

**The Relevance Of
Vedanta In This Modern Age Of Civilization**

Satchidaananda Vaak-Jyoti Series



SWAMI SATCHIDANANDENDRA SARASWATI

BY D. B. GANGOLLI

PUBLISHED BY :

SUBHARAM TRUST

BANGALORE

1988

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Preface

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

Having been profoundly influenced and having benefited immensely, I have mooted this small plan of publishing these 'gems of spiritual literature', unrivalled in their esoteric import and teachings of the highest order and based on the pristine pure original Bhashyas of Adi Shankara. It is an irony of our times that even that great Acharya's immaculate teachings of Atmavidya or Self-Knowledge — purely based on the strength of the Upanishadic statements, their veracity based on Intuitive dialectics or ratiocination and finally on the strength of the culmination or consummation of all those teachings in one's own Intuitive experience here and now — have been distorted beyond recognition and redemption.

The devoted and discerning seeker of the Ultimate Reality of Atman or the Self, of the essential nature of Pure Being-Consciousness (Intuition), is sure to benefit a great deal by studying and cognizing the

truths that are taught in these booklets, adopting a well-planned sequential order so as to enable him to get rid of many a deep-rooted misconception that was hitherto proving to be a stumbling block in his path of spiritual progress. It can be affirmed here that if the student honestly applies his mind and intellect and devotes all his efforts and energies with a high sense of purpose and perseverance, he will never fail to get the conviction and complete satisfaction accruing from this lofty pursuit.

To cater to the needs of young and immature minds of our present age of nuclear science this first book has tackled the problem of — "The Relevance of Vedanta in this Modern Age of Civilization" — from first principles, so to speak, and if only it kindles a spark of genuine interest and taste in this highly developed "Science of Spirituality" among its readers my objective of publishing these books purely for the sake of propagation without any profit-motive whatsoever would be fulfilled.

I will fail in my moral duty if I do not acknowledge here the continued munificent donations that the members of "Subharam Trust" have provided in the past and for this publication too and the excellent printing by "Chitra Printers", Bangalore.

D. B. GANGOLLI

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The Relevance Of Vedanta In This Modern Age Of Civilization

(A) Vedanta Alone Is The Panacea For The Scourge Of Civilization

1. The Validity of Vedanta ;

The philosophy of Vedanta is a certain scientific system or treatise born out of the Upanishadic lore. The remaining systems or schools of philosophy are, to a great extent, mere logical systems about Reality ; that means, they are philosophical systems which are formulated on the basis of the rules and regulations of logic or dialectics having no apparent contradictions. Such systematized sciences are called 'Philosophies' in the West. But in our country, i. e., India, Intuitive experience (Anubhava) alone is given greater value or importance. Therefore, the philosophical sciences, which some seers or sages of ancient times formulated in consonance with their experience alone are called 'Darshanas' or 'that which I have seen.' The respective seers or sages have presented their own respective philosophical systems before the people saying that they are in accordance with their experience alone. In Vedanta, however, the sages of the Upanishads have presented the philosophical Truth that they have 'Intuitively experienced'. Vedantins do not say that just because their philosophical science has been enunciated or expounded in the Upanishads it has to be believed or trusted merely on the basis of their Upanishadic statements alone. In this regard, Shri Sureshwaraachaarya, a direct disciple of Shri Shankaraachaarya,

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has said in his Vaartika on the Brihadhaaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya: *"Na Cha Vedoaktitoa Vedaha Shraddheyaa-rtha Iheshyate | Kin Tu Amaanatwahastoonaam Veda Vaakye-shwasambhavaat ||"* (Bri. Vaartika 2-4-325). Not indicating or signifying its subject-matter or object, or doing so in a doubtful manner or in a false manner — all these go under the name of 'invalid means or evidences (Apramaana)'. On the contrary, if a means or evidence indicates or signifies beyond doubt, but culminating in one's experience, that phenomenon which was not known previously — that 'means or evidence' is called 'valid means' or Pramaana. It is the assertion of Vedantins that because the Upanishadic statements signify their object or subject-matter so as to be cognized by everyone in his Intuitive experience (here and now) alone, the Upanishadic statements are called 'valid means' or reliable authoritative sources of knowledge.

2. For Vedanta Universal Intuitive Experience Alone is The Prime Foundation or Substrate

With regard to the empirical or physical sciences some people say that if an object or substance is attained as a result of some action — i.e., in our empirical dealings if a phenomenon produces or causes any useful or beneficial and irrefutable knowledge — then that theory or proposition can be called 'a scientific truth'. The fact that the earth revolves round the Sun is a proposition that at present some astronomers have formulated or put forth; because more than the prior or the layman's belief that — "The Sun revolves round the

earth" — this present proposition resolves, reconciles and explains all our known problems and events quite satisfactorily, people call this present theory in general as the scientific truth or reality. Similarly, the proposition that human beings exist or are living on the planet of Mars also can be said to be one such theory which is likely to be proved or accepted as a scientific truth. It is the opinion and intention of these thinkers or scientists that if this proposition or conjecture can be proved or established to be true by means of various causes based on inferences and dialectical or logical devices — besides, by such determinations if none of our experiences is vitiated or invalidated — then, that proposition can become an empirical and scientific truth. But if it is said that 'Vedanta is a science of Reality' — it is not said in this sense. Vedanta need not at all signify or teach any Reality which is in consonance or full agreement with any empirical dealing; for, Vedanta is a highly evolved or developed philosophical (metaphysical or esoteric) science which signifies or teaches the one Ultimate Reality alone which cannot ever be cognized either through the perceptual experiences (Pratyaksha) or inferential deductions or conjectures (Anumaana). But a special feature of Vedanta as a philosophical science lies in the fact that it helps cognize the Ultimate Reality which is within everyone's Intuitive experience here and now.

Who are those people who composed or formulated the Upanishads? When did they compose them? — though these and such other questions may

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be worth deliberating upon from the historical viewpoint, they are not at all important for the determination of the Ultimate Reality. For, in Vedanta, which is based on the scientific treatises of the Upanishads which propound the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman beyond doubt culminating in everyone's Intuitive experience, neither the objects or substances which can be determined on the basis of or through the means of perception (Pratyaksha) and examination and anticipation (Nireekshana) nor the subject-matters or objects which can be determined on the strength of reasoning or logic have been enunciated or propounded; nor subject-matters or objects, which can be believed on the basis of the greatness or qualifications of persons who explain or expound them, have been enunciated. In Vedanta or the Upanishadic texts there is a deliberation and delineation about the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman which is based on the Intuitive experience which is universal, beyond the rules and regulations and restrictions of time and space. Just as in the empirical sphere of day-to-day transactions the truths of the science of Mathematics are relevant and applicable at all times and in all regions and countries, in the same manner in the deliberation about the Ultimate Reality the scientific treatises of Vedanta based on the Upanishadic lore helps cognize that subject-matter which is in keeping with universal Intuitive experience alone.

3. The Present Subject-matter For Deliberation :

In this series of articles we are going to talk

about the subject of "Vedanta and the modern life style". Vedanta teaches us subject-matters which are in our experience alone. It is our prime intention here to present before you that Vedanta teaches or propounds doctrines or precepts which are useful or beneficial to the modern life style of civilized people. What exactly is the modern or civilized life style of people? Can we seek solutions in Vedanta for the knotty problems or difficulties of the ultra-modern or highly civilized people? — Such questions we must deliberate upon with utmost insight.

4. What Goes by The Name of 'Civilization' is in Truth a 'Malady':

What we pride upon as civilization has been called a kind of malady or illness by philosophers. One should not think that because Vedantins of our country alone have said like this, it is a hallmark of their ignorance or backwardness. For, what we have stated above (i.e. "The modern civilization is a kind of illness or malady") is based on the writings of a certain Western author. Edward Carpenter is a great independent thinker or philosopher of England. He has written a book entitled — "Civilization — Its Cause And Cure". His opinion is: "Civilization is a certain illness or disease which every nation or country suffers from in its infancy. Children suffer from several diseases like whooping cough, chicken pox etc.; because the number of children who become victims to such diseases is big, physicians have to carry out the deliberation upon the children's diseases

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very carefully and with utmost caution. Similarly, while nations grow up, in their infant stage itself they are attacked by a disease called 'civilization'. Those nations which understand or unearth its root cause and adopt suitable curative measures alone subsist or thrive for a long time. But those nations which look upon this 'disease' with indifference will become a prey to it." Carpenter has made an attempt to establish the veracity of this opinion by giving many points of fact.

5. The Cause of The Disease :

In the opinion of this author, for the disease of civilization the strengthening of 'the idea of ownership and acquisition of property' alone is the cause; people who are wise should detect or divine the symptoms and utilize suitable preventive measures. Among the group of people whom we criticize as uncivilized neither this 'disease' nor its ill effects are noticed. But man has to experience this disease or illness one day or other. It is not enough if one says and feels that this disease should never come at all; nations have to progress or thrive by adopting curative measures or solutions alone. Carpenter has written that among such nations which have thus successfully adopted curative measures Indians and the Chinese stand out as examples. But considering the state of affairs at present among these nations this disease seems to have revisited. Therefore, it is all the more essential for us Indians to deliberate upon these symptoms with utmost caution and insight.

