaded repeatedly twice, thrice, Baadhwa, the teacher, answered — "*Broomaha Khalu, Twam Tu Na Vijaanaasi; Upashaantoa(s)-yamaatmaa*" — meaning, "I am teaching you, but you, on your part especially, are not cognizing or knowing It. This Atman (Self) is devoid of the world of duality — totally quiescent" — (Sootra Bhashya 3-2-17). But even if we remain quiescent, or mentally still, it cannot be reckoned that we have

completely or clearly cognized or Intuited the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of Atman. For, even then there can lurk a misconception of the type — “I have cognized It in my mind.” To get established in Atman (Self) by Intuiting or cognizing in the manner — “Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, is not an object for any kind of concept (or misconception) whatsoever” — alone is the real ‘Tooshneemavasthaa’.

When it is stated in the manner — “Not this, not that” — the aspirants, i.e. Saadhakas, may reckon, rather misunderstand, that what we say and conceive as — ‘This’ and ‘That’ — apart or distinct from Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, do ‘really’ exist, and for that reason the scripture states: “*Brahmaivedamamritam Purastaad Brahma Paschaad Brahma Dakshinaha Choattarena; Adhaschoardhwam Cha Prasrutam Brahmaivedam Vishwamidam Varishtham*” — (Mundaka 2-2-11), meaning, “All this in front is Brahman alone of the nature of Immortality; That which is behind, That which is to the right, That which is to the left, That which is below and above and That profound Reality which has pervaded all this world.”

From the viewpoint of Avidya whatever is appearing before us, all this is Brahman alone; That which is behind too is Brahman, to the right too Brahman alone, to the left too Brahman alone; That which has pervaded below and above also is this Supreme or Profound (Varishtha) Brahman, the Ultimate Reality alone; ‘behind’ and ‘in front’ — such spatial relationships and ‘then’ and ‘now’ — such temporal relationships and ‘because’, ‘therefore’ — such relationships pertaining to the cause-effect categories also are all in reality Brahman alone. All that we cognize as ‘not Brahman’, i.e. not-self, is indeed misconception caused by Avidya, analogous to the wrong knowledge of the snake misconceived in the really existing rope. In order to drive home this idea the scripture sublates or negates all possible superimpositions in the manner — “Not this, not that”. For that reason alone, Shri Gaudapaada — who knew the traditional Vedantic methodology and who was an exponent in its application — states: “*Tattwamaadhyaatmikam Drishtwaa Tattwam Drishtwaa Tu Baahyataha; Tattweebhootastadaaraamastattwaadaprachyutoa Bhavet*” — (Gaudapaada Kaarika in Maandukya Upanishad - 2-38). Meaning: “Cognizing the internal Reality, cognizing the external Reality too, becoming one with the Reality and revelling in It alone, one should see that he does not slip down or dither away from Reality.”

All the misconceptions in the Adhyaatmika region (i.e. within our corporeal self) which appear in the forms within us like the body, the senses and the mind — we should Intuit as the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman alone; we should also cognize the externally appearing misconceptions of the type — the earth, the water (i.e. the five elements of Nature) etc. — to be the Ultimate Reality of Brahman alone. We must also Intuit or cognize that — “I too am the Reality alone; the misconceptions of the form of ‘Pramaatrutwa’, i.e. cognizership, ‘Prameyatwa’, i.e. the objects of cognition, etc. really do not

exist in me." Revelling in the Reality alone we should attain the Intuitive experience culminating in the manner — "There exists the Ultimate Reality alone, absolutely or transcendently, devoid of any misconceptions whatsoever and immutable or undivided in essence. In that case, to that seeker or aspirant there is no fall or dislodgement from Reality; how can the Reality get dislodged from Itself?" The saints of Maharashtra, Karnataka especially were exponents *par excellence* in this kind of Intuition.

This alone is the scriptural methodology of teaching, this alone is what is meant by 'cognizing' or 'Intuiting' the purport of the scriptures.

