

# साधन पञ्चकं

## Sadhana Panchakam

The text we are going to study is a very beautiful text. It has three names:

1. *Upadesha Pancharatnam*
2. *Sadhana Panchakam*
3. *Sopana Panchakam*

There is significance behind each of these names.

*Upadesha pancharatna*: "*upadesha*" means "teaching", "*pancha*" means "five", "*ratnam*" means "jewel", so the meaning of the first name is "the five jewels of teaching".

*Sadhana Panchakam*: "*sadhana*" means practice, "*panchakam*" means "five", five stanzas for practice.

*Sopana panchakam*: "*sopana*" means "staircase", "*pancha*", as we saw means "five", five stanzas, like a staircase, for Knowledge.

Before entering into the text we have to understand who is the author of the text? And how this text has come into existence?

The author of the text is Bhagavan Bhashyakara Adi Shankaracharya. "*Bhagavan*" means God, "*Bhashyakara*" means "Commentator", the commentator who is God to us Vedantins.

*Bhagavan* means one who has in its absolute, the six attributes of Gnana – knowledge, Vairagya – dispassion, Dharma – virtue, Aishvarya – Godliness, Yasha – name and fame and finally Shri – Wealth.

### Why the text came into existence?

*Bhagavan Bhashyakara* has written many texts, there are so many texts which he commented upon, he wrote many individual texts and commented upon other text, also.

According to the tradition, he is none other than *Siva* Himself, avathar of *Siva*,

Shankara-dig-vijaya refers to Sri Shankaracharya as *Shambu*, "shambo carati bhuma shankaracharya rupa" means Shambu, Shiva himself travelled on earth in the form of Sri Shankaracharya. So Sri Shankaracharya was about to leave this mortal coil, all his disciples came to him and requested him not to leave and then prayed for his final teaching, This SadhanaPancakam is Acharyas final message. He has written so many texts, but this is the gist of all the texts. This has the method which a practitioner should follow from the beginning to the end, on the spiritual path. Whatever a practitioner should follow is here in this text.

This starts with "*vedo nityamadhīyatām*" and ends as "*parabrahmātmanā sthīyatām*", meaning "Study the *Vedas* every day" and ends with: "Be established as that Absolute Self".

Beginning with study the *Vedas* every day and ending with being established as that *Absolute Self*.

We are not eligible for some of these.

### **Then, why should we know this?**

In order to understand that we may not be eligible to study the *Vedas*, but we are eligible to do some *mantras* which are based on that.

There are five stanzas. We call them *slokas*. There are five *slokas*. Each has four lines. In each line we have two *upadeshas*, two teachings, so totally, forty teachings, which takes us from the very basic till establishing us in the Absolute Self. Whatever an individual needs to know (on the spiritual path) and practice is explained here.

The methodology in commenting this text is by taking each word and understanding its meaning thus avoiding any confusion.

Sloka 1

वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयतां

तेनेशस्य विधीयतामपचितिः काम्ये मतिस्त्यज्यताम् ।

पापौघः परिधूयतां भवसुखे दोषोऽनुसन्धीयता-

मात्मेच्छा व्यवसीयतां निजगृहात्तूर्णं विनिर्गम्यताम् ॥ १ ॥

vedo nityamadhīyatām taduditaṁ karma svanuṣṭhīyatām  
teneśasya vidhīyatāmapacitiḥ kāmye matistyaajatām |  
pāpaughaḥ paridhūyatām bhavasukhe doṣo'nusandhīyatā-  
mātmecchā vyavasīyatām nijagrhāttūrṇaṁ vinirgamyatām || 1 ||

The first *upadesha* (teaching):

1

वेदो नित्यमधीयताम्

vedo nityamadhīyatām

*vedo* - Veda, *nityam* - every day, *adhīyatām* - study.

The whole meaning is : "Study the Scriptures every day". This is the general meaning, but some questions arise from here : what is *Veda* , what does "every day" mean and who should study , why one should study .

### What is Veda?

We define *Veda* as "apaūruṣeyaṁ vākyam *Veda*". "apaūruṣeyaṁ " means that which is not written by a person, "vākyam" means sentence. So a statement or a sentence which is not written by an individual is called *Veda*. So *Veda* is a statement or a sentence not written by an individual, this is the base.

Academically, people established some timeline for different *Vedas*. They said that first *Rig Veda* came into existence, and then *Yajur Veda* came into existence. In this way they, tried to find a timeline for each *Veda*. But traditionally, we don't fix any date, because according to us, the traditionalists, *Veda* is eternal. That is why we call this whole *dharma Sanatana Dharma*, our whole philosophy is called *Sanatana Dharma*. "Sanatana" means "eternal", a *dharma* which is eternal , a *dharma* which is the basis for even this Creation. The Creation which we see is based on *Sanatana Dharma*. Therefore, this is

eternal. *Veda* means a statement which is not written by an individual.

*Veda* is like a guide book based on which the Creator created this Creation. There are many texts to which we know the author, partial or full texts, but within a tradition we know the author. There are some situations when the author is unknown, but this is because there is no tradition. No one taught it to his disciples. Since there is no tradition, if the author's name is lost, it is not a surprise. But here, we have a perfect tradition, fool proof tradition, an infallible tradition in which doesn't allow any addition or removal of a single character, or any change in intonation, and which has its checks and balances to see it's not distorted. This is due to the holy tradition of passing on these hymns from one Guru to his disciple and to his *disciple* and so on and so forth. Thus no error could creep into it since ages.

For instance, in the statement “*vedo nityamadhīyatām*”, any intonation should be right, the labial vowels should be labial , the palatals should be palatal , the cerebral is cerebral. All of it is very clear. The children are taught from young age. There are methods of breaking the words and repeat them, called pada-patha, krama-patha, gana-patha etc, that it will not be possible in the end to do a mistake. And this exists even after many invasions of other religions in India, but the tradition is the same, as always.

Though there is no author for *Vedas*, some names of *rishis* are associated with each *Veda* and its *mantra*. Who is a *rishi*? *Rishi* is *mantra dṛīśatara*, a person who visualized a certain part of the *Vedas*. He is not the author of that portion. He is the one who visualized in his meditation.

There is another definition for *Veda*, “*mantra-brāhmanayor-veda-nāmadheyam*” to what we give the name of *Veda* to that “*mantra-brāhmanayo:*” which has two portions, called *mantra* and *brāhmana*. *Mantra* is that which refers to the *karmas*, fire oblations etc; *mantra* is that which is used in the *karmas*, and actions specified in the *Vedas*. *Brahmana* is a commentary upon the *mantra*, that is where the *mantra* should be used and how it should be used.

When discussing about the number of *Vedas*, the first thought is that there are four *Vedas*: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Atharvaveda*.

In *Upanishads*, *Bhagavadgita* etc., we see only three *Vedas* , *Veda-trayi*: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*. But that is not all. There is an implication to *Atharvaveda*. As we saw, some people accept the *Veda* to be written in different

periods of time. This final *Veda*, *Atharvaveda* is accepted to be written later, that is why it is not included in *Bhagavad Gita* etc., they say. This is not true, as we saw *Veda* means a text which is not authored by anyone. Since *Atharvaveda* too follows a similar structure of that of *Yajurveda*, of prose, it is not independently specified. And another important reason is, the *Atharvaveda* mantras are not used in the regular vedic sacrifices, they are standalone mantras.

Some people say that *Veda* is written by the author called *Vyasa*, *Veda Vyasa*. It is not so. *Veda Vyasa* compiled different kinds of *Vedas* in groups and then taught it to four different disciples in order that those who follow could be able at least get a portion of *Veda*.

The compilation was made based on some logical criterion, it was not made arbitrarily. He didn't group the statements at random, like for instance when cooking a food , one mixes the ingredients and proportions at random and even if the result is good , we don't expect the same method and result, they didn't follow any order. This is not the way *Vyasa* grouped the *Vedas* in four. *Veda Vyasa* applied a logic.

According to this logic, *Rigveda* is grouped in such a way that is completely full of poems. It is a poetic *Veda*. *Yajurveda* is a mixture of poetry and prose. *Rigveda* will follow a proper meters, whereas *Yajurveda* sometimes follows some meters, but generally will be prose. *Samaveda* is a beautiful *Veda*, which is in musical form. The *mantras* said in *Rigveda* are the basis for other *Vedas* also. Some *mantras* you can see in *Yajurveda*, some in *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda* also, but these *mantras* from *Rigveda* when sung in a musical form, forms *Samaveda*. *Atharvaveda* generally follows a prose form.

So there are four *Vedas* like this. But *Yajurveda* has two forms: *Shukla Yajurveda* and *Krishna Yajurveda*, white *Yajurveda* and black *Yajurveda*. These again are not written. Even *Shukla Yajurveda* which came later was revealed to Sage *Yajnavalkya* by the Sun God himself. He meditated upon Sun God to gain that. It was revealed.

There is a story on this topic which goes like this: *Yajnavalkya*'s *guru* had to attend a program. That program was organized by a group of *rishis*. When they decided to meet on a particular day they included in this a clause. According to this clause those who were absent, would incur a sin equal to the sin of *brahmana-hatya*, killing of a *brahmin*. Killing of a *brahmin* is accepted to be a great sin. For some reason or other, *Yajnavalkya*'s *guru* could not come to that

program, so he incurred this sin. To wash away the sins, *Veda* has some mantras when one repeats again and again; the sins will be washed off. So *Yajnavalkya*'s *guru* asked his students to chant the mantras for him. *Yajnavalkya*, being a very smart man, asked his *guru* to let him do alone the *mantra*, considering his colleagues weak and not able. He was so disrespecting his colleagues and this attitude didn't go well with his *guru*. So the *guru* told him "They are your colleagues, your brothers. How can you disrespect them?" *Yajnavalkya* answered: "They don't have the strength, the will power to completely do such a thing. They don't even know the *mantra* properly". Then his *guru* said to him: "If so, why don't you teach them?" and he teaches them, as he was put in an embarrassing situation by his *guru*, he gets out of that group and went to meditate on Sun God to get a new *Veda*. This is *Shukla Yajurveda*.

So we can say we have five *Vedas*: *Rigveda*, *Shukla Yajurveda*, *Krishna Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Atharvaveda*, but we don't consider those two forms of *Yajurveda* separately. We see them as one group, because they both are a mixture of poetry and prose.

This is the first answer which comes when counting *Vedas*, that there are four *Vedas*, but *Veda* itself says that there are innumerable *Vedas*: "*vedā vai anantaḥ*". It is not one, not two etc., but it is innumerable.

During the evolution, we say we gain something, we lose something, and here we lost major portions of *Vedas*.

So *Veda* is not written by anyone, *Veda* is the guidebook for Creation, *Veda* is *sanatana*, eternal, *Veda* is classified under four types: *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Samaveda*, *Atharvaveda*.

These are general ideas about *Veda*.

### **When to study Vedas?**

And next word is "*nityam*". "*Nityam*" means "always". What does "always" mean in this context? "Should I sleep or should I not sleep?" It could be interpreted like this in a general acceptance. To understand this "always" in the context we have to refer also to the period of not chanting, not studying the *Vedas*, called "*anadhyayana*." There are periods when one should not chant or study *Vedas*. So from this perspective, "*nityam*" in this context means "not always". So, *Veda* should not be studied after the afternoon food (which normally is the first food in a *gurukulam*), *Vedas* should not be chanted

immediately after having any food (breakfast, lunch, dinner etc.). *Vedas* should not be chanted in the night.

In this way, there are a lot of rules. If one starts to live according to all the rules, it will become a very tough task. That itself will become a life of meditation. Some say about the *Brahmins* that they used to control people, but how could they when they had to follow so many rules?! How can one control somebody when he has to live and follow so many rules?! He will not have time to think of himself; and where will he have time to think of controlling others.

What about Saturday and Sunday? should *Vedas* be chanted then? We don't have this type of calendar (Gregorian calendar). In the tradition, we follow a different calendar based on the Moon and its phases. According to this calendar there are the following holidays: as specified in *Manu Dharma Shastra* "aṣṭami gurum hanti śiśyam hanti caturdaśī pratipadā pāṭhanāśassyāt ubhau hanti pañcadaśī" meaning the eighth day kills the Guru, the 14<sup>th</sup> day kills the disciple, the first day destroys the knowledge and the 15<sup>th</sup> day kills both. Thus we have the new moon day, the full moon day, a day before new and full moon and a day after. So in 15 days we have three continuous holidays. To these is added the 8<sup>th</sup> full/new moon day, and thus we have four holidays: 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of waxing and waning of Moon. On these days one should not chant *Vedas*. These are rules for studying *Vedas*. Practicing *Vedas* on these days (1,8 etc.) is not a rule. When one practices *Vedas*, one should not study new portions, but practice *Vedas* on those days is not a problem, one can practice on these days, but should not study new portions and absolutely one should not study new portions of *Vedas* on the first day of new/full moon.

Other exceptions than these are of inauspicious periods. *Vedas* should not be studied or read during inauspicious periods. For instance: birth of a child. In general birth is considered auspicious, but not according to *Vedas*. According to it, birth is inauspicious. The next ten days after the birth, the *pandits* or the people in whose house the baby was born, don't even go to the temple. Death is also inauspicious. In the next 13 days following it, if any one goes to that house, he should take a bath after returning back. So it is not completely negated, but one should take a bath after. Generally, I don't give explanation to the *karmas* specified in the tradition, but it is very logical. Nowadays, when somebody is in an ICU, they don't allow one to enter there in any conditions or time, because the visitor may carry an infection. The same is the case of the new born baby. The interdiction of ten days is established taking into consideration the health of

baby. The visitors may carry an infection which can be dangerous for the new baby.

Another example is the prohibition to taste the food while cooking. In European countries, tasting the food while cooking is almost a custom. But through this, the saliva of the person tasting is spread in the whole food, along with a possible disease. So in our tradition this is forbidden along with touching the other's food or plates. These are rules which have a logical ground, but in our tradition we do not discuss the logicality of the rules from *Vedas*, we are very strict, and try to follow them exactly. That's why we call *Veda* as "mother", "*śruti mata*". The mother says : "do". If the child asks why, she will just keep saying "do, just do". The same with *Veda*, but *Veda* is a loving mother. It has no expectation from you. It guides you for your own good.

### **How does study of Vedas help us?**

Also it is important to make a distinction: *Veda* guides us, does not order us, and just guides us according to our desire. If, for instance, we desire Heaven, *Veda* shows the *karmas* to be fulfilled for gaining Heaven. It will tell one which are the actions to be performed for that. If there is desire for rain, it will give you the *karmas* for that. One has desire for a male child; it shows the actions to be performed for that. In this way, *Vedas* guide us, to fulfill our desires (personal, for the group, for the next world). They don't order us. This is the distinction.

So to sum up the concept of "*nityam*", we understand that it means always, but restrictions regarding not to study after the afternoon food, not immediately after any food, not in the night, not in the 1th, 8th, 14th and 15th day of waxing and waning moon, not during the inauspicious periods, not during rainy season or when there is an animal prowling around the area etc. Other than these exceptions, *Veda* should be performed, always.

Then there are some exceptions to (these) exceptions, which the *Veda* prescribe, such as actions which are to be performed by *Brahmins* daily, no matter of auspicious or inauspicious days. They have to perform these *karmas* daily. During the inauspicious days of birth and death they will not even go to the temple, but they will have to do the daily rituals without using water. They have to chant the *mantras* at least. This is valid only for the *karmas* which are to be performed daily.

### **Study of Vedas – who, why and how**



The third term “*adhiyatam*” means “study”, “one should study.” Here some questions can be raised: who should study and who should not, why and how one should study.

### **who should study Vedas?**

*Vedas* gives three classes of people the eligibility to study. There are five classes of people: 1. *Brahmins* - priestly class; 2. *Kshatriya* - the warrior class; 3. *Vaishya* - the business class; 4. *Shudra* - the servant class; 5. *Mleccha* - the foreigners. Also only human beings have the authority to study Vedas, not the *Devas*, the deities. From these five classes of people the eligibility to study *Vedas* is given just to the first three: *Brahmins*, *kshatriya* and *vaishya*. The last two have lost their eligibility. Also among the *Brahmins*, some people are losing the eligibility.

There is a beauty. We don't send people out of *Hinduism*, neither we invite them into *Hinduism*. Once one accepts *Hinduism*, its Tradition and the Truth, he is a *Hindu*. We don't believe in conversion.

Among the first three classes of people, the last two, warrior class and the business class have also lost their eligibility, as they didn't perform their *karmas* for three generations and they never got initiated with the sacred thread for three generations. Some *Brahmins* are also losing their eligibility because of this.

So *Vedas* give eligibility only to those three classes of people. Even among them, at present only some *Brahmins* have the eligibility. When we talk about the eligibility of *Brahmins*, does that mean the *Brahmin* women are eligible too? They are not. *Vedas* don't give eligibility to women. This is not a chauvinistic idea. The structure, the actions (*karmas*) enjoined for women are different. When chanting *Vedas*, the sound must rise from the belly, from the stomach, the sound should be produced from the navel area. But this whole area is different for the women. This is a logical explanation; there is no need for it. It is said in the vedas and it is enough. Still, in this context, the explanation is given.

From this situation one may get to the conclusion that *Hindu* system does not treat ladies properly. This is not true, on the contrary, it has given to them even more respect than to other people. For instance, in a *Hindu* family, the husband does some *punya* (good deeds, virtues) and some *papa* (bad deeds, vice) and the wife does some *punya* and *papa*. Normally, we say “I do, I enjoy or I do, I

suffer”, but the *Hindu* system is not structured in such a way. The good deeds (*punya*), of the husband are shared equally with the wife, the *papa* the husband does is not shared. The *punya* of the wife is not shared, but the *papa* of the wife goes completely to the husband. So this is how women are treated and there is no chauvinistic idea here.

### **Why study Vedas?**

We saw who should study *Vedas*, further we will see why he should study, because *Vedas* enjoins him to study by saying “*svādhyāyo adhyetavaḥ*”. This is a rule in *Vedas* which means “One’s own portion of *Veda* should be studied”. Only after studying one’s own portion of *Veda*, can one desire to study the other portion. There are some people who are named *Dvivedi*, *Trivedi*, *Chaturvedi* etc., *Dvivedi* , one who studied two *Vedas*, *Trivedi* , one who studied three *Vedas*, *Chaturvedi* , the one who has studied four *Vedas* but in many cases, at present, only the names remain. They are not studying *Vedas* but the name has come from their forefathers who studied them.

