



His Holiness Sri Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj of Vasishta Guha (Himalayas), born in 1928, is a disciple of Parma poojya Sri Swami Purushottamananda Puri Maharaj of Vasishta Guha, Himalayas.

Swamiji is a scholar par excellence in vedic scriptures as well as in the puranic texts. His deep knowledge and lucid exposition of Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita and Ashtavakra Gita have made him a popular guide to spiritual aspirants. His simplicity, transparent deep faith in the divine force and absolute surrender to the Supreme have made him an ideal combination of Jnana, Bhakti and Vairagya.

Swamiji's prodigious learning and deep devotion to the tenets of Indian philosophy and culture have reflected themselves in all his works, which are practical guides for inner personal experience and to raise oneself to a higher level of being. His emphasis has always been on 'Practice, practice, practice'.

Vivekachudamani of Sri Sankara is a rare jewel of Vedantic literature. This work in 584 elegant and profound verses takes the spiritual aspirant to the very heights of spiritual realization through the path of reason and analysis. These tenets are common to all religious faiths.

In this book revered Swamiji has brought out the essence of the original work with practical guidelines which will be helpful to all spiritual seekers.

Sadhanas from Vivekachudamani (Step by Step Approach to the Lord)



Swami Shantananda Puri

With love and invoking
Lord's blessings on all,

Shantananda
(Swami Shantananda)

**Sadhanas from
Vivekachudamani
(Step by Step Approach to the Lord)**

Swami Shantananda Puri

**PARVATHAMMA C.P. SUBBARAJU SETTY
CHARITABLE TRUST**

13/8, Pampa Mahakavi Road, Bangalore - 560 004.

Telefax : 2670 8186

E-mail : omkaroffset@gmail.com

Sadhanas from Vivekachudamani

by Sri Swami Shantananda Puri

Publisher :

**PARVATHAMMA C.P. SUBBARAJU SETTY
CHARITABLE TRUST**

13/8, Pampa Mahakavi Road, Bangalore - 560 004.

Telefax : 2670 8186 E-mail : omkaroffset@gmail.com

First Edition : 6th May 2012

(84th Birthday of Sri Swami Shantananda Puri)

**All the books of
H.H.Sri Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj
are available on
website: <http://www.scribd.com/vedavita>
(complete list of books on pages 120 & 121**

Designed & Printed at :

OMKAR OFFSET PRINTERS

No. 3/4, 1st Main Road,

New Tharagupet, Bangalore - 560 002

Telefax : 2670 8186 E-mail : omkaroffset@gmail.com

Website : www.omkaroffset.com



SAMARPAN

This book is dedicated
with Veneration
to the Lotus feet of
Sri Adi Shankaracharya

who inspired me to write this book





Sri Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj

About the Author

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तः
वसन्तवत् लोकहितं चरन्तः ।
तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षव ज्ञान्
अहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥

(Vivekachudamani-39)

“There are great holy persons exuding peace at all times. Having crossed the vast ocean of worldly existence, they help others too to cross the same without any selfish motive behind it. They work for the welfare of the world like the pleasure-giving spring season”.

Swami Shantananda Puri Maharaj is such a great soul as extolled in the above verse by Sri Sankara. Swamiji was born in Tamil Nadu in 1928. Even from his childhood, he had the good fortune to come into contact with holy men and benefit by their company. At the age of four, he met the Paramacharya of Kanchi and was blessed by him. He believes that the company of holy persons which he could obtain frequently throughout his life was the cause of all his material and spiritual progress. At the age of fourteen, he was fortunate enough to accompany the Paramacharya for a month in his travels by foot

through the villages and enjoy his company. The teachings of the great sage have given him eternal inspiration. At the instance of the sage, he published in 1989 the Sivasahasranama contained in the Linga Purana with the meaning of the Names and also conducted Sanskrit classes for devotees.

In 1950, at the age of 22, he joined the Central Government Service. His first posting was in Meerut. There, he came across the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' and was deeply attracted by the life and teachings of the Great Master. He considers the 'Gospel' as the greatest spiritual work in world literature. While at Meerut, he came into contact with Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Whenever possible, he would visit the Sivananda Ashram. Swamiji was willing to give him Sannyas, but he did not agree at that time owing to domestic responsibilities. He wanted to obtain a guru from the lineage of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. In 1952, he came to know about such a great soul, Swami Purushottamanandaji Maharaj of Vasishtha Guha, who was the disciple of Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the mentally adopted son of Sri Ramakrishna. It was only in 1957 that he could meet his Gurudev at the Guha. It seemed that Gurudev was waiting for his dear disciple. Immersed always in 'Sahaja Samadhi', the great Guru became the Supreme ideal for Swami Shantanandaji. Gurudev asked him to read

Bhagavatam during the ensuing birthday celebrations of himself. Swamiji was also required to explain its meaning. Till then he had not read that holy text. From that time onwards, Srimad Bhagavatam became an ideal source of inspiration and guidance to him.

In 1959, Gurudev most unexpectedly and without any formalities, blessed his disciple with the initiation of a mantra. It was expected that soon thereafter, he would be initiated into sanyas. But, one day suddenly Gurudev said that the disciple still had some samskaras of a householder and, therefore, should get married early. The disciple was totally discouraged at this turn of events and felt completely at a loss. Then Gurudev added that he would get sanyas also at a later date. However, he had to wait for 32 years leading the life of a householder for that blessed moment.

As instructed by Gurudev, the author got married in 1960. Gurudev had also advised him citing Mahabharata that even after marriage while leading a normal conjugal life one could be called a 'celibate' (Brahmachari) if he leads a life of restraint by enjoying with his wife only on the occasions enjoined in the scriptures and by refraining from adultery. In February 1961, Swami Purushottamanandaji Maharaj passed away. But he continued to instruct and advise the disciple even afterwards not only in spiritual matters but also in solving the major problems in life. In his

autobiographical book, 'Fragrant Flowers', swamiji emphasizes that it was Gurudev's grace alone which protected him always and led him forward in the path of the spirit.

Swamiji retired from service in 1986. He was engaged in sadhana even while in service. Now, after retirement, he intensified his sadhana. In 1991, when his family responsibilities were more or less over, his inner voice told him that the time for renunciation had come. He was then 63 years old. In June 1991, he left home and went to Uttarakashi, where his brother disciple, Swami Sankaranandaji Maharaj, lived.

On the holy occasion of the Sivaratri, in February 1992, he took the vows of sanyas and was given the name Shantananda Puri.

Swamiji's expectation was that now he could remain peacefully at one place and engage himself in spiritual practices, but Gurudev had other plans. One day, in meditation, Gurudev instructed him to remain as a wandering monk (parivrajaka) for a minimum of seven years. He still continues his peripatetic life on the grounds that he has not received his recall orders from his Gurudev. Thus, Swamiji has visited many places and ashramas of the country. In 1992, he participated in the Kumbhamela held at Haridwar. Throughout the period, he felt the guiding hand of Gurudev. Swamiji had the

good fortune of meeting many mahatmas during his travels.

Swamiji is now 84 years old. He has written and got published many valuable works. The essence of great works such as Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavad Gita, Adhyatma Ramayanam, Tripura Rahasyam, Yoga Vasishtham, Ashtavakra Gita etc. has been brought out by him in comparatively small books. Besides, there are other works such as the autobiographical book “Fragrant Flowers”, Inspiring Stories, Advice to spiritual aspirants etc. which have proved highly popular. These days, Swamiji spends a few months, including Chaturmasyam, in Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, two months in Vasishtha Guha (Himalayas) and the rest in travelling within India. Having many disciples and devotees he could easily have established an ashrama and lived as its revered Head; instead, being a man of frugal habits and accepting nothing more than his needs, he lives an ideal monastic life adjusted to modern times and spends his time in constant thought of God. All his works have evidence of that high spiritual state. May this mahatma live long, blessing all of us and helping us to advance on the spiritual path.

- **S.V. Unnikrishnan** I.A. & A.S. (R)

*Addl. Dy. Comptroller &
Auditor General of India (Retd.)*

Introduction

Adi Sankaracharya, the founder (proponent) of the philosophy of non-dualism, is famous for his unparalleled brilliance and genius at a very young age. Vivekachudamani can be considered as his masterpiece next only to his commentary on the ten principal Upanishads, Brahma sutra and the Bhagavad Gita. It is a unique summation of all the sadhanas required to reach the highest transcendental divinity. It takes one to the goal viz. the realization of the Supreme Brahman. In all the essential places, Sankara's statements are either based on the Upanishads or the latter's words are being repeated as they are. Almost the first half of the text covers answers to the most essential and basic seven questions raised by the disciple in sloka no. 51. The answers provided are unique and sometimes very simple and easy to understand. These are the basic questions which will be raised even today by any disciple. In the very beginning itself Sanakara has emphasized that the various rituals (karmas) including worship of gods are not of direct applicability and use in the realization of the Brahman. It is not also that they are unnecessary and not required at all. Before God-realisation it is essential that the mind should be first purified and all the prescribed actions including yagas (sacrifices) etc.,

contribute substantially towards purification of the mind. While purification of the mind is essential it is not by itself a direct factor leading to God-realisation. Sankara's final emphasis is on constant meditation on the oneness of the Atman and the Brahman which is also the theme of many Upanishads.

Vivekachudamani can be called as the Hand Book on the practice of Vedanta. May we all benefit by it and attain God- realisation in this very birth.

- Swami Shantananda

OM SREE MAATRE NAMAH

Chapter I

Pre-requisites For Sadhana (Sadhana Chatushtayam)

Vivekachudamani is a very popular text on Vedanta authored by Adi Sankaracharya. Viveka or discrimination means 'to separate' (pruthak karanam). In the context of Vedanta philosophy it means to discriminate between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the impermanent, the Infinite and the finite, the Unlimited and the limited. This process of discrimination leads to an inquiry as to who we really are and what is our relationship with the world and ultimately to the discovery of the Self or the Supreme Being.

This chapter deals with the qualifications of the seeker who desires to tread this path to the ultimate Reality and the pre-requisites or qualifications to be acquired before he approaches a competent Master to guide him on the path. Not only the qualifications necessary for a competent Guru but also qualifications necessary in a disciple are discussed in this chapter.

The purpose of human life is to strive to get out of the dream of delusion of repeated births and deaths and get liberated once for all. This liberation cannot be

obtained by any amount of actions like pooja, pilgrimage etc. As the bondage is because of a wrong perception, knowledge or Jnana alone can result in liberation. No doubt pooja and other rituals etc., are necessary for purification of the mind by dispelling the impurities like attachment, hatred, greed, jealousy etc. The purification of the mind is very necessary for attaining liberation. To acquire knowledge (Jnana) one has to go to a competent Master (Guru) and then perform the spiritual practices (Sadhanas) as expounded by the Master.

There are **three basic sine qua nons**¹ for success in the spiritual path. One should be born as a human being. Neither animals nor trees nor divine beings can attract the grace of the Lord for attaining success. Secondly one should have **an intense desire for moksha** or liberation. Lastly we should seek **refuge under a great soul for guidance.**

The entire purpose of Vedanta philosophy is to make us understand the oneness of the individual soul in each body and the ultimate Supreme Being (Brahman). This is called “Brahmatmaikya bodhah.” There is only one ultimate Reality called ‘Brahman’ and nothing else. Just as one electricity from the generator appears as individual

¹ दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतत् दैवानुग्रह हेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥ (SI. 3)

lights in various bulbs, the same Brahman appears as the Jivas (Individual bodies) as also as controller (Iswara) i.e. controlling gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Ganesa etc., by virtue of a power called 'Maya'. The Brahman can never be described in words (anirvachaniya) as an energy or matter, whether with form or without form or what it looks like. It can only be directly experienced (aparoksha anubhava) and not through any senses or mind.

This Brahman or Atman (Self) cannot² be realized through any number of actions, scholarship, pilgrimages, visiting temples, doing yagas (fire sacrifices), giving charity, building ashrams, temples or charitable hospitals, orphanages etc., nor through accumulation of money. It can only be attained by right perception (samyag darshanam) derived through Self-enquiry (vichara) on the path as directed by a competent Guru. At present we identify ourselves with our bodies individually and consider others as separate from us and as enemies or friends or competitors etc. resulting in lack of peace of mind and consequent unhappiness, sorrows and sufferings. When once this differentiation is removed and the knowledge that we are all only the one reality (Brahman) is established, the world and its activities which

² पठन्तु शास्त्राणि यजन्तु देवान् कुर्वन्तु कर्माणि भजन्तु देवताः ।
आत्मैक्यबोधेन विना विमुक्तिः न सिद्ध्यति ब्रह्मशतान्तरेऽपि ॥

are appearances like a dream cease to have any meaning for us. We are established in supreme bliss and peace. This is liberation or moksha.

This should not be taken to mean that charitable acts, pilgrimages, visiting temples and worshipping gods are purposeless and are not required. Even though they are not the direct means for attaining moksha, they are very much helpful for purification of the mind viz. to get rid of attachments, enmity, ego, competition etc., which is essential for going on the path of moksha.

One can uplift oneself from the ocean of Samsara in which he is drowned only by refining the mind whose discriminative capacity has been developed through various sadhanas by taking it away from non-Self objects like the body. We all talk of the ocean of Samsara (phenomenal world) where we are drowned because we have heard many others talking of the ocean but nothing can define as to what exactly the ocean is and how we are drowned. Actually 'Samsara' represents the various duties which we assume in the world because of our false identification with the body and also the enjoyments and sufferings generated by our actions³. "Kartṛtva bhokṛtva lakṣaṇaḥ saṁsārah". It is a world wound

³ कर्तृत्व भोक्तृत्व लक्षणः संसारः

around us by ourselves, as in the case of the silk worm. Our only duty is to know who we are in actuality. Sage Vidyanaraya has categorized the creation as two fold :

- (a) Creation of the Lord (Iswara Srishti) – Lord has created various human beings, plants and trees, animals etc. and as they are, they are harmless.
- (b) Creation of Jivas (individual souls) – We, the Jivas establish a world of relationship with all the objects of the world- say, of ownership (this is my land, my garden, my money etc.) of guru and disciple, of father and son, of husband and wife, of friends and enemies etc. This is Jiva Srishti. It is this world of relationships built by us which has caused all miseries and sufferings for us.

If only we withdrew our mind from the relationship with all the objects of the world (which is non-Self) and direct it solely towards the Lord or the Self, this will mean uplifting ourselves from the ocean of Samsara. We have to resort to enquiry in order to get rid of 'Samsara'. No number of baths in sacred rivers like the Ganges, giving in charity or doing Pranayama (breath control) can be of use for this purpose.

In order to do Self – enquiry in the right way, i.e. in order to know who we are, we should approach a Guru

who has to be the best among the knowers of the Supreme Being (Brahman). The Guru has to be a 'Sthita Prajna' (a Jivanmukta) and nothing less.

It is not enough if the Guru is the best. The disciple⁴ who approaches him should also be well qualified and competent. He should possess a highly retentive memory, be capable of reasoning out the pros and cons of a subject through induction and deduction and possessing certain other qualifications namely, discrimination(Viveka), dispassion(Vairagya), the six qualities like control of the mind, senses etc. and a strong desire for liberation(Mumuksha). Every disciple wants the best Guru in the world and never bothers to know his own competence to deserve such a Guru. My Gurudev used to say "You get the Guru you deserve".

Now Sankara proceeds to explain the other necessary qualifications and also how in an attitude of utter surrender the disciple approaches the Guru and expresses his desire for getting guidance for attaining his goal of moksha. In the modern days it will all look funny and both Guru and disciple will feel embarrassed if approached in this manner. The idea is that we should keep the spirit behind this old fashioned approach.

⁴ मेधावी पुरुषो विद्वानूहापोहविचक्षणः ।
अधिकार्यात्मविद्यायामुक्तलक्षणलक्षितः ॥ (SI. 16)

The Guru should be one well versed in scriptures, absolutely sinless and thoroughly free from desires and one whose mind is completely absorbed in the Brahman. Sri Shankara compares the Guru to the fire that has consumed its fuel. He is outwardly calm but shining inwardly with spiritual wisdom. He should be the best among the knowers of Brahman. Even the realised souls are categorized as (1) knower of Brahman (2) better knower of Brahman and (3) a the best among the knowers of the Brahman. It is just like a student passing M.B.B.S with the help of grace marks, (2) student getting a distinction and (3) student passing with cent percent marks. He is always exuding compassion without any cause towards the good disciples who surrender themselves at his feet. The disciple should approach him with humble words and also render any service possible to him with all humility. When the Guru is pleased he should present his request on the following lines :

“Oh! Master, ocean of compassion! you are the friend of all who surrender at your feet. I have fallen into the deep ocean of Samsara. Please uplift me by your kind look which is always pouring nectar. I am terribly afraid of Samsara and I am already tortured by its flames and you are my only refuge. It is the nature of the great saints that while living calmly they silently continue to work for the welfare of the world, having themselves crossed the ocean of Samsara and selflessly making other

people also cross the Samsara. They are like the moon which voluntarily cools down the earth heated by the rays of the Sun during the day time”.

Such an elaborate approach indicates that the Guru we choose has to be a living Guru and not a dead saint however great he might have been in his days. It does not mean that the most revered past saints are of no use at all. The past Gurus are essential in Hinduism, Jainism, Tibetan Buddhism and Sikhism. Remembering them and praying to them is of great help in purifying the mind and also giving us inspiration. Especially such rare saints like Bhagavan Ramana were Jivanmuktas (liberated) and were one with the ultimate Reality.

Late Swami Akhandanandji Maharaj of Brindavan has emphasized in one of his numerous books that a living Guru is a must. If one takes up a departed Guru and feels that he is getting all guidance, he is getting back his own wisdom and nothing new. It is just a feed back of what all he has studied and put in his memory.

On looking at the disciple who has surrendered himself at his feet, the eyes of the Guru should pour kindness on him and the saint should immediately calm down the latter's fears by his very look. On verifying that the disciple has a sincere desire for moksha and has established control over his own mind, the Guru should instruct the disciple on the ultimate Reality.

As regards the four pre-requisites (Sadhana-Chatushtaya), the first is Viveka (discrimination), the second is Vairagya (dispassion), the third is the six virtues (Shat-sampatti) like control of mind and lastly the desire for liberation (Mumukshutva).