VII. INSTRUCTIONS OF THE PRECEPTOR — GRACE OF THE LORD

So far we have dealt with 'Brahma Vidya', i.e. Self-Knowledge. If we understand properly what is heard from the scriptural statements of the type — "By means of Brahma Vidya the Paramapurusha, i.e. the *summum bonum* of human existence, is attained; all the desires are fulfilled" — it immediately flashes to our mind that — "There exists an exclusive but profound Vidya, i.e. knowledge; by means of that a greater goal of life, which has not been attained in this present existence or life, is obtained; a sublime state in which one feels blissful having enjoyed all the desires in their totality is attained." But the real purport and meaning of the scriptural statements of this kind is not this at all. Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, is not a big entity or substance which is separate or apart from us. 'Its Vidya or Jnaana (Knowledge)' does not at all mean 'to perceive or cognize' through any one valid means or our senses just as in our day-to-day life we know or perceive external objects through the valid means of our senses and the mind like 'Pratyaksha', 'Anumaana', i.e. inference carried out through our mental faculties etc. Brahman, the Absolute Reality beyond all empirical dealings, is (here and now) our Atman or Self indeed; Its 'Knowledge' or 'Vidya' means 'to recede from (the region of) Anaatman, i.e. not-self, and to get established in, or become one with, our essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss of our innate Self alone.' From this statement that — 'Parama Purusha, meaning the ultimate goal or purpose of all human existence, is gained' — does not at all mean — 'A certain result or fruit that has not been attained or achieved by us in this life-time, i.e. in our present birth'; that 'Purusha' really means 'Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality, which is nothing but our Atman or Self indeed.' And when it is said that — 'That is attained or obtained' — it means 'to cognize or Intuit our ever-available eternal and essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss through Intuitive experience alone after

sublating or negating all misconceptions of Anaatman superimposed on our Self because of Avidya.'

Why is it that the common run of people invariably comprehend or understand the meaning of the scriptural sentences or statements in such a topsy-turvy manner? There is a cause for it. In order to acquire 'Brahma Vidya' or Self-Knowledge there is a need of a queer and distinctive viewpoint; our present natural viewpoint is quite different from that which is needed from the standpoint of the scriptures. This Self-Knowledge does not 'accrue' merely by acquiring an intellectual knowledge or familiarity of a common spoken language. By the help of 'Nighantu', i.e. lexicography (dictionary), and 'Vyaakarana', i.e. grammar, we may at best acquire the 'knowledge' of using or speaking a language for communicating our ideas to others. But unless and until the 'inclination or aptitude' or our viewpoint is transformed or metamorphosed, the secrets or purport of 'Brahma Vidya' cannot possibly be comprehended or discerned. In one sense, man exists and behaves just like a sheep. All sheep, generally speaking, go about keeping their heads downwards. Thereby they only know the next sheep that is in front of it. If the sheep in front turns to one side while straying about, the rest of the flock of sheep too will follow suit in the same direction. If for some reason or other one sheep jumps about at a particular spot or place, then when the next sheep following it reaches that spot, despite the fact that there is no cause or need for such an action or behaviour, the other animal too will invariably jump about! This may be called the 'herd instinct' and man too, despite his tall claims for being intelligent and discriminative, has perhaps 'inherited' this instinct, and hence the same is the case with human beings also in general. **To them it is quite evident that their senses are conveniently and readily available to discern or perceive the external objects; therefore, just as others around behave they too imitate others and adopt a style of living like the others in the society. Thus quite naturally indeed they too are 'extroverted' and basically materialistic in their outlook.** But those among them who attempt to see within or get somewhat 'introverted' in their minds and examine in the manner — "What does exist within myself? How do these senses operate and by what means do they get prompted or induced to set about their functions?" — and such other esoteric questions of life are very few. The senses make man a 'Martya', i.e. a mortal being; hence, human beings are to a great extent — without consciously and discriminatively thinking about this inevitable destiny of theirs — proceeding or advancing towards 'Death' alone; their predecessors or ancestors were also going the same way and now these people too are helplessly, as it were, following suit. It is certain too that their progeny will also be of the same ilk being perhaps greater extroverts. They too are bound to be susceptible to the vicious circle of births and deaths. No wonder, then, if it is said by some philosophers or sages that this is the tradition of the human sheep!