6. Is Vedanta Alone The Solution For The Scourge of Civilization ?

Is there a solution or an antidote to be found in Vedanta for this disease of civilization? Does this solution or curative measure remove or destroy completely and permanently this scourge or illness? — These are the other questions. The medical science does not, as a rule, signify treatments or remedies which invariably remove or root out the disease or illness totally; there are instances where even after the treatment some diseases do not get cured or they do not completely disappear; similarly, in Vedanta also those practices or treatments which it indicates or suggests may not remove or cure this disease, is it not? — This kind of a doubt may arise. But there is a great difference between the system or method of treatment evolved or devised by examining the physical constitution and condition of every individual patient and the Vedantic treatment or cure evolved on the strength of universal Intuitive experience. Therefore, it is enough if it is elucidated that the Ultimate Reality which Vedantins talk about is established on the strength of universal Intuitive experience, as also the fact that those people who follow the instructions suggested in the Vedantic texts with unstinted faith alone will be immensely benefited

7. Symptoms of The Disease :

Anyway, let us consider a little the present topic, viz. "What are the symptoms of the present-day scourge

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or disease called 'Civilization'?" Competition is its first symptom. One salient feature of this civilization is one's desire to push or thrust himself in frontline after pulling back all others in the field. Nowadays wherever we see, individuals, communities, towns, districts, countries and nations are rushing or jostling forward as if saying — "I am first, I am first". Only such a competitive spirit is being exhibited everywhere. Things or commodities which are desirable are also increasing day by day; and it is but natural that because in one particular object or commodity alone many people are having their desire polarized, as it were, here in this workaday world, competition is consequently engendered in this regard. As a result of this competition, people have per force to work with speed. Thinking that — "Before we reach there, some one else may forestall us and take away the thing which we want" — people in general feel that they should acquire the knowledge of the thing or commodity as early as possible, possess it quickly and enjoy it as early as possible lest anybody deprives them of the thing or commodity. Naturally as a consequence of this way of thinking, in this highly competitive world people who claim to be civilized have to have railways or airways which are helpful in travelling fast; telephones which enable them to communicate and converse with others from long distances; television and other allied electronic gadgets which help see or observe things from afar. In the present times all these amenities and facilities have become essential for the modern civilized life style. The weekly magazines and daily newspapers which communicate news to us as early as possible

are not sufficient to cope with the speed with which we want them to come out. The morning newspaper becomes stale by the evening; we want a fresh and new evening newspaper! In future, who knows we may need newspapers or news bulletins every two hours even with fresh news!

All this may be termed as a mirthful sport or dance of desire. This 'revelry' of desire has begun to show up among nations too just as in individuals. If the French beat the English in this time-bound hunt for new pastures in quenching these desires, the French are beaten by the Germans and the latter in turn by the Americans in this mad race. At present in this competition and the unhealthy race to outbeat each other in the arms race between the Super Powers of America and Russia on the puerile excuse of providing a deterrent to the oponents it is not possible even to envisage whether anyone would survive to see who was the victor and who was the vanquished in the event of a nuclear war breaking out!

If a desire is not fulfilled, if there is any impediment in its path, that desire gets converted into hatred (Kroadha). This is the second symptom of this our so-called 'modern civilization'. There is a distinction between desire (Kaama) and hatred (Kroadha). First, after having thought of the object, that thought eventually having shaped up as a desire and thereafter having become strong for possessing

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the object, when a person prompted by utmost alacrity and competitive spirit makes an attempt with great struggle — then alone its fruit can accrue. But when there is an impediment for the fulfilment of the desire and hatred raises its ugly head, we do not come to realize it at all. When hatred overtakes us without our realizing that it has seized us in its firm grip, so to speak, that hatred goes through its full course and takes its full effect. Thereafter when that anger has subsided, it makes us feel in the manner — "My God, how did I do such a thing?" and show repentance. The effect of hatred may persist and torment us for a long time even after it has disappeared. To overcome or alleviate the misdeeds committed under the sway or spell of hatred, it is more difficult for nations than for individuals. The aftermaths of the past world wars are still tormenting us. Those who have and those who have not participated in those wars; those who have won and those who are vanquished; those who have fallen a prey to its havoc having been completely at the mercy of others at that time— all these people have, still in these far-off times, to suffer the ill-effects of those wars. Calamities and dangers, which even those people who dropped the atom bombs in Japan and wrought destruction could not have anticipated or imagined, are showing up their macabre effects even today after many decades!

Fear is yet another symptom of the disease of civilization. Nowadays this symptom is looming large everywhere. Fear has overpowered all of us and we

feel in the manner — “I am afraid of another; the other person is afraid of me”; “Who will deceive me?”; “Who will cause trouble to me?”; “Who will cause hindrance to my welfare and safety?”; “From whom and when will there be any danger to my life?” Some of us may be bragging in the manner — “I am not a person who is afraid of others”. But our predicament is similar to that of an actor in a particular drama who, after having run away from the battlefield unable to face the onslaught and barrage of arrows of the enemies, later trembling while narrating the events, says: “I did not fear them at all”. Though we are attempting to show off externally that we are not afraid, internally, as we all know, fear has overwhelmed us indeed!

Afflicted with this fear complex, we become anxious as to what will happen to us tomorrow and keep on cheating one another. In an old book some among us at least might have read about the story of two cheats called ‘cow-dung seller’ and ‘sand-seller’. One of them had in a cloth bag mere cow-dung and the other had a cloth bag full of sand alone. When both of them met each other in a public dormitory of a town, the cow-dung seller announced in the manner — “I have cooked rice; if anyone gives me uncooked rice I will give in exchange this bag containing boiled rice”. In the vicinity the sand seller balled out: “I have here in this bag uncooked rice; if anyone gives me cooked rice, I will take it in exchange for this bag of uncooked rice”. Both of them then came to an agreement and exchanged each

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other's bag, went to a far-off distance and opened their newly-acquired bags only to realize that they had been cheated and both got amazed and disillusioned! In the same manner, we also keep on trying somehow to dispose of unworthy things which are with us to others and obtain from them 'useful and important' articles. But because they also have adopted the same outlook of cheating others, both parties get mutually cheated invariably. We feel ashamed at our own tom-foolery! Thus the fear or anxiety for our welfare and safety, its resultant mutual cheating and in turn its consequent misery — all these have become the salient features or symptoms of our disease of civilization.

This mutual fear complex and cheating attitude does not pertain only to some particular individuals alone. Even if it is said that this is a certain contagious secondary disease afflicting everyone, it will not be an exaggeration. Nowadays everyone is talking about the third world war as being imminent. Because this fear complex is caused among the Big Powers too, although they outwardly pronounce and profess that they do not at all suffer from such fear complex or neurosis, they keep on taking safety and security measures needed to guard against such fears and dangers. All nations are increasing, these days, their military forces and defence budgets as also their nuclear arsenals; they are entering into ever new regional military and security pacts and programmes. Regional conferences regarding armaments are arranged among military personnel. In fact, it is quite certain

and clear that the demon or spectre of Death has spread its dragnet over the entire world !!

8. A General Perspective of Our Empirical Dealings :

How are our present empirical dealings? Just like people suffering from some disease keep on muttering something in a delirious condition, we are also indulging in self-aggrandisement and boastful utterances and are fully involved in criticising or blaming others. Having been caught in the vice-like grip of the lust for wealth like being possessed by a demon, we try to parade or exhibit our wealth by getting ourselves flattered by others around us and publicize or advertise to that effect in newspapers; even so, we pretend as if we do not like to be flattered or praised! On the pretext of examining the credentials or qualifications of others we are exposing their shortcomings and blemishes; even so, we keep on announcing every now and then the opinion that it is not proper to criticize others. We are undertaking or adopting various types of devices or strategies to acquire wealth; we also put forth the flimsy or fictitious reason of philanthropy alone for such acquisition of wealth. Today we are all indulging all the while in politics as if we are far ahead of the legendary and mythological characters like Sri Shankaraachaarya and Chaanakya. It has become a daily routine ritual to keep on talking or discussing about nations like America, Russia, Korea, Pakistan, India etc., examining their political systems and strategies and exhibit our scholarly opinions about the leading politicians in the manner — “So and so should

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not have done like that; such and such a person should have done like this." As if the brunt of the responsibility of administering all the nations of the world has fallen on our shoulders alone, we are taking immense and abiding interest in these discussions about political affairs. Whatever working or managing committee meetings they may be, shouts like — "Our votes should be given to our own representatives or nominees" — are being heard! Just as individuals look upon one another with attachment or hatred, we form various types of organisations or institutions and are prepared to fight on behalf of these organisations or institutions. Nowadays our nations or states are not at all lagging behind in these matters. Each powerful national government is publishing its own 'bulletin' in praise of its own achievements and progress. These powerful nations entice away the editors of newspapers by offering them monetary and other bribes and encourage and patronize them to write in praise of their own political systems and policies as also to condemn the governments of nations which are opposed to their own systems and policies and ideologies. These powerful nations have established their own embassies and ambassadors in almost every other nation and through them are building up their own big images; every now and then they are adopting highly diplomatic strategies to further their own selfish ends. "Avidyaayaamantare Vartamaanaha Swayam Dheeraaha Panditam Manyamaanaaha | Janghanyamaanaaha Pariyanti Moodhaa Andhenaiva Neeyamaanaa Yathaandhaaha ||" — "Being in the darkness of ignorance, saying that they alone are knowledgeable and scholarly, being

victims to various kinds of calamities, the fools are groping along here and there just as the blind being led or guided by other blind people to suffer misery by falling upon rocks and thorns etc." This scriptural verse is relevant and befits our case in many respects. Just like the saying — "Detrimental to one's own household; benevolent and helpful to others" — there does not seem to be any leisure or spare time for us to deliberate upon our own personal matters. Our body, senses, mind and intellect — all these have completely captured and captivated our whole attention. We are bragging that they are 'mine'; but in truth the consideration, especially, as to how best we can attain control over them, is invariably not liked by us. Just like the person who after learning the five alphabets of a five-lettered Mantra called 'Panchaakshari' goes to instruct the Almighty God Ishwara (This Mantra is meditated upon to invoke the Lord Ishwara) about the Panchaakshari Mantra, we exhaust and waste all our time in preaching to others invariably.

9. Whatever Wealth It May be, It Is Not Permanent :

Really speaking, what is our plight? We have become completely enslaved by desires (Kaama), hatred (Kroadha) and lust (Moaha). Howevermuch we may earn, it is not sufficient; howevermuch we may enjoy, we do not have satisfaction or contentment; for this, howevermuch we may harm or injure others, it is not sufficient. There is an old story. Once upon a time, Devendra (the Lord of the deities) in

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order to ward off the onslaughts of the Raakshasas or demons and as if to establish the veracity of the metaphor — 'In enjoyment equal to Indra' — to recall his own pomp and pageantry, started constructing a golden fort around his famous palace called Amaraavati. In order to supply or procure enough gold for the construction of the fort and out of an ardent or burning desire to construct the fort as early as possible he forgot his responsibilities of administering his kingdom and began staying at the site of construction of that fort! Thus though there were not anyone who could think of the administration of the celestial kingdom of the Devas or deities, no one Devata or deity had the courage to warn or remind Indra or Devendra. In these circumstances, one day one Lomasha Maharshi or a sage by that name (Lomasha in Sanskrit means 'hair') paid a visit to Devendra's kingdom. Because all over that sage's body there was a thick growth of hair that name suited him. Although Devendra did not have enough time to spare to receive the sage as per the custom and look after his comforts as a guest, Devendra noticed a small place or patch on his chest where there were no hairs and expressed his growing curiosity by means of a question as to why in that particular place alone there were no hairs. Then the sage Lomasha stated: "Oh Indra, this is a kind of pastime. Many Indras, who were lords of this famous palace Amaraavati have come and gone, is it not? Whenever one such Indra went away one of these hairs has fallen away. Look here, this hair which is shaky is that of your regime." Then at once Indra felt disillusioned. Indra at once thought within himself in the manner —

“Oh God, What a fool am I! For the sake of this brief transient life I began to construct a golden fort and, forgetting all my duties and responsibilities, I have begun to lose this golden opportunity for Nishreyasa or Enlightenment itself! What will become of me in future?” — and out of fear immediately prostrated before that sage and sought the latter’s blessings before getting engrossed in discharging his (Indra’s) princely or political responsibilities.