Viveka is the mental faculty capable of distinguishing between the permanent and the impermanent objects. Then one comes to the conclusion by right perception that Brahman (the Supreme Being) alone is the Reality while the entire world and its objects are all illusory. Here a story would seem relevant. Michael Angelo was a renowned sculptor several years back. In his village there was a shop where stones for sculpting were sold. Outside the shop, one useless stone had been lying unsold for a number of years. Michael Angelo approached the shopkeeper and enquired at what price the stone would be made available. The shop keeper replied - "Sir, take it away free. It is a useless stone and is unnecessarily occupying a large space. I do not want any money. Rid me of it and I shall be grateful." Michael promptly had it removed to his workplace very happily. In due course he had a beautiful "Christ" carved out of it. Even the Pope along with his cardinals came to see the beautiful statue of Christ and praised Michael for it. On hearing about it, the shopkeeper who had earlier owned the stone came running to Michael to view the statue. He asked Michael - "Sir, how did you manage to carve out such a nice Christ out of this useless stone?" Michael replied humbly - "However useless,

every stone contains the Christ in it already. I simply chiselled out and threw away the non-christ portions surrounding and hiding the Christ. What remained was the Christ alone in all his splendour. Similarly, the full divinity exists in all beings. It is surrounded and hidden by the non-Atman things like the body etc. along with their qualities of attachment, enmity, anger, desire etc. If only we can distinguish between the Atman with its full divinity and the non-divine portions and throw away the non-divine qualities, what remains is the Self or Atman alone, resplendent in its divinity. This is Viveka or discrimination.

Mukti or liberation has been defined in some scriptures⁵ as completely cutting off the relationship with the entire world (and its objects). Sambandha (relationship) comes from the root word 'bandhaha' meaning bondage. Sambandha (Samyak Bandhaha) means a tight bondage. Only through Viveka one comes to the conclusion that one should completely discard the world and devote oneself solely to Brahman.

Vairagya is defined in Vivekachudamani as thorough indifference to all objects of enjoyment in this world including body or the heavens by a natural disinclination even to see or hear about them.

⁵ प्रपञ्च संबन्ध विलयो मुक्तिः (Sastradeepika)

There are a lot of popular misconceptions among Sadhakas (aspirants) about the significance of the term Vairagya. Many think that a complete hatred towards the world and thorough lack of attraction towards enjoyable objects is Vairagya. It is not so. Elsewhere in some scriptures, according to late Swami Akhandananda Saraswatiji of Brindavan⁶ the loosening of our attachment (raga) or hatred(dvesha) towards the objects is called Vairagya at this preparatory stage. Leaving off hatred towards objects is also Vairagya. Because of our earlier conditioning we may get attached to the world or we may hate some persons or objects but let not the love or hate be to that extent as to cause harm to somebody else. Let them not be so tight.

Only through Viveka one goes to Vairagya and Vairagya is essential for Sama, i.e. control of mind etc. Thus each preceding sadhana is necessary for the succeeding sadhana.

How to develop this Vairagya or disgust for the worldly objects? It is by contemplating and seeing the various defects involved in the objects - for example the

⁶ किं नाम वैराग्यं? अदृढ राग द्वेषवत्त्वं (From “विवेक कीजिये”) श्रोत्रियोवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मविदुत्तमः ।

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।
तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षावं जनानहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥ (Sl. 37)

evanescent nature, expenditure involved, efforts necessary for obtaining them etc.

The third sadhana (pre-requisite) is a group of six virtues starting with Sama (control of the mind). To keep the mind, fixed unmovingly on one's own life's goal, - God with form or God without form- is called Sama or control of mind. The cause for all our mental agitations and lack of peace is our desire for something or other. If only we can develop an exclusive interest for God alone it will be easy to leave off all desires for the objects which will never remain for long with us. This will be control of mind.

It is the various senses like the eyes, the ears, the tongue etc. which get attracted towards the objects through form (roopa), sound (sabda), taste(rasa) etc. and they feed the mind in turn which begins to desire for them. Not allowing the senses of perception (eye, ears etc.) to go towards objects and making them remain immobile without any reaction towards any objects is called Dama (control of senses). The senses are likened to horses and it is the refined mind which, like the rein, restrains them (senses) from going out.

When the thoughts by themselves, without any effort, cease to go towards any objects and thus remain independent without any support, it is called "Uparati" – a complete withdrawal. This ensures that the mental modifications remain fixed and firm. No dependence

on outside objects means that one cannot have such dependence as to say for example –” I cannot sleep at all unless I have a cot”, “I cannot eat food at all unless I get some pickle.” etc.

The next virtue is forbearance or tolerance (Titiksha) of all sorrows. This is not simple. There are some conditions attached to it. One should bear all sorrows uncomplainingly. Secondly one should not seek a remedy for it. One should not worry about the consequences of the cause of such sorrows by remaining without remedying them.

The next item is ‘Sraddha’ which is wrongly interpreted by many as sincerity. It is complete faith in the instructions of the scriptures as well as of the Guru (master) that they represent truth. This is almost like ‘Viveka’ where we depend on our intellect, which gets refined. In Sraddha we depend on the intellect of the authors of the scriptures and the Guru.

The last and the sixth item is ‘Samadhanam’ – Quiescence. This is keeping the mind one-pointed on the Brahman (Supreme Being).

Sankara places his emphasis on vairagya and desire for liberation. Without these, all the six virtues including Sama will not be effective.

* * *

Chapter II

Basic questions on bondage and release (Moksha or Mukti)

After having acquired all these qualifications one has to approach a Guru, one who is well versed in the Vedas (Hindu scriptures), sinless, desireless, the best among the knowers of Brahman, always with his mind absorbed in Brahman and exuding peace. He should be an ocean of causeless compassion and one capable of dispelling the sorrows of those good people who approach him with all humility and request him to instruct them on the method or device to cross the ocean of Samsara where they are afflicted with sorrows.

Very briefly the Guru will tell him something as given below:

All the sorrows of yours will be once and for all destroyed by the knowledge you will get by enquiry into the significance of the instructions from the 'Upanishads'.

The Upanishads prescribe the practice of Sraddha (faith) Bhakti (love) and Meditation (dhyanam) as sadhanas to an aspirant for liberation. They also reveal the causes for liberation. We are ignorant and unaware

that we are fully divine and on the contrary bound by the non-Self i.e. the body by considering it as 'I'. This results in the unending cycle of birth and death. The fire of knowledge which is generated by Viveka and other sadhanas burn away and reduce to ashes the body which is a creation of our ignorance. As the bondage has been created through ignorance it can be removed only by knowledge.

Based on this brief answer, the disciple raises some basic questions and the elaborate answers provided form a substantial portion of the Text.

The questions raised by the disciple are as follows:-

- 1) What is this bondage?
- 2) How has it come to us?
- 3) How does it remain established for a long time?
- 4) How can one get released from it?
- 5) What is this "non-Self"?
- 6) Who is that Supreme soul or Self?
- 7) How can one discriminate between the Supreme Self and non –Self?

The Guru starts his answers with the following preface:-

Moksha (liberation)⁷ is possible only through the knowledge of the identification (one-ness) of the Self and the Brahman and not by any other means. No amount of yoga, performance of rituals like fire sacrifices or any of the worship of gods with attributes (Saguna gods) will ever lead to moksha. Similarly a high scholarship in philosophy or capacity for captivating oratory will lead to name and fame and not moksha. Instructions from a competent Guru and then doing intimate sadhanas like Sravanam (hearing), Mananam (reflection) and Dhyanam (meditation) are the only means to attain moksha.

The Guru starts with the fourth question “How to get released” as it is the one which matters most to all seekers.

The foremost requirement⁸ is to cultivate an intense Vairagya (dispassion) towards impermanent objects, then control the mind and senses, forbearance and leaving off all actions including those prescribed as compulsory in the scriptures.

⁷ न योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा न विद्यया ।

ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिद्ध्यति नान्यथा ॥ (Sl. 56)

⁸ को नाम बन्धः कथमेष आगतः । कथं प्रतिष्ठास्य कथं विमोक्षः ॥

कोऽसावनात्मा परमः क आत्मा । तयोर्विवेकः कथमेतदुच्यताम् ॥ (Sl. 49)

The sadhanas⁹ to be done after getting a Guru are to hear the philosophical instructions (sravanam), reflecting on them by thinking of arguments in favour of them and then meditating on the goal continuously with a one pointed mind (nididhyasanam). The word nidhidhyasanam is derived from the root 'dhyai' to meditate. Its base word is didhyasa which means 'the desire to meditate'- just like 'pipasa' meaning the desire to drink. These are called 'antaranga' sadhanas – meaning internal and intimate. These sadhanas lead one to an undifferentiated state of mind and one finally gets the bliss of liberation. This is how one gets released.

As all sadhanas begin with Viveka (discrimination between Self and non-Self), the Guru starts answering the questions as to what is non-Self (anatma) in an elaborate way.

The main non-Self item to be discarded is the body. The body consists of (1) gross body (2) subtle body and (3) causal body. The gross body consists of bones, marrow, flesh, skin, hands, feet, chest, throat, head and other parts. This becomes the main centre of attachment and we identify ourselves with it as 'I' and 'mine'. These

⁹ ततः श्रुतिस्तन्मननं सतत्त्वध्यानं चिरं नित्यनिरन्तरं मुनेः ।
ततोऽविकल्पं परमेत्य विद्वान् इहैव निर्वाणसुखं समृच्छति ॥ (Sl. 70)

bodies are constituted by a mixture of five subtle elements after subjecting them to a process called “Pancheekaranam” – the fivefold method when each element is divided into two equal parts and one part again divided into four parts and added to each of the other four elements. Thus each modified element will consist of $1/8^{\text{th}}$ of each of the other four elements and itself forming the balance half.

The modified elements which also form the five senses of perception in the body enable them to grasp sound, touch, form, taste and smell – which are called Tanmatras. It is the foolish people who get bound in these objects through a strong attachment. In order to enjoy those objects one does some good or bad action, as a result of which one either goes up (heaven) or falls down (hell).

Out of these tanmatras like sound, touch, form etc., one who is attached to even one of them is bound by death¹⁰. Hence these vishayas (objects) are to be abandoned. For instance, a deer which is entranced by music is caught by a hunter when it is hearing some music spell bound. The elephant is decoyed by a

¹⁰ शब्दादिभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन बद्धाः ।
कुरङ्गमातङ्गपतङ्गमीनभृङ्गा नरः पञ्चभिरञ्चितः किम् ॥ (Sl. 78)

domesticated she elephant whom the former is eager to touch and thus it is caught and bound by chains. The moths which are lured by the shining form of the fire of a lamp die in that fire. The fish is baited by a piece of flesh in the hook of the fishing rod and is caught for eating purposes. The bee is attracted by the smell of a flower and finally when the flower shuts its petals, it gets caught and is thus subject to death. Thus, being attached to any one of the objects is sufficient to invite a big calamity.

Far from experiencing the object (vishaya) and dying, even by looking at it one dies, while the poison (visha) causes death only when it is eaten.

Desire for objects is the greatest obstacle in the way of the one who strives for moksha. If one wants to have liberation (moksha) he has to thoughtfully abandon all objects, and constantly cultivate contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straight forwardness, control of mind and control of all the senses¹¹. Thus the desire for objects which is dependent on the body is also non-Self in the sense that the body hides his real Self. One has to leave off all the attachment to wife, son etc. who are all related to the body and are categorized as non-Self (anatma).

¹¹ मोक्षस्य कांक्षा यदि वै तवास्ति त्यजातिदूराद्विषयान्विषं यथा ।
पीयूषवत्तोषदयाक्षमार्जव-प्रशान्तिदान्तीर्भज नित्यमादरात् (Sl. 84)

How to leave off our attachment to the body (of oneself and one's wife's body etc)? Only if we know how to leave off attachment to the body, we can then study how to discard our attachment to the Prana (Vital elan or Vital energy). The detachment comes by creating a disgust for the body by contemplating how the body consists of all disgusting materials like the skin, flesh, blood, muscle, fat, bones etc. and is always filled with urine, stools, etc.

This gross body cannot be considered as Self because this is active only during the waking state and not in the dream state or deep sleep, unlike the Self who is a continuous witness of all the states. Hence gross-body is non-Self.

Similarly, the gross body's characteristics are birth, old age and death and it undergoes too many changes such as leanness and stoutness, and states such as childhood. Further the gross body is subject to various disciplines according to caste etc. These disciplines if observed, are capable of purifying the mind. Even though the body is non-Self and entangles one in the samsara, it is also useful in that by following the disciplines of caste which have been prescribed it is also helpful in the process of release from bondage.

In order to elaborate on the subtle body (sookshma sarira), also called as ethereal body by some, the various parts thereof are defined.

The eyes, the ears, the nose, the skin and the tongue are called the senses of perception. Hands, feet, speech (tongue has dual roles of taste and speech), the anus and the generative organ form the senses of action. By calling them senses as eyes, ears etc. their inner power of sight, hearing etc. is meant.

The inner sense known generally as mind consists of (1) the mind (manas) whose function is to resolve whether to do an action or not (samkalpa vikalpatmakam manah). (2) the intellect (Buddhi) which takes the final decision (Nirnayatmika buddhi) (3) Ego or Ahamkara which considers the body as our Self (4) Chitta, the archives of past memories from which we recall past incidents etc.

The Prana (vital force) functions in five-fold manner as Prana (the outgoing breath), Apana (the breath which passes through the anus), Vyana (the breath which distributes the energy from the digested food to various parts of the body), Udana (the breath which pushes up while vomiting as also at the time of death) and Samana (which brings the fire inside in order to digest the food taken). These are the five modifications of the Prana in general.

The subtle body which on every rebirth goes from one gross body to another and also experiences heaven

and hell consists of the following¹²:- (1) the five senses of action (the power behind them) (2) the five senses of perception (3) the five Pranas (4) The five subtle elements – earth, water, fire, air, space (5) Buddhi (Intellect), mind, chitta and ego (ahamkara) (6) basic ignorance (7) desire and (8) action. Thus the subtle body consists of eight groups. It is an assembly of various items and as all these items are meant for use by somebody, this subtle body, which continues to survive even after the gross body is dead, is non-Self and has to be ignored.

This subtle body manifests itself during the dream state as even a blind man sees well in the dream. In dream, it is the mind (a part of the subtle body) which sees, hears, walks, and does all activity by the light of the Supreme Soul. The Self remains absolutely untainted by the activities of the mind during the dream state. Atman as witness is just aware of the activities of the mind in the dream state.

Another part of Sookshma Sarira is Prana (Vital force). The various breathing activities, yawning, vomiting etc. take place because of Prana. Both hunger and thirst are also the activities of Prana.

¹² वागादि पञ्च श्रवणादि पञ्च प्राणादि पञ्चाभ्रमुखानि पञ्च ।
बुद्ध्याद्यविद्यापि च कामकर्मणी पुर्यष्टकं सूक्ष्मशरीरमाहुः ॥ (Sl. 98)

The mind is activated by the reflected light of the Supreme Self and in turn functions in the senses of perception and the senses of action. The mind which is bereft of Viveka, due to false identification on account of ignorance considers all the senses and the body as 'I', the Self. The Self also takes the characteristics like the blindness of the eyes on itself and functions with the idea that 'I am blind' etc. through the mind which gets the reflected consciousness.

The ego (Ahamkara) considers itself as the doer and experiencer even though all actions take place in Totality and no individual can claim to be the doer. It is the ego which undergoes the three states of waking, dreaming and sleep in conjunction with the three modes (Gunas). It considers itself as happy or unhappy on getting the favourable objects or not getting them respectively. Self (Atman) is always blissful and never for a moment it becomes sorrowful.

Now the next part, ignorance or avidya comes. At the Totality level it is called Maya (Delusion) and at the individual level it is called Avidya (ignorance). Maya¹³ cannot be considered as Sat (existing) as it ceases to

¹³ सन्नाप्यसन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो भिन्नाप्यभिन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।
साङ्गाप्यनङ्गा ह्युभयात्मिका नो महाद्भुताऽनिर्वचनीयरूपा ॥ (SI. 111)

exist on the acquisition of the ultimate knowledge. Nor can it be called *asat* (non-existing) as it is seen in the form of the world etc. We cannot say it is different from the Brahman (as nothing exists apart from Brahman). Nor can it be considered as non different from Brahman as this is subsumed after attaining Brahman while the latter remains unaffected by time. It cannot also be considered as both *sat* and *asat* nor both different and also non-different from Brahman because it is impossible for something to remain as opposites at the same time. It is something wonderful which cannot be described in words. This is responsible for the appearance of the entire world. Its presence is inferred by its product i.e. the world. It is called *Avidya* not because it is the opposite of the *Vidya* or knowledge. As finally *Maya* is something which does not exist (its existence cannot be proved) it is called *avidya* (*na vidyate iti avidya*). It is something which is beyond words and indescribable.

It is something which can be destroyed by the knowledge of the Brahman just like the delusion of a serpent by discriminating between the rope and the serpent. It manifests its three modes viz. *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* in the world it creates.

Maya functions in three different ways – (1) *Vikshepa Sakti* (Projective power). It projects the world which never existed. It is that which distracts us and attracts us.

(2) Avarana Sakti (Veiling power) It hides Brahman the reality (3) Jnana Sakti – It is what takes us to Moksha (Liberation) while the first two lead us to bondage. The question was what was non -Self which has to be discarded? All the three types of bodies elaborately described are all anatma (non-Self). The power of delusion which projects the world as also the bodies which are part of the world are also Maya only. It is all non-Self. Our own bodies along with the world, however attractive, are all to be abandoned.

Even though Satva guna (quality of light, peace and harmony) alone is pure, when once it mixes with Rajas (dynamism and activity) and Tamas (laziness, postponing doing things) it becomes full of mire and it is the world (samsara) which entangles us. In one Father's lodge a nun came to see a Brother known to her and while parting they shook each other's hands. A senior monk who was present expressed his disapproval. The Brother argued that his own purity was well known and so also the nun's and there could be no impropriety. The senior monk gave him an example of how pure water and pure sand formed a mire when mixed. When once through sadhana, we dispel the entire Tamo Guna and have only a little Rajas mixed with Sattva Guna, the mind becomes pure. As the Vikshepa Sakti of Rajo Guna and also the Avarana Sakti of Tamas is absent, one is able to experience his Self and a high level of peace, satisfaction and ecstatic happiness. He is established in his (Supreme) Self.