### **When can one study Vedas?**

Further we will see how one should study. Since it is said in the *Veda* that one should study at least his own branch of *Veda*, the question arises as to how one should study. It is said “*aṣṭavayasi brāhmaṇān upanayeta tam adhyāpayita*”, that at the age of 8 a *Brahmin* boy should be initiated into the ceremony of the sacred thread. Some people choose to initiate at a younger age. This initiation gives the eligibility to study *Vedas*. Only if one has that sacred thread, he has the eligibility to study *Vedas*, not before that. The moment the *Brahmin* boy is initiated, he enters into an *ashrama* (life style) called *brahmacharya ashrama*.

There are four life styles: *Brahmacharya* - after the initiation in the sacred thread, *Grihastha* - after getting married, family person, *Vanaprastha* - when one leaves the house and decides to live in the forest along with his wife and *Sannyasa* - when he decides to go to live alone as a renunciate.

Until a boy who is born in a *Brahmin* family is not initiated in the sacred thread, he is not considered a *Brahmin*. The sacred thread gives him the eligibility to become a *Brahmin* and study *Vedas*. He goes and stays with the *Guru* to study *Vedas*. The *Guru* chants “*vedo nityamadhīyatām*” once, the disciple will chant it twice. This is the first step. Then the *Guru* will ask him to chant the whole paragraph or *sloka* ten times. And the student will chant it ten times, ten days.

He will not memorize it, he will just chant it ten times per day for ten days and it is there in his memory for life. And after that he must repeat (as a revision) it in between lest he forgets it.

### **How one and why should he study?**

Only when one knows the *Vedas* along with its meaning, and we are referring to the general meaning, when practicing the *karmas*, one can perform it correctly. In the *Vedas* we have the *Upanishads* also. If one understands them, one will not involve himself in *karmas*, because *Upanishads* give the knowledge of Self and that is not associated with any action (*karma*).

So, one should have a general knowledge of the *Vedas*, when he practices the *karmas* prescribed there, he will be able to perform it rightly. This is what the following *upadesha* states:

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तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयताम्

*taduditam karma svanuṣṭhīyatām*

*tad* - that, *uditam* - which springs, *karma* - action, *svanuṣṭhīyatām* - su + *anuṣṭhīyatām* - nicely perform.

The whole meaning of the *upadesha* is “Perform the actions prescribed there (in *Vedas*) properly.”

### **How to perform Vedic duties?**

As we saw in the previous *upadesha*, we have to understand the *Vedas* along with their meaning, because we saw that *Veda* has two portions, the *mantras*, and their commentary. The *mantras* are used in the *karmas*, those *karmas* are explained in the commentary, and are called *brahmana*. From this perspective, it is important to understand which *mantra* should be applied where and to which *God*. When we invite a deity while performing *karma*, we have to use specific vedic *mantra*. If for instance one wants to invite the God of Fire, *Agni*, he should invite Him using *mantras* for fire. If he wants to invite *Siva*, he must invoke

with *mantra* for *Siva*. There are particular *mantras* for particular deities.

“*taduditam*”- the *karmas* seen there ( those prescribed in *Vedas*). The *Vedas* prescribe *karmas* for different people. Since the *karmas* are prescribed there, it does not imply that anyone can perform any *karma*. As we saw, the eligibility is given to the first three classes, and within these, just the *Brahmins* have maintained the eligibility and among them just a part are eligible to perform. Even if we take into consideration the eligibility of the all three classes, not all of them are eligible to perform any *karma*. The *Karma* for a *Brahmin* should be performed only by a *Brahmin*. The *karma* for a warrior class can be performed only by the warrior class. One cannot say “I am a *Brahmin*, I can do any *karma*”. You can perform the *karma* for the other, but not for yourself. Another example, a king should perform a *yagna* called “*rājasūya*”. It is specifically said “*rājā rājasūyena yajeta*”, only a person who is born in the warrior class is eligible for that and not everyone. So the *karmas* prescribed there, “*taduditam*”, only the eligible one should perform.

### **What karma do we need to perform?**

Next term in the *upadesha* is “*karma*”. This concept is the very basic concept which is needed to be understood in order to understand life. If we don’t understand *karma* theory, we will not understand why we need to study, the *Scripture, Shastra, Vedanta*. We know that *Veda* guides us, does not order us, *Veda* is “*śruti mata*”, guiding us according to our wish, whether it is good *karma* or bad *karma*. Normally, if a child wants to hurt other, the mother will say “No, don’t do it”, for instance “my brother hit me, so I will hit him. A normal mother will say “no”. But *Veda* says “ok, you want to do it, you can do it, you hit him like this and he won’t hit back, but if you hit, the result is you won’t get proper food, you will be put in dark room for three days etc., you decide”. It will provide us all the knowledge of the consequences of our actions so we can decide accordingly.

There are two types of *karma*: *vihita karma* and *pratiṣiddha*, “do’s” and “don’ts”. Not in an imperative way, but as per our desire. The “do’s” are deeds which will bring *punya* (good results, virtues) if we do, the “don’ts” are deeds that incur *papa* (bad results, sin). Under *vihita* and *pratiṣiddha* there are three categories: *nitya* (daily), *naimittika* (occasionally), *kamya* (desire propelled). Under the “do’s”, there is one more category, called *prayaschitta karma*, meaning repentance. In the “don’ts” there is no *prayaschitta*. So daily one

should do or should not do some specific *karmas*. Some examples: we have to perform the Sun worship daily. One should not drink liquor daily (never),. This is not to be performed daily. Another example is, not hurting or killing other living beings. For occasional *karmas*: for instance in full moon or new moon there are some *yagna* prescribed, like *Darshapurnamasa yagna* on new/full Moon or *Pitru karma*, the *karmas* for ancestors on the new Moon. In occasional “don’ts” there are also some *karmas*, like: one eats fish, in general , but when he is in a holy place he will not eat fish, because it is forbidden. He does it daily, but he will not do it on a holy day, in a holy place etc. For the desire propelled *karmas*, for instance the desire to go to Heaven, one should perform the specific actions which are prescribed for that. This is *kamya karma* in “do’s”. In “don’ts”, for instance one wants to hurt an enemy, so one perform that *karma*, *abhichara karma* (the *karma* to destroy the enemy). Those *karmas* are desire propelled. *Prayaschitta karma*, repentance, the actions prescribed for diminishing the *papa* resulting from one’s sins, like going to a temple, visiting a holy place, visiting a holy man, taking bath in a holy river etc.

The term “*karma*” used here is in singular. This does not imply that there is just one *karma* in the *Vedas*. There are so many *karmas*, but then why here we have the singular form? It is used (the singular) to show the class of *karmas*: we call it in sanskrit “*jātau eka vacanam*”, describing a class using the singular form. “*jāti*” means class, “*jātau*” means “in a class, to refer to a class”, we use singular. That is why here it is said in singular, “*karma*”.

So one has to understand first the *Vedas* and the *karmas* and his eligibility for those *karmas* and then one has to perform the *karmas*.

### **How should the *karmas* be performed?**

For instance “*akṣayam vai cāturmāsya yajino sukṛtaṁ bhavati*” - the person who performs the sacrifice called *Chaturmasya* will experience *punya* which is undiminishing, eternal”. This statement, *literally*, would mean that everybody would perform only this *karma* and not any other *karma*. And this would make the other *karmas* redundant, useless and the whole of *Veda* would become useless. A potential opponent could establish this thesis, by interpreting “undiminishing” *ad literam* and not in the context of the whole *Vedas*, not corroborating with the rest of *Vedas*. So in this statement, “undiminishing” means comparative greatness. When you compare to another *karma*, the result you gain from *chaturmasya* is enjoyed for longer time. Like for instance: great

great grandfather mosquito has passed knowledge to the great great grandchild. From the great great grandfather to the great great grandchild there is knowledge in the mosquito that a human being is eternal and this because the life span of a mosquito is very short, few days for male and few weeks for female. If it saw me a week ago and now also he sees me, I am like eternal for it; it will think “oh, this fellow is there for so long, don’t touch him”. That is how the *Chaturmasya* result also will be. It does not mean it is eternal. It is like you will be living a longer period than another person. It is comparative greatness.

*Karmas* cannot give eternal result. *Vedas* themselves negate it, by saying: “*kṣīṇe punye martyaloke viṣanti*”, when the punya gets extinguished, one comes back to this mortal world. This shows that *karmas* are not eternal. There is a simple logic: “*yat krtakam tad anityam*”, meaning “whatever is produced, whatever is created, and whatever is attained is not eternal”. It’s like in the example of a pot: we create a pot, therefore it is not eternal. We create paper, paper is not eternal, we create a building, it is not eternal. Whatever we create is not eternal.

So from the *Vedas*, through the logic, we understand one thing that whatever is created is not eternal. Therefore, the *karmas* cannot give eternal results. Then how to get eternal result? *Veda* itself declares: “*jñānena eva amṛtattvam ānaśuḥ*”, only through the knowledge one can gain eternal result, and there is no other path to gain eternal result. “*jñānād eva tu kaivalyam*”, only through the knowledge one can gain liberation, which is eternal; there is no other means. Therefore, by corroborating the two statements (*karma* doesn’t produce eternal result, knowledge produces eternal result), we understand that only through knowledge, we gain eternal result.

The term “*svanuṣṭhīyatām*” has the preposition ( adverbial) “*su*”(“*susthu*”) “*anuṣṭhīyatām*”, “perform it properly”. Why this recommendation? There is diction in *Veda*, karma portion, “*anga vaikalye, phala vaikalyam*”, (“*anga*” means “the limbs”, “*vaikalya*” means “not complete”), if one performs a *karma* with its limbs which are not complete, there will be defect in the result. If there is a defect in the limbs, there will be a defect in the result. This is an axiom, a diction in *Poorva-Mimamsa* , the *karma* portion. We take an example: while eating, I put some rice on the plate, some vegetables and some cheese (in Romania, not having some cheese while we eat means the food is not complete). In the same way, if you don’t perform the *karma* with each limb, it will not produce proper result. Therefore, we need to perform the *karmas* nicely,

meaning “as prescribed”.

If it is a simple *karma*, by having the knowledge of how to perform it as prescribed in the *Vedas*, one will be able to perform it. If it is a complex *karma*, then it cannot be performed individually. It requires a group of people. As we saw there are four *Vedas*. To each specialist, a task will be given and he will do that *karma*. The *Rigvedi pandit*, the *pandit* belonging to *Rigveda* will manage the *karmas* by inviting *God* and by saying the *mantras* for fire oblation etc., the *Brahmin* belonging to *Yajurveda*, will throw the oblation material into the fire, the *Samaveda pandit* will sing in praise of the invited *God*. The *Rigvedi* will invite the *God* and the *God* is supposed to stay in that place for a time, not leave immediately, for keeping Him there, the *Samavedi* *pandit* will sing a song. There is a person called *Brahmana* who manages all these three people. A *karma* is not a simple thing. We cannot do things otherwise. And if someone does something wrong, he will not be stopped by saying “no, no it is wrong.” He will be stopped with a specific intonation of the syllable “*Om*”, like in the example in the usage of the word “honey”, in addressing to a partner or kid. When one uses it to express love it has an intonation, when used to express anger, another intonation. Here also, when a *pandit* does a mistake in the ritual, he is stopped with a specific intonation of “*Om*” and he understands there is a mistake. For that there is repentance for some *karmas*, whereas for other *karmas*, one should perform the whole ritual again, in case of some *karmas* he has to incur the loss, for some *karmas* he has to sponsor the next *karmas*. It is not so simple. Nowadays, you invite a priest and pay him money for performing *karma*, but you don’t really know what he is doing. Sometimes he may chant some *Vedic mantra*, sometimes not.

So this *karma*, inviting a *Brahmin* priest and asking him to perform a *karma*, implies so many clauses (implicit). There is no need to sign any contract. One invites him, he accepts, that is all. He has accepted a convention. Like your google phone. You start the new phone or app, it will ask “accept?”, you have to say accept the license. If you say “no”, the phone will switch off and you will not be able to use the phone or the app. In the same way, if you invite a *Brahmin* priest, he can say “no”, but if he accepts, he is accepting a tacit contract and if he does a mistake, he will do in accordance with the *Vedas* (even incurring loss or sponsoring the next *karma*). So they perform the *karma* prescribed in the *Vedas* in a proper way, “*svanuṣṭhīyatām*”.

What should be the situation for the *sadaka* (spiritual seeker), who wants to gain

the knowledge of the Self? He should perform the daily *karma*, the occasional, the repentance, but not the *kamyā karma* (desire propelled actions). i.e., except for the *kamyā karma*, the rest he has to perform. Why this exception? This *karma* is result-oriented and the *sadaka* is not going after results; he already understands that whatever is gained as a result is not eternal. Therefore, when he performs the *karma*, he performs it for gaining the purity of heart (*chittashuddi*).

What are the results of the other three classes of *karmas*? For the daily *karmas*, like Sun worship (*sandhyavandana*), there is no result. As there is no result if one avoids performing it, there is a result. The result one gains is sin, “*pratyavaya*.” If one doesn’t perform the *karma*, he will incur sin. If one performs the *karma*, he will not perform it for any positive result, but to avoid incurring sin. So good *karmas*, always don’t bring in positive result.

### 3

तेनेशस्य विधीयताम् अपचितिः

*teneśasya vidhīyatāmapacitiḥ*

*tena* - that *karmas* which we are performing, *īśasya* - to the *Ishvara*, *vidhīyatām* - one who has to surrender, *apacitiḥ* - as a worship.

The whole meaning of the third teaching is: “The results of the *karmas* we perform, whatever it may be, that we should surrender to *Ishvara*, as a worship.”

### **Do work as worship**

So one studies the *Vedas* properly and after getting the knowledge of *karmas* through the *Vedas*, he performs the *karmas*. How does he perform? It is said that the knowledge should be gained along with its *angas* (limbs). *Vedas* are not studied throughout the year. When the boy goes to the *guru*, he is not taught *Vedas* throughout the year. Nowadays, it is done through the entire year, but traditionally is not like this. But, six months he is taught the *Vedas*, the other six months he will be taught the auxiliary text to understand the *Vedas*, *vedangas*, there is : *shiksha* - the methodology to pronounce the words, *chhandas* - the meters, *vyakarana* - sanskrit, *nirukta* - the dictionary, vocabulary, epistemology of the words, *jyotisha* - astrology (science of light), *kalpa* - instructions, related



to different rituals of *karmas*. He is also taught astrology. Vedic astrology is primarily developed not for reading the horoscope, but for fixing a proper time for the sacrifices, for the *karmas*, by looking at the planetary positions, the *tithi*, the particular day of waxing and waning of Moon. So after being taught how to perform the *karmas*, one is taught astrology. After learning these, they get into the *karmas*.

When we refer to a person who has performed a *karma* and there is a result for it, good or bad, complete or not complete. It is not specified what kind of result. We are asked through this *Upadesha* (v. supra) to surrender the results to *God*. Even if it is not said explicitly, that doesn't mean that if we do a bad *karma*, we surrender that also to *Iswara*. No. We have to make sure that, like when we give something to the person we love we choose only the best, we give only the best things to *Iswara*.

“teneśasya vidhīyatām” - that result of the *karma* we have to surrender to *Ishwara*. Why should we do this? It can be explained in two terms. 1. We need good results. Like for instance, the water from a small lake is transformed in water vapors and then converted into clouds by the Sun, the rain from that cloud will fall in the same lake, from where it took the water? No, the rain from that cloud will nourish the entire village. When this water is taken from the Sea, it will not be salty since it is from the sea, but sweet. Similarly, the result we gain from the *karmas* is very small, but when we surrender it to *Iswara*, it will be like the rain, it will give multiple results, great and good results. This is one way of seeing.

2. The second explanation is that from the point of view of rebirth, there is no difference between good or bad *karma*. Both end up in giving another birth. We are here not for gaining another birth, but to understand the Truth. To understand the Truth, we don't need *karmas*, but we need purity of mind, *chittashuddi*. For this we perform the *karmas*. But *karmas* have many clauses. When we buy things from a store, there will be a small star beneath which says “T&C, terms and conditions applied”. We never read it. Or like in the case of buying an insurance, we just sign the papers; there are so many pages, we don't completely read, we just sign it. And when we go for the claim, they we'll say “no, you signed the paper, there is a clause there...” Similarly, here in the *karmas*, there are so many clauses. The result of the *karmas*, good or bad, will bring in birth. This is the clause (implicit). No distinction regarding this effect.

The distinction is made when establishing what kind of birth. So good *karma* will bring in good birth, bad *karma* will bring in bad birth. Good *karma*, you will take a body in Heaven, bad *karma* you will be born in Hell. After that, you will have to come back here again. Again here also it (the birth) will be guided by these good or bad *karmas*. Here also our good and bad experiences are based on our good or bad *karmas*. So we are not interested in gaining another birth. One may say “I don’t have any problem in gaining another birth, I like this.” But this is not the situation for everybody. There are many people who every day, even for a handful of food, have to undergo tremendous suffering. They have to fight for their food. One may say “but my life is fine”. This time your life is fine because of your past good deeds. That may not be the case in the next birth. We are blessed not to worry about our food. But in a situation where you have to stand in line for a piece of bread, (and every country has undergone such a situation,) and that bread is for the whole family, of four or ten persons, we cannot say, it is fine. We are in a place and a time when we don’t face this situation, but if we faced this situation now, we would be able to enjoy it? No. So we are not really interested in taking another birth.

### **The merit of surrendering fruits of Karma**

Just by surrendering the results of the *karma*, one doesn’t get realization. Surrendering the results of the *karma* is for the purity of heart. Surrendering the results doesn’t mean that we do the *karmas*, but don’t enjoy the results. It is like making a good cake, but should not eat it. There is no point in it. Say for instance, there is some dirty water on the road, we take a stone and throw into it. The water will splash, not just on the other side, but on you also. After the splashing of water, you have to wash. This is a good game, for kids. They do it. But why should we be interested in doing it?

Performing the *karmas* gives result and that result one should surrender.