The Evolutionists are saying that man belongs to a certain species of the apes. Whether this is true or false, the fact that the minds of human beings, at

least are fickle or wayward just like their ancestors cannot be totally denied. There is no possibility of the human mind remaining still devoid of its fickleness even for a short while; then, how at all is it possible for this organically fickle-minded human being (whose mind has been from time immemorial extroverted indeed), who persistently allows his mental faculties to flow outwardly towards the distracting and dispersive objective world, to conserve all his mental faculties, integrate them in order to attain this esoteric knowledge (Intuitive experience) of this very subtle Reality or Brahman or Atman? How can the habit or practice of concentrating such a mind on that Brahman be developed? All through his life acts like drinking, eating, reading, writing, working hard, constructing houses and farms, procreating his progeny etc. etc. — such other things alone have become man's obsession, his yearning and goal! Thus there does not seem to be any scope whatsoever for him to comprehend or discern the method of deliberation and discrimination (in consonance with our hoary scriptural texts) about this Absolute, Transcendental Reality of Brahman or Atman. But yet, one need not become too pessimistic to jump to the conclusion that the chances of man Intuiting his essential and innate nature of Atman are so bleak, especially in these dark days of stark materialism promoted by startling industrial and scientific progress. Vedanta, as the super science *par excellence*, shows the way and is a clincher in this regard indeed.

What is meant by the statement: "Brahman is Sookshma, i.e. subtle"? It does not at all mean that — "That entity which is smaller than all other things." Howevermuch subtle a substance may be, it can be perceived with the help of magnifying instruments like the present-day microscopes or telescopes and such other modern appliances; similarly, howevermuch their sound maybe low or muffled, that sound can be heard with the aid of modern scientific gadgets. In all such instances, the 'subtle' substance which cannot be perceived just now through our senses is not called by this Sanskrit term — 'Sookshma'; here in the present context the term 'Sookshma' connotes that 'entity' or 'Reality' beyond the ken or reach of the senses. Howevermuch man may strive and for all time to come, this particular entity that Vedantic science talks about is one which can neither be perceived through our senses nor can be comprehended through our concepts of the mind. Only in this sense the term 'Sookshma' is used here.

"Esha Sarveshu Bhooteshu Goodhoa(ss)tmaa Na Prakaashate; Drishyate Twagryayaa Buddhyaa Sookshmayaa Sookshmadarshibhihi" — (Katha 1-3-12), meaning, "This Atman who is hidden in all things or beings does not shine. But to those who are endowed with subtle (i.e. Intuitive) perception or cognition, to an intellect which is chastened and made subtle (or one-pointed) He appears." Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, who is the innate core of Being (Self) of all of us forms the warp and woof of all creatures. But people — having an intellect which has become sharp and subtle, being endowed with concentration, and

thus they having become 'Sookshmadarshi', i.e. seers endowed with introspection — can cognize It. Some one particular discriminating person alone among many will be able to cognize or Intuit that Ultimate or Absolute Reality, and that rare person per force gives up his extroverted viewpoint unlike the rest of the people around him and pursue an exclusive path of cognizing the Self within, with all diligence and dedication indeed. For this kind of steadfast introspection the culmination is the Intuition of the Self of the essence of Pure Consciousness. Herefore he does not continue to be a mortal and is said to be immortal because he, in truth, has released himself from the shackles of mortality such as identification with the body, attachment towards his kith and kin etc. which together go to be called 'bondage' in Vedantic parlance. Thus the Upanishad is propounding.

How can this method of getting one's viewpoint itself changed or transformed be known? The scripture answers: "In order to cognize or Intuit that Reality one should approach a preceptor (Guru) alone with all humility." *"Shaastrajnoa(s)pi Swaatantryena Brahmajnaanaanveshanam Na Kuryaat — Ityetat Gurumeva Ityavadhaaranaphalam"*. The reason for stipulating in the manner — "You must approach a preceptor alone" — is because one should not independently attempt to seek and attain Self-Knowledge. Just as the fool who interpreted the Sanskrit phrase — "Kantakaarikashaaya" — as — "a decoction of a leather sandal which is an enemy of thorns" — the mere literary meaning that one may grasp or understand on the strength of a scriptural text may cause great hardships or harm. For a seeker of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman there should be devotion towards Ishwara, i.e. the Lord Creator, as also his preceptor.

"Yasya Deve Paraa Bhaktiryathaa Deve Tathaa Gurou; Tasyaite Kathitaa Hyarthaaha Prakaashante Mahaatmanaha" — (Shwetaashwatara 6-6). The scripture says: "To that person who has unstinted devotion towards God, to that person who has as much devotion towards his preceptor as he has towards God — to that person these (subtle and secret) meanings or teachings of the scriptural texts will flash."