10. Desire, Hatred and Lust and Their Respective Counter-Measures :

People like us who are enslaved by desire, hatred and lust should beware of this moral from the above mythological tale and realize our follies. In the Bhagavad Geeta, Shri Krishna Bhagavaan has stated : **“Trividham Narakasyedam Dwaaram Naashanamaatmanaha | Kaamaha Kroadhastathaa Loabhastasmaadetattrayam Tyajet ”** — Kaama means desire for external objects; Kroadha means the anger that one gets when his desire meets with any impediment or hindrance; Loabha means the vice-like grip of an inborn or deep-seated desire that everything should be for one’s sake alone (i.e., the innate selfish motive of man, in general). These three are the main entrances to Naraka or hell. These doors are always open; as if inviting notices are written and displayed on them to the effect — **“All are welcome”** — any one can enter through them and experience the travails and tribulations of hell. Despite knowing these dangers fully well, we are jostling forward, as it were, competing with one

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another; what a shame! However much we may struggle and toil, is there any possibility at all of our acquiring the wealth of Divendra, his span of life, his celestial divine pleasures? But, the disasters and calamities born out of Kaama, Kroadha and Loabha are surely our inherited stock. That, we have per force to experience. Just like patients determined to consume forbidden eatables or diet, we who are neck-deep in modern civilization are meekly submitting ourselves to these improper and irrational ideas, ideologies and principles and remain indifferent and immune to their dangers and risks; is it not utterly strange and foolish?

We should fully realize, before it is too late, the subtle meaning and teaching of the Geeta statement: 'These three should be given up'. By mere thinking to give up these three, viz. Kaama, Kroadha and Loabha, they do not at all leave us. As and when we try to give them up, over and over again they tighten up their grip on us, so to say. Therefore, the real and secret purport of this instruction of Geeta does not lie in the mere renunciation of these three. Shri Bhagavaan's opinion which is implicit in these instructions is that one should undertake to practise disciplines which are contrary to these three.

There is another mythological tale. Once upon a time, human beings, demons and deities went to their universal father, Brahma, and implored Him to preach them about the best discipline or spiritual practice to attain Shreyas or Beatitude, it is said.

Then Brahma taught them the monosyllable of "Da". Human beings took it to mean "Daana" or philanthropy or humanitarian service by way of charity which is their natural proclivity and understood it that the universal patriarch Brahma had advised them to perform humanitarian service; the demons took it to refer to their innate nature of cruelty and understood Brahma to have advised them to cultivate the habit of showing "Daya" or kindness or compassion to others; the deities having realized that they were by nature lustful and pleasure-seekers, understood Brahma to have advised them to practise "Dama" or control over the mind. This is an episode mentioned in Brihadhaaranyaka Upanishad. Shri Shankaraachaarya has written in his Bhashyas that the purport of this anecdote is: "Among human beings alone there exists intrinsically Manushyatwa or human nature, Aasuratwa or demoniac proclivities, Devatwa or divine nature of excellence, and so those human beings who are desirous of attaining Enlightenment or Beatitude or Shreyas should practise or cultivate these three qualities of "Daana" or philanthropic attitude, "Daya" or compassion or kindness and "Dama" or control over the senses as also the psyche or mind, respectively."

Therefore, what should we attempt to practise? If we wish to get cured from or overcome the disease of civilization we should observe with insight and alertness the symptoms of this disease, viz. Kaama or desire, Krodha or hatred and Loabha or lust, and by cultivating the virtues of Dama or control over

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the senses and the mind, Daya or compassion towards fellow-creatures and Daana philanthropic attitude, subdue or get rid of those symptoms. While practising the spiritual disciplines we should hold on to one particular discipline with steadfastness or perseverance and cultivate it over and over again in our life till that virtue becomes naturally a part and parcel of our innate nature in our day-to-day life. It may be that sometimes one discipline will have to be assiduously practised for one's lifetime. For, it is so very difficult for us to attain it. But if that one particular discipline is cultivated successfully and fully, along with it the remaining virtues of "Daivee Sampat" or the divine assets or virtues will become attainable, just like if one of the links of a chain is drawn the whole chain gets drawn in the process. For instance, if we develop or cultivate Daana or philanthropy in order to conquer the vice or weakness of miserliness or greed, as and when the former is attained, to that extent one obtains large-heartedness, love, humanitarian or philanthropic outlook and purity of heart. These virtues will get rooted in or ensconced in our very nature, one by one. Similarly, if this spiritual practice is continued, we will become qualified for knowing or cognizing the Ultimate Reality of Atman or Brahman as propounded by the 'spiritual science' of Vedanta. Then we will become partakers of the divine Bliss or Beatitude. However, to know the device to cultivate or practise these spiritual disciplines of Dama, Daya and Daana etc. we have to learn the technique from the Vedantic treatises alone and attain fulfilment of human life or existence.

(B) Benefits Accruing From The Vedantic Viewpoint

11. Competition, Speed and Modern Appliances :

In the previous Chapter we have drawn an outline of the modern life style; we have also found out the fact that in our empirical mundane dealings the ill effects or tribulations due to Kaama or desire, Kroadha or hatred and Loabha or lust are very strong. As a result of this, there is unhealthy or cut-throat competition and to augment it there arises a necessity of doing our work or performing our acts with utmost speed. This fact too we have realized. In order to be congenial to this speeding-up process we have devised various types of appliances and machines. This also we have mentioned. Now it has become necessary to briefly analyse and see the results of this advent of the machine age.

12. Disadvantages or the Ill Effects Produced by Machines :

It amounts to having described the essential nature of these empirical dealings if we think of our times as a machine age. Food, water, clothes and light etc. — such necessities of life for the general public have per force to be produced with the help of the machines alone. The machine was first produced by man as an aid to reduce his exhaustion and strain. But in proportion to the degree of reduction of our physical strain, sensual exhaustion

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and mental troubles, weaknesses of our body, senses and mind have increased. Now if any of our personal problems have to be solved, it has to be only through the mechanical gadgets. Without knowing the methods or ways of utilizing the goods produced by machines with unimaginable speed, people have to solve new kinds of problems and difficulties. Just as the mythological story that when one drop of blood of a certain type of demon called "Raktabeejaasura" fell on the ground thousands of the same species were born, similarly for each big machine innumerable small machines or gadgets are being produced.

There is a belief among some people that in a region called "Malenaadu" there are evil spirits called "Chowdi" and those who sustain such evil spirits are served by them in that they carry out all their work, but even so if the owners do not provide those evil spirits with sufficient workload they kill and consume their masters themselves. Whether this is true or false, in the case of these modern machines especially they have become such 'Chowdi' demons all right! For, it has become very difficult to provide sufficient workloads to these demoniac gigantic machines. Because our 'world machine' has itself to rotate through the functioning of these mechanical gadgets and appliances of modern age, we are in a perplexed delirium as not to discern what we have to do. Despite the fact that nations are cheating one another in their efforts to find customers for the commercial goods which they have produced in competition with others, as it is not sufficient these 'developed

nations' are biding their time, so to speak, to wage wars with one another through hatred and animosity. As our gigantic machines are producing ever new destructive weapons the permanence of economic wars is raising its ugly head. Everybody is aghast and astounded without knowing what will happen tomorrow! Nowadays, instead of the machine being an aid to us human beings, we ourselves have become slaves to the machines!

13. The Modern Civilization Has Become a Veritable Hell :

Now it is not even possible to curb the ill effects caused by machines. It is also not possible for us to give them up and recede away from them. Just as in our mythology when Ashwatthama did not know how to counter the effects of his weapon called "Naarayana Astra" which he used and was in a dazed confused state the whole world was trembling with terror, similarly among people and nations alike there exists mutual suspicion and fear too; the whole earth planet itself has become an example to suit the statement of Geeta, viz. "One who is caught in the grip of suspicion does not have the enjoyments or pleasures of this world, does not have the benefits of other worlds, does not at all have the spiritual Bliss or Beatitude".

As at present, our entire empirical existence and life has become a veritable hell, so to speak. What cannot be endured or tolerated any more — if that is

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not hell, what else is? Even so, because the state in which we find ourselves today is unavoidable and incorrigible, we have, out of our high sense of vanity, given it a dignified and honourable but a dubious name. When some people had gone to see a particular Swami or holy man, the latter had gone to sleep owing to exhaustion; but the aids of the Swami told the visitors that — "The holy man has gone into Samaadhi or trance, and so there is no scope to meet him!" Merely calling sleep by the honourable or dignified name of 'Samaadhi', does sleep stop being sleep at all? Merely by our calling a coin which is in currency at present as a 'rupee', can it get the same value of an old rupee? Never. Similarly, merely if we call our present state of living by the honorific name of "Civilization", its real worth and value cannot change.