If instead of this, one would say let me not perform the *karmas*, this also is against the *Vedas*, which say “you have to perform the *karmas* properly,” “*taduditam karma svanuṣṭhīyatām*” So one cannot escape performing the *karmas*, daily and occasional duties, and if needed the *prayaschitta* (repentance) also. So one should perform these *karmas* and surrender their results to *Iswara*, because it is *Iswara*’s will that we should perform these *karmas* only to gain purity of heart. For this reason it is said “*teneśasya vidhīyatāmapacitiḥ*”

Hence, we have to do these *karmas* as a worship, “*apacitiḥ*”

What kind of *karmas* do we need to perform? We talked about *nitya* - daily *karmas*, *naimittika karma* - occasional *karmas*, *prayaschitta karma* - repentance *karmas*. But *kamyas* are also prescribed by the *Vedas*. Are not *kamyas* prescribed in *Vedas*? By renouncing the *Kamyas*, can we give up performing the other *Karmas* too! Or while performing the other *karmas*, why not perform the *Kamyas* as well? To answer dilemma this we pass on to the next teaching:

4

काम्ये मतिस्त्यज्यताम्

*kāmye matistyaajyatām*

*kāmye* - the desire propelled *karmas*, *matih* - your attachment, here, *tyajyatām* - give up.

So the whole meaning is “Give up the attachment to the desire propelled *karmas*.”

Therefore, perform all the *karmas* properly, but not the desire propelled *karmas*. The argument for this statement is “*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramah smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati*” in *Bhagavadgita*, *Bhagavan* says “From desire (attachment) one gets anger, from anger one gets forgetfulness, from forgetfulness one loses his intelligence, the discriminative power, through that one gets himself destroyed.” The process starts with desire, but ends with the destruction of yourself. So since it is the cause of yourself destruction, give up the desire propelled *karma*. So one should perform the *karmas*, leaving aside the desire propelled *karmas*.

What will happen and What will I gain? This is a question “what it is to be gained ?” rises always about.

Here the next teaching answers:

5

पापौघः परिधूयताम्

*pāpaughah paridhūyatām*

*papa* - sin, *oghah* - group, *paridhūyatām* - cleanse.

The whole meaning is “cleanse the group of sins properly.”

When one performs the daily, occasional *karmas* and *karmas* for repentance properly the result is the removal of one’s sins, the group of sins that we have acquired in multiple past births.

Both negative *karmas* and positive *karmas* are obstacles in our growth, but the positive *karmas* help to purify our heart, purify our mind and helps us to understand the Truth.

### **Why is this purity of mind so important?**

Truth we are talking about cannot be understood without a pure mind. There is a statement in *Mandukya Karika*: “*Mana eva manushyanam karanam bandha mokshayoh*”, “Mind is the cause for all the beings for their bondage and release.” We can be happy in the middle of the people when there is no mind, but we will be troubled a lot even when alone when you have troubled mind. The troubled mind will not allow peace whether you are in the group or alone, but the same mind when purified, whether you are in the group or alone, doesn’t really matter.

Without a pure mind, even a simple statement, like for instance, “How are you?” can be distorted. This is a simple question with a simple answer: “I am fine, thank you.” But a troubled mind can distort even such a simple question thinking “Why is he asking me how I am , what is the reason behind, does he want to trouble me, does he not like me to be happy, what is the reason he asks how are you all of a sudden. I don’t understand this person. I don’t like him. How dare he asks me how are you?” And if you say “I am sorry”, then he retorts: “How can you say you are sorry?! Don’t you like me? Don’t you like to see me fine?” So a simple question as “how are you” can get distorted with an impure mind. In a troubled mind even a simple question becomes complicated.

So, when it is so even in the transactional reality, when the mind creates so many troubles, what can be said about self-knowledge which is not understandable as such, which is difficult to understand as such?!

We need to do as much good *karmas*, *japa*, meditation as possible, but we have to understand all these *karmas* we perform and should surrender to *Iswara* are only means for purification of the mind and not to gain the Truth, the Self. After gaining this mental purification, it is not of any use if it is not applied to gain the Truth.

Therefore, when we have attained purity of mind and gained the eligibility, what should we do with this? We find the answer in the next *upadesha*:

## 6

भवसुखे दोषोऽनुसन्धीयताम्

*bhavasukhe doṣo'nusandhīyatām*

*bhava* - *Samsara*, *sukha* - happiness, *doṣa* - defect, *anusandhīyatām* - see, meditate.

“See the defect in the happiness which we experience with respect to the objects of the world.”

The term “*bhava*” means *Samsara*. *Samsara* is the cycle of birth and death. We will be in this *Samsara* of birth and death until we understand the Truth. If there is birth, definitely there is death; if there is death definitely it presupposes a birth. That is why whoever is in the path of spirituality strives to be eternal. Why? Because everyone, any living being, has the “*abhinivesha*”, fear of death. Everyone, even the new born child, who doesn't know anything, has this fear. If anyone says “No, I don't have this fear of death, I am ready to die”, means he has no idea of death, doesn't have understanding about what death is.

This cycle of birth and death will continue till we understand the Truth.

People who commit suicide think that their problem will come to an end if they commit suicide. If they are told that after committing suicide, more problems may come, will they be still ready to die? When they say, “I am ready to die”, it indicates their ignorance of what death is.

Therefore, here it is said “*bhava*” in this *Samsara*, whatever may be the cause of happiness, it may be the joy of making money or anything else, we have to see a defect in it. It is said “*vishaiyeshu dosham pashya*,” meaning “See the defects in objects.”

If it is sorrow, then it is easy to find the defect, but here we are asked to see the defect in happiness. How is it possible? What is the defect?

The defect is that happiness is not eternal. We have to work hard; we have to undergo pain for happiness. During happiness we have pain because it will come to an end, when it comes to an end, we will be in pain as we lost it. Whichever way, there is a background of sorrow associated with that happiness. All throughout the process there is pain attached to that happiness we experience. So it is not pure happiness. There is nothing called pure happiness that we experience here. For example, money. For getting salary, we have to work the entire month. The day we get the salary, there is a list with the expenditures which at most of the time exceeds the salary. The money is with you, but the worries about how you will manage the whole month brings pain. After spending, your mind will be on the next salary day and again there is pain.

### **How to see defects in the objects of world**

One can say “This is not for me, this is for salaried people, I don’t have problems with money, I got the lottery ticket, won the big prize, and now what can be the defect?” Suddenly new friends come to you, friends who you didn’t have before, new relatives, who suddenly love you so much. Now you have to protect the money from all these people and you have to protect the money from thieves. A lot of worries come, pain comes. A lot of questions about what to invest in and what to do with the money arise. If investing in share, every day you should check if it is decreasing or increasing, again pain. If investing in property, the person who you will rent will treat the property very casually, so another pain. You will develop such attachment to these things; whatever happens to these things is seen as though it is happening to you. We have all experienced. For example, a new car. Every day you will be washing it. Someone just uses his bike and “kisses” your car. Gone...it is not the car which is “hurt”, but, you are hurt. So pain is everywhere. So you are afraid in any term, even when you have money. No happiness is without sorrow This is the defect one should see in the happiness experienced in respect to the objects of the world.

Seeing defect in the objects does not mean you are a negativist. And that, you will only see defects everywhere and never anything good in it. You will never get out of that. We already see defects everywhere. And we are not able to appreciate anything which is good. What is said in “*vishayeshu dosham pashya*”

is that, if it is an object it is defective, *per se*. This is the logic one should apply and not be critical about every object and show the particular defect in each of them.

Every object is defective. We see a beautiful body of a man or woman in front of us, it is defective. If for two days he/she doesn't take bath, it is difficult to stand near that person.

In *Bhaja Govindam* it is said, "*gatavati vāyau dehāpāye bhāryā bibhyati tasminkāye*", when the vital air leaves that body of a person whom we loved very dearly, we'll be afraid to stay alone near that body. This is the truth.

So *vishaya* means object, "object" means defect. We don't have to know all the objects to see the defect in each one of them.

We have seen the defect in the objects of experience. They are defective. Now what follows? Now it seems *Vedanta* is full of negativity. In reality it is not so. We are sons or daughters of our mother or we also have sons and daughters. When mother says "don't do your hairstyle like that," as a daughter or son you know how hard it is to get that hairstyle and mother doesn't ever understand that. When you become mother, the same story; whatever your mother said, you will say it to your child.

So "*bhavasukhe doṣo'nusandhīyatām*" doesn't imply negativity. It is a basis for something else. Only when you see the defects of the objects of the world, you will not be attracted towards it. This is what is called *vairagya*-dispassion.

What should one do after gaining *vairagya*?

The seventh teaching is

7

आत्मेच्छा व्यवसीयताम्

*ātmecchā vyavasīyatām*

*ātma* - Self, *icchā* - desire, *vyavasīyatām* - gain.

"Gain steadfastness in the desire of Self."

What is “*atma*”? if we don’t know what is *atma* , how can we have desire for *atma*? This is a valid question. Because there is a hierarchy: first we must have knowledge of an object to have desire for it; first the knowledge, then desire and after that the action. First we must have the knowledge of a desired object, desire and then we act on that desire. Without the knowledge of the object, we can never have desire to have/enjoy it. For example: let us have desire for *pani* . What does *pani* mean? So we should know if we desire it. *Pani* in hindi means water. If you don’t know what it means, whatever the *Vedas* can order you, you cannot have desire for it. Without knowing the object, we can never desire it.

Therefore, to have *atma iccha*, desire for the Self, we must know what is Self and what is non-self.

### **Definition of Self and non-Self**

The simple definition of *atma* is “that which is eternal is *atma*.” Then the question of what is “eternal” arises. That which exists in the three periods of time (past, present and future) or that which is not negated in the three periods of time is eternal, *atma*. So by this definition, whatever is negated in the three (one or more) periods of time, whatever does not exist in the three periods of time is non-self. We take some examples: cloth didn’t exist before being created, will not exist later (after the destruction) so it is non-self, paper didn’t exist before, will not exist later, it is non-self, pen didn’t exist before, will not exist after its destruction, it is non-self, the same with a house. Also, the same with the body; It didn’t exist before birth, it will not exist later, so it is non-self. The vital air didn’t exist before, will not exist later so it is non-self. The mind doesn’t exist in the state of deep sleep, doesn’t exist in *Samadhi*, so it is non-self. Therefore, whatever is non-existing in all the three periods of time is non-self.

The *Vedas* define *atma* as “*satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma*” *Satyam* means truth, existence, that which is not negated in all three periods of time is *Satyam*. *Gnanam* is knowledge or consciousness, *anantam* means unlimited or bliss. There is another *vedic* statement in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which says that “*yo vai bhūmā tad vai sukhaṁ nālpe sukhaṁ asti*” meaning “that which is all pervading is bliss. There is no bliss in what is limited.”

What is *Brahman*, what is *Self*, what is *atma*? *Brahman* is another word for *atma*. Therefore, *atma* is truth which is not negated in all three periods of time, *atma* is knowledge or consciousness, *atma* is unlimited or bliss.



Further, the term “*iccha*” means desire, here desire for the Self. The previous teaching says to give up the desire, of by seeing the defects of objects, “*bhavasukhe doṣo'nusandhīyatām*” and now it says “desire for the Self.” One has to see the defect with respect to the object of desire, but now it says to desire the Self. This seems to be contradictory. We proved that desire in whichever form in whichever object it may be, is defective. First we talked about the defect in the object of desire and desiring the object and now the teaching says about the Self as the object of desire, because we have to desire the Self, the Self becomes the object of desire. Then, following this logic, desiring the Self becomes defective. One should not have desire for Self also.

### **Different types of Desires**

What does this *upadesha* mean by “desire” here? There are two types of desire: 1. Desire for objects we don't have; 2. Desire for an object we already have. For instance I don't have a pen, I desire a pen. I don't have that book, I want that book. I don't have something; I have the desire to gain it. It is understandable to desire an object one doesn't have, but how is it possible that one can desire something he already has? One cannot say that he has desire for the cloth he is already having or for instance, for the mala (garland / necklace) he already has. Then how is it possible to have desire for something one already has? One can have desire for what he already has but he doesn't know he has it. It is like when we wear the spectacles on our head, we forget, we search for them, and somebody points it out for us. Or in some cases, it happens that some people wear their glasses and still search for the same glasses!!

The desire for the object we don't have is called “*aprāptasya prāpti*” and the desire for something we already have is called “*prāptasya prāpti*”

When we say “*atmeccha*,” desire for the Self, an opponent immediately will say “How can you say desire for Self, when you should have dispassion for everything - *bhavasukhe doṣo'nusandhīyatām*? You should see everything as defective! How can you have desire for Self?” If this is the argument, then, we say that this desire for Self is not a real desire, because it is not a desire for something we don't have. It is a desire for something we think we don't have. This is the difference. Therefore, the desire for Self is not really a desire.

Gaining the Self is happiness. One who is already happy with the enjoyments of the world may say “first you tell us not be happy with the experiences of the world and now you say gain the Self and become happy. I am already happy.”

We saw the defects in them. Whatever may be the experience, it doesn't stay with us eternally. There is a defect of impermanency in it. For example: somebody likes to watch movies and gets the opportunity, time and space to watch as much he wants. How many movies will he be able to watch? After the first, the second will come, but at the end of first already there will be saturation. Someone likes good food, for instance pizza. He will have one pizza, two pizzas and there will be saturation. So we cannot have the same joy with respect to the objects eternally.

Everyone, from the smallest ant till the biggest form of creation is in search of the Truth in different forms. Everyone thinks that whatever brings joy is the Truth, but that object of happiness, in itself is defective. There is a poem of John Keats that "a thing of beauty is joy forever." That doesn't stay so. A baby is so cute, beautiful, when he grows up and the same baby who doesn't listen to us is no longer cute. Therefore, no matter what the object may be, it is not eternal. And we are in search of that eternal happiness. This happiness can exist only in which is the Self, the embodiment of happiness, which is of the nature of bliss. Hence, we have to cultivate the desire for Self, "*atmeccha*."

The next step is given in the following *upadesha*:

8

निजगृहात्तूर्णं विनिर्गम्यताम्

*nijagrĥāttūrṇam vinirgamyatām*

*nija* - one's own, *grĥāt* - from house, *tūrṇam* - immediately, *vinirgamyatām* - turn away.

The whole meaning is "run away from one's real house."

The term "house" should not be interpreted literally. Then it would mean a realized person staying in one's house isn't really a realized person, because according to this logic only the one who runs away from his house can be realized. This will be the first conclusion. The second is, only when one runs out of his house, he will get realization.

It is not that one has to run away from the house, one has to get released from the attachments to the societal bondages. One has to give up the societal bondages. This is the meaning of the term “house” in this *upadesha*.

We are bound to many societal relations. Every time we do something we ask ourselves what our family, relative or neighbor would say, for example, even in the simple act of cutting our hair / hairstyle. More than to anything, we are bound by the societal bondages. Many of us are good, because of the societal bondage; because we are bothering more about what the society would say. That is the reality. Without the fear of law of society, can we be true to ourselves? This is the meaning of the eighth *upadesha*.

Therefore, the majority of the things we do may not be to our liking, yet we do because the society wants us to do. If a young person wants to understand the Truth, wants to study *Vedanta*, then everyone will jump on him asking a lot of questions, and try to stop him. They will ask him, “Why do you need this? You are young. Why are you doing this at this age?” So for a 20 year old, from the society’s perspective it is not appropriate to start study *Vedanta*. What about 30? They will say no again, they will say something like “You’ve just got married and you have a kid. Why now?” Then at 40? The answer will be: “You are in a very good position in your job. Why now?” Then at 50? “Your son or daughter has just got married. Just enjoy this experience. Why now?” Then at 60? The answer will be: “You are old, why now?” When then? For everything the society has an explanation.

There is a story. There was a young boy who had completed his studies from his Guru was planning to go to his house. When you go home, the Guru said, the elders will pounce on you, use this secret *trick* to silence them. As his *Guruji* predicted, everyone jumped on him, trying to convince him to give up. And so they told him “See you are young, now is the time for you to get married and get settled. When you are fifty, you can go. Who stops you from doing that? When you go old, you can go, not now”. He remembered the words of his *Guruji* and said “Yes, what you said is true, I will stay.” The elders were glad and satisfied for knowing the technique to convince people. Then the boy said “But one second, you people are elderly, why don’t you go, I will stay here.” Everyone said “oh, it’s five o’clock, I have an appointment.” No one is interested in facing the truth. Everyone wants to understand the truth, but not interested in facing it. The reality is everyone wants to run away from the truth.

The term “*tūrṇam*” means immediately “come out of it, immediately”. It is not said “get out of it” but completely come out of it.

If we don’t understand the Truth, we cannot escape this *bhava* (*Samsara*), this cycle of birth and death. Now due to our good deeds, positive *karma*, we are in a good position at least to be able to listen to *Shastra*. Nobody knows whether we can get this opportunity again. Even the desire to listen will come only when one has great amount of *punya*. It is not possible without a great amount of *punya*. We have taken a body, if we decide to leave it without understanding the Truth, there is no point.

There is a text called *Bhagavata*, explaining the glory of *Vishnu* in different avatars. The major portion is about *Krishna. Parikshit*, a king, had offended a *rishi Angeres*. He wanted to test his penance and put a snake around his neck. The rishi’s son Singri saw the scene and got angry and cursed Parikshit by saying that he will die in seven days. So he knew his time of death and immediately called on his *Guru* and said to him that he has just seven days. He requested his *Guru* to teach him the method to get out of the cycle of death and birth. That is why *Bhagavata* was taught. Those are not just stories. This person was facing death, in just seven days. He could not be said abstract things, and to make him understand, the Truth of overcoming the death was told through stories. On the seventh day, the serpent came and killed him. He left the body, but he didn’t die. His mind died. Since his mind died, there was no more attachment to the body-mind-sense organs complex. Since there was no attachment, whether he lives or dies makes is no difference. *Parikshit* has conquered death.

From the societal bonding’s we should escape, because our pursuit will become a failure due to the society bondages. This Societal bonding said here are not just the attachments to the things of the world.

Therefore, the first *sloka* has eight teachings:

1. Study the *Vedas* everyday
2. Practice *karmas* prescribed there
3. Surrender all the results to *Iswara*
4. Give up the attachment to desire propelled *karmas*
5. Wash off the sins

6. Find the defect in the objects of experience
7. Cultivate the desire for self knowledge
8. Give up the societal bondings.

Having giving up the attachment to the societal bonding's, we have come to the road. What are we to do now?