Thus the Guru concludes the definition of the causal body which is made up of ignorance and Maya. This body can be clearly experienced in the sleeping state of a person, where all the senses and intellect remain absorbed and inactive. Even though all the three states including waking and dreaming remain during ignorance, sleeping state is something special where the ignorance is clearly seen.

Finally, the entire world and its objects, the body, all the senses, the Prana (vital breath force), the mind, the ego, all the five basic elements like the earth, water etc. are all covered by the term “non-Self”. The Maya and the product of Maya are also non-Self and none of them has an independent existence. They all appear as if they exist just like a mirage.

Now the author moves to the sixth question “Who is that Supreme Soul or Supreme Being?” He is the one who is the witness of all the states namely, the waking, sleeping and dreaming and the one who is the support for the ego sense¹⁴. He is the one who sees all and

¹⁴ एषोऽन्तरात्मा पुरुषः पुराणो निरन्तराखण्डसुखानुभूतिः ।
सदैकरूपः प्रतिबोधमात्रो येनेषिता वागसवश्चरन्ति ॥ (SI. 133)

नियमितमनसामुं त्वं स्वमात्मान् मात्मन् (नि) ययमहमिति साक्षात् विद्धि बुद्धि प्रसादात् ।
जनिमरणतरंगापार संसारसिंधुं । प्रतर भव कृतार्थो ब्रह्मरूपेण संस्थः ॥ (SI. 138)

animates all when nothing else can see or animate. By his very presence, the body, the senses and the intellect get impelled towards their respective objects. He is that indweller who is always of the form of unbroken bliss, unchanging and who can only be understood by the teachings of a competent Guru. Induced by His very presence, the speech and the Prana function. He does not undergo any of the six modifications like birth, death, growth etc. Even when a pot is destroyed, nothing happens to the space inside the pot. In a similar way, even when the body undergoes destruction, no change occurs to the Supreme Soul (Param Atma).

He is different from both Maya and its product, namely the world, he is of the nature of pure knowledge (i.e. the form of sight alone and having no object), he is the one who illumines all with form and without form and he shines as 'I-I' in all the three states viz. waking, dreaming and sleeping as the witness of the intellect. Through a mind controlled by the process of sraavanam (hearing), mananam (reflection) and nididhyasanam (contemplation) and with an intellect with all its defects completely removed, you should realise that you are nothing but the Paramatman and with that realization remain as the ultimate Reality (Brahman) itself and thus cross the ocean of Samsara marked by repeated cycles of birth and death.

Now the Guru takes up the question “What is this bondage, from which we want liberation?”

The bondage is considering the non-Self objects such as the body, as ‘I’ and the cause for this bondage is ignorance. This bondage entangles us again and again in the miseries stemming from repeated births and deaths. Avidya or ignorance has been defined in the Yoga Sutras as considering the non-Self (body etc.) which is impermanent ,impure and full of sorrows and sufferings as the Self (I) which is permanent , ever pure and full of bliss

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु
नित्यशुचिसुखात्मरव्यातिरविद्या ।

Yogasutras II-5

“Avidya is taking the non-eternal, impure, evil and non-Atman to be eternal, pure, good and Atman respetively.”

Just like the silk worm which creates a covering from its own body, nurtures it and dies finally entangled in it, we create the body, nurture it, consider it as our own Self (I) and thus get entangled in an endless cycle of birth and death.

The bondage with the non-Self i.e., body, by considering it as the Self is caused by ignorance. As a

result, we undergo miseries in the form of birth, death, diseases, old age etc., which flood us. Again before concluding the answers to all the questions posed by the disciple, the Guru wants to deal with the question “How to get rid of this bondage?” as it is the main purpose of the entire life. In fact he started by answering this question only, even though it was the fourth serially.

This bondage caused by ignorance cannot be severed by any means other than by a firm discrimination (Viveka) which comes by the grace of the Supreme Lord. It is that Viveka which leads us to an experience of our own form. Even crores of rituals or other actions prescribed in the Vedas will not be able to destroy this bondage. No doubt one has to perform the actions as prescribed for his station and caste in order to make the mind pure (rid of attachment or hatred etc.) **The realization of the ultimate Truth cannot happen unless the mind becomes pure.**

* * *

Chapter III

Self and non-Self

The last question of the disciple is “How should one discriminate between Self and non-Self?” The Guru has started replying this and is going to elaborate it as to how besides the three types of bodies like the causal body etc, Atman is covered by five types of Kosas (coverings) namely, matter (Annamaya), mind (Manomaya), Vital force (Pranamaya), intellect (Vijnanamaya) and bliss (Anandamaya).

By discovering how these Kosas cannot be our Atman (Self) by the methods shown in the Upanishads, the Truth shines itself as the ultimate knowledge, having the nature of pure bliss, not adulterated by any sorrow of birth or death, inside all of us¹⁵. This type of Viveka between the Self and the non-Self (the pancha kosas covering Atman) has to be done in order to get released from the bondage of the world.

Why can't the first outer kosa, namely, the Annamaya Kosa (matter making up the gross body) be the Self (Atman)?

¹⁵ पञ्चानामपि कोशानामपवादे विभात्ययं शुद्धः।
नित्यानन्दैकरसः प्रत्यग्रूपः परः स्वयंज्योतिः ॥ (Sl. 153)

It is sustained by and dependent on matter till the end. It is also impure as it contains impure things inside it. Atman has been described as ever pure and never dependent. The body is subject to unrecognisable transformations like childhood, youth, old age etc. If you see a pot you cannot be the pot. Similarly as the body can be seen like a pot, 'I' (Atman) cannot be the body. The body is an assembly of parts like hands, feet etc. and even if a hand or leg is lost, man does not lose his power but manages to carry on with his duties with artificial limbs. The word 'deha' has come from the root दिह् उपचये (meaning assembly of parts). The man continues to live even if the parts like hands and feet are removed. Hence this body cannot be the Self.

We do not identify as our Self the shadow body or image seen in a mirror and we do not also consider the imagined body of a dream as 'I". Similarly we should abandon our identification with this gross body (in the waking state) as 'I' or Atman (Self)¹⁶.

Considering the body as 'I' (Self) is the seed for all our miseries emanating from birth, death etc. With all effort, leave off that idea from the mind. Then there will be no more re-births.

¹⁶ छायाशरीरे प्रतिबिम्बगात्रे । यत्स्वप्नदेहे हृदि कल्पिताङ्गे ।
यथात्मबुद्धिस्तव नास्ति काचिज्जीवच्छरीरे च तथैव माऽस्तु ॥ (Sl. 165)

So Annamaya Kosa cannot be the Atman. Next comes Pranamaya Kosa. As the entire body comes to life and becomes active because of Prana (vital force), one may be inclined to think that Prana is Atman. Pranamaya Kosa consists of five senses of action like the hands and the feet and is also spread over Annamaya Kosa. Its main attributes are hunger and thirst.

Externally the Prana is the breath which comes in (inhalation) and goes out (exhalation) and during pranayama it can be completely stopped. Atman is always inactive, never limited and pervades everywhere. So Prana cannot be the Atman as it is limited in its scope, dependent on other factors and also active. It is also not conscious, as while asleep, if a thief takes away certain things, it is not aware of it.

The next covering is Manomaya kosa. Just as the gross body is called Annamaya kosa, the subtle body is called Pranamaya kosa. Inside this Pranamaya is this Manomaya kosa which is spread into Pranamaya kosa. Inside this is the conscious entity which believes in the ideas of 'I' and 'mine'.

In the Taithireeya Upanishad this kosa is visualized as a bird having Yajur Veda as its head and Rik Veda and Sama Veda as its two wings. The purpose of this visualisation is that Manomaya kosa is made up of the Vedic knowledge. The indirect or theoretical knowledge

of the Atman derived from the Vedas lies in the Manomaya kosa. Manomaya kosa is also a part of the subtle body. All dharmas (virtuous acts), upasana (worship) and yoga are all meant for the purification of this Manomaya kosa. The beliefs “I am full of knowledge”, “I am full of vasanas (desires)”, “My mind is distracted”, etc. belong to Manomaya kosa. Manomaya kosa is not the Atman as it does not manifest during sleep, as it can be seen by us (we know that we are or are not thinking) and it is subject to constant changes. No doubt the pure mind leads us to liberation while the impure mind leads us to bondage. Manomaya kosa is the locus of knowledge and ignorance.

Ignorance is only an imagination of the mind¹⁷. The mind is the ignorance which binds us to the world. When the mind (along with its vasanas) is destroyed, the entire world is destroyed.

When once we sleep, the so called world being experienced by so many beings simultaneously ceases to exist. This is enough proof to show that there is no world in reality and it is only a product of imagination.

¹⁷ न ह्यस्त्यविद्या मनसोऽतिरिक्ता । मनो ह्यविद्या भवबन्धहेतुः ।
तस्मिन्विनष्टे सकलं विनष्टं विजुम्भितेऽस्मिन्सकलं विजुम्भते ॥ (SI. 171)

If the pure mind can lead us to liberation, how can we get that purification? For that purpose we should have a strong Viveka or sense of discrimination and an intense Vairagya (dispassion). Here purity means ‘not being overwhelmed by Kama (desires)’. At this stage, a weak hearted Vairagya will not do. Both Viveka and Vairagya should be very strong.

In the waking state it is the mind which creates all the objects; so too, in the dream state. When the senses cease to work also, it is the mind which creates all enjoyable objects. Not only the bodies but also the caste, station in life and the genus like man, animals etc., are created by the mind. This is proved as, while asleep, the mind is absent and these differences are absent.

Even though the Atman is absolutely untainted, the mind binds it by creating a belief¹⁸ of “I” and “mine” in the body, senses, vital force (prana) and their qualities (guna). It is the body, senses etc., which are involved in the various worldly activities or the religious rituals (karma). But a sense of feeling is created by the mind as if ‘I’ (the Atman) was involved in all the activities and the bondage is created. Because the Atman (I) is made to think that he is the doer, it is made to revolve up and

¹⁸ अध्यासदोषात्पुरुषस्य संसृतिरध्यासबन्धस्त्वमुनैव कल्पितः ।
रजस्तमोदोषवतोऽ विवेकिनो । जन्मादिदुःखस्य निदानमेतत् ॥ (SI. 181)

down (heaven and hell) while enjoying the result of the various karmas. There has thus been a super-imposition (adhyasa) of the characteristic of these anatma vastus (non-Self things) on the Atman and the feeling of I (Atman) has been superimposed on the anatma vastus like body and senses. Thus the super-imposition (adhyasa) takes place because of the mind – on account of the lack of discrimination (Viveka) – and consequent lack of knowledge of what is Self and what is non-Self. As this leads to the cycle of repeated births and deaths, naturally one is subject to birth, death, old age, diseases etc.

As already told, one who is after moksha (liberation) has to do purification of the mind. How should one do effort for purification of the mind? When the mind begins to long after Moksha only (this is called intense longing for Moksha) one should be able to uproot one's attachment / hatred from all objects. Then one should abandon all acts including those prescribed as permanent duties and seasonal rituals as also selfless karmas. Then one should hear the mega-statements of the Upanishads and other teachings with full faith. Then only the dynamic nature (rajo guna) which impels one to do some action or other disappears. This is in brief the sadhana one should do.

As the main factor responsible for our miseries is our stern belief that the body is our Self (I), we did the

Viveka (discrimination) of all three types of bodies (gross, subtle and causal) and proved that none of the three types of bodies can be the Atman. This is called Deha – Traya – Vivekam. The Atman has to be somebody apart from bodies, a witness (Sakshee) of the three bodies.

As in another categorization, Atman is covered by five sheaths (Pancha Kosas), we have also to do Pancha Kosa Viveka and prove that Atman is apart from all the Pancha Kosas and he is their Sakshee (witness).

We have already discussed upto Manomaya kosa.

Inside the Manomaya Kosa (mental sheath) and completely occupied by it is another body which is called 'Vijnanamaya Kosa' (Intellectual sheath). All the senses of perception and the intellect constitute part of it. The senses of perception come under both Manomaya as also Vijnanamaya as the mind and intellect are more or less the same, except that the latter is non-internal to the former. All identifications with karmas, enjoyment and knowledge obtained through senses of perception like 'I am the knower', 'I am the doer', 'I belong to this Ashram – namely brahmachari, sanyasi (monk) etc.,' 'I am a kshatriya(warrior caste)', 'I am the body', 'I am a sinner' etc. are all modifications of Vijnanamaya Kosa (Intellectual sheath). The person who identifies himself with Vijnanamaya Kosa is the doer of actions as impelled by previous Vasanas and reaps their fruits. He is the

individual soul who calls himself a Jiva. The various states like waking and sleeping , experiencing happiness and sorrows, the one who considers his body as I and mine – they are all in Vijnanamaya Kosa.

The power of reflection of the Pure Consciousness alone makes the Vijnanamaya Kosa function. It is aware of the various actions done as ‘I see’, ‘I go’, ‘I eat’. Because Vijnanamaya Kosa has this awareness of ‘I’; it is very near to the Atman but it is also not the Atman. The activities of this Kosa are subject to changes and are capable of being seen. During sleep, no activity of this Kosa is seen. Hence it cannot be Atman. On account of the limiting adjunct (upadhi) of the Vijnanamaya Kosa, Atman itself (due to its identification with this Kosa) becomes the doer and the experiencer. In Vijnanamaya Kosa, Atman begins to have a differentiating intellect such as ‘This is you. I am such and such’. This is just like a man looking at the mud pots and mud as if they are different. Both are in reality mud only and they differ in nomenclature and not in their essentiality. In Atman there is no differentiation. The differentiation in Vijnanamaya Kosa exists only due to an illusion (bhrama) and this illusion has been there in a person from a time without a beginning.

Here the disciple poses a question – “Sir, both Atman and the illusion superimposed on it which makes us

consider it as an individual soul (JIVA) with the body included in it as Self have existed from a time without a beginning. As that which has no beginning cannot have an end, the illusion of being a Jiva also cannot have an end or destruction. In that case how can there be moksha (liberation) at all?”

The Guru replies:-

The illusion is only an appearance. Atman is ever without any attachment because it has no form and is inactive too. For instance the sky is unattached but it looks blue or yellow due to imagination. But for imagination, the sky does not have the colour. Similarly the idea of a Jiva is only an imagination and has no permanent base. When once the illusion is gone, its imagined existence cannot continue as the appearance had manifested only due to a wrong knowledge¹⁹. Supposing at night I had imagined a rope lying on the ground as a serpent, it was a wrong knowledge as there was never a serpent. The moment I brought a torch and saw what it was, (it was only a rope) the illusion of a serpent was completely gone. The serpent has also disappeared along with the illusion.

¹⁹ यावद्भ्रान्तिस्तावदेवास्य सत्ता । मिथ्याज्ञानोज्झितस्य प्रमादात् ॥
रज्ज्वां सर्पो भ्रान्तिकालीन एव । भ्रान्तेर्नाशे नैव सर्पोऽपि तद्रूपत् ॥ (Sl. 199)

Supposing we see an unknown person in a dream, we cannot say that he was born only in that time. He had never existed earlier (pragabhava) and only his illusion had been created when we went to sleep and began to dream. So when we say that he existed from a time without beginning, we do not mean that he existed at all times earlier but that no time can be indicated about his non-existence (as he never existed earlier). When once we got up from our sleep, the sleep was gone and the person who appeared in the dream had also gone.

The false knowledge that we are a Jiva (an individual soul) can be dispelled only by the correct knowledge. The correct knowledge is the knowledge of the identification of Atman and Brahman (the ultimate Reality). It is having the knowledge that there is no individual or personality but one boundless impersonality or Totality. Again, if one asks how that perfect knowledge is attained the same reply holds good which has been repeated again and again that it is attained through Viveka (discrimination) between Self and non-Self.

The non-Self superimposed on the Self has to be removed. The ego etc. where the body has been considered as the Self has to be removed. In this process of proving how the sheaths like Vijnanamaya Kosa which is non-Self are not the Atman, the Guru reverts back to Vijnanamaya Kosa on which he was talking before the interruption by the disciple. The Vijnanamaya Kosa is

subject to changes like birth and death. It does not shine by itself – hence it is insentient (jada). It is limited as it is not omnipresent. The consciousness is aware of it as if it is an object. Due to all these reasons Vijnanamaya Kosa is not the Atman.

Now he moves to Anandamaya Kosa (sheath of bliss). Anandamaya Kosa is inside Vijnanamaya Kosa and is spread over it. While likening it to a **Tittiri** bird, the Taittiriya Upanishad says – ‘Priya’ is the head of Anandamaya Kosa visualised as a bird and ‘moda’ is its right wing and ‘pramoda’ is its left wing. ‘Brahman’ is its tail and support²⁰.

Due to earlier Vasanas we like certain things, say, I like Gulab Jamun (a sweet). This state of liking is called ‘Priya’. When I actually get Gulab Jamun in my hand and I see it, the state of happiness I have is called ‘Moda’. When I actually eat Gulab Jamun, the state of happiness experienced is called ‘Pramoda’. The centre from which one gets such happiness on eating, on getting a child, on marrying etc. is the Atman. Hence that happiness centre can also be called Brahman. In aerodynamics, the tail of an aircraft is the most important one as the

²⁰ तस्य प्रियमेव शिरः । मोदो दक्षिणः पक्षः ।

प्रमोद उत्तरः पक्षः । आनन्द आत्मा । ब्रह्म पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा ॥

(Taitthireeya Upanishad 2-5-1)

entire balance is dependent on it. Hence Brahman has been described as the main support and tail.

This Anandamaya Kosa reveals itself naturally while one sleeps - a high level of happiness produced by the Tamoguna. Whenever as a result of virtuous acts done in previous births we get our favourite things and get into the state of moda and pramoda, then also Anandamaya Kosa reveals itself. All these things have been condensed in sloka nos. 209, 210 & 211 of Vivekachudamani.

According to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Anandamaya Kosa is so near that you can almost see the Brahman except for a thin veil separating it. But the Anandamaya Kosa is not the Supreme Atman as it is only a modification of 'Avidya' or ignorance and stems from the same cause. It is only a modification (vritti) of Tamoguna. It is a product of some virtuous acts done in previous births.