14. The Help That Can Accrue To Us From 'Realized Souls':

Our state of living is truly very miserable. We have fallen into the cells of desires and are rotting. Saying that — "If it is like this, happiness may accrue to us; if it is like that, then happiness will accrue to us" — we are anxious to shift from one state to another in search of happiness. But what if we go from one jail to another? Both are confining cells alone, are they not? Only the 'Realized Souls' or 'Jnaanīs' who have attained a state beyond misery are capable of examining our present plight; they alone can show us or guide us to the path of happiness or bliss. As stated in the epic Mahaa-bhaarat: "Prajnaa Praasaadamaaruhya Hyashoachyaha

Shoachatoa Janaan I Bhoomishthaaniva Shailasthaha Sarvaan Praajnoa(s)nupashyati II'' — Those who do not have any kind of ignorance or Avidya and desires or Kaama — they are in truth the people who have ascended the high pedestal or storey of Prajnaa or real knowledge. About them no one has to worry or pity them for whatever reason. Just as to one who is stationed atop a hillock all the people walking along on the ground at the foot of the hillock are completely in view as in a panoramic view, similarly to those wise men who are atop the pedestal of Prajnaa or real knowledge of the Self the dismal plight of people like us who are stricken with various kinds of miseries and attachments in our day-to-day empirical life and are suffering is clearly and completely discernible simultaneously and spontaneously, as it were. Such wise men out of compassion towards us, feel in the manner — "Oh God, these people have taken to a wrong path and are feeling miserable!" — and they teach us the right path to adopt. This is not a vain flattery of Vedantins who have assumed the names of 'Jnaanis' or 'Realized Souls'. This is in fact the description of the essential qualities and innate nature of "Sthitaprajnaas" or those who are rooted or established in Prajnaa or Pure Consciousness or Pure knowledge of Atman or the Self, having realized the defects in this our mundane day-to-day life and the ill effects caused by it, and who have renounced all this. Such 'Sthitaprajnaas' alone are truly the people who know Vedanta; those alone are the people who are capable of helping us across this 'ocean of misery' or Samsaara.

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15. Bookish Knowledge Is Not Enough; Practice Is Essential :

It is not that we do not know the qualities at all of a 'Sthitaprajnaa' or one who is established in the Self-knowledge. There are quite a number of people who learn by heart the qualities of a 'Sthitaprajnaa' in these days when a book of Geeta is available cheaply for a rupee or so. Upanishads, Bhagavadgeeta etc. — all these are known to us indeed. Just as those who call one who knows the mere fact that Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Saamaveda and Athaaveda are the four Vedas is called a 'Chatuṛvedi' or one who knows the four Vedas, we are perfunctorily knowing the names of these philosophical texts, viz. Upanishads and Bhagavadgeeta; we also have read them; we also have learnt well to give discourses or lectures on those texts; with regard to them, we can even write articles and essays. But just as for those who have merely read books on medicine the dispensing of the medicines in practice cannot be known from mere book-reading, similarly though we have bookish knowledge of the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgeeta, we do not have the practical experience of the teachings and truths enunciated or propounded in those texts. Nowadays, this alone is the plight of many of us in every walk of life; many people possess knowledge about various subjects, as also the ability to show off their erudition or scholarship; but they are not able to translate their own intellectual knowledge into practice in their own life. We know indeed that the instructions of the spiritual texts are : ' Desire (Kaama) is to be conquered by will

power or mental control (Dama), hatred is to be conquered by compassion or kindness (Daya) and lust (Loabha) is to be overcome by charity or philanthropy (Daana).” But just like a professor of philosophy and medicine who can teach their truths and techniques is himself a perennial sufferer or patient, we have not used these spiritual teachings and instructions for our own benefit; we have neither found the spare time to utilize them for our own sake nor acquired the proper mental temperament and desire to do so.

16. Our Knowledge Is Full Of Defects Or Blemishes :

In one particular town, distribution of water through water taps was newly arranged. At that time a kind of illness was predominantly noticed to exist among the people of the town. In spite of inoculation and other remedial measures being taken, the illness did not disappear. Meanwhile, someone discovered that the water flowing through the taps was polluted at its very source by some poisonous germs. When these germs were treated and removed gradually the illness disappeared. This example exactly suits and is relevant to the present discussion. In the flow of knowledge that is reaching us or received by us, at the very source itself there exists a defect. If that is removed or got rid of, our empirical or day-to-day transactions too will be devoid of any defects or blemishes. The method of finding out or detecting the defect that exists in our knowledge and preventing it is taught by Vedanta. If we merely learn by rote these instructions or advices, it will not be of any avail; we should assiduously put them into

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practice in our daily life. The world at large can be seen from two different viewpoints. The first method is seeing it from the viewpoint of the 'I' notion that exists innately in us. This viewpoint is called the 'extroverted viewpoint'. "I am the person who is seeing this world; all this has to be experienced by me alone" — such is the feeling of the people of this viewpoint. Because whosoever has this viewpoint all of them have this feeling alone invariably, it is but natural that among these people with this extroverted viewpoint Raaga or attachment, liking and Dwesha or hatred or dislike are strong or pronounced. It is also natural for a cut-throat competition being practised by them as they think in the manner — "We should compete with others who also wish to obtain the things which we also want." Such people not only look upon those who come in their way of getting their desired objects or things with anger or hatred, but also will try to beat up or expel those who acquire quickly those very objects or things which are wanted by themselves. By this there is engendered invariably mutual fights and squabbles in life. Therefore, it is quite clear that there exists intrinsically a basic defect in seeing everything from this 'I' notion viewpoint alone.

17. The Viewpoint Of Vedantins :

The viewpoint of Jnanis or realized souls, who have found out this defect, is of a different kind altogether. Their opinion is : "Tyaktvaa Mamaahamiti Bandhakare Pade Dwe Maanaapamaanasadrishaaha Samadarshinascha | Kartaaramanyamavagamyaa Tadarpiteani

Kurvanti Karmaparipaakaphalaani Dhanyaaha II' —
 "I, mine — giving up these two binding terms completely, looking upon both honour (Maana) and dishonour (Apamaana) with the same outlook those with mental equipoise come to know that there is one dispenser of Karmas or acts, viz. Paramaatman or the Supreme Self or Atman and surrender as an offering to Him all their actions or deeds. They alone are fortunate people (who have attained the real goal of life!)" Vedantins have followed this second viewpoint. According to their viewpoint 'I' and 'mine' — these beliefs or feelings alone are the impediments or hindrances to our happiness. Once a boy tried to take out a handful of cashewnuts from a narrow-mouthed vessel. But because the mouth of the vessel was narrower than the girth of his folded fist full of the cashewnuts, it was not possible for him to take out his hand holding the cashewnuts. Howevermuch he attempted, it was more and more painful to his hands but he could not remove the fist out. An old man who noticed his predicament advised him in [the manner — "My boy, give up this obstinate attitude of yours of the type — 'all at once I will take out a fistful of cashewnuts'; leave out a few cashewnuts in the vessel itself. Then your fist (holding fewer cashewnuts) can be easily taken out; another time you can once again grab a few more cashewnuts, is it not?" In this old anecdote there is a moral implicit. We are trying in the same manner to grab everything for ourselves without sharing things with others or allowing others to get those things all at a time with a deep-seated hankering, thinking or feeling in the manner — "All that is there in this world

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is mine alone; all these should belong to me alone." As a result of this, we are meeting with all kinds of miseries and difficulties. However, if we give up this viewpoint and obtain or cultivate the comprehensive or pervasive viewpoint of the type — "All this is full of Pure Consciousness of the essential nature of Brahman, and because this Brahman is our very core of Being as Atman or the Self, this is blissful to everyone!" — then it is possible for everyone to acquire, on the basis of mutual help, that much happiness or bliss which each wants or desires in this world. Vedanta proposes to expound this second viewpoint alone which is faultless or flawless.

18. "All This Is Brahman Alone" :

We are seeing the world very clearly. Discarding this fact, how can we at all believe that there exists another Reality called Brahman just because Vedanta merely states like that? If we do so, will it not be analogous to our taking the false appearances of the dream to be real, discarding the reality of the waking experiences? — This doubt may arise in some people. But such a doubt is applicable to any scientific treatise. For, a scientific treatise (Shaastra) is a means or device which signifies any subject-matter that is not known to its seeker. About that subject-matter of the scientific treatise we have deliberated upon from a gross viewpoint and have beforehand formulated certain opinions; but the scientific treatise examines or analyses it from a subtle viewpoint and indicates to us the real innate

nature of that subject-matter. Is it not? For example, one scientist Eddington in his book — "The Nature of the Physical World" — has propounded that for whatever object we see in this universe there exists a second counterpart or antibody. This table universally known and which is seen in front of me is one; the table seen by the scientist is another. In the table which we are seeing there is a material cause of an existent object. If I press my hand on this table, it does not get knuckled under; it is a solid object. But what the scientist has cognized as the table is, it seems, formed out of innumerable nuclear sub-atoms which are moving with terrific speeds! For the paper that is placed on the table also there exists similarly the scientist's second counterpart of the paper, it seems; similarly for the pen, also! The nuclear sub-atoms are not objects, but are mere varieties of energies — such is the belief of the scientists. Whether it is possible for one in a thousand to grasp or cognize this scientist's sub-atomic table or the sub-atomic world in which it exists it is difficult to say; even so, we believe unquestionably that the table must be existing indeed. For, the scientist's well-intentioned, honest statement says so. In the same way, in the science of astronomy also it is established on the basis of many logical devices that the earth planet is revolving round the Sun. But in our perceptual experience it appears that the earth is itself steady. Even it being so, we believe in the manner — "Whatever science or an intellectually formulated scientific treatise signifies, that alone is real" — and we are teaching our children lessons from this science of astronomy alone. This

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equally applies to other branches of scientific treatises also.

It being so, if Vedanta tells us that — “All this is Brahman alone” — just because this truth is not perceptible to our senses it cannot be condemned. For, Vedanta states that — “The viewpoint of our perceptual experiences and inferences agrees with the empirical world alone. If seen from the absolute viewpoint, the Ultimate Reality of Brahman alone is the really existing entity. All this is Brahman alone” — and this fact can be cognized intuitively. This is what Vedantins say. One should not raise an objection in the manner — “In that case, henceforth discarding the empirical language of house, door, hill, human being, tiger, a tender sapling and tree, shall we call everything Brahman?” For, even after several scientists and scholars find out or discover subtle objects or things, their empirical day-to-day language does not change. If the viewpoint is changed, our knowledge alone will change and not our usual day-to-day language. Even the scientist carries out the empirical transaction in the manner — “This table is solid” — alone; even the astronomers transact in the manner — “The Sun has come up just above our head” — alone. In the same manner, Vedantins who say that everything is Brahman alone transact in the manner — “This is a house, this is a door” — alone. Even so, it is their ardent faith, nay conviction, that all this is Brahman alone. Therefore, the fact that — “Whether everything is Brahman alone or not?” — we will have to deliberate upon and know intuitively alone remains. If this intuitive knowledge is attained by us, is there any benefit accruing to us from it?

From this knowledge can that beneficial transformation come over the way of life of the general run of people? — these questions too are to be deliberated upon.