सङ्गः सत्सु विधीयतां भगवतो भक्तिर्दृढाऽऽधीयतां

शान्त्यादिः परिचीयतां दृढतरं कर्माशु सन्त्यज्यताम् ।

सद्विद्वानुपसृष्यतां प्रतिदिनं तत्पादुका सेव्यतां

ब्रह्मैकाक्षरमर्थ्यतां श्रुतिशिरोवाक्यं समाकर्ण्यताम् ॥ २ ॥

saṅgaḥ satsu vidhīyatām bhagavato bhaktirdṛḍhā"dhīyatām

śāntyādiḥ paricīyatām dṛḍhataram karmāśu santyajyatām |

sadvidvānupaśṛpyatām pratidinaṁ tatpādukā sevyatām

brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām śrutiśirovākyaṁ samākarnyatām || 2 ||

## २

सङ्गः सत्सु विधीयताम्

*saṅgaḥ satsu vidhīyatām*

*saṅgaḥ* - to associate, *satsu* - people who believe in or who know the existence, *vidhīyatām* - should do.

“One should associate himself with people who believe in existence or who understand the existence.”

After having cleansed our *papa*, one has to see the defects in the objects of experience. Then one has to cultivate the desire for Self. After this, one has to get out from the societal bondage. After giving up the attachment to the society, one has to associate himself, “*sangah*”. “*satsu*,” with people who believe in existence, people who understand the existence. So “*satsu*” can be understood in both ways: people who believe in existence and people who know what existence is. *Taittiriya Upanishad* says “*asti brahma iti ced veda santam enam*

*tato viduriti*” “if one understands that *Brahman* exists, if one understand just this, then people refer to him “he knows, he is a knower”. What to say, about a person who understands “*aham brahma asmi,*” “*I am the Self*”!!

Our understanding of the existence is of two types: 1. As oneself, 2. As it exists. The first is called *aparoksha jnana*, immediate knowledge. The second is called *paroksha jnana*, mediate knowledge. So there are two types of knowledge, immediate - *aparoksha*, mediate - *paroksha*. For instance: the knowledge related to paper is of two types. First, without seeing it, knowing only that paper is something one can write on is mediate knowledge. When I see it and use it, then it is immediate knowledge, there is no doubt about it. When one understands *Brahman* exists, because his *Guruji* told so, it is mediate knowledge, when one understands “I am *Brahman*”, it is immediate knowledge.

“*vidhīyatām*” means “associate yourself,” “have association with the people who believe in or who understand existence.” Why should one associate himself with such people? Sri *Ramana Maharishi* says that “When you are in association with people who believe or who know the existence, why do you need *yoga*, *yama*, *niyama* etc.? When you have the breeze from the mountains with sandal fragrance, why do you need a hand fan?” Similarly, when we are associated with a person who believes in existence or knows the existence, we don’t need anything else.

“*Sat*” is a name for *Brahman*, “*Sat Brahma,*” “*satyam jñānam anantam brahma*” “*Satyam*” is “*sat*” which means Truth. Truth is that which exists in all three periods of time. And that existence is *sat*. There is no difference between *sat Brahma* and *satyam Brahma*. *Brahman*, Absolute Self is *sat*.

On the contrary, we must not associate with people who don’t believe or don’t know the existence (*sat*). We believe in tradition, as the knowledge which is passed to a disciple by his *Guruji* is the same as the one he received from his *Guruji* and so on. So this idea does not change. But if it is mystical knowledge, and not traditional, he will not be able to present that idea. He may have the experience, but may not be able to help you. We say that the other philosophies are not proper is because there is really no tradition there. We have a tradition, right from the Creator. Every day we sing this song; “*sadāśiva samārambhām śaṅkarācārya madhyamām | asmadācārya paryantām vande guruparamparām*” The meaning of this *mantra* is: “Beginning with the Creator, having Sri *Shankaracharya* in the middle, till my *Guruji*, I salute the tradition.”

Therefore, after giving up the “house,” or social bondages first thing one should do is to associate himself with the people who believe in existence or who know the existence.

In *Bhaja Govindam*, there is a statement (9 th sloka): “*satsaṅgatve nissaṅgatvaṁ nissaṅgatve nirmohatvaṁ nirmohatve niscalatattvaṁ niscalatattve jivanmuktiḥ*” Sri *Adi Shankaracharya* gives the method to be established in the *Self*, even when one is alive.

We give up the “house”- “*nijagr̥hāttūrṇaṁ vinirgamyatām*”. When we give up the society and go directly to the jungle, it is possible to become crazier. If we go alone; from the craziness of the society we go to the jungle alone without any teaching and we become crazier, will not become realized. The objective to go into the jungle or staying alone meditating is to understand the Truth. This cannot happen without the knowledge of Truth. Therefore, it is said “*satsaṅga*”, associating yourself with people who know the Truth. From there we have to go to “*nissaṅga*”, staying alone. If we stay alone, without any associations, then we have “*nirmoha*”, we will not have the delusion. When we are no more deluded, we will be established in the Truth, “*niscalatattvam*”, i.e., we will not be “*chalita*,” we will not be oscillating in the Truth. When we get that steadiness in the Truth, we are liberated while alive, *jivan mukti*.

So first step is *satsaṅga*, being in the association of the knowledgeable, then *nissaṅga*, staying alone, from *nissaṅga* we go to *nirmoha*, being free from delusion, after which we go to *niscalitattvam*, clarity, from this we will be established in the *Self*, we’ll be *jivan mukta*, liberated while alive.

Therefore the basis for the Knowledge is *satsaṅga*, This is a knowledge which can take place only through a proper transmission. It is called “*pramana janita jnana*”. *Pramana* is “means of right knowledge”, *janita* “produced”, *jnana* “knowledge”, that is “knowledge which is produced through proper means of right knowledge.” Nothing else can remove this. We take an example: a white dress with an imagined dark spot on it. Nobody sees it, but one person who has the problem. How can this imagined spot be removed? Washing it will not remove it, because in reality it does not exist; it is just superimposed on the white dress. One sees it because of his confusion, so it cannot be removed through activity. The dark spot which only he sees cannot be removed through activity, it can be removed only through knowledge, the knowledge that this is a white cloth and there is no dark spot on it. Similarly, the world which we see is

because of our delusion, our confusion. This cannot be dismissed without the right knowledge. Like the example of the snake which we see in the rope or silver in mother-of-pearl. They are not real. The snake cannot be removed through any activity from the rope, any number of actions; it can be removed only through the knowledge of the substratum, that it is a rope and not a snake. Similarly here, we cannot remove this illusion through any other means except the knowledge of the substratum.

Therefore, one has to associate himself with the people who believe or people who know the existence.

The next *upadesha* says:

### 10

भगवतो भक्तिर्दृढाऽऽधीयताम्

*bhagavato bhaktirdṛḍhā''dhīyatām*

*bhagavataḥ* - in the *Bhagavan*, *bhaktiḥ* - one should have devotion, *dṛḍha* – steadfast, *ādhiyatām* - one should have.

The whole meaning: “One should gain steadfast devotion in Bhagavan.”

*Bhagavan*, *Lord*, *God*, *Iswara* are synonyms. *Bhagavan* means one who has *bhaga*. Like one who has *jnana* is *jnanavan*, one who has *aishwarya* is *aishwaryavan*, one who has *dharma* is *dharmavan*. Similarly, one who has *bhaga* is *bhagavan*. The suffix *van* is used to show one who has (a certain attribute). *Bhaga* is the sum of the six qualities: *dharma*, *jnana*, *vairagya*, *aishwaryam*, *shriya*(*shree*), *yasha*. *Dharma* means “good deeds”, *jnana* means “knowledge”, *vairagya* means “dispassion”, *aishwarya* means “greatness”, including all the *siddhis*, *shree* means “wealth”, *yasha* means “name and fame”. One who has those six in totality is *Bhagavan*. In that *Bhagavan*, “*bhagavato*,” one has to have devotion, “*bhaktiḥ*.”

### Surrender everything to Iswara (God)

The third *upadesha*, wants the results of our karmas be surrendered to *Iswara*, In this *upadesha* (tenth), again it is said in this *Iswara* one should have devotion,



*bhakti*. There is a statement: “*adhikam naiva dūṣyate*”, meaning “excess in good things is not condemned” There is another statement: “*adhikasya adhikam phalam*” meaning “the more one does, the more is the result”. In *Vivekacudamani*, *Acharya* says “*ātma anusandhānam eva bhaktiḥ iti abhidhīyate*” meaning “meditation on the Self, is called as *bhakti*.” The *sadaka* who is in the beginning stage, the teaching is devotion to the *Iswara* (Lord). In *Yoga Sutra*, *Patanjali Maharishi* says “*īśvara praṇidhānāt vā*” meaning “by worshipping *Iswara* also”. While explaining the different ways to obtain the *yoga Samadhi*, he says that one can meditate upon different objects or can obtain it by worshipping *Iswara*. Even by worshipping *Iswara* one can *yoga Samadhi*. Therefore, the *bhakti* mentioned here, in this text, is the *bhakti* from *Yoga Sutra*, the devotion towards *Iswara*, and not the meditation on the Self.

The next *upadesha*

## 11

शान्त्यादिः परिचीयताम्  
*śāntyādiḥ paricīyatām*

*śānti* - peace, *ādiḥ* - etc., *paricīyatām* - gain completely

The whole meaning is:” Gain complete peace etc.”

In the cause when there is a certain attribute, that attribute will be seen in the effect also; like for instance when white milk becomes curd, curd will be also white, not black. The causal attribute is seen in the effect. If there is no attribute in the cause, it cannot be there in the effect. “*śānti*” (peace) as causal peace, i.e. peace during the practice, can be seen in the effect, the state of *Realization*. So, only when one gains the causal peace, one can gain it in the effect also. This is because “*śānti*” is the term used in *Bhagavadgita* to define *Realization*. “*ādiḥ*” means “etc.”

### How does one get *śānti*?

We refer to the causal *śānti*, not the *śānti* from *Realization*. Without the control of the mind, *śānti* cannot be gained. *śānti* here means *shama*. *Shama* means control of mind. By the term *ādiḥ* (etc.), we understand *dama*, *uparama*, *titiksha*,

*shraddha, samadhanam*. These are the six-fold qualities, the pre-requisites in *Vedanta*.

The text says “*ātmeccā vyavasīyatām*”, cultivate the desire for the Self. This is *viveka*, discrimination. Then “*nijagrāhātūrṇam vinirgamyatām*”, give up the societal bonding. This is *vairagya*, dispassion. Then it gives the method for gaining those. And then it says one should gain the six-fold pre-requisites, “*santyadih pariciyatam*.” They are: *shama* - mind control; *dama* - sense organ control, *uparama* - performing the duty; *titiksha* - forbearance, accepting both good and bad, accepting the duality; *samadhanam* - tranquility of mind; *shraddha* - surrender. Between them there is a cause-effect relation. Without *dama*, one cannot have *shama*, without *uparathi* one cannot have *dama*, without *titiksha* one cannot gain *uparama*, without *samadhanam* there is no *titiksha*, and without *shraddha* there is no *samadhanam*. That is why it is said: “*bhagavato bhaktirdṛdhā'dhīyatām*”, “hold on to *Iswara* very clearly”, that means surrender to *Iswara*.

The term “*pariciyatām*,” is formed of two words *paritah* meaning completely and *ciyatam* which means “gain”, i.e., “gain completely”(the six-fold attributes), there is no choice. They alone can lead one to the next stage.

The next step is

## 12

दृढतरं कर्माशु सन्त्यज्यताम्  
*dṛḍhataram karmāśu santyajyatām*

*dṛḍhataram* - very clearly, steadfastly, *karma* - action, *āśu* - fast, quickly, *santyajyatām* - clearly, rightly, correctly give up.

In a proper, way give up all the karmas Immediately.

“*dṛḍhataram*” means completely. We saw in the fourth *upadesha* that the *kamyā karma* should be given up. Now we see that all the *karmas* should be given up. One is asked to give up the association with all the *karmas*, to give up that idea of “I am doing, I am the doer”. This kind of association creates bondage. So, one is asked to give up this association.

In general, we think that things are happening only because we do or we act. In South Indian temples we have a statue at the base of the gopura (entrance tower), as if it is holding on the entire building. We are all like that. We think “this world is revolving, this world is functioning, only because I do things” Everyone has this idea. “If I don’t do, nothing happens here.” But if you are replaced and someone else takes your place, things will go on nicely. We are not indispensable in this Creation. Anyone can be replaced, even the people whom we think is not capable of doing or knowing anything.

“*santyaajyatām*” means “give up rightly” This term is an indication to *sannyasa*, renunciation. Renunciation is explained as “*eṣaṇā traya tyāga*”, giving up the attachment to three things: *putreshana* - giving up the attachment to progeny, *vitteshana* - giving up the attachment to wealth, *lokeshana* - the attachment to name and fame. If for instance, we are attached to name and fame and somebody comes and praise us first, he will very easily gain something from us, maybe some amount of money. One meaning of *santyaajyatām* is completely giving up all these three attachments. *santyaajyatām* also means “giving it up properly”, through the rituals prescribed in the *Vedas*. Regarding the previous *upadesha* to give up the *kamya karma* there was no ritual, but to give up the daily activities, like Sun worship etc., the occasional activities (like full Moon , new Moon rituals etc.), one has to do it properly, as prescribed in *Shastra*. This is called as *sannyasa*. Through *sannyasa* one should give up all the three attachments and through the prescribed ritual.

There are two aspects to refer to: one is to give up the attachments to all the three objects mentioned above and second is giving up the rituals through rituals, giving up an activity through an activity.

“*āśu*” means immediately; giving up must be immediate. It is said in *Jabala Upanishad* “*yad ahar eva virajet, tad ahar eva pravajet*”, “the day you give up the association with your house (society), that day you give up all the associations.” That is why it is said *āśu*, immediately, quickly. After giving up the associating with the society, one should give up immediately the three things also.

In *Mundaka Upanishad*, it is said: “*nāsti akṛta kṛteṇa*”, the day one understands that one cannot gain The Causeless (the one who is not an effect) through the cause, through an activity; he should go to the *Guru*, “*sa gurum eva abhigacchet*”. *Sa* - he, *gurum* - master, *eva* - only, *abhigacchet* - to go. There are

three possible meanings here:

- a) *Sa gurum abhigacchet eva*, “He should, only/definitely go to, the *guru*,” because if he doesn’t go to a *guru*, he will not be able to understand. The act he should do is to go to the *Guru*.
- b) *Sa eva gurum abhigacchet*, “only he, should go to, the *Guru*, because he has the prerequisites, he is eligible. The others who are not will go and waste the *guru*’s time and their time too.
- c) *Sa gurum eva abhigacchet*, “he, should go, only to the *Guru*”. The meaning is that he should go to *guru*, and to nobody else. To that *guru* who has the knowledge of the Self.

The 13th *upadesha* says

### 13

सद्विद्वानुपसृष्यताम्  
*sadvidvānupasrpyatām*

*sad* - existence, *vidvān* - one who has knowledge (*vid*), *upa* - close, *srpyatām* - worship.

Its meaning is: “Go close to him who has knowledge of existence (Truth) and serve him.”

The one who knows the Self doesn’t expect anything from anyone, he is ever satisfied (*nitya-trpta*), because there is nothing other than him. So what and from whom he would/should expect something? Then why this service is taught here? The moment the *Guru* is in front of the disciple, the disciple salutes / prostrates to him. Why is a disciple required to do so? If the *Guru* doesn’t expect anything, one may say that there is no need to do it. Yet, the disciple has to show respect to *Guru*. While the *Guru*, though not expecting anything from his, observes the attitude of the disciple. If one doesn’t have the proper attitude towards the *Guru*, he will not have the proper attitude towards the words of the *Guru*, which is nothing but *Shastra*. It is said “*idam te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadāchana na chāsusrusave vāchyam na ca mam yo ’bhyasuyati*”, You should never explain this to one devoid of penance, to a non-devotee, to the one devoid of faith, to one

does not do any service, or to one who is resentful towards Me. Therefore, one should not give this knowledge to a person who doesn't have a proper attitude.

The term “*upasevyatām*” is the same with “*upasṛpyatām*”. *upasevyatām* is similar to *Upanishad*. “*Upa*” means close, *ni* means at a lower level or clearly, *shad* means go, “go to the *Guru*, close to him, sit clearly below, in the knowledge”. The same is said here, *upa* means “close”, *sevyatam* means “worship”. Here it is implied also a specific attitude of worshipping. It is not mere the action. Without the proper attitude, people pretend to worship, in fact they will be cheating themselves. By this pretension, they think they cheat others, but in reality they only cheat themselves. So here, the real mental attitude is important.

One has to go to that *Guru* who has the knowledge of existence (Truth), as he only can transmit the knowledge. Only the one, who has the knowledge of existence, can give the knowledge of existence. One who has the knowledge of economy can give just the knowledge of economy, not the one of existence. Therefore one should go to the *Guru* who has the knowledge of existence and surrender to him.

The next teaching shows how he should be asked:

## 14

प्रतिदिनं तत्पादुका सेव्यताम्  
*pratidinaṁ tatpādukā sevyatām*

*pratidinaṁ* / *anudinam* - every day, *tatpādukā* - his lotus feet, *sevyatām* - worship.

“Every day one should worship the *guru*'s feet.”

This is the method taught here. In the beginning we mentioned that the text contains forty steps which a person who wants the knowledge should follow. One should everyday worship the lotus feet of the master. In *Bhagavadgita*, *Bhagavan* tells *Arjuna* how one can gain the knowledge. He says “*paripraśnena*

*sevyā*”, i.e. question with respect to the teaching and serving. Worship is not to please the *Guru*, but to make him understand the attitude of the disciple. The realized one should exist (live) in the world like a wooden block, inert. For the one who has knowledge in reality there can be no activity. It is said “*jānatopi medhāvi jaḍavat lokam ācaret*”. “*jānatopi medhāvi*”, even though the intelligent one knows the Truth, let him be like an inert thing in this world, “*jaḍavat lokam ācaret*”. Being inert doesn’t mean that he should not answer to the disciple’s question, but he should answer only if he is asked, “*nā apṛṣṭan kasyacit vadet*”. If a child is fed at 12 o’clock. The mother will not go to feed him directly at 12 o’clock, but wait for the request (the child to cry or show signs of hunger). Similarly, if one wants knowledge, one has to ask for it. And how should one ask the *Guru*? With respect he should serve his (*Guru*’s) feet every day, “*pratidinam tatpādukā sevyatām*”. It is said that in front of the *Guru*, even breathing sound should not be heard. This means, that one should be totally focused on what the *Guru* says and not disturb his train of thoughts. The method of asking the *Guru* is explained in *Taittiriya Upanishad*, “*teṣām tvayā āsanena praśvasitavyam*”. When one has doubts about some *karmas* or some knowledge, one should go and meet some knowledgeable person, one who has knowledge about that *karma* or that subject. And one should not go and immediately ask the question, *ex abrupto* (*abruptly*). One has to first offer him a seat, give something to drink, and once he is settled, he can ask the question.