These are the various methods through which we search for the Atman in our body. In the Mahavakya 'You are That' – the pancha kosa viveka forms part of the analysis of the meaning "You", when the Guru teaches the disciple "You are That". By eliminating the five sheaths being mistaken as the Atman, we are coming to the one who is the witness (Sakshee) of all these five Kosas. This is pancha kosa viveka.

There is another method of unveiling the Atman by penetrating through the five layers or coverings called pancha Kosas. These five layers can also be considered by us as five bodies. The first layer as we have seen is the gross body made up of matter called the physical body. We are unable to see through it as it looks very solid and hence we do not become aware of the other four bodies. When the physical body is kept pure, we become aware and can jump over to the next body called vital body (Pranamaya kosa). How can we make it pure? It is by undertaking fasting initially and also by not indiscriminately eating. At the initial level, austerity or 'tapasya' means to regulate the body by undertaking fasts etc – “शरीरशोषणं तप इत्युच्यते”. At the higher levels of sadhana, concentrating on the oneness of the Atman (individual Self) and the Brahman (the Totality) is called Tapasya. Further, Ramanuja the founder of qualified non-dualism, prescribes that one has to ensure that the * food one eats should be pure. In the hotels, apart from the questionability of the level of hygiene, many of the cooks think of nothing but **money and carnal pleasures**. Further the proprietors of these eateries might have earned their money by illegal and sinful manners. If we eat the food prepared and served by

* आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः ।

them , their bad vibrations may go into us through the food and will impede our spiritual progress.

The second body consists of the various subtle airs like the one which we breathe in (Apana), the one which distributes the energies from the digested food (Samana) and upa- Pranas like the one which causes us to yawn etc. It is through the energy carried by the vital sheath that the body functions. This sheath is to be kept pure again in order to transcend it and go over to the next layer to the mental body (Manomaya). This should be kept pure again through 'Pranayama' – regulation of breath. In addition, one has to expose himself to good vibrations. For instance, we have to avoid the company of bad people – say given to liquor, debauchery, and licentiousness and seek the company of devotees and saints (satsang).

Now we come to the third body – viz., the mental sheath (Manomaya kosa). Mind is not an organ like the eye or the ear but it is the name for a conglomeration of thoughts, one succeeding the other like the strands of vermicelli preparation or the spaghetti. It is the thoughts which are translated into actions – either bad and sinful or good or virtuous. Further, the entire world is only a thought like the dream world and its objects. So any continuous and deep thought will materialize as the thing which we think of. It is essential that the thoughts are

kept pure, i.e. free from lust, greed, anger, envy etc. This is the way to jump into the fourth body i.e. Vijnanamaya kosa.

Actually, it is the mind i.e. the mental sheath which does not allow us to be aware or conscious at all times. We do things unconsciously. When we eat, we are not aware of what we are eating as we are thinking of our business or other affairs. When we are watching a suspense story in the T.V. there are times when our breath as well as thoughts cease. Thus when the mind stops we are aware. It is then that the Vijnanamaya's functioning is seen. In order to transcend it we should always consciously do every act. If we do japa (chanting of a mantra) or one-pointedly concentrate on the Brahman – Atman, the mind becomes a no-mind (mano nasa) one day. This is also another way to transcend the fourth sheath.

The last sheath is the bliss sheath (Anandamaya). It is from this we feel bliss when you are in deep meditation, deep sleep or visualize a God with form (like Siva, Vishnu, Divine mother etc). This bliss seems to be so self-sufficient that we do not want to move anywhere from this state. It is almost the end of the journey but we have to go beyond this bliss also. The seekers on the devotional path consider this as the final achievement and do not want to be further liberated. But whether one wants or

not, the bliss sheath being in the gravitational field of the Absolute, one is pulled out of this sheath into the Brahman, the ultimate Reality. This may be called the Grace of the Lord. One is automatically sucked into the wall-less, 'impersonal infinite' beyond without any effort.

The next is deha traya vivkea - discriminating the three bodies. By eliminating all the three bodies being the Atman, we again come to the one who is Sakshee (the witness) of the three bodies.

Then there will be Avastha-traya Viveka-discriminative analysis of all the three states viz.waking, dream and sleep.

As regards what actually is represented by the five sheaths, it is beautifully described by the late Swami Akhandananda Sararaswati of Brindavan in one of his books :

Actually all these five sheaths are imagined in order to make us understand the one who is the witness of these sheaths. This is right hand. The bones,the flesh, the skin etc. of which this hand is made constitute the Annamaya Kosa(the material sheath). If this right hand gets paralysed the hand which cannot be moved is the Annamaya Kosa. The energy which has gone away from the hand, which enabled you to lift your hand originally, that was the sheath of vital force (Pranamaya kosa). Even

while active, the hand could not have lifted itself. Only when there was a desire to lift, the hand lifted itself. This region where the desire arose, it was Manomaya Kosa. The one who created the desire to lift the hand was Vijnanamaya Kosa. After all, the hand was made to rise up in order to achieve some purpose. The comfort or happiness you got in raising your hand was from Anandamaya Kosa. This is the way Swami Akhandanandji has explained.

When once each of the five Kosas has been negated as “this is not the Atman” by proper logic, at the end of the negation only one awareness as the witness to the negation remains. What is thus left is the Atman. He is also the witness of the three states (waking, sleeping and dreaming). He never undergoes any change, he is not tainted, he is always of the form of Bliss, (Ananda). That is how one should find the Atman who is one’s own nature as the substratum when the Pancha Kosas are all negated.

Now again the disciple intervenes with a question:- “Sir, when everything has been negated, I see only a void. What is there to be understood as the Self? All these Kosas were experienced earlier as the modification of ‘I’ and now their absence is also being experienced. Who was the one who experienced them? They were earlier experienced after identifying the Self with them

and now their absence is experienced separately. The Guru explains²¹ that the one knower who cannot be himself experienced but experiences all, he is the witness of all. He should be known as the Atman by applying the one-pointed and extremely subtle intellect. The one who sees the presence and absence of a thing is himself the witness. All the five Kosas were imagined on the Atman and then they were negated. It is a method called **adhyaropa** and **apavada** in philosophy.

The one by whom an object is experienced is called the Sakshee or the witness for it. When once you say that I see nothing except the absence of everything, it means that you see the absence of everything. It again means that you are the witness (Sakshee) of that absence (Abhava).

Atman or Self is the one who is clearly²² seen as manifesting in all the three states, namely waking, sleeping and the dream states. He also witnessed the

²¹ सर्वे येनानुभूयन्ते यः स्वयं नानुभूयते
तमात्मानं वेदितारं विद्धि बुद्ध्या सुसूक्ष्मया ॥ (Sl. 216)

²² जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुमिषु स्फुटतरं योऽसौ समुज्जृम्भते ।
प्रत्यग्रूपतया सदाहमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्नैकधा ॥
नानाकारविकारभागिन इमान् पश्यन्नहंधीमुखान् ।
नित्यानन्दचिदात्मना स्फुरति तं विद्धि स्वमेतं हृदि ॥ (Sl. 219)

Kosas, the ego, the body etc. which undergo many changes like birth, death, transformation, decline, growth etc. and is also shining in the form of 'I' – I being inside all in the form of perennial bliss and Self-effulgence inside the heart. Know that as the Atman. These slokas describing the Atman can be used for meditation purposes.

A fool when he sees the image of the sun in the water in the pot considers the image as the original sun. He does not know that the image is different. Similarly, an ignorant person considers the intellect which functions due to reflection of the Total Consciousness (Chidabhasa) as his own Self (I) due to an illusion and the lack of discrimination.

Why are we not able to see the Paramatman who is everywhere? It is because he is hidden inside a cave called the Intellect. The intellect functions as if it has got an awareness of its own. Actually it is only an image of the Consciousness and that is why by illusion we identify ourselves ('I') with intellect. When²³ one is able to come face to face with his Atman which is his own form, he becomes bereft of all sins. The Self is the witness of all

²³ नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्ममन्तर्बहिःशून्यमनन्यमात्मनः ।
विज्ञाय सम्यङ्निजरूपमेतत् पुमान् विपाप्मा विरजो विमृत्युः ॥ (Sl. 223)

and is different from both the manifest and the unmanifest. It is this which lends light to all the objects and makes them shine. It is unlimited by time and space. Even though it is everywhere as the material cause of all objects, it is so subtle that it has no form, it has no outside or inside. It is bereft of the world and has no death. In other words, it never slips from its own form.

Thus one becomes free from all sorrows and fear from any quarters. Hence a seeker finally becomes omniscient, full of bliss. The sadhaka has to know who he is and without that knowledge of the Self there is no way to get released from samsara. ‘TAT TVAM ASI’ (You Are That) is the most important Mahavakya. Here ‘Tvam’ refers to the seeker who is desirous of liberation (moksha). The ‘Avastha Traya’ analysis, Pancha Kosa analysis etc. are all called Tvam padartha sodhana – an analysis as to what is meant by ‘I’ or Self (same as ‘Tvam’- you, when the Guru addressed the disciple. We have found out the one who is the witness of the Pancha Kosas and the witness of the three states (waking, dream and sleep). Brahman which is identified with Atman is called ‘Tat’. After talking about the five sheaths, the text talks about ‘Brahman’ - as to what it is. That is the analysis of ‘Tat’ (Tat padartha sodhanam). Now, after sloka no. 224, Sankara proceeds to affirm the oneness of the Atman (the individual Self) and Brahman, the ultimate Supreme Reality. Proving the oneness of the Atman and

Brahman is the purpose of all the Upanishads. The knowledge that I am not an individual attached to one separate body but I am Brahman, the Supreme Being is the cause for liberation. In other words, to remain as Supreme Brahman is alone Moksha or Liberation.

Now a question may arise as to how the liberation from the world can result by remaining as Brahman? The one who remains as Brahman, the Infinite, will not have any more births or deaths and so attains moksha.

Sankara repeats the definition of Brahman giving His real nature. He is the truth as he cannot be negated at any time in the past, present or future (Satyam). He cannot be limited either by time, space or objects. An ordinary human being is limited by a birthday (as it did not exist earlier to that day) and also by a death day (as it ceases to exist after that day). Similarly, if a person is in Delhi at this moment, he cannot be at Bombay at the same moment. So he is limited by time. If there is a chair at this place, no other person can remain in the place where the chair exists. Hence we are all limited by other objects. As Brahman is not limited²⁴ by any factor, He is infinite (Anantam). He is all knowledge. The

²⁴ सत्यंज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म विशुद्धं परं स्वतस्मिद्धम् ।
नित्यानन्दैक रसं प्रत्यगभिन्नं निरन्तरं जयति ॥

Brahman is the ultimate knowledge by knowing which all else is known. He is the light (knowledge) which reveals everything else. He is pure as He has no attributes. He is not dependent on anything else. He is beyond the clutches of Maya. He is always of the form of perennial bliss and he is identical with the Jiva. He is pure existence. At the highest stage of enlightenment there is no other object apart from Him. There is only non-duality.

Even when the multi-featured world is seen by us, it is pure imagination and ultimately it is only Brahman. A mud pot in reality is only mud as the entire pot is made up of mud only and we only call it as a pot- a difference in nomenclature. In a modified form, it is the mud which is called the pot. The pot is no way different from mud. There is no new thing called a pot. Pot is only an imaginary name for a modification. This very example given by Adi Sankara is based on what is given²⁵ in Chandogya Upanishad. The only existence (Sat) is Brahman and all its products like air, water etc., (the basic elements) are not different from Brahman itself. None of them has a separate existence. The Atharva Veda declares that the entire world is all²⁶ Brahman only

²⁵ वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं ।
मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ॥ (Chandogya)

²⁶ तस्मादेतत् ब्रह्ममात्रं हि विश्वं ।
नाधिष्ठानात् भिन्नतारोपितस्य । (Sl. 233)

and they are not different. The world is only a false superimposition (Adhyaropa). At no time a superimposition (like a rope mistaken as a snake) can be different from the sub-stratum (i.e. the rope).

‘ Tat Tvam Asi ’ is the main Mahavakya which teaches us the oneness of Atman (the individual soul) and Brahman (the ultimate Totality). In the earlier verses Sankara has investigated into the meaning of Tvam knowing it as a witness of three states (waking, sleeping and dream) and also as something different from the five sheaths like Annamaya etc. (Pancha kosa vilakshana). In the last few slokas he has started proving the identification of Tat and Tvam (Asi) giving the examples of pot and clay. Knowing this oneness alone leads to release (moksha) from samsara.

If the world is held to have an independent existence and true by itself, it would mean that the Self is not infinite as it is limited by the world. In that case the Scriptures would be proved wrong. In support of his stand, in this text, Srimad Bhagavad Gita is quoted²⁷ by Sankara. Firstly he says that the entire world is in me and I am not in the world. For understanding this let us

²⁷ मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ।
न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योग मेश्वरम् ।

(Bhagavad Gita Chapter IX - Sl. 4&5)

take a pot. The pot is manufactured by enclosing a part of the space by the mud walls of the pot. So the pot is in the space and we cannot say that the space is in the pot. It looks like anachronism to say that I (Lord) am the substratum for the entire world and in the next sloka to say that I (Lord) am not the substratum of the world. This, he says is “His power of Maya”. So long as we are ignorant, the world is seen separately, but it is all in the Supreme Being. The moment we begin to understand the truth, the Supreme Being is the only truth which exists and nothing else exists. Hence the world is only an appearance or superimposition on the Supreme Being. It does not exist independently. It is only a delusion. If this world is a truth, why doesn't it exist during sleep?

After having proved the falsehood of the world, Sankara concludes the meaning of Tat in such a beautiful way that we can use the four slokas (239-242) for meditation purpose.

The Supreme Brahman, the ultimate Reality which is of the nature of pure existence, is second to none. It is made up of pure consciousness without any objects, not at all touched by ignorance, never subject to any transformation, bereft of birth or death, having the form of unbroken bliss, having no differentiations which are always created by Maya; eternal, having no parts;

immeasurable, having no form or name, immutable and shining by its own resplendence. It is bereft of the three differentiations namely, the knower, knowledge and objects to be known. It is an unbroken awareness. It is beyond the jurisdiction of mind and speech. It can neither be renounced nor received. It is the greatest of lights which reveals to us the sun etc.

Thus having explained the meanings of the three words, Tat, Tvam and Asi, Sankara proceeds to give the meaning of the entire sentence ‘Tat Tvam Asi’. The purpose of all these sentences and all Upanishads is to establish the oneness of the Atman (individual soul) and the Brahman. There is only an infinite, wall-less impersonal Totality and no separate individual souls or persons exist.

A sentence can be interpreted as it is but it may lead to anachronism. In that case we resort to a special method called ‘lakshana’ or implication. For instance, if a horse race manager tells his servant “Bring that red”, he means the red horse. Here you have to add a word which is implied in it without having the word red. This Lakshana method also can be divided into three kinds – Jahal Lakshana (where you leave the original intention of a word in the sentence), Ajahal Lakshana (where without leaving the original intention of words you may add some new word) and Jahadajahal lakshana or Bhaga

Tyaga lakshana. The last one is used in Vedanta. For example you converted the gold in your anklet and made a necklace out of it. Then you tell your friend that it is the same anklet. Here we have omitted the adjuncts of the name and form of the earlier anklet and also the present necklace but you only compared the gold which existed in the anklet and also in the necklace. This is Bhaga-tyga lakshana.

In 'Tat Tvam Asi' this method is applied. Both Tat (God) and Tvam (Jiva) have apparently opposite qualities and they cannot be the same. For instance Jiva's (Individual soul) knowledge is limited while Isvara's is unlimited. So 'Tvam' cannot be 'Tat'. But if you leave the name, form and other adjuncts of both and understand the reality of the thing which is only awareness, existence and bliss, this being the same in both, what is meant by the word 'Tat' is the same as the meaning of 'Tvam' and vice versa. Thus in Tat-Tvam-Asi we have to get the knowledge of that one conscious principle (Chetana) which is in both. All the apparent differences are due to the external adjuncts (upadhis). 'Maya' (cause of creation) is the upadhi of the Lord, while the body which is created is the upadhi of the Jivas. For instance, **khetaka** (a type of weapon) is the adjunct for the soldier (upadhi) while the kingdom is of the king. When you remove the upadhis there is neither the king nor the soldier. Both are alike. Similarly when you remove

the Maya (Karana) upadhi of the Iswara and Karya upadhi(body) of the Jiva – along with five sheaths (panchakosa), the awareness which is left (Chinmatra) is identical in both.

How to remove the upadhis? It has to be done in the manner described in the scriptures.

The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad²⁸ firmly declares “NOT THIS, NOT THIS”, meaning that the plurality of the world superimposed on the Supreme reality, the Brahman is false. This knowledge gained from the Scriptures is not enough. We should then resort to rational thinking also. The snake seen at the night on the rope is false even though at the time of seeing it looked very real and I would not have touched it even if I were offered a crore of rupees. Similarly, a dream looked very real when seen and on waking up, it was proved false. That which was not in the past or will not be in future but is only seen in the present is called an illusion. Whenever you have a serious bodily ailment, think “ I am not the body, I am not the mind” etc. Thus by negating the body and five sheaths covering the Atman you will slowly come to have a firm conviction that “ I am not the body, mind or intellect but I am the only

²⁸ नेदं नेदं कल्पितत्वात् सत्यं रज्जुदृष्टव्यालवत्स्वप्नवच्च ।

इत्थं दृश्यं साधुयुक्त्या व्यपोह्य ज्ञेयः पश्चादेकभावस्तयोर्धः ॥ (SI. 248)

Reality which is pure Consciousness.” Thus one comes to know the oneness of Iswara and Jiva (or Brahman and Atman) which is the ultimate teaching of all the Upanishads.

To make it clearer, Sankara **posits** another example. I meet a bald headed and bearded monk at Rishikesh and say “Oh , This is the same Devdutta”, meaning an Air pilot with a prominent mustache and with a head full of black hair, whom you knew very well thirty years back when you were in England. As the two persons had different adjuncts like the hair in the head, colour of the hair etc., how do I affirm that this person is the same Devdutta? I just eliminated all the adjuncts and compared them. Similarly Iswara and Jiva have opposite qualities. Iswara is immortal and Jiva is mortal. One is plenary and the other has plurality. One has infinite knowledge and the other has finite knowledge. Remove those upadhis and compare them when their qualities of consciousness alone are left. You will have to conclude that both are identical. This is what is meant by TAT TVAM ASI and so many other Mahavakyas (mega - dictums of the Upanishads.)