Here a doubt may arise: The Ultimate Reality is an eternally inconceivable (as well as imperceptible) entity. That being so, whatever is conceived or imagined in It, that will be invariably and indubitably a 'misconception' alone. Therefore, all things like the preceptor, Ishwara (the Lord), the scripture, the pupil, the spiritual practice — are misconceptions alone. In that case, how at all is it possible for the Reality to be known from these sets of misconception? The answer to this knotty question is: Although all these are misconceptions alone 'superimposed' on Paramaatman, i.e. the Supreme Self, from the empirical viewpoint, there exists a difference among them. Some are misconceptions born out of Tamas, i.e. the quality (Guna) of inertia resulting in inaction, dullness and delusion; some misconceptions are born out of the Guna of Rajas, i.e. the quality of motivity leading to activity, desire, restlessness or pain; and some others are born out of the Guna of Sattwa,

i.e. the quality of serenity conducive to purity and knowledge and joy. The Taamasika Vikalpas, i.e. misconceptions born out of Tamas, have to be conquered by means of Raajasika Vikalpas; and this alone, by and large, forms that path of the so-called modern civilization (To wit, this indeed is the predominant trend in 'high society' of the modern age of extreme or excessive materialism). The Raajasika Vikalpas have to be conquered by means of Saatwika Vikalpas; this is the path of Neeti, i.e. ethics or morals, and Dharma, i.e. religious faith. All these Vikalpas have to be conquered by means of Shuddha Saatwika, i.e. Absolute or Pure Consciousness, which follows or adopts the Pratyagdrishti, i.e. the Introverted, introspective or Intuitive viewpoint. This is the Adhyaatma Maarga, i.e. the path of Adhyaatma Vidya, or Self-Knowledge.

Even from the empirical viewpoint if one desires to acquire any great or profound knowledge, say any one of the natural sciences or fine arts, for each of those disciplines a proficient and qualified preceptor is needed. But the empirical, workaday world viewpoint is that 'Pramaatru Drishti', i.e. the parochial viewpoint or outlook of the cognizer (or the ego in everyone), which is invariably a viewpoint of the extroverted individual. In order to teach the spiritual disciplines or practices to be necessarily observed so as to get rid of this parochial empirical (egoistic) viewpoint a proficient preceptor who has attained the Intuitive Knowledge or experience of the Supreme Self, i.e. one who is a Self-Realized person, alone is the one who can show the way and guide properly. Every student who has taken to this sacred path which is shown and preached by such a preceptor should per force learn and practise to cognize directly (Intuit) by his own mind and his own effort. For instance, Duhkha, i.e. misery or grief, does not mean in this context, that which appears as grief of others; it is the grief that is directly experienced by the student. Similarly in the case of fear, wonder, happiness, deep sleep, waking, ignorance, knowledge etc. also, the preceptor should first cognize directly and on the strength of his own immediate experience alone he should suggest and guide his pupils. He should instruct about Self-Knowledge from the viewpoint supported by his own Intuitive experience of Atman, of the essence of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Just as any picture of a vegetable printed in a book is not of any use for the purposes of cooking, in the same manner the Self-Knowledge which is talked about and heard (in spiritual circles) does not become fruitful in this context. Thus the Aachaarya, i.e. spiritual preceptor who is a 'Shroatreeya', i.e. one who is well-versed in the scriptural teachings, and also who is 'Brahma Nishtha', i.e. one who is established in the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman (Self or Pure Consciousness) is exclusively needed.

Ishwaratwa, i.e. Lordship or Godhood, too is a misconception alone superimposed on the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman. Even so, the blissful happiness that accrues to those who have unstinted devotion towards Ishwara, i.e. the Lord of the universe as well as all creatures, can never be

known or comprehended by others. In the same strain, it can be stated that Achaaryatwa, i.e. preceptorship, too is a misconception alone. But it is a misconception belonging to a higher or superior variety. As it is taught in our religious texts — *"Ishwaroa Gururaatmeti Mòortibhedaad Vibhaagine; Vyoamavad Vyaaptadehaaya Dakshinaamoortaye Namaha"* — (Dakshinaamoorti Stotra) — meaning, "By means of the instructions obtained through sincerity and devotion towards the preceptor the Intuitive knowledge of the type — 'Although there are distinctions in the three forms of Ishwara, preceptor and devotee or disciple, the cognition or Intuitive experience of the type — 'One and the same Ultimate Reality or Brahman alone, which is of all-pervading nature of Parabrahma, i.e. Supreme Self' — appears or manifests Itself in those variegated or different forms' — is attained."