The disciple has reached to the *Guru* who is *sadvidvan*, he did the service to his lotus every day. The result of this service is shown in the next *upadesha*:

## 15

ब्रह्मैकाक्षरमर्थताम्  
*brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām*

*brahma* – Self, *ekākṣaram* – the one syllable, *arthyatām* - we should ask.

The meaning here is not just “ask,” but pray for. “*brahmaikākṣaram*” has two meanings: a) about that *Brahman* which is one and doesn’t undergo the decay; ask for that One non-dual Self, that doesn’t change; b) “*aksharam*” also means

“syllable, ”*brahmaikākṣaram* “ - one syllable of *Brahman*; ask for one syllable of *Brahman*, which is ॐ - *Om kara*.

The *mantra Om*, like any other *mantra*, should be gained from the *Guru*. Not everybody has the eligibility to chant *Om*. Only the one who has given up the world completely, i.e. the one who has taken up *sannyasa is eligible*. He has the eligibility to chant *Om* individually. And he must be initiated by the *Guru* and he has to chant *Om* ten thousand times per day. Whatever he does, his mind should be completely in the *Om kara*. And for the others, though they are not eligible to chant it individually, as one syllable, they are given *mantra* that will generally be preceded by *Om*.

There is a story in the *Upanishads* about *Shvetaketu*. After graduating from the *Vedic* school, he comes back to his father. He comes back very proud, displaying his ego of having studied everything. His father was a great man himself, but had sent his son to other teacher. Seeing his son’s pride he asked him: ”Have you studied everything?” The son replies: ”Yes, of course, I have studied everything and I am the first”. Then, the father asked him, “do you know the one, by knowing which, everything else is as well known? Have you asked your *Guru*?”. “My *Guru* does not know”, replied the boy. And he added, “If he had known, he would have taught me, who am his best student”. Again his father asks him if he had asked the *Guru* about it. The boy answered “no” and at that moment he understands that there is something that he did not learn from his *Guru* and this his father may know. Then *Shvetaketu* asks his father to teach him about that one knowing which, everything is known. And so the father goes on to teach “*Tat Tvam asi*”, *that you are*. You are that Self, nine times, with nine different examples. For instance: when the salt is thrown in the water, salt would be everywhere, will pervade the whole water. In the same way, the Self pervades everything. And, like a small seed which has in it the potentiality of a tree, but one doesn’t see the tree in the seed, similarly the Self pervades everything. Like these, he offers nine different examples and teaches him *tat tvam asi*.

The person as explained in *Mundaka Upanishad* “*nasti akṛta kṛtena*”, one who understood that the Causeless, the Self, is not an effect and therefore cannot be gained through any cause, comes to the *Guru*. He serves the *guru* and finds an opportune time to ask a question.

In *Chandogya Upanishad*, there is a story: *Indra*, the Lord of the deities and *Virochana*, the king of demons, came to the Father, *Brahma*, the Creator. After

hearing a celestial sound which said “knowing that one Truth through which everything is as well known, one becomes eternal”. After listening to these words, they both went to the Creator together, even though they were enemies. They told Him they have come to know ‘that’ by which, everything is known and they too can become eternal. The Creator told them to stay there and serve him for 32 years they could ask him after that. If he knows the answer, then he will tell them. They do that and finally when they were called by *Brahma*, they told him what they wanted to know. *Brahma* then tells them to go to clean themselves and come in the dress which they came with. He takes them to a lake and shows them their reflection in the water and tells them ‘That is the Self. What you see is the Self’. They both went back. Half way they split up. *Virochana*, the demon king goes to his peoples and tells them that the body is the Self, “let’s drink and dance happily”. *Indra*, the king of deities, on his way back, stays and retreats and starts thinking “what did the *Father* tell me? He told me that the body is the Truth, but how can this be? This is perishable. This cannot be the Truth. The Truth is *aksharam*, imperishable. Because he had purity of heart he was able to understand that and so he went back. And this went on for 101 years, again and again. After 32 years, *Brahma* tells something, *Indra* comes back and so on few times. Same teaching is given in different forms. The *Guru* gave the Truth to the disciple, but the problem was with the disciple. Because of impurity of mind, whatever was taught, he had understood according to his own intellect. So he misinterpreted everything, every time, except the last time when he understood that Self is non-dual, imperishable, not-changeable. To know this Self, one should ask the *Guru* about it.

In order to ask this question, one should have the knowledge of *Brahman*. Asking is action. Action presupposes desire, desire presupposes knowledge. So to ask the *Guru* to impart the knowledge of *Brahman*, one must have the knowledge of *Brahman*. Then a question rises: if one already has that knowledge why he should ask anymore? If one doesn’t have the knowledge of *Brahman* how can he ask?

Every *Upanishad* tells us that the disciple has heard from somewhere about the Self, before going to the *Guru*. He doesn’t know, he has heard about it. There is another story in *Chandogya Upanishads*, in which *Narada*, the great *rishi*, son of *Brahma*, the Creator, goes to his elder brother, *Sanat Kumara* and ask to teach him. He tells him “*bhavadbhyo ṛṣibhyo śrutam tarati śokam ātmaviditi bahava śocami tam mām bhagavān śokam pāram tārayatu*” - “I have heard



from great people like you, about that ONE by knowing which everything is known and through which one crosses the ocean of *Samsara*. I am in deep sorrow, and therefore please help me to cross this ocean of sorrow, of *Samsara*". The sage *Narada* knew every science and art; there was nothing he hadn't studied. He was a master of everything, of all the *vidyas*. *Sanat Kumara* starts explaining to him "*yo vai bhuma tat vai sukham*" - that which is all pervading is bliss and "*na alpe sukham asti*" - there is no happiness in limited things. This is the teaching and from here he goes on to teach him non-duality.

Therefore, every text tells us that the disciple has some idea of the Self, then goes to the *Guru* and asks for that Self. This is said also in the *upadesha* "*brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām*" (ask for that imperishable non-dual Self). One should not go and ask for worldly things from the *Guru*. This is a recommendation for the disciple. As for the *guru*, he also should be a *guru* who is able to answer such a question. If he is asked this question (about that imperishable Self) and he starts talking about the politics and climate, then one should thank him and get away from him, because the next teaching says: "*śrutiśirovākyaṃ samākarnyatām*". When asked about the Truth, the *Guru* should teach the Truth. And the source of the Truth he is teaching must be the Scriptures, not his imagination.

## 16

श्रुतिशिरोवाक्यं समाकर्ण्यताम्  
*śrutiśirovākyaṃ samākarnyatām*

*śruti* - Veda, *śira* - head, conclusion (in here), *vākyaṃ* - statement, *samākarnyatām* – *samyak* - nicely + *ākarnyatām* - to listen.

"Listen nicely to the *Vedic* statements from the *Guru*".

Not just the disciple, the *Guru* also must have certain qualities. *Mundaka Upanishad* says about the eligibility of the *Guru*, the qualities of the *guru* "*śrotriyaṃ brahmaniṣṭham*". This describes the eligibility of the *Guru*. 1. "*śrotriyaṃ*" he should have heard, not read, the Truth from his *Guru*. 2. "*brahmaniṣṭham*" he should be established in the Truth. This is a compound word which one can understand in two ways: the one who believes *Brahman* is Truth or the one who is established in that Truth.

In the statement “*śrutiśirovākyam samākarṇyatām*” there are three words: “*śrutiśiraḥ*”, “*vākyam*” and “*samākarṇyatām*.” *Śruti* means *Veda*, *śiraḥ* means “head”, important, therefore *śrutiśiraḥ* means the conclusions of *Veda*, and that is *Vedanta*. And again, in Vedanta we have two words, *Veda* means *śruti*, *anta* means “end”. That doesn’t mean it is in the end portion of the *Vedas*. Though it is explained to be the conclusion of *Vedas*, that may not be the last chapter of the *Vedas*. *Mantra* and *brahmana* are *Veda* (v. supra.). *Vedas* has three parts:

1) *karma* - rituals, actions;

2) *upasana* - the mental performance of the rituals. Whether the ritual is performed physically or mentally, is an action and its result cannot be eternal. Both are limited and through limited one cannot gain the unlimited.

3) *jnana* - knowledge. It may be said, knowledge is not eternal too as it is acquired. This is not true. This knowledge that is acquired dispels the ignorance, helps us to understand the Truth, which is always ever present, and it doesn’t help us to gain anything new. It is like one putting the spectacles on his head or bridge of the nose, forgets and searches for them! Out of the ignorance one is searching for what he already has. When he realizes, he stops searching. This Self-knowledge removes only the ignorance and doesn’t help us to attain anything new.

The next term in the teaching, *vākyam* means “statement”. In *Vedanta*, there are two kinds of statements: *avāntaravākya* - secondary statements and *mahāvākya* - primary statements or ultimate statements.

*avāntaravākya* is that statement which deals independently with the notion of *world*, independently with the notion of *Iswara*, and of the individual *self*, *jiva*.

The *mahāvākya* is that statement which establishes the identity between the individual Self and the Absolute Self. It is said “*jīva brahma abheda bodhaka vākya*”, that is a statement which establishes the non-duality between the individual Self (*jiva*) and Absolute Self (*Brahman*).

One could think that since he has the *Vedas* in front of him, he can study by himself, without a *guru*. But the text here again talks about “listening nicely” from the *guru*, *samākarṇyatām*. *ākarṇyatām* means “listen to”, *sam* - *samyak* means “nicely”, listen to the *Vedic* statements from the *Guru* nicely, fully focused.

### **What is listening?**

There are three stages in understanding the Truth. They are not really stages. Different levels of people need these three levels. These are: *shravana*, *manana*, *nidhidhyasana*.

*Shravana* means listening, *manana* means reflecting, *nidhidhyasana* means meditation or contemplation.

*Shravana* is of two types: **a.** *avantara shravana* - secondary *shravana*, listening to the statement and connect it using the six pointers so as to understand that it speaks of non-dual Self and **b.** *mukhya shravana* - the primary *shravana*, listening to the *mahāvākya* from the *Guru*.

The six pointers in *Vedanta* are: 1. *Upakrama-Upasamhara*; 2. *Abhyasa*; 3. *Aporvata*; 4. *Phalam*; 5. *Arthavada*; 6. *Upapatti*.

1. *Upakrama-Upasamhara* - introduction and conclusion. If a text starts with some topic and ends with another, since there is no link between the introduction and the conclusion, we understand that this is not the teaching. If a text starts with the topic *Vedanta* and ends with the same topic, we understand that the text talks entirely on *Vedanta*.
2. *Abhyasa* - repetition. In a statement with beginning and end, if an idea is repeating, one can understand the whole discussion is about that idea. This is called *abhyasa*. Here one understands the subject matter as that which is repeated.
3. *Aporvata/aporva* - speciality. What is the speciality here? This knowledge (of non-dual Self) cannot be gained through any other means of right knowledge, *pramana*. And this is the speciality.
4. *Phala* - result. The result of *Vedanta* is not seen anywhere else, i.e. the non-duality between the individual Self and the Absolute Self.
5. *Arthavada* - extolling or denouncing statement. In *Vedanta* extolling or praising is to establish the importance of the subject and denouncing is also for establishing the importance of *Vedanta*, through denouncing all the others (non-vedantic views). Vedantins have no hatred towards the other views but we use this pointer only to establish the Truth by denouncing the views of opponent.
6. *Upapatti* - logic. Logically, through inference, we can understand the topic in *Vedanta*. If something is presented logically in *Vedanta* and that

helps in understanding the non-duality, this is also a pointer.

So the process of listening to the *guru* using these six pointers is to understand and establish that the teaching is only about the non-dual Self is listening (*shravana*).

There are two main obstacles in understanding the Truth: 1. *asambhavana* and 2. *Viparithabhavana*.

1. *Asambhavana* means doubt. Doubt can be two types: a) a doubt with reference to the means, called *pramana* (means) *ghata sandeha*; b) with reference to the object, called *prameya* (object) *ghata sandeha*. For instance: I have something in front of me. If my eyes can't see properly, there is an error in the means. So there is doubt with reference to the means. And then due to this, a doubt with reference to the object will be created

The doubt regarding the means is removed through *shravana*. We listen to *Vedanta* for the knowledge of *Brahman*. The means (*pramana*) here is *Vedanta*. The object (*prameya*) is *Brahman*. The doubt with reference to the means will be whether the *vedantic* statement gives the knowledge of non-dual Self or dual-Self or of something else? Wherefrom such a doubt comes to us? We are programmed from time to time, i.e., from one birth to other to see the world as dual.

There are different philosophies: *advaita*, non-dual philosophy, *dvaita* - dualism, the individual *Self* is different from *God* as well as Creation. There is another philosophy called semi-dualism which believes that the individual *Self* is a part of *God*, but due to ignorance it got separated and finally the individual *Self* has to become one with *God*. All that one should do is to become united with the Absolute *Self*. It is called *vishishtadvaita*.

Our *Vedanta* philosophy, says the individual *Self* is the Absolute *Self*. Because of ignorance they seem to be different and the individual *Self* has the experience of the difference. This is *Advaita Vedanta*.

So the whole idea of *shravana* is to understand that the *vedantic* statement is establishing the non-duality. Through this, one gets rid of the doubt that a certain *vedantic* statement is not talking about something else, but it is talking about the non-duality. The doubt regarding the means is removed

through this analysis while listening. So *shravana* means listening and analyzing while listening.

So practicing *shravana*, the doubt regarding the validity of the means, which is *Vedanta*, is removed.

2. *Viparita bhavana* means contradictory, erroneous knowledge. (We will discuss this in detail in twenty-first upadesha).

वाक्यार्थश्च विचार्यतां श्रुतिशिरःपक्षः समाश्रीयतां  
दुस्तर्कात्सुविरम्यतां श्रुतिमतस्तर्कोऽनुसन्धीयताम् ।  
ब्रह्मास्मीति विभाव्यतामहरहर्गर्वः परित्यज्यतां

देहेऽहम्मतिरुज्ज्यतां बुधजनैर्वादः परित्यज्यताम् ॥ ३ ॥

vākyārthaśca vicāryatām śrutiśiraḥpakṣaḥ samāśrīyatām  
dustarkātsuviramyatām śrutimatastarko'nusandhīyatām |  
brahmāsmīti vibhāvyatāmaharahargarvaḥ parityajyatām  
dehe'hammatirujjhyatām budhajanairvādaḥ parityajyatām || 3 ||

## 17

वाक्यार्थश्च विचार्यताम्  
vākyārthaśca vicāryatām

*vākya* - statement, *arthaḥ* - meaning, *ca* - and, *vicāryatām* - inquire.

“Inquire into the meaning of the statements of *Vedanta*”.

This is the seventeenth *upadesha*.

One should inquire into the meaning of the statement. How can this inquiry be done? There are two ways of understanding a statement: 1. Understanding each word for understanding the meaning of whole statement; 2. Understanding the meaning of the sentence, some general idea first and later to understand the meaning of each word in that statement. For example there is a sentence:

“having that knowledge gave a shot to this arm”. The direct meaning is that he received a shot in his arm, but “shot” here is strength, boost so the meaning is that the knowledge gave him strength. Here in this example, the meaning is understood first and what that ‘shot’ means is understood later. The other way is to understand each word first and later come to a conclusion of that statement.

In the statement “*tat tvam asi*”, *tat* means “that”, *tvam* mean “you” and *asi* means “are”, “that you are”. *vākyārthaḥ* means meaning of the statement. There is another statement which says that for gaining the meaning of the statement, the knowledge of the meaning of the words is important “*vākyārtha jñāne padārthe jñānam hetuḥ*”. So in the statement “*tat tvam asi*”, we must have the knowledge of each word. One understands each word so as to construct the meaning of the statement.

So, one has to understand the meaning of each word. A word has two types of meaning: 1. Direct meaning; 2. Implied meaning. A word can have a direct meaning and an implied meaning. If one goes just by the direct meaning it may create confusion. For example: one Mr.X has to go to somebody’s house for dinner and that person is not a friend of him, but still he invites him. Mr.X’s mother knowing about the invitation says to him: “eat poison”. What does it mean? That mother wants him to eat poison? No, that means “instead of eating in that persons house, you’d better eat poison, going to eat in that house is equal or even worse than eating poison”. So here the direct meaning is distorting, creates confusion. The implied meaning is something else. So, one cannot always go by the word meaning. There is always some other implied meaning. There are situations like this, when some confusion or misunderstanding is created during a dialog because of taking into consideration just the base direct meaning. This kind of situation is solved by showing the implied meaning. If one refers just to the word meaning, he cannot change what is said, but since he uses the implied meaning, one can give different connotations to his statement. This is what normally diplomats and politicians do to avoid controversy.

So, *shravana* means listening and analyzing while listening to understand that the statement is talking about non-duality in order to remove the doubts regarding the means (*pramana*), which is *Vedanta*.

The present *upadesha* is about reflecting, *manana*. Through contradictory logic and supportive logic, we establish that the statements in *Vedanta* are with reference only to That Self which is non-dual, non-different from the individual

Self. This is *manana*, reflection.

When someone cracks a joke everyone laughs, even though sometimes we don't understand it. Later, while walking in the road, we remember the joke and understand it all of a sudden and we may burst into laughter, least caring for the stares of the fellow travelers. This is reflection and it helps us to remove the doubt regarding the object, i.e. *Brahman*, Self (*prameya ghata sandeha*- the doubt regarding the object).

The *upadesha* “*vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*” is discussing about reflection. “*vicāryatām*” means inquiry into the meaning of the statement. For this one has to get into the meanings of the words. And this is very beautifully done in *Vedanta*, because here just direct meaning is not accepted but one has to go into the implied meaning, as well. It is not easy to understand the implied meaning.

Understanding properly the meaning of the statement is the goal. We are not talking about a philosophy where the teacher talks and the students listen. We are talking about a philosophy where the *Guru* explains and the disciples explore, where the *Guru* teaches the method of inquiry to the students. So the tools are explained.

There are three types of implied meaning (*lakshana*): 1. *Jahat lakshana*; 2. *Ajahat lakshana*; 3. *Jahat ajahat lakshana*.