So far Sankara was citing sentences of upanishads which through injunctions teach the oneness of Jiva and Brahman. Now he gives the same teachings in a negative way. There are sentences in the Upanishads which

describe the Brahman as “not gross, not small like atoms, not short and not long also²⁹”. By not gross (asthoolam), the gross objects like the body which is normally considered as Self are negated. One cannot tell the measurements or the expanse of space. Similarly except through the scriptures one cannot get any idea of the right knowledge by any other means, say through arguments based on logic. Through contemplation and samadhi one has to purify one’s intellect and then realize that Self is only the unbroken Consciousness. The gross body and other things., which through ignorance we had considered as the Self or Brahman have to be renounced as absolutely false.

Just as during the dream²⁹ time and space as also the objects and the noise proved to be false when the person wakes up and the entire dream world was a delusion, so also in the waking state also, the world seen has been created as result of ignorance. The body, the senses and the prana (vital elan) etc. were actually non-existent though they looked very real. So you are That who rests in absolute peace, who is second to none and Supreme. Now Sankara, in ten slokas, gives in a beautiful

²⁹ अस्थूल मनणवहस्व - भदीर्घं

जातिनीतिकुलगोत्रदूरगं नामरूपगुणदोषवर्जितम्।

देशकालविषयातिवर्ति यद् ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि॥ (SI. 255)

rhythmic way as to how to continuously think of Brahman who cannot be defined or even conceived.

Consider you are the Atman, that ultimate principle, namely Brahman, who is beyond all the rules of caste, lineage etc, completely bereft of the good qualities as also the defects by attributing a name and form and also beyond all time, space and objects. Contemplate always that you are Atman, same as Brahman, which is Supreme, beyond descriptions by words, an object of perception only for those who have the eyes in the form of Pure Knowledge, a thing without a beginning, constituted of Pure Awareness. Contemplate your Atman as the ultimate principle of Brahman, which is immutable, absolutely bereft of birth, growth, transformation, deterioration, diseases and final destruction. It is bereft of all differences, still like an ocean without waves, ever-liberated. Though non-dual, it is the cause of several imagined creations, in the form of substratum, absolutely unique and different from both the cause and the effect. Brahman is the only final truth but though the only existence it shines³⁰ in various forms as many objects qualified by name, form and qualities. It is just like the

³⁰ यद्विभाति सदनेकधा भ्रमात्रामरूपगुणविक्रियात्मना।

हेमवत्स्वयमविक्रियं सदा ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ (Sl. 263)

gold which, though retaining its original form shines in various ways the rings, bracelet etc., Let us always mediate on the Self³¹ as the Supreme, beyond words, capable of being seen with eyes in the form of Pure Knowledge, and as Pure Consciousness bereft of all objects.

The aforesaid description of Brahman who is indescribable and inconceivable is meant for daily meditation on the Brahman. We have only to sit and contemplate on the Brahman as above and also as stated below:-

“I am that ultimate Reality³², the Brahman who is never affected by the **Shadoormis (the internal waves)**, namely – thirst and appetite, sorrow and delusion, old age and death. Brahman cannot be realized by any of our senses like eyes, ears etc. but can be experienced in the pure hearts of Yogis whose minds have been permanently turned away from all worldly objects.

³¹ यत्परं सकलवागगोचरं गोचरं विमलबोधचक्षुषः।

शुद्धचिद्घनमनादि वस्तु यद् ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि॥ (SI. 256)

³² षड्भिरुर्मिभिरयोगि योगिहृद्भावितं न करणैर्विभावितम्।

बुद्ध्यवेद्यमनवद्यभूति यद् ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ (SI. 257)

I am that Brahman³³ and is not subject to any transformation (like rice after cooking) or degeneration, diseases or death. Brahman is the cause of the birth, sustenance and the dissolution of the entire universe (It is in the Brahman that there is an appearance of a universe just like the appearance of dream in a man).

I am that Brahman undifferentiated (unlike in the world where there are different objects with different characteristics), absolutely still like an ocean, devoid of all the waves. It is always free, unlimited by time, space and objects. It is one indivisible entity.

For meditation on the Brahman to be successful, it is necessary that we should forget the world. It is the thoughts of the objects of the world like money, son, wife etc which will be intruding in between. For that purpose Sankara tells us a device³⁴.

We recognize a king among a battalion of his army through his special royal **Paraphernalia**. In the same way know your own Self out of the assembly of the body,

³³ जन्मवृद्धिपरिणत्यपक्षय-व्याधिनाशनविहीनमव्ययम्।
विश्वसृष्ट्यवनिघातकारणं ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि॥ (SI. 259)

³⁴ सम्बोधमात्रं परिशुद्धतत्त्वं विज्ञाय संघे नृपवच्च सैन्ये।
तदात्मनैवात्मनि स्वात्मनि सर्वदा स्थितो विलापय ब्रह्मणि दृश्यजातम्॥ (SI. 266)

vital force (Prana), ego etc., as the pure, real entity and as the knowledge which reveals all objects and devoid of any relationship with the world. Thus, do not think of anything but the Self. This will be possible if we resort to the method of “absorption”. The entire world is made up of the five basic elements – earth, water, fire, air and space. As the earth has come out of water only, absorb all the earth into the water mentally. Then, as the entire water has come out of fire absorb all the water into the fire, element. In the same manner absorb all the fire into the air and all the air into the space. Finally absorb through imagination the entire space of the world into the Brahman from whom the entire world has emanated so that nothing but Brahman remains. The last step has to be done by keeping the mind concentrated on the Self alone.

Now the question arises as to how to keep the mind steady on the Self (Atman). Even though theoretically we have known the Atman as different from the five sheaths (Panchakosa) dealt with earlier and also as identical with Brahman, the vasanas inherited from previous conditioning are very powerful. Hence we always consider that ‘I am the doer and I experience the result’ (Karta and Bhokta). This can be completely eliminated by turning the mind completely inwards (ie. through Nirvikalpa Samadhi). “कर्तृत्व भोक्तृत्व लक्षणः संसारः ”. The entire world consists of each one’s attributing all

actions and the results to oneself and so everyone gets entangled in sins and virtuous acts resulting in subsequent births and consequent miseries and sufferings. Removing these vasanas through undifferentiated Samadhi (superconscious state) is the way to steady the mind on the Self.

So long as obstacles exist, to be established continuously in the Self never happens. Now Sankara details the main obstacles and the devices to remove them. In this process he uses a very commonly cited technical word of Vedanta called “adhyasa” (superimposition). This is the fundamental base for all enquiries as per Vedanta. It is only on the basis of adhyasa that we attribute delusion or ignorance in Atman (Self) or Brahman (Supreme Truth). Sankara has written pages on Adhyasa at the very beginning of his famous Brahma Sutra Bhashya and it is known as Adhyasa Bhashya.

Adhyasa (adhi+ āsa) means to superimpose something on something else. A rope was lying on the floor and as it was dusk it was not clear. So I attributed to it all the characteristics of a snake and I saw a snake. A snake was superimposed on a rope. This is called Adhyasa (अतास्मिन् तद्बुद्धिः :) - on an object which is not a snake my mind superimposed a snake and all its qualities. In Vedanta we have no explanation as to how that delusion came (It is called anirvachaniya khyati).

I am not this body, nor this body is mine. The body is not the Self (Anantman – non Self). The attitude of “I” and “mine” towards the body which all of us practically have, is ‘Adhyasa’. This is the main obstacle. This has to be dispelled by always being established in our Self.

The method of dispelling all the delusions due to ‘Adhyasa’ is as follows :-

One should³⁵ leave off following other people. Be indifferent to the favour or frown of other people. Whatever others may think or say, we should not be bothered. Do not bother about the body. It has nothing to do with you. Body is governed by its own Prarabdha (previous karmas).

Leave off studying any books other than those which will be useful in getting moksha. Even if they are of use in moksha, one should not study many books nor should one go on thinking of what has been studied. One of the principal³⁶ Upanishads viz. Chhandogya Upanishad affirms this. One has to leave the Vasanas of scriptures, the Vasanas of the body and the Vasanas of pleasing people.

³⁵ लोकानुवर्तनं त्यक्त्वा, त्यक्त्वा देहानुवर्तनम्।
शास्त्रानुवर्तनं त्यक्त्वा स्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु। (Sl. 271)

³⁶ नानुध्यायेन्बहून् शब्दान् वाचो विग्लापनं हि तत्।

The ultimate paramatma vasana (the vasana of the Supreme Being) is overwhelmed by the various vasanas of non - Self (anatma vasana) as mentioned above, which hide the Self. By brining into play our 'Prajna', this dust has to be removed. Prajna has been defined as the modification of the mind made up of pure awareness, undifferentiated and flowing in only one direction when once the Brahman and the Atman have been analysed and found to be identical.

The Atmavasana is completely hidden by the various groups of anantmavasanas like the body-vasana, scriptural-vasana etc. When once the mind is established only in the contemplation of Atman at all times, all the anatmavasanas are destroyed so that the Atmavasana becomes very clear. By keeping the mind always on the Atman, the mind dies- i.e., the Vasanas which are embedded in the mind also die. When Vasanas die, the Adhyasa (superimposition) also dies. The mind can be continuously kept on the Atman or Brahman by eliminating all the Rajoguna and Tamoguna and keeping the Satvaguna alone to dominate the mind. Satva means satvic works like keeping the mind one-pointed and it develops satva guna. Such a work will help us to overcome Rajoguna, which propels us into doing action. Thus the Rajoguna is quelled by Satvaguna. This Satvaguna is also destroyed by the pure nirguna i.e., being without any qualities. Thus the adhyasa has to be dispelled.

The other factor that disturbs us in our quest for 'Moksha' is our body. We need not worry about the body at all as the entire course of the body³⁷ is governed by the Prarabdhas (past karmas). Hence we should not bother about the body at all but should make effort with courage to dispel the adhyasa³⁸. We should again affirm to ourselves that we are not the individual souls but we are the Supreme Being. By doing it again and again, the adhyasa which has come to us due to the vasanas obtained from the previous births can be dispelled. The scriptures say that everything in this world is Atman only. The scriptures also say that the entire world is revealed in the light of the Atman only and so there is no independent existence for any of the objects of the world apart from the Atman. In other words, the entire world is only an imagination for which the substratum is the Atman. Besides, a superimposition or an imagination is never different from the substratum. By adopting these arguments and having known the all pervasiveness of the Atman by actual experience through meditation following the injunction of the scriptures, the adhyasa of

³⁷ प्रारब्धं पुष्यति वपुरिति निश्चित्य निश्चलः।
धैर्यमालम्ब्य यत्नेन स्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ॥ (Sl. 280)

³⁸ नाहं जीवः परं ब्रह्मेत्यतद्द्वयावृत्तिपूर्वकम्।
वासनावेगतः प्राप्तस्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ॥

considering the anatman - like body as Atman has to be dispelled.

For a person who is in the habit of contemplating always on the Supreme Being, there is no action or duty to be done except performing essential bodily functions. Knowing this, with single-minded devotion, remove the adhyasa by clear understanding that Brahman (the Totality) and Atman (the Individual Self) are one and the same. The Mahavakya “You Are That” dispels the adhyasa in order to have a firm faith in the oneness of both Brahman and Atman. Be at all times alert and with the mind never swerving from its aim, one should continue to eliminate Adhyasa till the idea of considering the body as ‘I’ is completely destroyed. One should do this dispelling of Adhyasa continuously till such time as the Jiva and world begin to appear as a dream. Never give any opportunity to forget the Self by being engaged in sleep, gossip and other objects of the world.

This body is made of impure substances such as flesh and has come out of the impurities of the parents. Always keep the body at a distance as if it is untouchable and remember that you are the Pure Brahman. Just as we merge the space inside a pot in the total space, merge the individual soul in the Supreme Being. In other words, a pot is nothing but an enclosure of a portion of the vast space by mud walls. We can always consider the space

inside the pot as part of the total space only and this is known as merging the individual space in the total space. Hence always meditate that your Self is an indivisible part of the Total Existence which is the only Reality. Meditating like this, remain in absolute silence. Know that the substratum of the imagination caused by the Maya is yourself, which is the Self shining. Leave off this entire universe consisting of the fourteen worlds and also your body like a pot full of excreta. In other words by the very knowledge of the substratum, all the objects which have been imagined are destroyed automatically. When a rope is mistaken for a serpent at night, by the very knowledge of the substratum that it is a rope (with the help of a torch) the entire delusion of a serpent is destroyed. Merge the idea of "I" which has been superimposed on the body, on the Atman which is absolute Consciousness, and thus leave off all your attachments to your subtle body and become the one Undifferentiated Reality. The appearance of this world is as false as a city seen in a mirror. Hence the world is nothing but Brahman, which is ones' real Self. The one who has known this has performed all the duties of the world. Attain your own nature, which is the only reality. It is pure consciousness and Bliss, formless and actionless. Then you will be able to leave off the illusion of this body just like an actor leaves off the robes worn for the drama and becomes his original Self.

By all the above means, realise that this visible world is false, as it exists only momentarily. You cannot really know it, because each one of your senses is meant to grasp only one aspect of an object. For instance, the eyes cannot smell and ears cannot see. The world is an illusion produced by the senses. The Atman is certainly different from the world. It is That, which is meant by the word 'I'. It is the witness of your ego. It is something which is different from both, the manifest and the unmanifest. The bodies and other objects are subject to various changes like, birth, growth, death etc. The Atman is the witness of all the changes. It does not undergo any change and is eternal. The unreality of the world becomes clear in sleep, when the person is not aware of the entire world. The unreality of the body and the ego is again made very clear in dream, when the mind is completely engaged in the imagination of a dream world when one becomes unaware of the rain, storm etc. raging outside. In the sleep, one sees the non-existence of the body and the ego. Hence, the Atman is the witness of the existence as well the non-existence of objects. He is changeless and eternal³⁹. Leave off your attachment to the body, which is only a mass of flesh imagined by the intellect and ego.

³⁹ अतोऽभिमानं त्यज मांसपिण्डे पिण्डाभिमानिन्यपि बुद्धिकल्पिते
कालत्रयाबाध्यमखण्डबोधं ज्ञात्वा स्वमात्मानमुपैहि शान्तिम् ॥ (Sl. 297)

Then the question arises, “What is Atman or Self?” It is knowledge of the Totality and it is not capable of being influenced by time i.e., the past, the present and the future. Now Sankara gives us a device for removing the adhyasa. One should leave off one’s attachment to the lineage, name, fame and station in life, i.e., monkhood etc. which are all based on one’s gross body. Remain as the “Indivisible consciousness and Bliss”. The basic factor responsible for our being entangled in the samsara is the ego. While various other factors which also contribute to the samsara exist, but they all stem and branch out from this basic factor. So long as we have any relationship with ego, we can go nowhere near Moksha (Liberation). The moment one is free from the ego, one remains in one’s nature as the Reality, full of bliss and shining by itself. Now, Sankara goes to enunciate the devices for rooting out the ego. As the ego is only a product of imagination, one has to discriminate and find out one’s real nature and get rid of the ignorance leading to the ego. The moment this ego is fully destroyed, the real nature of our being one with Brahman or the Atman comes out without any impediments blocking it.

The question is, how to destroy the ego? Sankara explains it by an example. The ego is like a ferocious serpent which has become very strong by drinking the milk of worldly objects and is enclosing the Atman by its

three hoods made up of the three gunas, thus rendering the treasure of Atman impossible to be enjoyed by everybody. This serpent of ego can be completely destroyed by cutting off its three hoods made of Satva, Rajas and Tamas by the great sword of Vijnana (experiential knowledge) obtained through the realisation of Brahman gained by one-pointed concentration. Thus the treasure known as the Bliss of Brahman becomes capable of being enjoyed by the courageous. Thus by the destruction of the ego (Aham) the automatic destruction of the various manifestations of the ego namely lineage, gotra, name, form and the station in life (Ashrama) etc. takes place. It is only the ego which is the result of adhyasa which clouds and prevents one from seeing the Atman who is all Consciousness, who remains unchanged, who is an embodiment of bliss and thus we are pushed into the mire of samsara. The ego, viz. the identification of the body with our Self, is one's prime enemy and is always around our neck like thorns. This can only be destroyed by one-pointed contemplation resulting in the knowledge of Reality. Vijnana is the only sword which can cut ego into pieces. One can then enjoy the happiness of the kingdom of the Atman. After this what remains to be done?

When once our thoughts identifying ourselves with the body are turned away, one is free from attachment towards all objects of the world as one has now attained

the highest benefit of getting the only precious goal in life, namely, the Ultimate Reality. Thus one should experience the bliss of the Atman and remain fully established in the undifferentiated Brahman. This is what is to be done. People may wonder why Sankara repeats again and again the same instructions which he has given earlier⁴⁰. This is because even though the ego which has grown and extended its tentacles from time immemorial over a vast area has been destroyed totally, if in an unwary moment much later we casually think of it, it gets rejuvenated and will put hundreds of obstructions in the way of our being established in the bliss of the Atman.