19. The Beneficial Fruits Or Results That Accrue From Assiduous Faith In The Vedantic Teachings :

We have heard about the scientific discovery and theory that electricity pervades everywhere. In our daily life we see its effect or manifestation at certain places only; even so, we believe on the strength of the statements of the elders that — “Electricity is all-pervading” — is it not? In our empirical or daily life we believe many such phenomenal truths which the scientists propound only on the basis that it is the statement of our scientific texts or people who are trust-worthy, and we are enjoying the benefits or fruits of the utilities or amenities, gadgets or appliances produced on the strength of their statements or theories. In the same way, why should we not utilize the benefits or fruits accruing from our trust in the Vedantins’ statements about the theory or teachings about Brahman or the Ultimate Reality as enunciated or propounded in Vedantic treatises and, on that basis, carry out our day-to-day dealings? The Vedantic statements are propounding that Paramaatman or the Supreme Self who is of the essential nature of Happiness or Bliss exists everywhere; by merely believing these statements to be true alone our way of life or our daily dealings change a great deal. If the one belief that — “Whatever

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cause there is for happiness, wherever there is cause for elation — all that is the creation of or is caused by Paramaatman or the Supreme Self alone" — is established in our heart, then it is tantamount to cognizing the truth that the entire universe itself is the Lord's unique manifestation (Vibhooti). Paramaatman or the Supreme Self or Lord is like space all-pervasive as well as eternal too; therefore, if the reverential attitude or outlook that — "Whatever things we see, in all of them His greatness is manifest" — is adopted, then a new latent impression is engendered in our heart. He alone is the very life force for all our life or mundane existence. The feeling that — "Our body, mind, senses, intellect — in all these everywhere His unimaginable or unfathomable power alone is having its full play sportfully" — may even suppress the birth itself of attachment or liking (Ānaga) and hatred or dislike (Dweshā). "Nityoa Nityaanam Chetanaschetanaanaamekoa Bahoonam Yoa Vidadhaati Kaamaan I Tamaatmasthan Ye(s)nupashyanti Dheeraasteshaam Shaantihi Shaashwatee Netareshaam II" — (Kathopanishad 2-2-13). "Although the external objects are non-eternal, which is that root cause that makes them appear to be eternal? It is nothing but Paramaatman's or the Supreme Self's greatness alone. Which is that prime Principle that has booned away or given to all the endless number of creatures right from Brahma, the four-headed creator or Hiranyagarbha, to the inanimate wooden pole His Pure Consciousness? Just as though water is by nature cold only, but in association with the heat of the fire it becomes hot — similarly, which is that Reality that makes Pure Consciousness to manifest itself in all

these composite and animate bodies with mind and senses? It is Paramaatman's Pure Consciousness alone. To all these endless number of Jeevas or creatures to enjoy proper and suitable fruits of action (Karmaphala) according to the time and space regulations as a result of their own various actions performed in accordance with the time-space-causation concepts or regulations, who is that Creator or Lord who dispenses such suitable fruits without any trace of exertion, who is all-powerful, all-benevolent? Which is that fountainhead of Bliss (Anandamoola) that distributes without the least exertion or strain happiness to all creatures simultaneously and enables them all to aspire for living their span of life to make it worth living? That Paramaatman alone. All over this entire universe that Lord's or Paramaatman's Bliss alone is having its full sway. If that were not true, how could at all there exist the innate desire in all the creatures to survive despite whatever miserable situation or dire straits are countenanced, as also to attempt to survive in such circumstances? Just as we have an innate belief in our empirical dealings or day-to-day life that all that appears to us during the day time is due to the Sun's rays alone, that the heat that is seen in our body, the metabolism, the various kinds of functions of the senses, the alertness and intelligence of the intellect., etc., and in the external world the seasonal rains and agricultural activities etc. are the outcome of that Sun's rays alone — similarly, if we have the feeling that the whole functioning of the three sections of our life seen in this world, viz. Aadhidavika or the celestial region, Aadhibhautika or the region of the external

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physical world and Aadhyaatmika or the corporeal region within our bodies, all our transactions and functions like — all that we think or imagine, all that we talk or converse, all that we perform, all that we obtain or acquire — all these are nothing but the playful sport of that Blissful Paramaatman alone, how much will it improve and enhance the value of our day-to-day transactions ?

20. The Indirect Or External Knowledge Of Brahman :

So far we have tried to fathom the benefits or fruits of the knowledge of the pervasiveness of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self based on feelings or sentiments born out of deep faith. But this is not a mere statement or enunciation which has to be believed alone with utmost faith till the end. For, if the Ultimate Reality is deliberated upon following the viewpoint of the Shaastras or scriptural texts alone, then it will be clear that there does not exist any greater Reality whatsoever external to or other than Paramaatman or the Supreme Self. Listen to the statement made in the scriptures : “Yatsaakshaada-paroakshaad Brahma Ya Aatmaa Sarvaantaraha” (Brihadhaaranyaka 3-4-1). Brahman or the Ultimate Reality of Paramaatman is not an entity which is established or determined, like the external objects, desiderating the intermediary means of the senses, mind, intellect etc. This is a Reality which is directly Intuited by us; objects, senses, mind, intellect — to all these it is that Entity which is the support or substrate, but more than all these adjuncts It is that which is directly Intuited. We are

cognizing or perceiving our intellect, mind, senses and external objects in the light of Pure Consciousness alone. This is not a symbolic secondary Brahman which is to be meditated upon as a huge or big Entity of Pure Consciousness which has pervaded everything and has comprised or included everything in Itself or in Its womb, so to speak. It is called Brahman, meaning that eternal Reality in which there are no distinctions whatsoever of space, time and objects. How could that Reality, which has pervaded all phenomena like space, time and things or objects, be divided by any other entity at all? This Reality of Brahman is our Atman or Self alone; because It is our innermost essence of Being as the Witnessing Self beyond the empirical self or Jeevaatman whom we are treating on and off in our day-to-day dealings variously as our body, our senses, our mind, our intellect and our ego, it is not possible even to think or imagine that It (i.e., Atman) does not exist.

21. 'I' Notion Is The Guise That Atman Or The Self Puts On In The Empirical Sphere :

Thus, although this Atman or Self, who is highly popular, immediately and innately near and is our very core or essence of Being, has pervaded or permeated everything, He puts on in the empirical sphere a mask called the 'I' notion and is sporting in gay abandon, so to speak, assuming the forms of innumerable 'I's. Although in the empirical sphere this 'I' notion assumes various kinds of identifications and is dancing, this Paramaatman or the

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Supreme Self (i.e., the Witnessing Principle of the essential nature of Pure or Absolute Consciousness) is always witnessing that 'I' notion through the Intuitive sight which is of the essence of eternal, Pure Consciousness; just as a servant assumes his master's house to be 'my own' and transacts in that manner on his behalf or for his sake, similarly the 'I' notion, on the strength of its essential nature viz. Paramaatman or the Supreme Self, keeps on feeling and saying everywhere and in all its dealings in the manner — "I" and "mine". Just as in all our empirical dealings the 'I' notion which is inside the body seems to be more pervasive than everything else' and the innermost entity when compared to all else, similarly if we suppress this 'I' notion a little, recede deep enough up to our innate nature of Being and observe with the help or aid of Samaadhi or Intuitively experience to be one with (or merge into) the Witnessing Principle with a concentrated mind — it will be realized or cognized that this Paramaatman or the Supreme Self alone is our really real essence of Being; the really essential nature of the 'I' notion is full of Pure Consciousness alone i.e. the Witnessing Self, of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness alone, which is the substrate for the whole universe.

22. One Gets Blissful In Establishing Oneself In Paramaatman Or The Supreme Self :

Unlike those who have deep-seated identification with the 'I' notion meet with or encounter confrontation or hostility from outside, bother and toil and moil etc.,

people who are established in Atman or the Self alone and who are viewing life from that comprehensive outlook do not come across any confusion or turmoil at all. They do not suffer from any exertion or exhaustion nor from any mental torture. Such supreme or sublime peace and bliss is the fruit of performing righteous or meritorious deeds for a long time as also the fruit of the spiritual practices or disciplines obtained by association for a long period with righteous and holy people who have realized the Self. When an ingot of gold is acquired, one feels the exhaustion or exertion that one felt after working deep inside the mine for many days to be worth all the trouble, is it not? Therefore, to cognize or realize this Ultimate Reality one has to practise spiritual disciplines very assiduously and hard; only then all our efforts and endeavours will be fruitful. When compared to the Ultimate Reality of the Self or Atman, the 'I' notion is a false appearance or phenomenon. Because of this name of 'I' alone many are deluded to believe in the manner — "Truly, this alone is our essence of Being." If a name-sake of the son-in-law comes home, will the mother-in-law feel as much elation as when her real son-in-law returns home? To the extent we suppress the 'I' notion and what belongs to its retinue, viz. all those aspects which we feel as 'mine' in ourselves, — to that extent we attain our true 'I' (that means — our essential nature of Atman or Self of the essence of Pure Consciousness) and thereby we will attain true Bliss or happiness. That Reality alone is capable of granting the strength to everyone or every creature to gain happiness *par excellence*.