1. *Jahat lakshana* - means giving up partially, understanding something by giving up partially. Like in the example, “my house is on the *Ganga*”. One doesn't apply the direct meaning to understand the statement; one doesn't understand the house is floating on the *Ganges*. One understands the house is on the banks of the *Ganges*. This is *jahat lakshana*, giving up partially, leaving partially.
2. *Ajahat lakshana* - means not (the prefix “a” from *ajahat*) giving up partially. For instance, we are on the road and we say “the white one is faster than the black one”. The meaning is the white car is faster than the black car. This is the implied meaning. So in this example, we are adding something (the word “car”), we are not giving up partially, we are adding something partially. There is another famous example that it is given: “*pītāmbari*” - “the yellow robed”, that means *Krishna*.
3. *Jahat ajahat lakshana* – means giving up partially, not giving up partially.

This is important because this is used in *Vedanta* to explain the meaning of a statement. For instance we saw someone ten years back somewhere, we see the same person now after ten years; there are many changes in dress style, in hair style, changes in the whole physic etc. Nevertheless, we remember to have seen him somewhere. At one point we realize this person is that person. In *sanskrit* it is said through the example “*so'yaṁ devadatta*”, meaning “*this* is *that* Devadatta”. We are equating this person from now with that person from the past. *This* means current time, current place, and current person. *That* means past, different place, different (look of the) person. We are equating two time periods, two places, two different persons as one. When we say, that this person from the present is the person from the past, we give up the different moments in time, different places, different looks and we only understand that it is the same person. We partially give up time and space and we partially unite two persons as one person. The time and space are different, but the person is one. Going further with the example, the present person is fat and bald and he is wearing a coat because it is cold. The person from the past was thin, he had a big hair, didn't have a beard and he was wearing a t-shirt as it was summer time. If we give apart the differences in hair, clothes, weight, we understand that person is this person.

This *lakshana* is used in understanding the *mahāvākya* - ultimate sentence, “*tat tvam asi*”, “that you are”, “*tat*” is *Iswara*, “*tvam*” means you, *asi* means “are,” equating both. If we use just the direct meaning when inquiring into the meaning of the *mahāvākya*, there cannot be any equanimity, because *Iswara*, the Lord is all-powerful, he is omniscient and whatever he wills happens. The *jiva*, the individual Self, is less powerful, less knowing and with very less will power. There is a tangible difference between *Iswara* and *jiva*. They cannot be equated using the direct meaning of the words. Hence, the implied meaning is to be used here.

### **What/Who is *Iswara* and *Jiva*?**

*Iswara* (God) is *maya avvacchina chaithanya* and *jiva* (individual Self) is *avidya avvacchina chaithanya*. *Iswara* is *maya* associated consciousness and *jiva* is *avidya* associated consciousness. *Maya* and *avidya* are different sides of the same coin. One side of a coin it is the head, on the other the tail (number). If the value of the coin is five cents, which side has the values of five cents? We don't differentiate; as both sides are with the value of five



cents. In the same way, *maya* and *avidya* are two different directions, the same thing viewed from two different sides. So *Iswara* is ignorance (*maya*) associated with consciousness and *jiva* is ignorance (*avidya*) associated with consciousness. If both are ignorance associated with consciousness, there can be no difference. We explain it as, Special ignorance (*maya*) associated with consciousness is *Iswara* and common ignorance (*avidya*) associated with consciousness is *jiva*. *maya* is called special ignorance because *Iswara* uses it as his weapon, as his tool. *avidya* is called common ignorance because *jiva* is bound by it.

God is special ignorance (*maya*) associated with consciousness and the individual self is common ignorance (*avidya*) associated with consciousness.

In the example “*so'yam devadatta*”, meaning “*this* is *that* Devadutta”, fatness and the coat are associated with *this* person. In the past the same person was associated with t-shirt and thin body. When the two are equated (*this* person from present and *that* one from the past), the attributes are given away. I.e. the fatness and the coat are removed; the thinness and the t-shirt are removed (forgotten). And so the equation happens. Similarly, in “*tat tvam asi*”, the special ignorance associated with consciousness is like the coat or the fatness. We remove it and what is left is the consciousness. In the same way the common ignorance associated with the consciousness is removed and what is left is consciousness. So they are the same, consciousness is equal to consciousness. This is how *Iswara* and *jiva* are equated, the God and the individual Self. There are the attributes: common ignorance and special ignorance.

The equation looks like:

*Iswara* = *Jiva*

special ignorance associated with consciousness = common ignorance associated with consciousness

~~special ignorance associated with consciousness = common ignorance associated with consciousness~~

consciousness = consciousness

Once they are removed, that which is left is consciousness which is common

in both. The substratum is consciousness and it is common for both *Iswara* and *jiva*. The substratum is differentiated because of the attributes. For instance, a room and the space within it, the room is limited with the space. We call it room associated with the space. The space in the room is room associated space. Another example is that of a pot. The space in the pot is pot associated space. In those examples, the room is attribute / limiting adjunct for the space, the pot is attribute / limiting adjunct for the space. When those attributes / limiting adjunct, of room and pot are removed, space remains, space is common. This space is the substratum for the room and the pot within it. The all-pervading space is the substratum for the room space and the pot space. So when the attributes / limiting adjuncts are removed, what is left is just the space. This is how the individual self and *Iswara* are equated.

Therefore in the example above, space has two attributes: the room and the pot. In the same way, consciousness has two attributes common ignorance and special ignorance. Space is the substratum for the room and for the pot. Consciousness is the substratum for the common ignorance and the special ignorance. This is how the implied meaning is understood, by giving up partially (just the attributes room and pot), one understands the space to be the same, similarly in the exemplified, by removing the attributes, the common ignorance and special ignorance, one understand the consciousness to be the same.

Therefore, this is how one should understand the inquiry into the meaning of the statement, *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*. This is how we inquire into the meaning of the statement. First we understand the words, then the implied meaning and after, the meaning of the statement.

At this point, one can ask the question of how the inquiry should be done?, what should be kept as a base? Because whatever we speak, we always speak after choosing a side. Like in the example: we are watching two persons playing tennis. Whom do we support? We support/ choose the person we know / like, whether he/she wins or not. If there is the case in which we don't know either of them, whom do we support? We will not just look at the game without supporting one of the players, we will again choose one of them and we will want that person to win. We can't do that without any bias. This is common everywhere. Similarly, when one is inquiring into the statement, he

has to decide, what the side he is going to take is. This is going to be explained in the next teaching.

So to decide the meaning of the statement, what is the side to be taken?

The next *upadesha* says

## 18

श्रुतिशिरःपक्षः समाश्रीयताम्  
*śrutiśiraḥpakṣaḥ samāśrīyatām*

*śrutiśiraḥ* - *Vedanta* (as we saw in the above teaching, sixteen), *pakṣaḥ* - side, *samāśrīyatām* - take.

The whole meaning is “Take the side of *Vedanta*.”

One day someone was invited to a conference. He didn't know what the topic was. He came and sat and looked at the people around and called the person who was the organizer, asking what the topic was. *God* was the topic, the organizer answered to him. Then the invited person asked “should I condemn or support? Should I establish *God* or should I condemn *God*? Whatever is the topic, I can talk”. So when we are given a statement, should we understand and accept it according to some philosophy or according to *Vedanta*? This question may rise because the same statement is taken by different people.

For instance “*tat tvam asi*”. There are people who take *tat tvam* as a compound word and break it in different nominal cases.

Some people break it in 6<sup>th</sup> case (genitive). They say “*tasya tvam asi*”, meaning “of that you are”. That means “you (the individual Self) belong to that (*Brahman*). *tasya* - “Of that” is in the 6<sup>th</sup> case. So they say “Of that you are”.

Some other school considers it to be in the 5<sup>th</sup> case (ablative) and they say “because of that you are”.

Others take the 4<sup>th</sup> case (dative) and say “for that you are”.

In this way they try to change the cases so the interpretation fits their views, whereas in the statement “*tat tvam asi*”, all the words are in the 1<sup>st</sup> case (nominative). “*tat*” is in the 1<sup>st</sup> case, “*tvam*” is in the 1<sup>st</sup> case, both are subject. But they give other cases and completely distort the meaning. If that is what the *Vedanta* text taught us, we would accept it, but *Vedanta* establishes the Truth as one non-dual. Therefore, one should not distort the words by accepting them in different cases to negate the *vedantic* idea. That why it is said “*śrutiśiraḥpakṣaḥ samāśrīyatām*”, one should take the side of *Vedanta*.

*Vedanta* establishes non-duality. There is a *vedantic* statement which says “*ekam eva advitīyam*,” meaning “one only and non-dual”. When *vedantic* statements talk about the Self, they say “one only and non-dual”. These three words are very important. Through them three types of possible dualities are refuted.

The three types of duality are: 1. *sajātīya bheda* 2. *vi-jātīya bheda* and 3. *svagata bheda*.

1. *Sajatiya bheda* - same class duality. *Samana* means “the same”, *jati* means “class”. For example: two trees. Both are apple tree, but they are different from each other. They both belong to the same class of trees.
2. *Vijatyā bheda* - contradictory class. This is the case, for instance of two trees, one an apple tree, the other an orange tree. There are two different classes of trees, orange and apple.
3. *Svaghata bheda* - *sva* means “one’s own”, *gata* means “existing”, i.e. the duality existing in its self, in one’s own. Like there is in one tree: there are flowers, leaves, branches etc.; so in one tree there are all these different elements. In one tree, we have duality.

Through the statement “one only and non-dual” all these three types of duality are negated. In the Absolute Self, there is no duality of different class, because there is no duality. The duality of same class does not exist in the Self, because there is nothing the same with it and there is no duality in itself, because it is not with limbs. So, all the three types of duality are negated.

Therefore, while inquiring into a statement, one should place oneself in one side. As we saw, that side is that one supported by *Vedanta*.

The next *upadesha* is

**19**

दुस्तर्कात्सुविरम्यताम्  
*dustarkātsuviramyatām*

*dustarkāt* – erroneous / wrong logic, *suviramyatām* - keep away.

“Keep away from erroneous logic”.

Different people, following different philosophies, claim to accept the validity of the *śruti* (*Vedas*), and say this is what the *Vedas* say:

- a. the individual Self is manifold (the *yoga* school),
- b. the individual Self is the experiencer, not the doer;
- c. other group says the individual Self is void, the Absolute Self is void, there is nothing but void, because the *Vedas* themselves say “*asat eva idam agra āsid*”, meaning “only the void existed before the Creation”;
- d. The other group says the individual Self is neither the experiencer nor the void; he is a part of *Iswara* (the Creator).

In this way, there are so many dualities which are accepted in contradiction with the Truth established by *Vedanta*. When one wants to establish non-duality, he should not start with question like: why this ignorance exists, from where it comes, why did the Creator create us, why are we being played with, why this Creation is in this way etc. These are questions which are called *dustarka*, proof of wrong logic, because when one has accepted *śrutiśiraḥpakṣaḥ*, the side of the *śruti*, whatever is contradictory to that is not accepted as valid.

Then what should one do? The answer comes in the next *upadesha*:

**20**

श्रुतिमतस्तर्कोऽनुसन्धीयताम्  
*śrutimatastarko'nusandhīyatām* |

*śruti* - *Vedas*, *mataḥ* - accept, *tarka* - logic, *anusandhīyatām* – follow.

“Follow the logic accepted by the *Vedas*”.

There are three *Pramanas* of *śruti* (Scripture), *Yukti* (logic) and *Anubhava* (experience) accepted, other than the six, namely *Pratyaksha* (Perception), *Anumana* (inference), *Upamana* (comparison), *Shabda* (verbal testimony), *Arthapatti* (Postulation), *Anupalabdhi* (Absence). The *śruti* is all powerful *Pramana*. The Logic (*Yukti*) should be based on the *śruti* and the Experience also should be based upon *śruti*. This is why we said earlier "*śruti mata*".

This *śruti* also, though is generally accepted as the *Vedas*, also includes the *smṛtis* and *puraṇās*. This we say as *śruti*, *smṛti* and *puraṇā*, as said in the salutation to the *Sri Adi Shankaracharya* "*śruti smṛti puraṇānām ālayam karuṇālayam | namāmi bhagavatpādam śaṅkaram lokaśaṅkaram |*" (I salute the abode of compassion *Sri Shankaracharya*, who is the protector of the world, the one who is the abode of knowledge of *śruti*, *smṛti* and *puraṇā*).

*śruti* - the revealed texts, *Vedas*. The most powerful *Pramana*. Nothing can contradict it. The *logic* and the *experience* also should be based or as explained in the *śruti*, only then will it be accepted as *Pramana*.

*smṛti* - texts written by different authors based on the knowledge gained from the *śruti*, it maybe from the existing *śruti* or the *śruti* which has become extinct. If there is a contradiction between the *śruti* and *smṛti*, the *smṛti* gets negated and the *śruti* is accepted.

*Puraṇā* - text written based on the knowledge of the *Vedas*, but is generally presented in a story form. This is written for people who cannot grasp the abstract knowledge. This is the weakest of the *Pramana*, when compared to *śruti* and *smṛti*.

In order to understand what wrong logic is, one has to first understand what right logic means and prior to this we have to understand, what is logic? Logic or *tarka* is of three types: 1. *vāda*; 2. *jalpa*; 3. *vitaṇḍā*;

1. *vāda* – that type of logic dialog when two people are interested in the Truth, they have no preconditions, when they discuss between them and come out with a conclusion that is acceptable to both.
2. *jalpa* - the persons involved in the dialog have preconceived notions and

try to establish their own point of view by refuting the other's point of view. Whoever loses in arguments has to accept the winner.

3. *vitaṇḍā* – there aren't any preconceived notions, but whatever the opponent says the other will always say "no, it is wrong". He does not establish his statement through arguments, but simply negates without giving reasons, or points out the defects in the other's argument.

Whatever *śruti* establishes the way one should accept. This is not to be interpreted to be the third type of *tarka* (logic). The idea is not the same. Here we don't say "because the *śruti* says one has to accept". It is like in the example with a patient who goes to see a doctor having a problem. The doctor says the diagnosis and gives the advice what to eat and not eat and what medicine to take. Doctors say that it is very difficult to treat the educated people. They won't listen. But in general when the doctors give the advice, patients follow. The result in the case of following the doctor's advice is to get rid of the disease. If one challenges it, he will only suffer. Hence, some rules are laid so one can go on this particular path and reach the goal. These aren't do's and don'ts but the recommendations to follow, to reach the goal in the easiest way.

From the thirteenth *upadesha* to the sixteenth it is about *shravana* (listening), from seventeenth to twentieth is about *manana* (reflecting).

By listening, we can remove the doubt regarding the means for the right knowledge, i.e. *Vedanta*. By reflecting, we can remove the doubt about the object of the knowledge, *Brahman*. So the doubt regarding the *pramana* was removed, as also the doubt regarding the *prameya*. What follows now is the total removal of *viparita jnana* and be established in the Truth. For this, *nididhyasana* is required.

The next *upadesha*

## 21

ब्रह्मास्मीति विभाव्यताम्  
*brahmāsmīti vibhāvyaṭām*

*brahma* - Absolute Self, *asmi* – I am, *iti* - as, *vibhāvyaṭām* - meditate

“Meditate(*vibhāvvyatām*) on I am the Self (*Brahma asmi iti*)” or be established in the knowledge that you are the Self.

Meditation here doesn't mean keeping on repeating the statement “I am the Self,” but the clarity one reaches after applying the *śruti* logic (*manana*). This clarity is meditation, *nididhyasana*. That means the knowledge of “*aham Brahma asmi*” should not be interrupted by any other knowledge. Any thought should not disturb the knowledge that “I am the Self”. The moment one attributes himself with things, this and that, he gets disturbed, and his knowledge also gets disturbed. Here, we are talking about the knowledge of “I” without leaving the first person. Only when one leaves the first person, he has the second person, and third person. Staying in “I”, one will not have the second or the third person. As we saw above there is nothing other than the Self.

This *upadesha* contains another *mahāvākya* (the statement which states the non-duality between the individual Self and the Absolut Self), “*aham Brahmasmi*”.

When asked as to how many *mahāvākyas* are there in the *Vedas*, the immediate answer is four: *aham brahmasmi* (*I am that*), *tat tvam asi* \**you are that*), *prajnanam brahma* (knowledge is Self), *ayam atma brahma* (this individual Self is Absolute Self). These are sample *mahāvākya* taken from each *Vedas*. The *mahāvākyas* are many, innumerable. Whichever statement states the non-duality between *jiva* and *Brahman* is a *mahāvākya*.

Therefore, one should be established in that non-dual Self without being disturbed by any thought.

The next teaching,

## 22

अहरहर्गर्वः परित्यज्यताम्  
*aharahargarvaḥ parityajyatām*

(*ahar* – day) *aharahar* - every day, *garvaḥ* - ego, *parityajyatām* - completely give up.

“Completely give up the ego every day”.

This teaching is for the renunciate and for the seekers who have nothing to do



with the world. If one has things to do in the world, he cannot follow this teaching completely. As mentioned when commenting the first teaching “vedo nityamadhīyatām”, who should study, how should one study; there was eligibility for that; for those not eligible, choice is given. Similarly in this *upadesha* also, those seekers who have to live in the world should not completely remove the ego. If one gives up the ego completely, he will not be able to do anything in this world! No transaction will be possible! Therefore, “*aharahargarvaḥ parityajyatām*” is for a person who completely gives up this world and invests his complete life for *Realization of Brahman*.

What “everyday” (*aharah*) means? This second “everyday” should not be understood like the first every day, “*nityam.*” There we say the exceptions, the days of not study, in this case it is not so. Here the meaning is linked to *Yoga Sutra*: “*sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra sevyato dṛḍhabhūmiḥ*”, “one should practice for a long time, continuously, till achieving the goal”. This destruction of ego should be complete; one cannot keep even a little bit of ego. One can show ego, but he cannot have ego. There is a difference.

### **Why not Hiss?**

There is a story to underline this difference. There was a snake, a cobra, very dangerous. People from the village were afraid of that snake, never even went near the anthill where it was living. One day a saintly man came to that village and the people told him not to go to the area where the snake was living. But he went there and he encountered the snake, he spoke to that snake and asked it, why it was like that and why it had so much of ego and told him to give up and not to be that ferocious and that angry, and advised him to be at peace. And the snake listened and learnt because the message was coming from a saint and decided that from that day he would not show any anger to anyone. The saint blessed the snake and went. After two months, the saintly man came through the same way. Saw the snake badly beaten and very weak. The saint asked the snake what had happened. The snake told him that as per his advice it didn’t show any anger towards anyone, it had no ego now, but the people didn’t listen, they tortured hi, freely. Then the saint told him that he had told only, not to have anger and ego, but there is no problem to threaten them by hissing. Therefore, if one wants to leave a peaceful life and people don’t disturb him, one should have protective armour. This armour may not exist in reality, but one has to show it!