Now the question arises as to how the ego that has been destroyed can rise again. Sankara now explains that just as a corpse can be revived by divine nectar, thinking of the objects of the world can revive the ego. One has to be very careful and vigilant every moment so as not to give a chance for the ego to revive by even casually thinking of the objects the world. It is just like a withering and dying lemon tree being revived by watering it. Even if we think of the worldly objects, how can the ego which has died be rejuvenated? This is told elsewhere that, the moment the mind enters the objects of the

⁴⁰ समूलकृतोऽपि महानहं पुनर्व्युल्लेखितः स्याद्यादि चेतसा क्षणम्।
संजीव्य विक्षेपशतं करोति नभस्वता प्रावृषि वारिदो यथा।। (SI. 310)

world; it goes on thinking of their qualities. These thoughts induce a desire to possess them. Then action takes place with all its **deleterious consequences** of entangling a person into samsara. Thus, when we think of the worldly objects, we forget our divine nature. Then we begin to consider the ego as the real Self. Desire to possess the objects which appear to be favourable to our body etc. cannot arise without this limited ego which considers the body as the Self. Sankara again and again emphasizes the necessity for desisting from the thoughts of the world. We observe in our daily life that a small seed can grow into a big tree by expanding its effect, namely sprouting etc.. The ego is the seed and the effect is the thoughts of the world. When the latent desires of the world grow, its effect grows by resulting in an action which involves us in samsara (phenomenal world). If the result happens to be the thoughts of the world, it cannot happen without the basic factor of ego. By continuous thinking of worldly objects, the ego, which is the seed, grows. Thus the cause and the effect undergo a mutual growth. Even though the ego has been destroyed by Vijnana resulting from discrimination, it is never completely lost but remains in the form of a latent vasana. So this vasana just waits for an opportunity to grow, the moment we cease to be established in the Atman. When in full alertness and without the least negligence, if we remain in the continuous thought of Brahman, there will be no place for worldly thoughts to enter and they

cannot remain in the form of vasanas. Just as a small spark of fire, however small, grows when it comes into contact with dry grass and becoming a big conflagration is capable of burning up an entire forest, similarly, the ego when it remains as a latent vasana, when coming into contact with the world, tumbles a person down from his own nature. It gives rise to thoughts of the worldly objects so that we are subjected to the entire gamut of delusion, thus entangling us in samsara. Hence, one has to be vigilant every second; then we will not fall into the mire of samsara by forgetting our real nature of bliss, which results in efforts for possessing the worldly objects, causing unhappiness in our failure to get the objects, or happiness in getting them, resulting in pride. Because of the happiness and transgressing of dharma on account of our pride, the intellect gets impure because of its lack of ability to grasp the Atman. Then, follows the identification of the body with the Atman and indefinite continuation of Samsara in the form of birth, death and growth etc. So a sadhaka who strives for cutting out the bondages of samsara has to burn away both the vasanas and their effects. The subtle ego grows because of the thoughts of the world and subsequent actions. The complete destruction of the vasanas, the thoughts and the involvement of the Self in worldliness are required. As the Self alone remains in all states in all places, at all times, we are not to see any object as different from the

substratum, namely, the Brahman. When once the action is destroyed the thoughts from which it emanated and the vasanas also die. When all the vasanas die, one gets liberation while alive. Just as even deep darkness gets dissolved with the dawn of the Sun, in the same way, when the vasana related to Brahman goes on manifesting, the vasana relating to the ego, the body, senses and world objects etc. gets destroyed, as the mind is well refined by the thought of ultimate Reality through hearing, contemplation and meditation. When once we experience the essence of this unique bliss, there is no more bondage caused by considering the non-Self as the Self and not even the trace of unhappiness and miseries remains. Afterwards one should spend all one's time with an undisturbed and undistracted mind, contemplating Brahman, the only substratum of all the worldly objects, as the name and form of the object of the world have already been dissolved. This, one should do till such time as external distractions arise due to Prarabdha.

The master is very much concerned that his disciple should never again be subjected to miseries and sufferings and hence he warns him again against negligence, which could lead to the revival of unhappiness and miseries, even though, his sense of discrimination had been fully awakened. One has to daily cleanse his kamandalu, as otherwise, its lustre will be clouded by dust and other

impurities. One⁴¹. should exercise vigilance and any lapse or negligence will spell death as told by Rishi Sanat sujata to Dhritarashtra.

Just as a woman forgets her own husband due to the thoughts of her paramour, when a person turns his face towards the worldly objects, forgetfulness of the Reality takes place and intellect gets distracted however great a scholar he may be.

Just like the moss in the stagnant water comes back to its original place and covers the water however much it may be pushed to the distance, similarly, Maya covers even the wisest man in a moment of negligence. Just as, due to negligence, the ball which is used for play goes on rolling down and down the steps of the staircase due to a moment of negligence, in the same way, when the mind slips, it goes downward in quick succession.

Sankara now elaborates as to how a moment of negligence can spell spiritual death of a seeker. When, once the mind gets attracted by the worldly objects, it begins to think of the qualities of those objects. The more he ponders over those objects, the desire to possess and enjoy those objects arise. Desires are then translated into

⁴¹ प्रमादो ब्रह्मनिष्ठायां न कर्तव्यः कदाचन
प्रमादो मृत्युरित्याह भगवान्ब्रह्मणः सुतः ॥ (Sl. 322)

actions. Then one slips from one's nature and falls downward. The one who falls thus meets his destruction and will not be able to rise up again. Just like a person affected by diseases should leave off taking any food which is incompatible with his state of health, one should leave off contemplating on the objects of the world as it is the cause of all calamities. Thus, for a seeker, there is no other death than negligence. One should always be vigilant and with one's mind completely controlled, one should keep one's mind fully concentrated on Brahman. One who tries to be alone without any attachment or hatred by being freed from all relationship with all objects, such a person retains the same state even after the departure from this world. He who sees the world as other than the Atman will have to fall from the spiritual path. All the scriptures have negated that this entire world, including our own body up to the ego, is not the Self. The one, who considers the body etc. as the Atman, becomes a sinner and will be subjected to endless series of miseries and unhappiness. The seeker who is established in the ultimate truth of Reality is liberated and is worshiped by all. On the contrary, the one who is contemplating the unreal objects like the world gets destroyed. A seeker who has almost reached the level of a monk should leave off the contemplation of anatman (non-self) objects like the body, house etc. and should be established in the thought that 'I am the ultimate Reality'. Such a firm establishment and immediate experience

give the seeker bliss and all the miseries caused by ignorance vanish.

Sankara stresses again and again how extremely essential it is to be glued to Brahman at all times without diverting the mind to anything else even for a moment. One should leave off the least attachment to any worldly object as it will give rise to bad vasanas which in turn give rise to further births. Hence, one should avoid any diversion of the mind towards worldly objects and continue contemplating the Brahman always. When once the mind is controlled from going to external objects, the mind remains pleased and when once you keep the mind always pleased, the mind becomes one - pointed and becomes capable of God - realisation. When one becomes a scholar, has the power of discrimination between Reality and unreality, and knows about the ultimate Reality, how can he continue to have intimate contact with unreal objects, knowing well that they will lead to his downfall? It is only a child having no power of discrimination that will try to catch a serpent or the flame of a lamp. A seeker whose mind is attached to his body is not a freed soul. A person cannot be asleep and awake at the same time. One who maintains mental equanimity at all times and views all the movable and immovable objects of the world with the full knowledge that He alone exists in all those forms and has left off all ignorance and its effects is really liberated. His consciousness always remains undivided.

So long as a seeker remains with the body sense, that is considering the body as his Self, how can he fail to grasp the vibration of the external objects? It is because his entire mind is engaged in the experience of the external objects that he tries translating his desires into action. Completely abstaining from all relationship with external objects has to be done with effort by those who long for real bliss, by those who are engaged continuously in the contemplation of the Atman and by those who have totally renounced all the worldly objects, actions and the sins and virtues emanating from the actions.

In respect of a monk who has done the intimate (antaranga) sadhana like hearing about the Absolute from the Guru for the purpose of becoming one with the source in the world reaches up to the Samadhi stage and the disciple becomes completely peaceful having controlled all his senses.

There are two types of Samadhi states – differentiated (savikalpa) and undifferentiated (nirvikalpa). Savikalpa Samadhi is a state where, even though there is a revelation of the Atman as the Totality (the Brahman), the distinction still remains of the knower who looks at the Brahman and the Brahman. On the contrary, in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the distinction between the triad of the knower, the known and the knowledge merge as one knowledge alone and there is no knower separate

from it. Those who are established in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi at all times will be able to get Self - realisation as there are no latent desires (vasanas) accumulated from myriad births. No scholar, however wise he may be, will be able to destroy his ego which is a sine quo non for Self Realization. When a person considers a non-Self object like his body as his Self, then his own nature gets hidden. Thus the Reality is hidden by the ego or the ' I ' - sense which now gathers more strength. As the truth is already hidden, the projective power of ignorance creates a series of delusion after delusion and by utilising the power of resolution for further action, desires etc. distracts a person and takes him far away from the Self (Atman). Unless the hiding power is eliminated, it is impossible to get victory over the projective power. Just like the swan that separates milk from the water, by discriminating between the Self and the non-Self, the hiding power should be destroyed. Then we should withdraw the mind from the false non-Self objects. Then, victory over the projective power becomes easy because of the absence of all obstacles. Now the question is how to develop this discriminative power (Viveka). This Viveka⁴² is developed by the clear perception of the truth

⁴² सम्यग्विवेकः स्फुटबोधजन्यो विभज्य दृग्दृश्यपदार्थतत्त्वम्।
छिनत्ति मायाकृतमोहबन्धं यस्माद्विमुक्तस्य पुनर्न संसृतिः॥ (Sl. 346)

regarding the Self and the non-Self which is obtained by the grace of Guru and the study of the scriptures as also the experience resulting from the Mahavakyas (mega statements of the scriptures). This discrimination of the Self and non-Self roots out thoroughly the bondage of delusion (due to the non awareness of one's own nature) created by Maya. Thus, when one is released from bondage, he will never again be entangled in the Samsara. Now Sankara explains as to how the non-entanglement in Samsara results. When the fire of knowledge of oneness of the Supreme Being and the individual soul has been kindled in our mind, the entire forest of avidya (ignorance) is reduced to ashes. Thus, when one has reached the final truth that the Self alone exists and nothing else, where is the question of Samsara for him?

When the hiding power is lost, the Reality reveals itself. In other words, the false knowledge, because of which we considered the non-Self as the Self, is lost. Hence the misery and suffering caused by the projective power which created a separate world of myriad objects is all dispelled. Have we not seen that in the night when a rope has been mistaken for a snake, the correct position is revealed when lit by the torch? All the three namely - the hiding of the true nature of the rope, the distraction of the delusion due to the same and also the miseries due to the fear caused by the projection of the snake -

are all eliminated at one stroke. Hence it is essential for a wise man to know first the truth of the ultimate Reality so that the projection which hid the truth could be destroyed and then the individual can be liberated from bondage. Just like by contact with the fire, it looks as if an iron piece is burning, similarly because of the reflection from the Reality, the intellect manifests in many forms as the knower, knowledge and known, i.e., we see the world as separate from us and we become the knower. Even the individual soul (Jiva) is a product of the imagination on account of the differentiation in intellect. Even in dream we see that the dream world has the difference of the triad, namely the knower, the known and the knowledge. Hence the waking state is also a delusion as much as a dream. As what all is grasped by the intellect is false, all the objects like the sound and parts etc., which all come to an end when the body comes to an end are all unreal even though they may look otherwise. As far as the 'Atman' or "Self" is concerned it is neither born nor does it die. Thus a wise man first discriminates between the Real and the unreal and on the basis of this practical experience he comes to the conclusion about the ultimate Reality and having been liberated from the coils of the non-Self objects, remains fully effulgent in his own nature. When does this happen? When a person has the realisation of the undifferentiated Supreme Being by means of 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi'

(undifferentiated), then all knots in his heart (between Self and non-Self) created by ignorance get dissolved.

Now Sankara elaborates the Samadhi and its effect. By practising 'Samadhi' at all times with a controlled mind and having control over all his senses, with his mind seeking no support from external objects he attains oneness with all souls. At that time he is able to burn away all the different imaginations caused by the darkness of ignorance and remain in happiness in the form of 'Brahman' having ceased from all actions. Those who have thus dissolved all their external senses like the ear etc. and dissolved their ego and their internal mind in the Supreme Consciousness, become liberated from the bondage of 'Samsara'.

The one Ultimate Reality is differentiated into various objects due to external adjuncts which are all false. The main adjunct is our ego. In order to get those adjuncts including the ego dissolved, the seeker should continue to remain in 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi' at all the times. Thus remaining in the contemplation of the 'Brahman' alone, he becomes the 'Brahman', the Ultimate Reality. This happens just like the worm becoming the bee by constantly thinking of its mother bee. It is only by concentrated, one - pointed and continuous contemplation that one can realise the Ultimate Reality. The principle behind the Ultimate Reality is extremely

subtle and cannot be realised by our mind which can normally grasp gross as well as subtle objects. If one has to develop the power of realising the subtlest object it can only be done in 'Samadhi' state with the intellect completely cleaned of its impurities. Gold, after having been subjected to various processes is rid off its impurities, attains its original quality of absolute purity; in the same way when the mind leaves off the impurities caused by 'satva guna' 'rajo guna' and 'tamo guna' by means of continuous meditation, the ultimate principle is revealed. As the ultimate Reality is bereft of all the three gunas, the mind has to get rid of even 'satva guna'. Thus continuous practice is a must and only when the mind⁴³ becomes mature and gets merged in 'Brahman' (the ultimate Reality), the 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi', where no differences exist, results. It is then that one remains as 'Brahman' alone and effortlessly becomes that unique bliss for which there is no parallel. On attaining the Samadhi all the latent tendencies ('Vasanas') disappear, the knots of the heart are cut asunder and old Karmic effects are destroyed. Then effortlessly, at all times and in all places, one experiences one's divine nature. One should remember that contemplation is equivalent to

⁴³ निरन्तराभ्यासवशात्तदित्थं । पक्वं मनो ब्रह्मणि लीयते यदा ।
तदा समाधिः सविकल्पवर्जितः स्वतोऽद्वयानन्दरसानुभावकः ॥ (Sl. 363)

hearing from the 'Guru' a hundred times. The one pointed meditation is equal to one lakh times the normal meditation. As regards the 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi' it is infinite times greater than even meditation. As the mind is always of wavering nature and a number of external thoughts always intrude, it is only through 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi' that one can realise the ultimate Reality. In order to realize the ultimate Reality, one has to keep his mind one pointed with one's senses under control and with a peaceful mind one should destroy the deep darkness caused by the beginningless ignorance by coming face to face with the only Reality.

Now Sankara gives us the various means of reaching the 'Nirvikalpa Samadhi'. The first step⁴⁴ to Yoga is controlling speech and resorting to silence. From the beginning a sadhaka, irrespective of whatever path he adopts, should daily spend a minimum of one to four hours in undisturbed silence. Next to it comes non-accumulation of objects. One should only accept that much that would be required for the minimum sustenance of the body. Then one should practice disinterest in action and dispassion (Vairagya). Lastly, one should always seek a lonely place bereft of people. Ramakrishna

⁴⁴ योगस्य प्रथमंद्वारं वाङ्निरोधोऽपस्त्रिहः ।
निराशा च निरीहा च नित्यमेकान्तशीलता ॥ (Sl. 368)

Paramahansa used to advise even householders to go out on holidays to some river bank and spend the entire day alone. Even watching the river flowing the entire day, gives us a good spiritual experience. Seeking solitude will contribute towards controlling our senses as also our mind. We will forget ourselves and the ego will go away. Thus when the mind is stopped from going towards non-Self objects, the ego subsides and there will be the revelation of one's own pure nature of Brahman.

How should the first step of controlling speech be implemented? There is a progressive method. Observe your speech in your mind. In other words leave- off all speech and remain only in your mind. When this silence becomes strong, absorb this mind which is always thinking of dos and don'ts in the intellect. Then the intellect stops all its actions, even though it is the doer, just like the carpenter who has no equipment. The one who witnesses the working of the intellect is the Consciousness. Now you observe that intellect also in pure Consciousness. Then dissolve that Consciousness also in the plenary Atman bereft of all limitations, undifferentiated and who is nothing but Brahman, the Totality. Thus you attain Liberation.

Now Sankara elucidates Vairagya. Leaving off all the non-Self objects inside and outside is necessary for one who seeks Vairagya. As his mind is set only on Liberation, the dispassionate person leaves off all the

attachments, internal and external. In other words, while he gives up the attachment to the objects outside, he also gives up the attachment to his ego inside. This is possible only for a seeker who is established in Brahman alone. The Vairagya and the knowledge of experience of the Reality of the nature of his own Self obtained by the discrimination of the Self and non-Self, can be likened to the two wings of a bird. Without these two essentials, flying up to Liberation is never possible with anything else and not even with Vairagya alone. Vairagya and concentration of mind are both essential for attaining Samadhi and enlightenment. This will result in freedom from bondage, enabling the seeker to experience peace and bliss.

Even though one might have completely brought under control his body and other senses through asana, pranayama etc., without Vairagya (dispassion) one cannot get happiness. We know that people like Hiranyakasipu had done great penance. They were fully entangled in samsara because of lack of Vairagya. If Vairagya is added to that penance, the realisation of Self with the help of the analysis of the five sheaths is possible and he becomes the monarch of the Self. Hence one should develop an intense disinterest in all worldly objects and should always be engaged in Samadhi in the Atman, which is the only real existence at all times. All the objects are like poison. Do not desire for them. This desire is the cause of

negligence resulting in slipping down from one's own nature, which is verily the death. Leave off your pride in your caste, lineage and station in life etc. The body, mind, senses etc., are all false and never consider them as your Self. You are their witness. You are always pure unlike the body. You are that non-dual Brahman, the Supreme Being. Hence get the knowledge that you are the Brahman through Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Establish your mind firmly on the goal, namely Brahman, ignoring the aspects of body maintenance. Coming face to face with the identity of the Self and Brahman, drink the nectar of Brahman. What is the use of involving yourself with delusory objects which serve no purpose? Out of compassion, Sankara again instructs us to be established in the Atman.

Give up contemplating on non-Self objects which are impure and a cause for all our miseries and sufferings. It is only the Atman which leads us to liberation and is in the form of bliss. Always think of it. How to do the contemplation of the Atman? Think of it as self-effulgent, the witness of all, who always shines in the intellect. Make Him your goal and in an unbroken way think of the Atman as your own nature. When we think of the Atman as our own nature, there should be no other intruding thoughts. The thought should be one pointed on the Atman and continuous without any interval, thus strengthening our identification with the Atman and

leaving off our identification with the ego etc., by being completely indifferent to them. When the mind is completely pure i.e. free from tamoguna and rajoguna, keep it in one's own nature which is just a witness and slowly come to a state of stillness. Remaining in that immobility try to look at the plenary Self only. The mind which is only a reflection of the Consciousness becomes Brahman. All objects starting from Brahma, who identifies himself with the subtle bodies of the cosmic Totality to the smallest are all false and have been superimposed on the substratum. As they amount to nothing on analysis, one should be able to see with a one-pointed mind his own Self which is Poorna (Plenary). Whatever is imagined and superimposed on another object due to delusion is ultimately found to be the Substratum on proper discrimination. For instance, when we mistake a rope for a serpent, the serpent remains real only as the rope which is its substratum. When once the delusion is lost the delusory serpent is also lost and only the rope is seen. As such in the final stage the world is not seen. It is seen in the form of the Self. The Self alone has become the world and there is nothing else but the Self. It is Brahma, it is Vishnu, it is Indra and it is Siva.