Merely because it is stated that misconceptions are false one should not take it to mean that there is no coherent arrangement in them. In their forms of appearance or manifestation they are false, but in their essential nature they are the Ultimate Reality alone. **That which leads, or takes, us towards the Ultimate Reality or Atman (our own innate Self) is itself a misconception of the form of Saatwika Saadhana, i.e. benign spiritual discipline or practice, indeed.**

"Yoa Brahmaanam Vidadhaati Poorvam Yoa Vai Vedaamscha Prahinoati Tasmai; Tam Ha Devamaatmabuddhiprakaasham Mumukshurvai Sharanamaham Prapadye" — meaning, "First the Supreme Self creates at the beginning of 'Kalpa', i.e. a cycle of creation, the four-headed Brahmaa or Hiranyagarbha. The Supreme Self ordains through His grace so that the Veda shine in, or Intuited by, the mind of Brahmaa (i.e. the creator aspect of the Supreme Self). That divine being (Deva) alone ordains that Aatmabuddhi, i.e. the intellect imbued with, or pervaded by, Atman, i.e. Self-Knowledge (Pure Consciousness), to shine in all of us."

Therefore, the Mumukshus, i.e. the aspirants for Self-Knowledge, should acquire devotion towards Ishwara as well as the preceptor. In fact, Ishwara (Dakshinaamoorti) is a preceptor to us externally or indirectly (Paroaksha), but the genuine proficient Aachaarya, i.e. preceptor, is the direct (Aparoaksha) teacher. It is narrated in our scriptures that — "A person belonging to Gandhaara State was kidnapped blindfolded by thieves after looting his valuables and was left in a forest of a distant region. There a compassionate passerby, noticing the agony of this person, untied the cloth tied round his eyes and the ropes around his hands and advised him in the manner — 'Go in this direction if you wish to reach your native place; your Gandhaara State lies in this direction' — and then that person followed the passersby's advice with discrimination and went along that path to reach his own native place. In the same way, we Mumukshus should cognize or Intuit (our Self, of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss) in accordance with the teacher's spiritual instructions." We have wandered away from our original source of existence, viz. Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, and are groping with delusion in

the stark dark forest of the external world perceptible to our senses. When the teacher who knows the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman advises us in the manner — “Turn around and see within yourself; then you can cognize (Intuit) the Reality of Atman or Self” — the Saakshaatkaara, i.e. the actual materialization or immediate and direct (Intuitive) Self-Realization, reaches its fruition or culmination, so to speak.

It being so, the grace of Ishwara, the Almighty God, too is needed. *“Tameva Sharanam Gatcha Sarvabhaavena Bhaarata; Tatprasaadaat Paraam Shaantim Sthaanam Praapsyasi Shaashwatam”* — As this Geeta verse says: “We should with all devotion and dedication surrender unto Ishwara, i.e. the Lord, alone who resides in our heart. By His Grace alone both the supreme goal of human life, i.e. Paramapurushaatha, and the grace of the teacher or preceptor, who instructs us about the spiritual path and how to turn inwards (away from the manifoldness and misery of this transmigratory existence) towards that Ishwara, who is nothing but our innate nature of Brahman or Atman, will accrue.” This spiritual preceptor unravels to us the secrets, i.e. the implicit purport, of Ishwara Bhakti, i.e. devotion towards the Lord; he induces a veritable fountain of sincerity, dedication and devotion to ‘ooze out’ spontaneously in our heart. By seeking the august audience of the teacher and by rendering unstinted wholehearted service to the teacher, who is established in Brahman (Brahmanishtha) and who is always tranquil in mind despite appearing to weep along with weeping people or devotees and to smile with smiling devotees or people at large, we will in due course be able to discern ever-lasting peace and tranquillity manifesting themselves in our mind too.

Thus by spiritual disciplines alone imbued with sincerity, dedication and devotion towards both Ishwara, the Almighty Creator, and the preceptor, who is a guide at hand in solving all kinds of problems that may be encountered on this long, hazardous path of spiritual progress, Brahma Jnaana, i.e. Self-Knowledge, will surely accrue. Let us, then, pray that by the benign grace of the world teacher (Jagadguru) Shri Shankara Bhagavatpaada we may also attain all the wisdom and sagacity needed to trek this sacred path of introspection! Let us all pray that the good fortune of getting rid of all misconceptions and thereby getting established in Parabrahma, i.e. Supreme Reality, alone which is our innate Atman or Self beyond all mental concepts may come to its fruition in all of us!