**One should not have, but should show ego. One should not show, but should**

**have *vairagya* (dispassion).**

There is another story. This happened to me. I was in Chennai. My grandmother had passed away. After incineration, we went to dissolve the ash into the ocean. While we were walking towards the ocean, a drunken man came and asked us to give the pot of ash and some money so he would pour it right in the middle of the ocean, so it would not be stepped upon by anyone, he said. Because I am a *sadhu* (monk), for some time I kept quiet. Others in the group were trying to make him go away because he was disturbing the procession. They were trying to do it very peacefully, soft voice. And ofcourse he was not listening to them and he kept disturbing. After a while I had to shout at him badly all of a sudden. He got scared and ran away immediately. Everybody was astonished how I could be so angry, as I am a saintly man. Then I said to them that I was not angry at all, I just showed the anger. I had to tell him with the same coin in order to understand, otherwise he would not have understood. I used the only language he could understand. So one can show ego, as a protective armour, but not have it.

The next *upadesha* is

### 23

देहेऽहम्मतिरुज्ज्यताम्  
*dehe'hammatirujjhyatām*

“*dehe aham*” means “I am in the body”, in another form “*deho aham*”, it means “I am the body”; *matir* - knowledge, *ujjhyatām* - give up.

That means “Give up the idea that <I am the body> or <I am in the body>.”

These ideas should be given up, that means during the *shravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana* - listening, reflecting, meditating / contemplating - one should use the technique to remove one’s identification with the body-sense organs complex. This is what is said here.

Which is the method of removing the identification? There is a beautiful logic which says “*jagat mithya*”, meaning the world is illusory. The subject is the world and is to be proven that it is illusory through three reasons: *drshyatvat*,

because it is seen; *jadatvat*, because it is inert, *paricchinnatvat*, because it is limited. The syllogism will look like – the world we see is illusory, because it is being seen, because it is inert and limited. Whatever is seen, whatever is inert, whatever is limited is not Self! So using this logic, we apply the three attributes to the five sheaths and it results that: that body can be seen, so it cannot be the Self, the vital air (*prana*) can also be seen, the breath can be seen going and coming out and in, so it cannot be the Self. It is also limited because one can control it; mind cannot be the Self because it can also be seen; we say “my mind is a monkey, it is very peculiar”; intellect which controls the mind cannot be the Self, because it also can be seen, like the mind is seen by the intellect. This intellect also cannot be the Self, because it is limited. Everyone knows that the power of the intellect is limited. The ignorance, which is the base for all these identifications, isn't the Self because it is inert; it is not endowed with consciousness. Hence, whatever we see as the body-sense organs complex is a product of that ignorance, it cannot be the Self, and therefore it cannot be the “I”. The discussion takes into consideration all the five *koshas* (sheaths) because here in the present *upadesha* it is mentioned the body. And there are three types of bodies: 1. *sthula sharira* - the gross body; 2. *Sukshma sharira* - the subtle body; 3. *Karana sharira* - the causal body.

1. *Sthula sharira* - *annamaya kosha* is the correspondent sheath, the food sheath which we see;
2. *Sukshma sharira* - the subtle body has three sheaths: *pranamaya kosha* (vital air sheath), *manomaya kosha* (mind sheath) and *vijnanamaya kosha* (intellect sheath);
3. *Karana sharira* - *anandamaya kosha* (the ignorance).

One may not have identification with the gross body when leaving this body, but he still has identification with the subtle body when he travels from this world to another world.

In deep sleep one has the identification with the causal body.

Therefore, one should not have identification with none of the three bodies.

Giving up the association with the body doesn't mean one should destroy the body. It is said in the *Scriptures* that the body is a temple, “*deho devālayo prokta*”. Only when one has the body, he can perform the *dharma*. There is a

statement “*śarīraṃ vai khalu dharma sādhanam*”, meaning “the body is definitely the means for practicing *dharma*”. Without the body one cannot practice any *dharma*, any good activity. Realization is possible only when one has the human body so one should take care of the body till he gains the *Realization*. So, one needs this body to perform good deeds as well as to realize one’s Self.

About the Body Saint Tirumular says that “first I thought the body is filthy, but inside the body I found the Truth, I found God. Since I found *Iswara* inside, I maintain this body, as a temple”. And another Saint says “Previously I thought I am limited to this body-mind-complex; now I know I am this body-sense organs complex also, meaning I am everything”. If I am everything, I cannot say, no, except the body I am everything. Like the idea “I can accept everyone to be *Iswara*, except that person”. So one previously thought body-sense organs complex to be the Self, but now he knows this body -sense organs is also the Self. These are two different ideas to understand the importance of the body.

Therefore, one should give up the identification with all the three bodies. Because of the identification, “*aham brahma ’smi*” - I am the Self, one cannot be anything else. If one is the Self, he cannot be anything else. So, one gives up to the identification with the three bodies.

The twenty-fourth teaching says

## 24

बुधजनैर्वादः परित्यज्यताम्  
*budhajanairvādaḥ parityajyatām*

*budhajanaiḥ* - intelligent people OR with knowledgeable people (people who know the Truth), *vādaḥ* - dialog, *parityajyatām* - give up completely

“Completely give up any debate with the knowledgeable people”. This is one meaning. The other meaning is: people who have the intelligence (*budhajanaiḥ*) should give up the debate (argument).

There is no point in having the debate. Whom to debate with?! So one should give up the debate with the knowledgeable people and knowledgeable people

should give up the debate. What is the reason for this giving up? For the knowledgeable person, a person who has gained the knowledge of Truth, mediate or immediate, the only thing that is said is “*tat cintanam, tat kathanam anyonyam tat prabodhanam, etat eka paratvam*”. The meaning is “thinking about It ( *tat cintanam*), speaking about it (*tat kathanam*), discussing about the Truth ( *anyonyam tat prabodhanam*), this is what one should do. This is what one should do if he wants to be established in the Truth, because the moment another person comes into the picture, normally the beginning of the discussion is about how they are, after this, they will invariably be talking about any third person. So, a knowledgeable one should give up the talking about other things.

On the other hand, one should not have debates with knowledgeable people. One doesn't know the subject matter; neither does he know what he is and what this world is. So instead of going and having a debate with him, one should try to get the knowledge from him. And this was said above in “*sadvidvānupasṛpyatām pratidinam tatpādukā sevyatām brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām*”, “go to the knowledgeable one and serve him to gain the knowledge” (13, 14, 15 *upadesha*). We will see further that this teaching is mentioned in the thirty-second *upadesha*.

#### Sloka 4

क्षुद्रयाधिश्च चिकित्स्यतां प्रतिदिनं भिक्षौषधं भुज्यतां

स्वादन्नं न तु याच्यतां विधिवशात् प्राप्तेन सन्तुष्यताम् ।

औदासीन्यमभीप्स्यतां जनकृपानैष्ठुर्यमुत्सृज्यतां

शीतोष्णादि विषह्यतां न तु वृथा वाक्यं समुच्चार्यताम् ॥ ४ ॥

kṣudrvyādhiśca cikitsyatām pratidinam bhikṣauśadham bhujyatām

svādvannam na tu yācyatām vidhivaśāt prāptena santuṣyatām |

audāsīnyamabhīpsyatām janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryamutsṛjyatām

śītoṣṇādi viṣahyatām na tu vṛthā vākyaṁ samuccāryatā m || 4 ||

First *upadesha* from this *sloka* is

25

क्षुद्रयाधिश्च चिकित्सयताम्

*kṣudvyādhiśca cikitsyatām*

*kṣud* - hunger, *vyādhi* - disease, *ca* – and, *cikitsyatām* - treat.

The whole first meaning is “treat the hunger and disease.”

The second meaning is “treat the hunger which in itself is a disease”.

When *Sri Adi Shankaracharya* was asked (in *PrashnottaraRatnaMalika*), what is the intelligent way of living? he answered: “eating while hungry, taking medicine to treat the disease is the intelligent way of living”. One can think that if he has to give up the identification with the body he should ill-treat the body or treat whatever happens to the body as of no importance. One should not destroy the body, because only through the body, one can practice the *dharma*, so the intelligent way of living is by eating properly and taking care of the body by taking proper medicine for the disease.

One great saint writes a poem about the stomach: “Will you not be happy and content after eating? You don’t know to be happy and content and you are asking for more every time?” In spite of eating at a point of day, this hunger is satisfied only for some time, it will come back later in the same day. Therefore, hunger itself is a disease. This should be treated properly (*cikitsyatām*).

Further it is said

26

प्रतिदिनं भिक्षौषधं भुज्यताम्

*pratidinaṁ bhikṣauśadhaṁ bhujyatām*

*pratidinaṁ* - everyday, *bhikṣa* - the food got by alms, *auśadhaṁ* - medicine, *bhujyatām* - “eat”.

The whole meaning: “Eat food, the medicine which is gained by alms every day”.

A *sannyasi*, a renunciate, is given the eligibility to take alms. This renunciate, cannot go on knocking all the doors asking for food. He should stand in front of the house and chant for three times “*bhavati bhiksham dehi*” or “*Narayana*”. If he doesn’t receive food from that house, he should go to the next house till seven houses. Only seven houses per day are allowed. If he doesn’t receive anything, he will not eat that day. He should accept it as God’s will.

There is a story. one renunciate went to houses asking for *biksha*. He received nothing from any of the seven houses he knocked. He was hungry and needed food. He tried to find a solution. So he told the seventh house owners “If you don’t give me the food, I will do what I did in the last village”. Hearing him, the owners of the house were afraid that he had cursed people there. They invited him to have the meal in their house, they made good food and offered to him. Then they wanted to know what happened in the previous village. Then he said “oh, the same thing happened. I went on knocking all the seven houses’ no one gave food.” “And then?” they asked,” I came back hungry”, he replied, “This is what I was telling; if you don’t give me food I will go hungry”.

In the next *upadesha*,

27

स्वादन्नं न तु याच्यताम्

*svādvannaṁ na tu yācyatām*

*svādu* - tasty, *annaṁ* - food, *na tu* - don’t, *yācyatām* - beg for.

The whole meaning is “don’t beg for tasty food”.

A renunciate has given up all the attachments. Even after giving up all the attachments, if any attachment remains, it will destroy him, and that is the tongue, taste for food. The other sense organs are either sense organ of action (*karma indriya*) or of knowledge (*gnana indriya*). But the tongue is both sense organ of knowledge and sense organ of action. Through it one speaks (function of sense organ of action) and tastes (function of sense organ of knowledge) also.

This is very subtle. That's why a saint said "Whoever it may be should have control over his tongue. If not, he will be denounced very badly." And here it refers to both speech and taste. So, one should not ask for tasty food. That doesn't mean that if people offer tasty food, one should reject it.

When this is the situation next teaching comes to clarify it:

28

विधिवशात् प्राप्तेन सन्तुष्यताम्

*vidhivaśāt prāptena santuṣyatām*

*vidhivaśāt* - according to your fate, *prāptena* - that which comes to you, *santuṣyatām* - be happy.

The whole meaning is "be happy with whatever comes to you according to your fate".

One has to understand clearly what "according to your fate" means. There is a group of people who distort the meaning and experience and enjoy everything. In a religious group these monks come with a table for begging. And people place non-vegetarian items and liquor and this religious group monks consume it, in spite of the fact that this whole religion is based on *ahimsa*, tolerance, non-violence. They say they don't kill, but if someone kills and provides them with meat they will eat.

There is another group of people who go to a particular person's house and ask for a special menu to be cooked and they want that non-vegetarian items to be prepared which is against the custom and the robe they wear. They are slaves of their tongue (taste). Nothing, no *Realization* can they get!. Therefore, "according to your fate" doesn't mean everything or anything. It is according to your *dharma*.

What is this "vidhi" (fate)? Fate is of three types: 1. *Swaprarabdha* / *swechha* - one's own fate ; 2. *parechha* - Other's desire becomes my fate; 3. *Iswaraechha* - God's will becomes my fate. Any way, one's own, by others or by *Iswara*, whatever is gained one should be happy with it. One should not complain.

The food mentioned in the teaching is not only the food which one eats to strengthen the body, it is also the things which one sees and hears. All these are



also referred as food.

Next teaching is (in some text this comes later)

## 29

औदासीन्यमभीप्स्यताम्

*audāsīnyamabhīpsyatām*

*audāsīnyam* - carelessness, *abhīpsyatām* - desire for.

So the whole meaning is “One should desire not to be attached to things”.

Here carelessness means “don’t bother too much about things”. One should just be aloof, without being attached to things.

One should not be attached to things; because whatever he does he gets bound by it and to it. We already said above (v. supra the eighth teaching) that one should give up the societal bonding. Now this idea is stressed on for not to be attached to things, to have a carefree attitude like for instance we won’t be bothered if the crow has teeth (*kāka danta parīkṣā*) or not or if there is some dropping of some bird (*viṣṭha parīkṣā*), we will not investigate which bird is that; the biologists can do that, but the normal people won’t. That is the attitude one should have towards the world and the things of the world.

When one has this attitude towards the word he should have no implication, should he not do anything in any case, should he be indifferent in all the cases? Should he say “I don’t see anything because I am careless, I don’t bother about this?” Then how should one handle people? Here comes the next teaching:

## 30

जनकृपानैष्ठुर्यमुत्सृज्यताम्

*janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryamutsrjyatām*

*jana* - people, *kṛpā* - compassion, *naiṣṭhuryam* - hard feeling, *utsrjyatām* - give up.

The first meaning is: “Completely give up the compassion and hatred for

people”.

Other meaning of the *upadesha*: “to renounce to expect from the people sympathy and detachment”.

As a seeker, one should completely give up the compassion and the hatred for people. But when one understands the Truth, that compassion comes without any cause. The compassion mentioned in this *upadesha* is that which creates a string, an attachment. That doesn't mean one has to be insensible and indifferent and if for instance somebody is hit by a vehicle near us, we should stay indifferent and don't do anything and don't feel compassion. This is not what is said in the present *upadesha*. If one is in the position to help, then he should help, but he should not go in search of this situation and he should not be attached to that situation. There are some people who go from road to road searching for this kind of situation. One should not be attached to it, that is what is said here.

There are some stories to underline this *upadesha*. There was a man called *Jada Bharata*. *Jada* means inert, *Bharata* was his name, inert *Bharata*. He stayed like inert all the time, not moving a limb. One day a king was carried in a palanquin. One of the men who were carrying the palanquin was hurt, and they needed another person, a replacement, to carry it. And they saw *Bharata* who was sitting idle and they took him and put him in the front to hold the palanquin. Everyone was moving and he was also moving. Everyone kept a rhythm, but he was out of it and because of the non-synchronized movements the king was feeling the jolts. He got down and asked what the reason was, and then they told him that *Bharata* was the reason. So he thrashed him. *Bharata* didn't react even to that. And then after some dialog, the king understood him to be a great realized man and asked for forgiveness.

What happened to *Jada Bharata*? Why was he inert like that? How he had gained that name? Because in his previous births, two births before, he was a great renunciate, great seeker, practitioner, *sadaka*; he was living alone in the jungle practicing his *sadhana*. One day, a pregnant deer chased by a tiger got hurt came in his place. She gave birth to a small deer and died, because of the wounds. He couldn't let the small deer outside because there was the tiger, so took care of it. And the small deer grew bigger and *Bharata* also became old. At the time of death, he kept thinking what would happen to the deer after his death. That was his last thought. Instead of thinking about the God, he was

thinking about the deer. And it is said that whatever may be the last thought that is the connection to the next birth. This is the reason we give names of Gods to children. The name we give is to remind of that *God*. The saint died and because his last thought was that of a deer, he took birth of a deer. But being a great *sadaka* in his previous life, he remembered his past life. At that point he decided that he would not be attached to anything and even when he was a deer he was alone. He didn't include anyone. After the deer died, he took birth as a human being and he decided for being detached and therefore he became like an inert. A small compassion towards that deer made him to be born as a deer, if one is compassionate towards his dog, cat etc. and he is born as a dog or cat and in his third birth he gets *Realization*, there isn't such a great problem, but in general that is not going to happen. Therefore, one should be very careful with any type of attachment.

The second story is that of *Indra*. Because of his pride and ego, the celestial king, *Indra* had to be born as a snake. He ill-treated some *rishi* and he was cursed to be born as a snake.

The compassion and the pride regarding something shouldn't be the nature of a *sadaka*, of the practitioner.

Other meaning of the *upadesha* “janakṛpānaiṣṭhuryamutsrjyatām” is to renounce to expect from the people sympathy and detachment. There is a famous story about a great *mahatma* (*monk*). He was travelling and wanting to take some rest he was lying on the ground keeping a brick as a pillow, nothing else. Three ladies who went that way saw this man lying down with that brick under his head. One of the ladies said that he seems to be a great *mahatma* since he was lying like that on the flat ground without anything. Other lady said he cannot be a great *mahatma* because he still wants a pillow, referring to that brick. After they leave, the monk gets up and thinks that what the woman had said is true, after giving up everything, he still needs a pillow. So he throws away that brick and lies down without anything. The same three ladies come back; one among them noticed that he had given up the brick pillow also. For that he should be a really great person, she said. The other lady says that isn't so because he had listened to the useless talk of some passing ladies so he cannot be a great person. Even if one does or does not do something, there will be some reaction from people. So, one should learn to be detached from that.

The next teaching

**31**

शीतोष्णादि विषह्यताम्

*śītoṣṇādi viṣahyatām*

*śīta* - cold, *uṣṇa* - heat, *ādi* – etc, *viṣahyatām* - one should have to endure nicely.

The whole meaning is “One should have to endure nicely the cold and hot etc. (all the dualities).”