In order to strengthen our meditation, Sankara speaks more of the Atman. It is both inside as well as

outside, it is both in the front as well as the back, it is in the east as well as the west, it is there up above as also down below. Just as the waves, the bubbles etc are ultimately only water, in the same way, all things beginning from the body and up to the ego are all only Consciousness. All are pure and blissful awareness. The entire world as we see belongs to one Existence alone. There is nothing other than the one Existence. The pot, the kamandalu, and the tumbler have all been made of mud alone and hence they are not different from mud, even though the forms are different. In the same way the entire world is not different from Brahman, but the person who is intoxicated with the wine of Maya goes on telling “you, I” etc . The scriptures say that where there is no other seer, where there is no other hearer and where there is no other knower, there is the infinite Brahman only. This absence of duality is told in order to dispel the false super-imposition (adhyasa). In order to get rid of the intoxication of Maya one has to think of Brahman who is undifferentiated, who is pure like the sky, boundless, inactive, changeless, with a void both inside and outside and having no second to Him. If only we realise Him, what else is there left to be known? What is there to talk about it? The individual soul (Jiva) is nothing but the Totality, ie. Brahman. When once the seeker is awakened to the fact that “I am Brahman” and has left off his ego etc., he becomes the Brahman and

lives always in the form of blissful Consciousness. We should give up the 'I' – sense in the body, which is full of impurities. So long as one is devoted to one's body, considering it as oneself, one becomes impure. It is on account of the body that one gets unhappiness from other beings like the enemies and wild animals and also is subject to birth, death, disease, hell etc. One gets liberated from them when he begins to consider himself as the Atman of the form of Siva, pure and immovable. When we dispel all the non-Self objects which have been superimposed on our own Atman by means of meditation etc., we remain as the plenary and infinite Brahman who alone exists and who is inactive. When all the movements of the mind are collected and concentrated on the undifferentiated Brahman, the world and other different objects will cease to be seen. This entire world consisting of different objects is all an imagination and has no reality. What remains is only the Brahman which undergoes no change and is formless. Where is the question of differences there? When the Brahman alone remains, the differences like the seer, the seen and the sight do not exist at all. At the time of deluge, when all the oceans join together and all the buildings, mountains etc. disappear, the world is only an infinite bed of water and water alone. Similarly, when the changeless and the formless Brahman alone remains, where is the question of any difference? Ignorance, which is deep

and dark, is the cause of our delusion; it is destroyed like darkness in the presence of light. When the highest principle alone exists, where is the question of any difference? When in the ultimate principle, there is only one soul as the Totality, how can there be differences? It is just like the sleeping state, when a sadhaka is in the undifferentiated state, where the different objects do not exist. Just as there was never a serpent in the rope and there was never a drop of water in the mirage, in the same way there is no world in the Atman or Brahman, which is undifferentiated and ever existing. All duality is due to Maya and in reality there is only non-duality. We have an experience of it in the sleep; this is also told in our scriptures. The wise man has already seen that the snake seen in the rope was only a delusive appearance and if there has been no rope as a substratum, nobody would be mad or foolish enough to think of a snake in an empty space. Hence, a superimposed object can't remain without the substratum. These various imaginative projections are generated from the mind. If there were no mind (no thought), there would have been no projection. Hence, we should concentrate the mind on the Supreme Brahman who is our very nature. How a person should think of the Brahman is given below.

Brahman is one indivisible knowledge. He is all bliss, un-paralleled, extending far beyond the world, ever liberated, desire-less, boundless like the sky⁴⁵. A wise

man contemplates on this infinite Brahman in the Samadhi state. The Brahman is not derived from any other factor or entity, nor are there any derivatives coming out of Brahman. It is beyond all mental conceptions, always the same, having no equals and having no connection with the various authentic proofs like direct perception etc. and proved only through the Vedas. This Brahman is contemplated in the Samadhi state. Brahman is not subject to old age or death, being one's own nature, where all the imaginations vanish. It has no name, caste, etc. It is immobile and still like the ocean without waves, having no qualities to distinguish it, eternally peaceful and the only one. A wise man concentrates on this plenary Brahman in the Samadhi state. With the mind still, keep it firmly concentrated on your nature, namely, Brahman. Realise the Atman whose glory is infinite. Thus, exercise all your efforts to tear off the bondage of Samsara and thus make your life successful. Concentrate on your Self who is actually Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, unparalleled and free from all adjuncts. Reach your blissful nature which is of pure knowledge. Leave off your adjuncts which are insentient and impure. Don't ever remember the objects

⁴⁵ किमपि सततबोधं केवलानन्दरूपं निरुपममतिवेलं नित्यमुक्तं निरीहम् ।
निरवधिगगनाभं निष्कलं निर्विकल्पं हृदि कलयति विद्वान् ब्रह्म पूर्णं समाधौ ॥
(Sl. 409)

which you have thrown out. If ever you remember them again, your mind will undergo changes and you will fall. The wise man remains in his eternal and pure knowledge having burnt off the appearance of non-Self objects in the fire of undifferentiated Brahman which always remains as his Self. This entire body is subject to the results⁴⁶ of actions of previous births (Prarabdha). After realization of the Brahman, let the body die or continue to live. Be unconcerned with it like a cow with a garland around its neck. The one whose mind is completely absorbed in Brahman and is full of bliss never looks at his body at all.

When once a person knows that the blissful Atman is his own very nature, why should he nourish his body? A Yogi, who is liberated while alive, remains drowned in the Atman tasting always the ineffable bliss. The result of Vairagya (dispassion) is perfect knowledge. When a person gets perfect knowledge, his mind does not seek any support from the outside objects. This is called Uparati or withdrawal and this is the result of perfect knowledge⁴⁷.

⁴⁶ प्रारब्धसूत्रग्रथितं शरीरं प्रयातु वा निष्ठतु गोखि स्रक् ।
न तत्पुनः पश्यति तत्त्ववेत्ता- ऽऽ नन्दात्मना ब्रह्मणि लीनवृत्तिः ॥ (Sl. 417)

⁴⁷ वैराग्यस्य फलं बोधो बोधस्योपरतिः फलम् ।
स्वानन्दानुभवाच्छान्तिरेषैवोपरतेः फलम् ॥ (Sl. 420)

The result of this withdrawal is Absolute peace on account of his experience of Infinite Bliss.

Now Sankara tells us the result of attaining Brahma Vidya (Knowledge of Brahman). As uparati develops, a Supreme contentment and an unparalleled bliss result and unhappiness and miseries disappear. Just as a person who knows about mirage will not knowingly go to the desert and search for water, a man with Brahma Vidya completely withdraws from the non-Self objects. Ignorance results in being involved in non-Self-objects as one has not tasted the bliss of his own nature. When ignorance is completely removed from the heart, the wise man does not get involved in the world, as he is free from all desires. A person may do all types of undesirable acts under delusion, but how can he continue to do so when he has regained his discriminative capacity? Now the question arises as to when the knowledge and the withdrawal could be completely earned. There is no desire for enjoyments in future, as vasanas of past enjoyments do not arise even when the objects are present. We can consider this as the ultimate limit of Vairagya. Similarly, the non-rising of the ego can be considered as the last limit of knowledge. When the modifications of the mind are drowned in complete bliss, they do not rise up again, just as ghee does not revert to the state of milk. One whose intellect is freed from all thoughts of the external world and who is always

established in Brahman is like a child who is sleeping and during the sleep has taken food fed by other people without being conscious of it. He also looks at the world as if it is a dream world and having awakened a little he looks at the world as if it is all false. Such a knower of Brahman should be actually enjoying this state obtained as a result of the infinite amount of virtuous acts done in previous births and thus he is respected everywhere. Such a person whose mind is dissolved in the Brahman and who is changeless and who is not involved in any action is a monk of steady mind. He attains at all times the final bliss.

The state of a Jeevanmukta (One who is liberated while alive in this very birth)

A Jeevanmukta is one who has a 'PRAJNA'. PRAJNA has been defined as an undifferentiated state of the mind, full of awareness and one pointedly and continuously flowing towards the final Reality after having analysed Brahman (the Totality) and the Atman (the individual Self) as identical⁴⁸. A Jeevanmukta is one whose mind is steady, his bliss continuous and who has practically forgotten the world.

⁴⁸ यस्य स्थिता भवेत्प्रज्ञा यस्यानन्दो निरन्तरः ।
प्रपञ्चो विस्मृतप्रायः स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥ (Sl. 429)

A Jeevanmukta is one, whose ignorance has been lost, who is always awake even though appearing to be asleep. One who is not aware of his gross body even though he is awake and whose awareness or knowledge of the object is free from any attachment or desire is called a Jeevan Mukta.

A Jeevanmukta is one whose propensities for being involved in Samsara have all been extinguished, who, though an expert in various subjects, does not demonstrate any of his powers as his mind is engaged in Brahman alone and though he possesses a Chitta (mind) he is free from thoughts and is in a no-mind state.

A Jeevanmukta is one who possesses no sense⁴⁹ of 'I' and 'mine' in his gross body even though it follows him everywhere like his shadow.

⁵⁰A Jeevanmukta is one who never ponders over the past, nor is he worried and anxious about the future. He is not bothered about the present also as he is indifferent to it. This is an advice which is extremely beneficial to all people in the world and not necessarily

⁴⁹ वर्तमानेऽपि देहेऽस्मिञ्छायावदनुवर्तिनि ।
अहन्ताममताऽभावो जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥ (Sl. 432)

⁵⁰ अतीताननुसन्धानं भविष्यदविचारणम् ।
औदासीन्यमपि प्रोक्तं जीवन्मुक्तस्य लक्षणम् ॥ (Sl. 433)

Jeevan Muktas. I have seen old men reminiscing about their official lives, thirty years back, as to how they suffered under some bosses. This serves no purpose except to rekindle the emotions of past miseries and sufferings. One does not know as to what the future holds for one. He can have no inkling of whether it would be bad or good. That being so, our thinking of the future is nothing but an extension of the present and may be far from what is going to happen. What is the use of such excursion into such purposeless imagination? As far as the present is concerned, before we can catch it, it already becomes the past. Thus, not to think of the past or the future and to be indifferent to the present contributes to our peace of mind and happiness.

In this world all objects distinguish themselves by having some good qualities as also defects by nature. A Jeevanmukta is one who looks at all things with an equal vision. He neither despises a dog nor does he adore a scholar. He looks at a ball of clay and a gold biscuit as equal. He has no special value for gold. He neither refuses to accept an object because of its defects nor does he accept another object because of its good qualities. Or, one can say that the Jeevanmukta sees only Brahman in all. As a Jeevanmukta has no likes or dislikes, he behaves in the same manner whether he gets something he likes or something he dislikes. He is not elated in winning a lottery nor depressed by incurring a substantial

loss in his business. As a Jeevanmukta sees Brahman everywhere who can never gain or lose any thing and remains changeless, he is not bothered about the gain or loss.

A Jeevanmukta's mind is always engaged in tasting the bliss of Brahman and as such he is not aware of anything outside or inside.

A Jeevanmukta does not consider the body or the senses as his Self. He is bereft of the 'Adhyasa' (superimposition of something else other than the Object) as 'this is my body', 'I am seeing', 'I am a man', 'my eyes' etc. He does not also feel any sense of 'mine' by thinking in respect of a work as 'this much I have to do' or 'this has been done by me' etc. Thus, as he does not feel any identification with any object of the world and remains without any attachment, he is a Jeevanmukta.

One who has understood through experience that he is Brahman on account of the strength of the scriptural injunctions like 'YOU ARE THAT' and who is thus freed from the bondage of samsara is a Jeevanmukta.

One who does not, at anytime, consider the body and the senses as the Self and who does not consider the objects of the world as something separate from himself is a Jeevanmukta. The identification of the Self with the world arises only through the Vasanas, i.e., the

latent tendencies of the past. As the Jeevanmukta has no Vasanas, the identification of the Self with the other objects as 'I' or Self cannot arise.

When once the ignorance is lost forever, for such a person there cannot be any difference between the Atman and Brahman. Similarly, the individual soul (the Jiva), Brahman (the Totality) and the world- these cannot be separated. For one who is established in the Brahman, the Jiva and the Ishwara are both false entities that do not exist. Similarly, also there cannot be any difference between the world and the Brahman as the world is only an appearance over Brahman. Such a one is called Jeevanmukta.

One who maintains equanimity whether he is worshipped by good people or tortured by the bad is called a Jeevanmukta. He is not affected by experiences like praise and blame by others, and they are lost like the waters of the river flowing into the ocean. He is liberated as he has no mind and his Vasanas have been destroyed. For one who has known the ultimate truth of Brahman, there cannot be a samsara involving the experience of happiness and unhappiness. In case it happens, he has not known the ultimate truth. If we justify such a state on the plea that such a person slips into samsara due to strength of old Vasanas, it is not acceptable, as by the very realisation of the Ultimate

Existence- which alone is- the Vasanas should get thinned. Just as for a person who is extremely interested in sex, his passion vanishes in the presence of his mother, in the same way, for a discriminative person, when once he experiences the infinite bliss of Brahman, his Vasanas will cease to have any strength.

For a person who is habitually accustomed to meditate (Nididhyasanam), when he comes out of his meditation, he is conscious of all external objects. As he has not yet got the realisation of Brahman and as the adhyasa between the body and the Self remains, the Prarabdha (the reaction of past karmas) continues effectively. Till such time as one continues to experience joy and sorrow, the Prarabdha continues. No joy or sorrow can arise unless it was preceded by the action leading to it. In other words, in respect of the one who is conscious of the world, though given to regular meditation, the enjoyment resulting from the actions does take place. When a person realizes 'I am the Brahman', the earlier actions which have not started giving their results (Sanchita Karma) get wiped off, just like an action done during the dream, which is destroyed on waking up. Similarly, the actions being done in the current birth (called aagaami), whether sin-ful or virtuous, get destroyed on realisation of Brahman. One who has had the direct experience of his Self, remains without attachments, indifferent and a non-doer. Such a person does not get

tainted by any action done after the realisation and remains like the space. The space inside a pot which contains liquor is never tainted by the smell of liquor. In the same way, a realised soul never gets tainted by the qualities of the gross and subtle bodies because the Self has no relationship with them. However, the prarabdhas (the actions which have already started giving the results), do not get destroyed by the knowledge of the Reality. An arrow which has left the bow towards the target cannot be stopped mid-way. Similarly, the Prarabdha of the Jnani does give its results even after the realisation. The Prarabdha is so strong that it cannot be exhausted unless it is fully experienced. It is only the sanchita and aagaami actions (the actions done in previous birth and accumulated as also the actions being done in the current birth) that are destroyed by the fire of true knowledge. As regards those who always remain identified with the Brahman whose identification with the Atman has been properly understood, for them all the three karmas get lost as those persons are established in the attributeless Brahman.

For a person in the waking state, the happenings in the dream state have no value. In the same way for a person who is bereft of any identification with his ego etc., and the one who is established in the state of the Brahman and the Atman, the question of maturing of Prarabdha does not arise. A person possesses a different

body during his dream and even though this body is false, as it appears true, it is called 'pratibhasika deha'. After all, a man who has been awakened from a dream does not establish any relationship of I, this and mine with the dream body but remains in his waking state only. For instance, if he was a cow in his dream, when he wakes up, he does not begin to eat grass nor does he leave off his own routine of the waking state. He does not try to prove that the body etc. which appeared in his dream were true. While in the waking state, he does not accept the world that he has seen in the dream. In case he continues to keep up his relationship with the body and world seen in his dream, it certainly means that he has not yet awakened from his dream. One who has established his mind in Brahman, remains as his Self at all the times, as pure Consciousness. He does not see anything other than Brahman, as nothing else exists apart from him. But even a knower of Brahman may continue to accept food or give it away because of the earlier habit. He was previously living with his ego while now, after having seen his own real nature, continues to live without any ego.

Now, Sankara elaborates on the statement that no Prarabdha karma (the effects of past acts) exists for the Self. Prarabdha is due on the body which has been constructed by karmas (past deeds). As the Atman has no birth and as it is not produced by any action, the

question of Prarabdha does not arise for the Self. For one who has the body sense, on account of 'Adhyasa', Prarabdha may be applicable. But not so in the case of a Jnani. If we go deeper into it, the imagination of the Prarabdha for the body also is a delusion. When there is no body in reality, how can there be a Prarabdha for it? As a Jnani has no body-sense, there is no Prarabdha for him. As body is an imagined superimposition, how does it really exist? There cannot be a Prarabdha for something that does not exist. There are dull-minded people who may question as to how the body of a Jnani remains even after the disappearance of the world including the body and ego, on account of the knowledge. In order to satisfy them, the scriptures accept the existence of Prarabdha for a Jnani. The statement of the scripture is not meant to affirm the reality of the body.

Now Sankara describes the ultimate Reality which is the object of the statement of scriptures. The Brahman is always 'Poorna' (plenary) and does not lack in anything. He has no birth or death. He undergoes no transformation. He alone is and is a non-doer. There is nothing else apart from Him⁵¹. He is also Existence,

⁵¹ परिपूर्णमनाद्यन्तमप्रमेयमविक्रियम् ।
एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्म नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ॥ (Sl. 465)

Consciousness and permanent Bliss. He is bereft of all actions like creation etc. He is infinite, indivisible, innermost and all pervasive. He alone is and is non-dual. There is nothing else apart from him.

He has no cause and being our own Self, cannot be abandoned. He has no attributes, is indivisible⁵² (having no parts), extremely subtle, undifferentiated and untainted. He is one whose nature cannot be defined and he is beyond words and mind. He is the truth which cannot be **sublated** or contradicted anytime later. He is prosperous and full since He is Indivisible Bliss. He is his own proof as no other authentic proof can establish him. He is pure, He is of the form of knowledge and having no parallel. He alone is and is non-dual. There is nothing else apart from him.