VIII. HOMAGE TO SHRI SHANKARA BHAGAVATPAADA

There is an old custom or convention that on the concluding day of the Shankara Jayanti Saptaaha a homage is paid to the great Aachaarya by

showering encomiums pertaining to his profound qualities of head and heart. The question as to — in which manner should any praise be made — may confront us, for not a single person who has seen him in person is alive today and he is a legendary figure too. In fact, even the period in which he is supposed to have lived has become a raging controversy; but the place where he lived is acknowledged on all hands to be Kaaladi, in Kerala. Although there are many 'Shankara Vijayas' — which are written to be his biographical sketches and facets of his life — they are all describing events which are mutually contradictory in nature as seen from the differing accounts in these Vijayas themselves. It being so, 'How best and in which befitting manner can we remember him?' — will be a ticklish problem indeed.

One can unequivocally declare that Shri Shankaraachaarya is neither a mere individual tied down or confined to a particular place, region or State nor a particular period of time. There are biographies of individuals who have served our country. But such individuals or personalities are either eulogised and raised to great statures or condemned and degraded in stature by different generations according to their respective viewpoints or ideologies — as it often happens in the case of statesmen and politicians. Shri Shankara is surely not one such personality who can possibly be put into such a category for he has taught the world the profound truth that — "The Absolute, Transcendental Reality which is beyond time, space and causation categories is Itself the Atman, i.e. the Self, of all of us" — and by propounding this unique teaching in every nook and corner of our country he has over the centuries become a National figure, and by virtue of the relevance of his eternal doctrines of Advaita Vedanta for all times to come he has, in truth, become a world teacher.

Therefore, it means the same whether it is purported to be Shri Shankara's remembrance or the universal (i.e. everyone's) Atman's remembrance. If an anecdote pertaining to him is written in the manner — "His Self belonged to a previous era or period of time" — it would not amount to doing justice or being true to his teaching and thereby it would not be his remembrance at all. Merely to say or remember that he has shown a way of life suitable and needed by the future generations also will fizzle out to be paying lip-homage without realizing its importance. Through his unique teachings expounded in a vivid manner so as to take his followers to the lofty heights of Intuition of Atman-Consciousness, which is eternally pure, conscious and liberated or free (Nitya Shuddha Buddha Mukta Swaroopa) he ever lives in our hearts and sheds his benign grace on all those who remember him and trek the spiritual path that he has shown by his own example. Hence the Shankara Jayanti Saptaaha should remind us to revitalise and rededicate ourselves to that way of life. Then alone the celebrations will pay off rich dividends and will be meaningful.

One may reasonably raise the question — "In times before the advent of Shri Shankaraachaarya was there no Vedanta at all? If there was Vedanta,

then what is the new and unique teaching that he expounded for the benefit of all?" At the time when Shri Baadaraayanaachaarya compiled his Vedanta Sootras, it becomes evident that there existed three distinct opinions (or schools of thought) with regard to the relation between Jeevaatma, i.e. the transmigratory soul, and Paramaatman, i.e. the Supreme Self. A preceptor by name Aashmaratya was saying, it seems, that — "That scriptures propound that — 'If one cognizes Atman, i.e. the Self, it is tantamount to knowing or cognizing everything'; therefore, between Paramaatman and ourselves, the Jeevaatmans, there exists a relationship of 'Bhedaabheda', i.e. difference-cum-non-difference. When that part or aspect of difference (Bheda Amsha) is sublated we become one with Paramaatman." The second preceptor by name Ouduloami was instructing, it seems, in the manner — "Now we have got defiled by association with the conglomeration of the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. If we practise Jnaana, i.e. Knowledge, of the Reality, Dhyana, i.e. contemplation etc. we become one with Paramaatman after this conglomeration of the body, the senses etc. leaves us or is got rid of." There was yet another preceptor by name Kaashakritsna. It seems he was preaching in the manner — "The scriptures say that the Supreme Lord or Parameshwara alone has entered into our conglomeration of the body, the senses etc. in this form of Jeevaatman. Therefore, we are, here and now itself, of the essential nature of Paramaatman(i.e. Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Cognizing or Intuiting this Reality we should attain the fulfilment of our life's purpose or goal." The fact that this third opinion alone is the true, genuine Vedantic (philosophical) teaching has been elucidated beyond all doubt by Shri Shankaraachaarya in and through his extant Bhashyas.