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23. Spiritual Discipline :

Saintly knowledgeable people have instructed that before realizing or cognizing the Paramaatman or the Supreme Self who is all-pervasive one should perform or practise spiritual disciplines like the Lord's worship, His praise, prayer and meditation or contemplation etc. Those holy men have stated that for them these spiritual practices or disciplines were helpful for remembering the Lord without let. In the past it was customary to construct temples and a God's room in one's house etc. so as to be able to bring to mind the immediate presence of God everywhere. But for some reason or other that practice or custom went on becoming obsolete or restricted. Now the external form of undertaking pilgrimages alone exists among a few people. The practice of visiting temples is on the wane; the feeling that — keeping one portion in the house reserved as God's room' is a waste of valuable space — has come over us. Gradually, the box to keep the idol of one's deity is being discarded and it is being felt that it is enough if a leaf of Tulsi is placed on a case or Shaalagraama (or a sacred stone symbolic of Vishnu) and finally, feeling that it is not possible for maintaining the custom of wearing the silk clothes and observing strict sanctity associated with the worship of Shaalagraama, people are beginning either to gift away these accessories for worship to a Brahmin or to stop such old customs or practices in Maths and temples etc. | Not only that, even the audacity to put the question — "What is the proof or evidence to say that a God who is the substrate for all empirical dealings

exists?" — has taken root among many people (particularly the so-called modern, civilized intelligentsia of our holy land II). What does the scriptures say? "Asanneva Sa Bhavati | Asadorahmeti Veda Chet II" — (Taittireeya Upanishad 2-6). Paramaatman or the Supreme Self is our Atman alone. One who thinks or reckons that He does not exist, he that person himself will become non-existent. If a clock asks — "What evidence or proof is there to say that this lamp here exists?" — will it be proper? That the clock exists is itself shown by the light of the lamp alone. What need of another proof is there to prove the existence of the light of the lamp? Brahman alone is the fountainhead or the prius of the light of Consciousness which lends its light, as it were, to all the means of knowledge in the empirical sphere. Even the Vedas or scriptural texts (as the means to teach the Ultimate Reality of Brahman) cannot make Brahman known. Even so, if I point out with my finger that lamp which is there at a distance, all others can see in that direction and that can enable them to know that object, is it not? Similarly, the Vedas or the Hindu scriptural texts also can make us turn our attention towards that Paramaatman or the Supreme Self (who is the very core of our Being). Then that Atman or Self, who is self-established (without desiderating any other means of Knowledge) and eternally or ever of the nature of the light of knowledge or Consciousness, will by Himself reveal His essential nature of Pure Being or Pure Consciousness to us. To our body, senses, mind etc. wherefrom have their abilities to function come? To the trees and herbs which grow on earth and have sprouts, leaves,

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flowers and fruits endowed with form, sap and smell — all these phenomena wherefrom are they created? What is the root cause for the elation or pleasure that we get on seeing those objects? If we contemplate upon such matters, we come to know or cognize Paramaatman's or the Supreme Lord's existence (through these adjuncts, so to speak), as also to perform meditation on His Glory and extraordinary powers of creation.

Paramaatman is a veritable fountainhead or spring of happiness or bliss. People who are emotionally devoted to Him — even if they listen to His name their mind gets enthralled by it and merges in it, so to say. For that reason alone, He is named "Raama". If one filled with emotion and feeling, chants with an alert mind the name — "Raama, Raama. Raama" — unalloyed happiness springs up in his bosom. If one observes after getting purified in the heart, by chanting Paramaatman's name the feeling that — 'His name also is He Himself' — will be born.

"Snaatam Tena Samasthateerthasalile Sarvaapi
Dattaavaniryajnaanaam Cha Sahasramishthamakhilaa
Devaascha Sampoojitaaha | Samsaaraachha Samuddhri-
taaha Swapitarasthrailoakyapoojyoapi Asau Yasya
Brahmavichaarane Kshanamapi Sthairyam Manaha
Praapnuyaat ||"

"In the case of one whose mind has established itself in the contemplation on Brahman, even if it be for a moment, it amounts to his having bathed in all the sacred waters or rivers; his having gifted away as

charity the entire earth itself; his having performed thousands of Yajnas or religious sacrifices; his having invoked or worshipped all the deities; his having liberated from this bondage of Samsara or rebirths all his ancestors; he is worshipped in all three Loakas or regions" — this is said by knowledgeable people. Then in the case of one who has merged his mind in Paramaatman alone through contemplation — can it be merely said that he is just a person with a good deal of merit? In fact, he is of the very essential nature of Brahman or the Supreme Self Himself !

24. To Experience The Bliss Or Happiness Of Brahman Or The Supreme Self Everyone Has Equal Right :

In the centre of this fort called the body, 'Hridaya' or the heart, which is 'Brahma Veshma' or the palace of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self or Lord, exists. Our senses are performing their respective functions — this is not for their own sake; the gifts or offerings brought by those senses are being delivered by the mind and the intellect to Paramaatman alone. The scriptures or Upanishads are proclaiming that Paramaatman created the world, entered it Himself, and shining in every Jeeva or soul in the cognitive form (Pratyaya) of 'I', 'I', He is illumining everything being their substratum. Those who cognize within themselves that this Blissful indweller (Purusha) is their own Atman or Self (i.e. one's own essential nature of Pure Consciousness) will find every quarter is blissful, nay the whole world is seen as an ocean of Bliss Supreme. History tells us that

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foreigners have looted away a great deal of wealth from our country. But no one can ever rob away this our Atman who is of the essential nature of Bliss or happiness *par excellence*. This birthright, gifted to us by Nature, of experiencing this 'Brahmaananda' or the Bliss of Pure Consciousness or our real core of Being, is equal and the same to every one of us. This Atman or our Self (of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness) is not existing in us human beings alone, but also in all creatures in equal proportions alone; all the creatures who are capable of knowing or cognizing His essential nature of Bliss get or attain this equally without distinction. Because this birthright of gaining and experiencing this Bliss is equal to everyone of us creatures alone, the scriptures or Upanishads say — 'All of you are children of the Immortal or Deathless God or Creator, not mortals'. The Maharshis or sages of the Vedic Age have not only realized or cognized this eternal Bliss but also have given us the benign assurance that there is every scope for us to attain and experience this Bliss. Their statement is: "One who cognizes that the eternal Brahman or the Supreme Self who is of the essential nature of Reality (Satyam), Pure Knowledge or Consciousness (Jnaana), Pure Bliss or Happiness (Ananda) exists in the cave of our heart alone, he will enjoy all the desires or pleasures simultaneously or all at once." There are also some people who doubt in the manner — "Does Paramaatman or the Supreme Self exist in our heart (Hridaya)? Many people have died after their heart stopped functioning, is it not so?" But these people do not know what this 'Hridaya' or heart means. They are

people who have seen from outside, externally or extrovertedly, the fleshy heart alone, but not those who have seen Intuitively from within the heart wherein dwells Paramaatman or the Supreme Lord or Self of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness.

We have already stated that in this empirical world one can observe one object or thing alone from two different viewpoints. Between these, observing by keeping the 'I' notion predominantly is beset with, or is the cause for, misery or unhappiness. But to go beyond this 'I' notion and Intuitively take a stand in Paramaatman or our real Self of the very nature of Pure Consciousness (which is the true Witnessing Principle and our core of Being) and to observe Intuitively from there — is the second viewpoint. This viewpoint is capable of mitigating the various kinds of miseries, troubles, calamities that are noticed by us in the present-day civilization or sophisticated life-style and of transforming everything into blissful living. All of us can possibly acquire this viewpoint and live with bliss or happiness *par excellence*.

(C) Everything Is Full Of Brahman Or Pure Consciousness

25. The Gist Of What Has Been Previously Stated :

The facts that — (1) There are two viewpoints available to observe the world around us and (2) the

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different fruits or benefits which are obtained in our life following or adopting those two viewpoints — have been fully explained in the previous chapters. To observe the sphere of the empirical world by keeping the wrong central or focal point of the 'I' notion is one viewpoint. The steadfast belief or faith behind this viewpoint is that — "If I perform a particular action by my own independent effort, I can attain a particular result or fruit." With the belief that — "To the extent I put in my effort and perform an action I get the fruits or results proportionately" — we keep on increasing the speed as well as the degree or magnitude of our action. But because this same belief is to be found in every person around us there arises mutually a competitive spirit among us. Then in the minds of all workers, liking (Raaga) and hatred (Dwesa) are born; assuming or taking all those who are helpful to us to be our friends and all those who are a hindrance to our interests to be enemies, it becomes inevitable for us to draw our friends near and to push away the enemies using various penal and forceful methods and shrewdly getting our job done, cheating them in the process.

These empirical, workaday dealings depict to us the non-eternal and unhappy world alone. It is our innate belief that the worldly laws function in a certain orderly fashion. Although this is true, because we formulate the ordinary or normal conventions or regulations as they flash to us with the help of examples or instances known to us alone — despite the fact that our effort or endeavour seems to be

successful up to a little extent — finally all of them culminate in misery or unhappiness alone. The fruits or benefits that accrue to us are non-eternal and sometimes contrary to our expectations or anticipations. For that reason alone, everyone has called this nature as "Aghatita Ghatanaa-pateeyasi Maayaa", meaning "All this is Maayaa or an illusion which befuddles one into believing to be true, though it is not an event or phenomenon which has occurred or happened, i.e. it is not true or real." Hitler got famous as one having conquered three-fourths of Europe; finally, when he attacked the Russians, Maayaa or this power of illusion defeated or shattered all his designs or efforts. The efforts of many people in this world finally culminate in mere fatigue or exhaustion alone. This fact of life is customarily explained through an imaginary story called "Kyaatayyana Bitti" or "The vain errand of one by name Kyaatayya". One weaver, who felt that he is not getting his wages proportionate to the efforts that he put in, decided to earn more by going to other places. Whenever he went to answer the call of nature in the evenings, from the other side of the compound someone seemed to ask him repeatedly — "Will you go on a vain errand of Kyaatayya?" One day, out of curiosity he answered — "All right, I will". Immediately, a pot full of coins came rolling in front of him with a noise. With astonishment he saw the pot to be full of coins, and fearing that someone may rob him of the pot of money, he carried the pot on his shoulders and rushed out of his home town totally unmindful of ups or downs, ditches or pits, forests or

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woods and finally he reached another town having covered a long distance. No one gave him any place to take shelter. Eventually, in someone's cattleshed he got a little space to settle down. While he went to sleep as a result of the exhaustion from walking, the owner of the house, his host, came where he slept and decamped with the pot of money. In the morning, despite his cries and appeals he did not get back his pot of money. Finally, the weaver asked his host — "Let it be, what is your name?" Immediately on knowing that his name was 'Kyaatayya', the weaver said to himself — "Well, whatever was destined for me, or was in store for me, that alone has happened!" — and with both his hands free he returned to his home town. Thus the story goes. Our workaday dealings in this world too are, to a large extent, like this Kyaatayya's vain errand alone. For, many among us after having slogged a great deal have a sigh of relief in the manner — "Despite my such great, assiduous efforts, I did not achieve suitable results or fruits proportionate to my work or effort!" Even so, our greed, without fail, torments us. Sometimes, some one else gets the fruits or benefits of our efforts. The greed of the type — "Now the fruit will accrue; later on, the fruit will accrue; if I put in a little more effort, surely I will get the benefit!" — keeps on prompting us to pursue our efforts. Among the Greeks there is a mythological story. A person named Tantalus had been made to stand in a 'sea' of grape juice. All around him there was plenty of grape juice alone. But whenever he attempted to drink it, the level of the grape juice used to drain away or recede away from him

Similarly, above his head there were plenty of grape bunches hanging from above within the reach of his stretched hands, but whenever he stretched his hands and attempted to snatch the grapes it seemed to him as if the grapes were a couple of feet beyond reach. It can be said that, that precarious or perilous predicament of Tantalus alone is our lot in our empirical workaday existence. Here in our life everywhere only objects which induce us to be greedy are surrounding us; but if we make an attempt to obtain them, they recede farther and farther away from us, and further they do not stop tempting or luring us!