Having given up all attachments, having abandoned all types of enjoyments in the world, with a mind full of peace, having controlled all their external senses, the great saints who have been striving hard, ultimately come to know the Reality, after all their sadhanas and on account of having practised Nirvikalpa Samadhi. They have attained liberation in the form of unique Bliss.

⁵² निर्गुणं निष्कलं सूक्ष्मं निर्विकल्पं निरञ्जनम् ।
एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्म नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ॥ (Sl. 469)

Now, the guru starts the concluding portion of his instructions to the disciple who has approached him for spiritual instructions. He addresses the disciple : “You also realise the Ultimate Reality of yourself and your blissful nature⁵³. Become awakened and be liberated having dispelled the delusion which has been imagined by your mind.”

With a completely still mind enter into the Samadhi and experience the Atman with a clear eye of knowledge. If once experienced, you will never go back to your original delusion.

The bondage, liberation, health, hunger etc. have to be experienced by oneself and the knowledge of others’ experience is of no use.

The Guru and the scriptures stand on the bank of the ocean of Samsara and guide and instruct the disciple. Then, it is the Grace of the Lord which makes him cross over it. This is the final conclusion of Vedanta that all the individual souls (Jivas) and the entire world is nothing but Brahman, the Supreme Being and liberation is to remain in the form of the indivisible Totality. In this book, the word ‘Totality’ has been used to denote the Supreme

⁵³ निरस्तरागा निरपास्त शान्ताः सुदान्ता यतयो महान्तः ।
विज्ञान-तत्त्वं परमेतदन्ते प्राप्ताः परां निर्वृतिमात्मयोगात् ॥ (SI. 472)

Brahman who covers all, but this word is absolutely inadequate. The Supreme Being is not the sum total of Jivas and the world but a lot more which cannot be specified.

It is said in the Purusha⁵⁴ Sukta that the entire universe constitutes only one fourth of the supreme being and then three - fourths remain in his immortal and divine nature and (Mantra 3) He is also said to transcend the manifested universe (Mantra 1).

The Supreme Brahman is something unique and is second to none. For the aforesaid conclusion, the Vedas are our authentic proof.

Hearing the instructions of the Guru and based on the evidence of the scriptures, and by applying the prescribed means, the disciple realises the Supreme. All the senses become quiet, his mind is controlled and he himself remains still. This is the state of being established in the Atman. The disciple, having thus kept his mind one-pointed, in the Supreme Brahman, for some time, gets up with a supreme bliss and thanks the Guru profusely. "By realising the identity of the Atman and Brahman now, my intellect which has been going in the

⁵⁴ पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि । त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ (Purusha Sukta)

wrong direction, has been lost and my propensity to be involved in activities has been dissolved. On account of all the differences having been wiped off, I do not know whatever is before my eyes and the senses. I don't know how much happiness I have and what is the ultimate boundary of this happiness." By this the disciple means that the Bliss he has got is not limited by space, time and objects.

The ocean of Supreme Brahman which is filled with the nectar of the Bliss of the Self cannot be either described by words or conceived by the mind. The disciple who had only tasted a very small drop of the happiness earlier is now fully overcome by the mind full of Bliss. "O, my master, where has this world gone which I saw, just now, a few minutes back? What a wonder! What is there which is separate and different from Brahman? The great ocean of Brahman being filled up by the nectar of infinite Bliss, what is there to be accepted or what is there to be abandoned! I am so full of the Bliss of Self that I do not need anything else, neither do I hear anything else nor do I understand anything else".

The disciple prostrates before the Guru praising him "O Guru, I bow to you by whose glance which is as cool as the moon light, all the exertions and efforts caused by the heat of Samsara have all been washed away and in a moment I have been catapulted to the infinite status of

the Atman. I am extremely grateful to you. It is by your grace that I have become Poorna (plenary) and also liberated. I bow to you again who are the treasure house of compassion. All my attachments have been lost. My body sense has been lost. I am completely peaceful, infinite and not tired at all”.

“I am now a non-doer, non-experiencer; I undergo no change, I am not involved in any activity and I am of the form of pure knowledge. I am different from the seer, hearer, the speaker, the doer and the experiencer. I am always the Atman, who is pure knowledge, free from attachments, boundaries and all activities. I am neither this nor that. I am the Supreme Being who reveals all things. I am void both inside and outside. But I am also full. I am that unique Brahman. It is I who pervade all the beings and I am the support of things both outside and inside. I am the experiencer and I am also all the objects which were being seen differently earlier. I am of the form of the infinite Bliss in which the various waves in the form of the universe arise and get dissolved due to the delusion created by the wind of Maya”.

“Just as second, day, season and years have been super-imposed on the infinite time which is indivisible and un-differentiated, in the same way, the ideas of gross body, subtle body and the causal body have all been superimposed on the Atman due to ignorance”.

“I am boundless like the ocean. I am always still without any movement like the mountain. I am not limited by time. I have no connection with the body; so how can its characteristics like the waking state, sleeping state etc. affect me? I am neither impelled to do any action nor am I withdrawn from it. I am always of the same form and undergo no change. I am one with all the souls. I am infinite like the sky; how can I ever act? I am bereft of all senses and also the mind and other senses of perception. That being so, where is the question of sin or virtue for me? I am one who experiences the indivisible Bliss. Just as the characteristics of a house, whether it is big or small, furnished or not etc., do not affect the lamp which lights the house, similarly, the characteristics of the world or the senses or the body can never affect the Atman which is changeless and is absolutely uninvolved”.

Sankara elucidates the state of detachment of the Atman by giving three examples: whether we do a bad action or a good action, the Sun is simply witnessing it. Similarly, an iron piece which is being heated in fire, will give an impression as if the iron is burning hot. Similarly when a rope is seen as a snake at night, the rope never affects the superimposed snake; it remains independent. Similarly, the innermost Atman as Consciousness remains detached from everything. I am neither the doer nor do I make somebody to do. I am not the experiencer nor do I make somebody experience. I am not the seer

nor do I make somebody see. I remain in my effulgence and I am bereft of all qualities or characteristics. When the sun is seen in the river water, because of the movement of the water which is an adjunct, foolish people think that it is the sun which is moving, even though it remains still. Similarly, even though the Atman is bereft of any action, due to the various adjuncts like the intellect, the gross body etc., one thinks that he is the doer, he is the experiencer etc. May this insentient body fall in water or on the earth. Just as the space inside the pot is not affected by the characteristics of the pot, I am also not tainted by the characteristics of the gross body. The doership, the experiencership, the arrogance, the insentience, the bondage, the release etc. are only the imaginations of the mind and they don't remain in me who am the Supreme Being and non-dual.

“Let there be hundreds or thousands of changes due to the modification of Maya. They cannot do anything to me who is the Consciousness, detached because of having no attachment to any object. The modification of the cloud like the thunder cannot touch the sky. The author now elucidates the non-dual experience which has arisen as a result of the instructions of the Guru. “I am that in whom the entire universe starting from the Prakriti (primordial nature) upto all the other gross objects become just a reflection. I am that

non-dual Brahman who is subtle and has neither birth nor destruction. I am that non-dual Brahman, who is the support of all, who reveals all the objects in its light which has taken all the forms, which is devoid of all objects, eternally pure, partless and undifferentiated. I am that non-dual Brahman, in whom all Maya gets dispelled, the one who is in the form of the final Truth, Innermost form, Ultimate Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. I am actionless; no changes or transformation takes place in me, I am partless, I have no form, I am undifferentiated, I am eternal and I need no support and I am non-dual”.

“I am the Self of all, I am all, I have transcended all and I am non-dual. I am indivisible Knowledge and constant Bliss. I bow to you again and again. My respected master, you have protected me by waking me up when I was tortured by the tiger of ego and various types of miseries while roaming in the forest of birth, death and old age in a grand dream.”

On seeing the disciple standing with bowed head having awakened to the Reality and having attained the happiness of the Self, the master was pleased and began to address him. “Brahman alone exists everywhere. With your spiritual insight and a peaceful mind, see that Brahman in all states. What else exists around us who have the eyes to see? When the real moon is shining giving pleasure to us all, who would like to see a painted

moon? In the same way, who is the wise man, who after knowing the truth would like to give up the experience of the transcendental bliss and revel in empty sense pleasures? In the experience of the worldly objects which have no existence of their own, there is neither contentment nor the end of our miseries and sufferings.

“Remain happily established in the Atman which alone exists”, experiencing the bliss of non-duality. Oh wise disciple! spend the rest of your time by seeing yourself everywhere, understanding the Self to be non-dual and experiencing the bliss of the Self. Leaving off the thoughts of the non-existing objects remain silent, by which you can get supreme peace. The knowers of Brahman realising the oneness of Brahman and Atman enjoy the bliss of non-duality continuously. For one who has known the nature of the Self and enjoys bliss of the Self, there is nothing better than silence free from all Vasanas (desires). A man who has known the truth and revels in his own Self, can live as he likes either walking, standing, sitting, lying down or doing anything else. He need not bother about his goal, time, space, posture, the direction and control of mind. For one who has known the Self, where is the need for any rules and regulations? The Self is ever known and being its own proof, It shines without depending upon a proper place or time. For a knower of Brahman, the knowledge that “I am Brahman” is natural and does not depend on anything else. The Atman being

the knower of all, who is required to throw light on him? All the scriptures and puranas (mythology) have the justification only in the Brahman”.

“This Atman is self effulgent (self revealed), possesses infinite power, has no parallel and contains all the experiences. The best of the knowers of Brahman revel after knowing Brahman and having been liberated from all bondage. He neither feels depressed by certain objects nor does he get happy by others. He is neither attracted nor is he repelled. He always plays with his own Self and is happy. A child is happy to play with toys forgetting his hunger or the tiredness of the body. In the same way, a knower is happy being rid of his ego and bereft of the sense of possession. The knower of Brahman plays in the supreme Brahman roaming in the streets of the final conclusion of the scriptures bereft of all anxiety, not feeling helpless, eating by begging alms, drinking from water of the river, not caring for anybody’s command, sleeping in the jungle or cremation ground, wearing his dress without washing them, sleeping on the ground and wandering in the lanes of the Upanishads. The liberated man being without any ego, experiences all objects which come to him by chance. He behaves like a child, he is not attached to any outside object and does not show off the insignia of his status in life, that he is a monk etc. He roams in the world either with or without clothes, sometime behaving like a madman,

sometimes like a child, sometimes like a goblin. He roams alone, eating what he gets. The liberated person, revelling always in constant bliss, behaves somewhere like a fool, somewhere like a scholar, somewhere with all the glory of a king, somewhere like mad, somewhere lying like a python and eating whatever comes to his place without going anywhere in search of food. He goes somewhere incognito, somewhere respected and somewhere insulted. Even though he possesses no money, he is always content, he seeks nobody's help, has a strong confidence always, content even though he has not taken any food and looks at all with an equal vision. He does nothing even though being engaged in activities. Even though he has a body, he has no body-sense. Even though he looks to be limited by time, space etc., he is all pervasive. This knower of Brahman is not aware of his body at all. He has no likes and dislikes and there is nothing auspicious or in-auspicious for him. Even though he is completely freed from the bondage of the body etc., foolish people consider him as possessing a body because they see the reflection of a body. Just like a log of wood which is being taken by the tide to higher places and lower places, similarly the body of a liberated person is taken here and there according to his prarabdha. Even though he is liberated from his body, he behaves like a householder while enjoying the objects of the world, being propelled by the Vasanas of the Prarabdha Karma. He never directs his senses to worldly objects and never

desires for the results of the actions performed by him. The knower of Brahman has achieved the purpose of his life and is always liberated even while living. Free from the adjuncts, he attains to the state of non-dual Brahman.

The body of the monk who has become Brahman has already been burnt to ashes by the fire of knowledge. Hence, whenever he may finally leave his body, it is like a leaf fallen from the tree and got tattered. He does not look forward to a proper time or place to leave his body which is after all a mass of flesh, skin and worms. Giving up the staff or Kamandalu (water pot) or even the body, does not lead to freedom from bondage; freedom from the knot of ignorance in the heart is real liberation. When a leaf from a tree falls in a pond or a river or in the temple of lord Siva, where is the question of its being auspicious or in-auspicious? The Self is like the tree in the above example and the body, senses etc. are like its leaves. The Atman which is among things which are subject to destruction and change is itself indestructible. This is affirmed by the scriptures. Just as when the Sun rises, the darkness which is completely different from the light gets absorbed in the Sunlight, the entire world is absorbed in Brahman. When a pot is broken, the space inside the pot becomes the infinite space. Similarly, when the adjuncts like the body etc., are lost, the knower of Brahman remains as Brahman himself. Just like milk

mixing with milk, the oil mixing with oil and water mixing with water, the knower of Atman becomes one with Brahman. Just as in a still and inactive rope, at dusk, the illusory appearance and disappearance of the snake takes place, similarly bondage and liberation are only products of maya and do not exist in Atman in reality. The belief in an object that it exists and also that it does not exist are the characteristics of the intellect alone; it does not belong to the eternal Subject. In conclusion, Sankara repeats a famous verse⁵⁵ from the text Gaudapadarika (Mandukyopanishad) of his grand Guru. This is known as Ajatavada and represents the final truth.

There has never been a creation or dissolution. There has been nobody in bondage nor any striving to get out of bondage by sadhana. There was nobody ever longing for liberation nor has any one been liberated. This is the final truth. The lives of all people form a part of the cosmic divine dream / drama. A drama is not real.

On hearing these instructions of the Guru, the disciple prostrated before him in all humility and after taking leave of his Guru went away liberated.

⁵⁵ न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः ।
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्तः इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥ (Sl. 575)



Complete list of books/documents available on website
(<http://www.scribd.com/vedavita>)

As per the statistics released by Scribd.com, since the launch of this website on 15th August 2009, about **1,03,000** readers have visited this website to read **71** books/documents which are available as of now, about **26,000** copies are downloaded worldwide and **241** people are subscribers to this website.

1. Books published by Shri Purushottamananda Trust

Sr.	Title of Book	Year of Publication
1	Autobiography in Malayalam	1956
2	Autobiography in English	1994
3	Autobiography in Hindi	2007
4	Updeshamrit	1979
5	Nectar of Spiritual Instructions	1986
6	A Peep into the Gita	1990
7	Gita ki ek Jhalak	2000
8	Adhyatma Varta	2000
9	Spiritual talks	1990
10	Guide to Spiritual Aspirants	1986
11	Souvenir (in Hindi and English)	2004
12	Souvenir (in Hindi and English)	2011

2. Books authored by His Holiness Swami Shantananda Puri ji

Sr.	Title of Book	Year of Publication
1	Srimad Bhagavatam : Its message for the Modern Man	1998
2	Sadhanas in Bhagvad Gita	1999
3	Srimad Bhagvat - Adhunik Manav ke Liye Iska Sandesh	2000
4	Srimad Bhagvad Gita ki Adhyatmik Sadhanayein (In Hindi)	2001
5	Fragrant Flowers: Soul-elevating Reminiscences of a Himalayan Monk	2002
6	Jivan Mukti : Liberation- Here & Now	2002
7	Stories for Meditation	2003
8	Answers to basic spiritual questions of Sadhaks	2003
9	Sri Lalita Sahasranama Stotram : An Insight	2003
10	Instant Self- Awareness : Talks on Asthavakra Gita	2004
11	The Quantum Leap into the Absolute : Essence of Asthavakra Gita	2005
12	Golden guidelines to "Who am I"	2005
13	Sadhanas according to Yoga Vasishtha	2005
14	Infalible Vedic Remedies	2005
15	Musings of a Himalayan Monk	2006
16	Stories for Inspiration	2006
17	Srimad Bhagavatam : Its message ... (In Malayalam)	2006
18	Sadhanas according to Tripura Rahasyam	2007
19	Pearls of Wisdom Sublime	2007
20	Sadhanas from Adhyatma Ramayanam	2007

21	Gita's Sthita Pragna Darshan - A crash course for Moksha	2008
22	Gita's Sthita Pragna Darshan (In Malayalam)	2006
23	A quintessence of Uddhava Gita	2008
24	The Ecstasy of Love Divine : Essence of Narada Bhakti Sutra	2009
25	Living Happily Forever	2010
26	Sadhanas from Kaivalyopanishad	2010
27	The Spiritual Journey of a Himalayan Monk- Biography of Swamiji	2010
28	Gita Sarah	2010
29	Devi Kalottara	2010
30	Sadhanas from Kenopanishad	2011
31	Sri Shiva Sahasranama Stotram (As per Linga Purana) Revised	2011
32	Selected Gems from Ashtavakra Gita	2011

All above books except at Sr. 1, 17, 22 & 31 are published by Parvathamma C.P. Subbaraju Setty Charitable Trust, Bangalore, India for limited free distribution among the devotees of Poojya Swamiji.

3. Other documents authored by H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri

1	Clarifications of doubts of a Sadhak
2	What I Pray for
3	Gems from Srimad Bhagvatam
4	Gems from Guru Gita
5	My experience of keeping Silence(Mowna)
6	Mantra Pushpam
7	Sri Suktam- an Exegesis
8	Sri Ramana Suprabhatam
9	An Open Letter to a Sadhak
10	Boat Leela of Lord Krishna
11	Message on 82nd Birthday of Revered Swamiji
12	The 108 Names of Guru with their meanings in Hindi
13	Introduction to Vasishtha Guha
14	Introduction to Vasishtha Guha (In Hindi)
15	Karma, sadhana, renunciation, grace & self realisation
16	Is Guru necessary
17	Remedy for Maladies

Some more books are also available on the website like "At the feet of my Gurudev" by Swami Nirvedananda, "Swami Nirvedananda- A True Sannyasin".

NOTE: All the books are available on website and can be downloaded by anybody free of cost for non-commercial personal use by logging into this website-
<http://www.scribd.com/vedavita>

For any feedback, kindly send mail to: vedavita@gmail.com

P.S. Interested devotees may send their Email-id for inclusion in mailing list.

This document is released by H.H. Swami Shantananda Puri on 15th Feb 2012 at Ghazipur (U.P) India for information of all devotees and interested readers.