Even before the time of Shri Shankara there were many schools of philosophy which were propounding the unity or oneness of Jeeva and Brahman. But in them there did not exist the skill of expounding the true Vedantic methodology which is in consonance with the scriptural statements, dialectical devices and, more important than all else, everyone's Intuitive experience. The philosophy taught by preceptors belonging to the tradition of Shri Shankara is clarified by Shri Gaudapaadaachaarya in his famous Maandukya Kaarikas. Because that methodology alone is in agreement completely with Saarvatrika Anubhava (i.e. universal, not individual, Intuitive experience) it is called, in the fitness of things, the Supreme philosophical teaching.

Real 'Siddhaanta', i.e. philosophical teaching, means that it should be, first of all, Saarvatrika, i.e. universal (to wit, acknowledged by everyone) and Sunischita, i.e. utterly certain. In the traditional Vedantic philosophy that Shri Shankara has propounded both these features exist. Thus his teachings are irrefutable indeed. The scriptures say: "That thou art; you are that Ultimate Reality of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self alone" — to every human being. Whether we have cognized it or not, Atman or Self of all of us exists as Paramaatman eternally; in the scriptures it has not

been stated that Atman who exists in people of such and such a country, people of such and such a period of time, of such and such a caste or community, of such and such a sex, in such and such a state of consciousness etc. — is Paramaatman, i.e. the Supreme Self. It is Shri Shankara's unique teaching that all those who can discriminate and introspect can invariably and certainly cognize this Reality of the Self culminating in their own Intuitive experience.

In the past, Christians were not teaching the spiritual instructions of Christ to those who were not Yahoodis; but St. Paul taught them to everyone. "We live, move and have our being in Him" — this profound truth he taught to everyone, it is said. The scriptures too are proclaiming in the same manner indeed that everyone is verily in essence Brahman alone. "*Brahma Daashaa Brahma Daasaa Brahmaiveme Kitavaaha*" — meaning, "Fishermen are also Brahman alone, poor beggars from birth too are Brahman alone, low-class people who gamble too are Brahman alone" — thus the universal Reality is taught in such a clear-cut manner and with certitude by the scriptures, and their greatness or profundity was brought to bear on everyone's memory by Shri Shankara. No one is denied this Brahma Vidya, which is his birthright; so comprehensive and Catholic in outlook and universal in his teachings was this world teacher. This then was his glorious contribution and unique service to humanity.

Manu has stated in his Smritis that — "To know or cognize this Reality of Atman or Brahman alone is the fulfilment of life for human beings in general; especially among them for a Brahmin this Self-Knowledge is fit to give him the attainment of life's purpose; that person who has attained this Self-Knowledge is Dwija, i.e. the genuine twice-born, alone and not in any other manner." The scripture also is stating: "One who knows this Reality alone is a Brahmin in the true sense of the term." To Shri Shankara who has taught such a Reality in such a lucid unambiguous manner so as to make us nod our heads in full agreement saying invariably — "True, true" — and to induce us to pursue this sacred Self-Knowledge so as to culminate in our own Intuitive experience we all should pay our whole-hearted and sincere homage and be ever grateful.

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1. The Scientific Approach Of Advaita Vedanta

A succinct description of the unique methodology that is utilized in and through the *Upanishadic* lore to expound the Ultimate, Absolute Reality of *Brahman* or *Atman*, as explained by Shri Shankara in his extant, original *Bhashyas* on the *Prasthaana Trayi*, viz. the ten principal *Upanishads*, *Bhagavadgeeta* and the *Vedanta Sootras (Brahma Sootras)*. It will not be euphemistic if it is stated that without the knowledge of the six fundamentals mentioned in this booklet a true seeker of the Reality of the Self or student of *Advaita Vedanta* will invariably get confused and confounded by the apparently contradictory statements of the *Upanishads*. The author has used 14 diagrams to drive home the subtle teachings of pristine pure *Advaita Vedanta* of Adi Shankara in keeping with the modern trend of audio-visual methods of presentation of a topic.

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Pages - 102

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