Whatever has been described so far is about the calamities and troubles that we suffer from our empirical dealings we undertake by seeing or examining the world around us from the central or focal point of the 'I' notion. The viewpoint or outlook on life, which keeps the 'I' notion predominantly, projects or manifests before us the world that is non-eternal and full of unhappiness alone. But there is another viewpoint. That is a viewpoint which keeps or takes as its central or focal point that Ultimate Reality which is well-known by names like Brahman (all-consuming and all-comprehensive), Paramaatman (the Supreme Self or Atman), Bhagavanta (the Lord of the universe), Ishwara (the Lord of creation) etc. It is because we have ignored this viewpoint alone that we meet with misery or grief. "Anityamasukham Loakamimam Praapya Bhajaswa Maam" — Bhagvaan Sri Krishna, taking Arjuna as an example or proto-type of an aspirant, has instructed

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or taught all of us in the manner — "You have attained this non-eternal and misery-ridden world; if you wish to attain (eternal) happiness or bliss you worship Me!" The power or energy that enables the five elements of earth (Prithvi), water (Ap), fire (Tejas), air (Vaayu) and space in the form of sky (Aakaasha) to perform their various and astounding functions has come down from that Paramaatman or Supreme Lord alone. On the earth various kinds of plants and trees are born because of Paramaatman's glory or greatness; the power of the seed sprouting and that sprout blooming and growing into a plant to yield flowers and fruits imbued with various kinds of forms, sap or juice and smell or fragrance — all these exist because of His glory alone. The phenomenon of various types of creatures, birds and animals as also insects and bacteria getting born on this earth and performing their variegated functions and transactions is also owing to His glory alone. Further, we the human beings getting born and growing and then undertaking various kinds of day-to-day transactions and our begetting various fruits for our deeds is also owing to His grace alone. Similarly, the astounding functions and effects of Ap or the element water and Tejas or the element of fire in this world are taking place owing to His benign grace alone. All those laws and regulations which the scientists call — "Laws of Nature" — are, in truth, manifesting that Supreme Lord's glory or greatness alone. The essence or core of Being of this entire universe itself is this Ultimate Reality of the Supreme Self (Parmaartha Tattwa). If we train our attention towards this Ultimate Reality and keep-

ing that in mind if we always perform our day-to-day duties and functions, our life will become easy and smooth; nay, it culminates in eternal happiness alone.

26. Two Viewpoints :

Paramaatman (the Supreme Self), Bhagavanta (one who is to be revered by all, i.e. God the Almighty), Parameshwara (the Supreme Lord of the universe and all creation) — all these are not mere words. There is no necessity at all to believe with mere devotion that this Ultimate Reality of the Supreme Self exists. For, "Yatsaakshaat Aparoakshaat Brahma Ya Atmaa Sarvaantaraha" — as this scriptural statement says — "Because this Ultimate Reality is our Atman or Self alone who is the most innate or innermost essence of Being subtler than or beyond the purview of our body, senses, mind, intellect etc, He can be cognized or Intuited as our most intimate, direct experience". The viewpoint which we are just now experiencing is the Paraagdrishti or extroverted viewpoint, that means, the viewpoint which is the means of, or is instrumental in, anticipating and examining the external objects by taking the 'I' notion as the central or focal point. By this viewpoint the Ultimate Reality of the Supreme Self or Atman cannot be known. For, that Reality, being the essence of this entire universe, is also our very core of Being or existence and hence exists very innately. We should Intuitively cognize or reckon as to — "Who is that 'I' who is witnessing from within or as the innate core of our Being, after thrusting or casting away all that we are perceiving objectively or externally?",

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That which we see or objectify is called 'Vishaya' or the object; the Witnessing Principle which is the essential nature of our Being or Pure Consciousness and is seeing or perceiving the Vishaya or all objective phenomena is called 'Vishayi' or the Witnessing subject. The senses and the mind etc. which we are misconceiving or falsely considering as the witness or subjects (i.e. objectifying principles within us) — even these are being objectified or perceived within ourselves by the all-witnessing Principle which is the real Atman or Self alone. Whatever object or thing it may be — even to say that 'it exists' or 'it does not exist', we can only do so with the help of, or on the strength of, this Witnessing Principle of our Atman, of the essential nature of Pure Being - Consciousness alone. As Shri Sureshwaraachaarya, the direct disciple of Shri Shankaraachaarya, has said: "Yatsiddhaavidamaha Siddhiryadasiddhou Na Kinchana" — Whatever we address externally as 'this' — all that is established or gets its certitude of existence from the Pure Existence or Reality (Siddhi or Sat Swaropa) of that Paramaatman or Supreme Atman or Self; without Its support nothing whatsoever can ever be established to exist." If we take a stand or identification intuitively in It, i.e. our Self of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness, and witness, then it will be very clear or evident that — (1) For everything or all phenomena in this world, or for our life in its entirety, that Atman alone is the substratum; (2) With Its light alone everything is being manifested or is appearing; (3) The functioning of all these phenomena is owing to the grace and glory of that Atman or

Witnessing Pure Consciousness alone. This viewpoint is called 'Pratyagdrishti' or the introverted viewpoint.

27. Bhagavaan Or The Supreme Lord Alone Is The Fountainhead Of All Aspects Of Knowledge :

Without Intuitively cognizing by this 'Pratyagdrishti' or introverted viewpoint the knowledge of this Ultimate Reality of Atman or Pure Consciousness cannot be attained. Howevermuch we may utilize the external senses and try very hard, we cannot cognize or Intuit Its existence. But if by stages we look unto ourselves with utmost insight and alertness, it becomes evident and very clear that for all the functions or actions as well as all knowledges in this entire universe the substratum or support itself is that Ultimate Reality of Atman or Pure Consciousness alone.

Once upon a time Emperor Janaka commenced performing a great sacrifice. In that ritualistic sacrifice in a place called 'Sadas' all the erudite scholars had gathered together. Many specialists who were adepts in each branch of the scriptural texts and sciences were seated therein. They carried out deliberations and discussions not only on ritualistic matters but also on the topic of the Ultimate Reality. In this present context of the sacrifice, Janaka who was a connoisseur of Adhyaatma Vidya or the Knowledge of the Self, realizing that there were many great scholars from Kuru and Paanchaala regions present in that gathering, had kept one thousand cows with

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each of their horns decorated with ornaments of ten measures of gold lined up. He got it proclaimed to the scholars in the gathering in the manner — “The best among Brahmins, i.e. knowers of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman, one who is a ‘Brahmanishtha’ or the Knower of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman or Atman among you may drive away those cows”. How can anyone claim himself in the manner — “I am alone the best among the realized souls or knowers of Brahman” — amidst a gathering of thousands of scholars? All were silent. But one sage, Yajnavalkya, addressed his disciple and ordered him in the manner — “My boy, take these cows away to our monastery or Ashram!” Yajnavalkya was one who had known and mastered all the four Vedas. He was knowing the essential secrets of Karma (rituals) and Upasana (meditations), but also those of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman. That great courageous man accepted the challenge of proving that he had the best credentials as the knower of the Ultimate Reality of Brahman in that august assembly abounding with experts in Vedic sciences! Thereupon there was a great commotion in the gathering. All the scholars got excited and agitated and started questioning one by one Yajnavalkya in various ways about the subject — matter of ‘Brahman’ or the Ultimate Reality of all existence. Yajnavalkya went on giving answers to all their questions with serenity and equanimity. This anecdote is narrated in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

Among those who attempted thus to ask a question was one other scholar named Uddalaka

Aaruni. He asked: "Just as a thread runs through all the flowers of a garland that is being prepared, similarly which is that analogous entity which runs through in the form of a thread through this world, other worlds and all things that exist right from the inanimate pillar to the four-headed creator called Brahma? Who is that Antaryaami or indweller in this world, other worlds and all existent things who controls and prompts them from within? Tell us". Then Yaajnavalkya gave this answer: "Praanavaayu or the breath of Praana itself, which binds together this entire universe like a garland, is that thread; by virtue of it alone all creatures are functioning according to certain regulations and restrictions; for that reason alone, when man dies because of the absence of the grace or control of this binding thread, all his different organs and organisms get separated or loosened (i.e. disintegrated)".

By which power or force are all the planets held in position and are they stationed in their respective positions as spherical bodies? Which is that cause for all creatures to possess the ability to transact their own bodies as one unitary composite organic body without each of them disintegrating? Which is that power that enables our senses, mind and intellect to perform their respective functions and keeps all these bound together? By merely calling this as 'the Laws of Nature' it does not amount to our explaining these topics properly and satisfactorily. Should there not be a 'certain power' which is the root cause for all actions and functions? Scientists

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are propounding nowadays that the essential nature of all material existence is not mere substance or matter alone, but in the ultimate analysis all this is to be declared and determined as energy alone. But what is the reality behind that energy? It is not merely inert or insentient; it is the Supreme Lord's or Paramaatman's power alone which is the substratum or fountainhead for the movement and dynamism of everything. Just as it is said "Yataha Pravrutti-rbhootaanaam" — "That power of the Supreme Lord alone is the substratum or the root cause for all our transactions and functions"— this Entity or Reality which when viewed predominantly as a 'dynamic force' is called by Vedantins as "Samastipraanavaayu" or the macrocosmic breath of Praana or Life Force. This alone is the "Sootra" or "the binding force".

Next is the deliberation on 'Antaryaami' or the indwelling controller. Yaajnavalkya has described that this Paramaatman of the form of Antaryaami or indwelling controller exists in all the three aspects of Aadhyaatmika or corporeal world, Aadhibhoutika or the external materialistic world and Aadhidivika or the stellar region of the universe — and is ruling over or controlling all of them. He says: "Yaha Prithivyaam Tishthan Prithivyaa Antaroa Yam Prithivee Na Veda Yasya Prithivee Shareeram Yaha Prithivee-mantaroa Yamayatyesha Ta Aatmaa Antaryaam-yamrutaha" (Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad 3-7-3) — 'This Antaryaami or indwelling controller exists in Prithivee or earth; He exists within the earth. But even to the deity of this earth the essential nature of Being of

this Antaryaami or indwelling Controller is not known. This earth exists in the form of His body. He who is indwelling in the earth and is controlling it from within — that person alone is your Antaryaami or indwelling Controller. He is Amritaha or the Immortal Reality !'