Enduring doesn't mean that if it is cold outside, one should go without a sweater. If he has a sweater then one should use it. But even after using whatever means one has, the cold is still unbearable, one should accept it and not complain. This is valid for everything. One has to work hard to achieve his goal, but still if there is a failure, one should not be bothered by it. If there is a success, he should not dance over it. All the dualities, like cold-heat, success-failure etc. should be accepted, because in *Bhagavadgita*, *Bhagavan* says “*āgamāpāyino'nityā tān titikṣasva bhārata*”, meaning “Oh, one who is the seer of *Bharata*, you have to forbear it”, referring to the dualities of cold-heat etc., ”because they come and go , they aren't eternal”. The success or the failure doesn't stay eternally. Nothing in this world, which is in the duality, stays permanently. Therefore, one has to accept it. If whatever one tries, if it isn't giving the desired effect, he should accept it, accept the result as *Iswara prasadha*, *Iswara* 's blessing.

At this point, one may say “Fine, I can understand the blessing of *Iswara* if there is a success, but if I fail, how can I accept it as blessing of *Iswara*?” This can be the question. But we don't see the full picture. We always see a portion of it and come to a conclusion based on that part that this is a failure. One should analyze his life and for sure he will see a situation which was a failure at a point of time and that was turning point in life. Many people having a failure, in family, in job, in exams come to spirituality and they shine very nicely, they understand the Truth. How many of us will have the chance or even think to come to spirituality? If everything is very nice, no one will even think about it. So, that one failure was a turning point to take a right decision and later in time when one looks at it, will appear as something to be laughed at. Everyone has had such experiences. For instance a fight in the school, which appeared tragic then,

but now if we turn back and remember, we laugh at it as a silly thing. So failure or success is about our mentality, not about the result itself. The clear idea one should have is that nothing is wrong in *Iswara's* plan, in His blessing.

Reaching at this point, I normally tell about myself. When I came to Rishikesh, in 1997, after a long travel I was not feeling well. First I was planning to go to the jungle or to a cave and meditate. But I was not feeling well and I was afraid so I thought to take some rest for three days and then later go to the jungle. So I went into a big *ashram* in Rishikesh. A particular *swami* who was my friend was not there, so somebody told me to go to the head-chief and he will give me a room in the *ashram*. It was cold and I decided to do that. I went and met that old *swami*. After listening to my story, he shouted at me “GET OUT”. I was shaken, completely destroyed. That moment I decided that I would not meet that person anymore. Till his death I didn't go and meet him. Everybody said he was a very nice man, except me. And when I was telling people that man had said to get out, they didn't believe me. Because of not getting into that *ashram*, I didn't become a part of the politics of the ashram. I was able to study *shastra*, I was able to understand that, what I came to Rishikesh for. That was the blessing. At that earlier point of time I was filled with anger, but the outcome is blessing. So, one should understand that for every bad result in a point of time, the gross result, the outcome later is positive.

The next teaching is

32

न तु वृथा वाक्यं समुच्चार्यताम्

*na tu vṛthā vākyaṁ samuccāryatām*

*na tu* - we should not, *vṛthā* - useless, *vākyaṁ* - sentences, *samuccāryatām* - speak.

The meaning is “we should not speak or not hear (*samākarṇyatām*) useless words, sentences (*vṛthā vākyaṁ*).

In some places there is “*samākarṇyatām*” instead of “*samuccāryatām*”.

We have already seen that we should listen to the words of the Scriptures (v.

supra 16th *upadesha*). When explaining the latest, we saw that when we talk to each other, or when we think or give a lecture, we should always talk about that Truth, *Sat*, nothing other than that. When the mind is focused, when we dwell in it, then speaking useless words is not possible. So, “*anyān vācān vimuñchata amṛtasya eṣa setuḥ*”- one should give up the other words, speaking about other things; this is the means for immortality.

So, we should have to think only about the Self. If our focus is on something else, for instance we are completely focused on writing, reading, doing something; we won't even remember the basic needs of the body, like food. So when the mind dwells only on the Self, then no duality can affect us, hunger, thirst etc. If even when we are immersed in a worldly action we don't have hunger etc., how will they be then, when we are thinking at that Absolute Self?

### **Sloka 5**

एकान्ते सुखमास्यतां परतरे चेतः समाधीयतां

पूर्णात्मा सुसमीक्ष्यतां जगदिदं तद्बाधितं दृश्यताम् ।

प्राक्कर्म प्रविलाप्यतां चित्बलान्नाप्युत्तरैः श्लिष्यतां

प्रारब्धं त्विह भुज्यतामथ परब्रह्मात्मना स्थीयताम् ॥ ५ ॥

ekānte sukhamāsyatām paratare cetah samādhīyatām  
pūrṇātmā susamīkṣyatām jagadidaṁ tadbādhitam dṛśyatām |  
prākkarma pravilāpyatām citibalānnāpyuttaraiḥ śliṣyatām  
prārabdham tviha bhujyatāmatha parabrahmātmanā sthīyatām || 5||

The thirty-third teaching

### **33**

एकान्ते सुखमास्यताम्

*ekānte sukhamāsyatām*

*ekānte* - alone, in being alone, *sukham* - happiness, *āsyatām* - gain.

“Gain happiness in being alone”

Learn to stay alone.

The real meaning of *ekanta* (*ekam antam yasya*) is the end of the duality, that final end which is non-duality, in that, be seated blissfully.

In *Yoga Sutra*, “*āsyatām*” means *asana*, being seated. *Asana* in *Yoga Sutra* is defined as “*sthiram sukham āsanam*” - *asana* is sitting in a posture which is completely in control, without disturbance (wavering) and be peaceful. That means the mind should not waver from Truth.

After listening to *Shastra*, we have quit the group; we have already gone to stay alone, now being established in the non-dual Self is what is said in the present *upadesha*.

### 34

परतरे चेतः समाधीयताम्

*paratare cetaḥ samādhīyatām*

*paratare* - in that Absolute Self , *cetaḥ* - mind, *samādhīyatām* - completely merge it.

“Completely merge your mind in that Absolute Self”.

### 35

पूर्णात्मा सुसमीक्ष्यताम्

*pūrṇātmā susamīkṣyatām*

*pūrṇātmā* - Absolute Self, *susamīkṣyatām* - see (*perceive*).

The meaning is “we should have to only see the Absolute Self (*pūrṇātmā*)”

When we are established in that non-dual Self, then “*pūrṇātmā susamīkṣyatām*” - “we should have to only see the Absolute Self (*pūrṇātmā*)” everywhere; *pūrṇa* means “complete”. In fact there is no “everywhere”. There is only *pūrṇātmā*. So the meaning is “see only the Absolute Self”.

When one is established in that *pūrṇātmā*, only then one can talk about the state “the world is illusory”. This statement, tells that knowledge can only be when one sees the absolute Self and nothing but the absolute Self. When one sees the absolute Self only, will he see the world of duality or not? If he sees it, then he is not established in the Self, if he doesn't see it, how can he answer the questions of the disciples, how can he remove the doubts of the disciple?

The next *upadesha* answers to these questions:

### 36

जगदिदं तद्बाधितं दृश्यताम्

*jagadidam tadbādhitam dṛśyatām*

*jagadidam* - this world, *tadbādhitam* - negated by it, *dṛśyatām* - see.

“See the world to be negated in / by it.”

The world is illusory. What is illusion? What happens to the snake we see on the rope when we have complete knowledge of the rope? (a). it gets killed? (b). it runs away? None of these, in the place where one saw the snake, in that very place; in that very rope it merges. In the same way, the world, in whichever way one saw it, in that very place it merges in the Self. A superimposed object merges in the substratum, the superimposed snake merges in the rope, and the superimposed world merges into the substratum, which is the Self. So when one sees the Absolute Self, at that very moment, because of the knowledge of *pūrṇātmā*, the Absolute Self, whatever was superimposed on the Absolute Self merges in the Self. The world has no different existence other than be(ing) the Self. The world seems to have an existence because of the projection which is due to ignorance. Ignorance projects the world. When this ignorance, the cause



is removed, there is no projection, and therefore there is no world.

Will the world have an existence after that? The example of the rope and the snake is to make one understand. Here we take another. We see a beautiful house with curtains etc. For some reason the house gets burnt, not to ashes. When entering the burnt house, the curtains can be seen in negative, if one touches them will fall and become ash. Or another example: someone had an iron box full of money, but because of fire it got burnt and also the paper notes from inside it. If just a piece of the notes were left, one could go and exchange it, but now there is no proof the money was there. So, the box was given to be investigated by the insurance people. They opened it, they removed block by block, the notes were ash, but still the negative, and the number was displayed so they carefully handled it and replaced the money. The money was in ash form, not complete ash. Like in the other example with the rope, the rope is burnt; one sees that ash form of the rope there. Would one be able to use this ash form of rope for binding or anything? No. Similarly this world may seem to exist, but it will not have a different existence other than the Self.

This negation, this effect getting merged into the cause is what is called “*bādhitaṁ*”. “*bādha*” means “the effect merges into the cause”. It is called in Vedanta as *bādhāsāmānādhikaraṇyam* – The effect merging in the same place as it is seen, i.e. in the substratum.

The effect getting destroyed is *nivṛtti* and the effect merging in the cause is *bādha*.

### 37

प्राक्कर्म प्रविलाप्यताम्

*prākkarma pravilāpyatām*

*prākkarma* – past karma, *pravilāpyatām* - completely merge

The past *karma* (*sanchita*) completely merges in the Self.

Both good *karmas* and bad *karmas* give results. Good *karmas* can lead one to Heaven, bad *karmas* can lead one to Hell. After the *Realization* what will happen with the *karma*?

One school says the body is the Self and whatever *karma* it is born with and one

generates will not produce effect for him, that means those effects go to somebody else, because it has to go somewhere. They consider one is not associated with the *karmas* he is born with nor with the *karma* he performs. Both are a fallacious. That would mean, going by this logic that there is a defect in *Iswara*. This is not so; we are responsible for our actions. One's own past action produce the body; the present actions will produce later body.

The question rising is whether the realized person will have association with the *karma*? If he has association with the *karma*, then he will be born again and he will die again. The eternity will be a dream and in this way it would not be possible. So in this case what happens to the *karma*?

There are three types of *karma*. We have already seen some classification in two types of *karma*; bad and good, and under another criteria *vihita* and *pratiṣiddha* and again *nithya*, *naimittika*, *kamya*, *prayaschita*.

Other classification, according to another criteria is in three types: 1. *Sanchita karma* - the whole group of *karma* that one has acquired in his past births; 2. *Prarabdha* - the group of *karma* that gives the present birth; 3. *Agami* – the group of *karma* created by this birth, the resultant regroups from the past *karma* and produces another birth. The future *karma* is a resultant of the combination of these two, otherwise if we say that it results only from present *karma*, the past *karma* would become useless and that could no more be experienced. So we say, the present *karma* regroups the past *karma* in such a way it generates a birth according to the life style in the present birth.

Till the body exists, one has to experience all the results coming from *prarabdha karma*. But the past and the future *karma* can be removed, can disassociate with. How it is done? It is said in this teaching “*prākkarma pravilāpyatām*”, the past *karma* (*sanchita*) completely merges in the Self. Once one knows the Absolute Self, there can be nothing but the Self so it merges in the Absolute Self. This is what *Bhavagan* says in *Bhagavadgita* “*jñānagniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasād kurute*”, meaning the fire of knowledge destroys all the *karmas* to ash. So, by the knowledge of the Absolute Truth, all the past *karmas* get destroyed.

Then, he need not worry about the past *karmas*, but still the *karmas* the Realized one performs, after the knowledge may bind him. To answer this, the next teaching says

चितिबलान्नाप्युत्तरैः श्लिष्यताम्

*citibalānnāpyuttaraiḥ śliṣyatām*

*citi* - knowledge, *balāt* - because of power, *nāpyuttaraiḥ* - not also the future, *śliṣyatām* - associated with.

“You are not associated with the future *karmas* either, because of the power of knowledge”.

Then what will happen to this *karma*, as it is known that the *karma* will not be destroyed without producing its result. Then it means that this *karma* will go to somebody else who is not associated in any way with it. The deeds of the realized person are in general good, but sometimes he may, knowingly or unknowingly do something bad. For instance, there is a deer which came running as it was chased by a hunter. The deer went to the right. The hunter comes and asked him (the realized one who saw the deer), if he had seen the deer. He replied he saw it, he told the truth and also the direction it went in, when he was asked. The fact is, he tells the truth, but in that moment he becomes an instrument for death of the deer and therefore obtains bad karma.

There are cases when one may lie in order to protect somebody. In the same example, suppose he answers the hunter that he saw the deer, but gives a false direction, telling it went to the left. He protects the deer, he protects the value of life, that is *dharma* (to protect a *jiva*, an individual Self is *dharma*), but he went against another *dharma*, telling the truth. That will have an effect. This is an example, for knowingly telling a lie, doing a bad *karma*. Sometime, unknowingly he may say a lie. Even in this case, unknowingly, one cannot exonerate himself telling that he didn't know the law, like in the example with the police stopping one for driving illegally, he cannot protect or exonerate himself of the responsibility of that act, saying he didn't know the law. Ignorance of law cannot be an excuse. Similarly here, also, any *karma* one has performed, knowingly or unknowingly, must produce its effect. The realized one must have performed, knowingly and unknowingly, some bad *karmas*. For instance: knowingly that lie regarding the direction of the deer, unknowingly, the situation when walking crushes some ants to death. But all his life he practiced a proper way of living, so he has done very good deeds. What will happen to his good and bad *karmas*? It is said in the present *upadesha* that by the strength of the knowledge he will not be associated with the future *karma*,

those will not affect him. The Scriptures say “*dushantah papa krtyam*”, the bad *karma* of the realized will go to the people who denounce, curse or do bad things to him. His good *karmas* will go to those who serve and praise him. He will not distribute his *karma*, the *karma* will go automatically in function of the rule mentioned above, according to the law of *karma*. And when he leaves the body, when his *prarabdha* comes to an end, at that point he doesn't carry any account of *karma* with him. He doesn't carry anything, he doesn't go anywhere. It is said “*tasya tāvad eva ciram yāvad na vimokṣye ata sampatsye*”; he waits till his *prarabdha karma* comes to an end, later he ‘merges’ in the Self, he is the Self, only the Self is, and his limitation , body-sense organs complex is removed.

What should he do, will he disappear after realization? These are answered in the next upadesha:

### 39

प्रारब्धं त्विह भुज्यताम्

*prārabdham̐ tviha bhujyatām̐*

*prārabdham̐* – present karma , *tu iha* – definitely here, *bhujyatām̐* - experience.

“He will definitely experience the *prarabdha karma* here”.

Therefore, the realized one is dissociated from past and future *karmas*, because they haven't started giving the results yet, but the present *karma* has started giving result. These cannot be solved through knowledge. One has to experience it. “*nābhuktam kṣīyate karma kalpakoṭīśatairapī*” - without experience, it cannot be dissolved even in thousands of creations.

*Prarabdha karma*, the present *karma*, is the *karma* which determines the body, the kind of life, the life span and the experiences within it. But he will not be bothered by it. There is this analogy: when somebody hits your leg, you will be angry, but if your young baby does so, you will kiss him. Similarly, *prarabdha karma* for the non-realized is like an enemy, but for the realized one it is like child's play. He will not react to it. This is the difference.

One comes out of the room, he sees a note of 500 euros, takes it puts it in the pocket. After he goes for a walk and sees there on the road a very good diamond and he takes it. Further down, he sees a gold biscuit. Wherever he goes and whatever he sees there is something precious. What will be the reaction?

Happiness, of course. But in the end, there always will be a comma, adding “in your dream” - because all the experiences are as in a dream. But a realized one will not react to the experiences generated by his *prarabdha karma*. Therefore, after his *Realization*, if he dies in some jungle, or a dilapidated house, or some holy place, made no difference for him. It was all as though in the dream. So without any complaints he will go on experiencing his *prarabdha*. He cannot do anything about it, because it’s like the arrow which has been released, until it reaches the target, it will not stop. Like, after switching off the fan, it will run till a given momentum. This body exists till the specific momentum. Once, the *prarabdha karma* ends, the body gets dropped off. For instance, if this room gets demolished, what happens to the space inside the room? It ‘merges’ in the Absolute Space. Likewise when the pot is broken (merges in the open space). So the pot and the room were there to prevent the space within them to merge with the Absolute space. In the same way, when the body of the realized drops off, he becomes one with that Absolute Self, which he has been always. He doesn’t become unified with the Absolute Self, he doesn’t attain union with the Absolute Self, he has always been the Absolute Self, as the space is always space, but because of the limiting adjunct, like the pot, we say pot space.

The final teaching,

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अथ परब्रह्मात्मना स्थीयताम्

*atha parabrahmātmanā sthīyatām*

atha - thereafter, *parabrahmātmanā* - as the Absolute Self, *sthīyatām* - be established or “be the Absolute Self”, “he is the Absolute Self.”

After dropping off the body, when his *prarabdha karma* extinguishes, he is the Self (stays as Absolute Self).

These are the forty steps for the *Realization*. The moment one understands these properly, without any doubt, without any error, he will be established in the Self as said in these teachings. But for all these one needs a focused, pure mind.

Therefore, these are the steps which are prescribed: do all the *sadhanas*, practices like chanting etc. Because of it, one gains a pure mind (*chitta shudi*). Because of this pure mind, one gets interest in listening to *Shastra*. The

knowledge of the Self cannot be gained through any other means, but through *Shastra*. We said “*pramāṇa janita jñāna*”.

One sees a rope and on that rope he sees a snake. This is superimposed snake. For this example, the exemplified is, The Self is non-dual, due ignorance there is superimposition of body etc. world. The superimposed snake (or world) cannot be removed through any other means like *yoga*, meditation, action, climbing trees or taking bath in holy rivers, but only through the knowledge that it is a rope not a snake. So the third step, after gaining the purity of mind, is that one gains interest in listening to *Shastra*. The fourth is: because of the pure mind one gains immediate Knowledge. And because of the immediate knowledge, he gains *Realization, Liberation*.

So these are the steps:

1. *Sadhana* - said in the first *upadesha*, “*Vedo nityamadhiyatam*”;
2. Pure mind - in the fifth *upadesha*, “*Papaughah paridhuyatam*”;
3. Interest to listen to *Shastra* - ninth teaching, “*sangah satsu vidhiyatam*”;
4. Immediate knowledge - the thirty-third *upadesha*, “*ekante sukhamasyatam*”;
5. *Realisation / Liberation* - this is said in the last teaching “*parabrahmatmana sthiyatam*”.

॥ इति परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यश्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्यविरचित साधन पञ्चकं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

|| iti paramahamsaparivrājakācāryaśrīmacchaṅkarācāryaviracita sādhana  
pañcakam sampūrṇam ||