It is necessary to explain a little more the purport of this sentence. What is the meaning of the sentence — "Antaryaami exists or resides within the earth or Prithivi"? Those who know or have studied Geology have examined the various strata of earth. The upper part of the earth alone is suitable for us to live; we can plough the earth and sow the seed in it and grow the plants. If we go still deeper into the earth to reach various strata of earth we will come across, deep inside, tremendous heat existing and also streams of water flowing. In this manner the physical scientists explain it to us. But here when we say — "He who exists or resides within the earth" — it does not carry the same meaning or it is not said in the same sense. Although the perceptual viewpoint of the senses, which observes the earth from above or externally and then examines as to which things are perceived by excavating or physically going deeper into the various strata of earth, is enough for our routine day-to-day transactions, for the purpose of determining the Ultimate Reality of this universe this viewpoint is of no avail at all. We should pointedly observe the manner in which Yaajnavalkya has stated, viz. "This Antaryaami or the indwelling Controller who exists or resides within this earth is your Atman or Self". How can

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our Atman or Self exist within the earth? If our Atman or Self is that entity or reality which goes by the name of our 'I' notion, then it is capable of being or existing within our body alone. It has no entry anywhere else. Here Yajñavalkya has not scrutinized this 'I' notion which is the limited or divided Atman or the soul (Jeevaatman) who has identified himself with the conglomeration of the body and its inner and outer instruments of action like the mind and the limbs, respectively. There is one Entity or Reality of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self who is more innate and intimate than this 'I' notion or ego; It sees or witnesses this 'I' notion's appearance (or birth) and disappearance (or death) and keeps it even in its control. This has to be intuitively cognized through the Pratyagdrishti or introverted viewpoint alone. Although this Atman or Self can be seen by everyone by receding unto himself, as it were, and is intuitively known or cognized, it cannot be conveyed or communicated to others with the help of words alone. Therefore, Yajñavalkya has stated that even the deity who is the proud lord of this earth does not know that there is a Paramaatman or Supreme Self who exists within him (that deity) and has kept him in His control.

Now let us take up for consideration the statement that to this Paramaatman or Supreme Self, who exists or resides within us, the earth is the body. To the 'I' notion which exists within us this stipulated or known physical body alone is its body. This 'I' does not know to function anywhere else other than in this body. But though our inner Atman, who is the Witness even to this 'I' notion or ego, is to be

cognized within our body, He or Atman is not tied down to, or restricted by, this body at all. To Him the entire universe itself is the witnessed object. Just as our body seems to be in our control, earth, water, fire etc. — all these elemental forces are within His (i.e. Paramaatman's) control. Therefore, Ap or water, Tejas or fire, Vaayu or air, Aakaasha or space, Antariksha or the stellar region, Aaditya or the Sun God, Chandra or the Moon God, the directions, all creatures, the life forces of Praana, Apaana, Vyaana, Samaana and Udaana etc. functioning within every creature, the senses like eyes, ears, etc., the mind and the intellect — all these are things which are witnessed by Him and are within His control alone. Hence, any one of these can be said to be His (Paramaatman's) body. In this sense or with this meaning He, the Supreme Self or Lord, is the Antaryaamin or the indwelling Controller for all these objects. For all these, Atman or the Self alone is the essence or core of Being. He alone is the Witnessing Principle for all things. He can never be witnessed or perceived through any means or instruments of knowledge whatsoever. Because He is self-established and of the essence of the Light of Pure Consciousness, He is devoid of destruction or death. In fact, in the immediate presence or vicinity of that Light alone and by His grace alone I, you, all people are carrying on their respective actions or transactions, are obtaining the fruits of those respective actions and are enjoying the fruits or results. This alone is the essential nature of Being of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self or Lord who is the Atman or innermost Self of all of us I

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28. The Transactions Of Those Who Are Established In Or Endowed With The Introverted Viewpoint :

It has been indicated that if we recede unto ourselves with an introverted viewpoint we can intuitively cognize the self-established essential nature or core of Being of our Atman or Self, and further that the viewpoint of those, who get established or who take a firm stand in that Atman or Self and witness the world, is in itself of a different type. When witnessed from this Pratyagdrishti or introverted viewpoint we will know intuitively that all of us have one and the same Atman or Self alone. Because this Atman or Self is of the essential nature of immutable, eternal or perpetual Bliss or happiness, there is no need for us to acquire any mutable object whatsoever in the external world and obtain whatever happiness we desire to have from outside. In this viewpoint, as everyone is our Atman or Self alone there is no possibility of entertaining any feeling of enmity, amity or indifference among ourselves; there is no possibility of any one among us getting suspicion about others or any one getting afraid of others. But among the people with extroverted viewpoint there is a feeling lurking about the limited or restricted quantities of the objects which are the sources of happiness; therefore, a competitive spirit is engendered among them. But howevermuch the ants which have traced the hillock of sugar take away the sugar bits in their small mouths, can there be a time when the sugar gets exhausted? The entity or Reality of the Supreme Self or Paramaatman who makes all of us happy or blissful is to be found

at the core of Being in each one of us alone. That Reality is a veritable inexhaustible fountainhead or spring of the ambrosia of Bliss. Then why should we be hasty? Why should we look at one another with malice and rancour? Why should there be any quarrel among one another with regard to that source of Bliss?

Really speaking, all of us are born from Brahman or the Ultimate Reality which is of the essential nature of happiness or Bliss alone; we thrive by existing in that Brahman alone; finally also, we are destined to get merged into that Brahman alone. The welfare and security of all of us is also being looked after by that Brahman alone. We should give up the limited or restricted outlook of seeing from the Paraagdrishti or extroverted viewpoint. In all of us without exception that Paramaatman or Supreme Self alone, of the essential nature of happiness or Bliss, exists; not only that, in each one of us He exists in full or consummately alone. Neither in the rich people He exists in greater proportions, nor does He exist in smaller proportions in the poor people. In the Vedas there is a wise saying called Brahma Sookta. In that it is said: "Brahma Daashaa Brahma Daasaa Brahmaiveme Kitavaaha" — The meaning of this sentence is: "The fishermen, servile people by birth, the low-class people who indulge in gambling and other vices — all these are, in truth, Brahman alone. When it is said that — "Atman or the innate nature of people who do the most repulsive type of work; the Atman or innate nature of people who are totally at the mercy of others; and the

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Atman or innate nature of wicked or roguish people who thrive on cheating others alone — the essential nature of Being of all these people is that Paramaatman or Supreme Self Himself'' — where is the need of saying anything about the Atman or essential nature of deities (Devatas), sages (Rishis) etc.? Cognizing or realizing that in women, men, young boys and young girls, in old people and children — in all of them that Ananda Brahman or Brahman of the essential or innate nature of happiness or Bliss alone exists equally only, let us exhibit this feeling or sentiment in our day-to-day transactions, being equipped with the strength of that Intuitive experience; steeped in this Paraabhakti or Supreme Devotion of seeing Paramaatman alone everywhere, let us make everyone happy I

In the world, to the extent the number of Brahma-Jnaanis or realized souls who have established themselves in the Intuitive experience of the Supreme Self increases there will be all-round happiness and prosperity. For, they ever keep in their heart the remembrance of Paramaatman alone with singular devotion, and seeing Him alone everywhere they [are immersed in His invocation alone. They do not entertain any selfishness at all. They are the people who have sustained and dedicated their very existence for the sake of Paramaatman alone; because they wish the welfare and prosperity alone of everyone they teach and preach all people very enthusiastically and without any trace of deceit the Ultimate Reality of Paramaatman alone. Where the Jnaanis reside, there necessarily peace will be established. For, they

themselves are the epitomes of peace. "Tesdaam Shaantirnetareshaam" — Only to those people peace or bliss accrues and not to any one else. Some years ago in America a political expert tried very hard to popularize the doctrine: "In every country there should be a 'peace secretary' ". But as long as there existed a 'war secretary' what could that poor 'peace secretary' do? In a blacksmith's shop can a washerman keep the clothes clean and guarded? Never. Peace is not obtained by politics. It is the exclusive birthright of enlightened people who are established in Brahman, the Ultimate Reality of the Self. Wherever these people may be, there the moonlight of peace pervades! When this world is viewed from the Intuitive standpoint of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self, then alone man begets happiness or Bliss, otherwise, misery awaits him without fail. Those who have known or cognized this essential nature of Brahman or the Ultimate Reality of the Self within them, they are real 'Brahmins'. Brahmins perform the ritual of Vaishwadeva; at that time, there is a custom and scriptural injunction that without enquiring about the caste and family background of any visitor who may come to his place, the Brahmin should serve him well by offering him food, shelter etc. The food that man takes has been polluted because everyone is looking at it covetously in the manner — "I want it for myself, I want it for myself". Even if anybody eats the food secretly without being seen by anyone, this defect of covetousness cannot be avoided. For, man's evil propensities are dependent upon his food alone; therefore, it is proper for him to distribute the food

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equally among many people and then only partake of that food. Thus the religious texts are teaching. Thus the food that is suitable to be equally distributed among everyone is this "Brahma-Jnaana" or the Knowledge of the essential nature of Brahman or the Supreme Self alone. By the grace of Paramaatman or the Supreme Self our senses as well as our mind have to be cleansed or purified; we have to have a good intellect, we have to obtain or cultivate the Pratyagdrishti or the introverted viewpoint and we have to attain "Brahma-Jnaana" or the Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of the Supreme Self. Let us pray that — "The food that I eat, the water that I drink, the air that I breathe, the thoughts that I think or entertain — all these are the grace of that Supreme Lord alone" — let such a cognition get rooted in us! Let us pray that the viewpoint or insight of seeing that Paramaatman or Supreme Lord alone everywhere be acquired by us!

"Eeshaavaasyamidam Sarvam" — all this (entire external world) is pervaded by the Lord. Such is the viewpoint held by the people of our country; the prime goal of 'protecting ourselves through the practice of renunciation and asceticism and remaining as Jnaana-Nishtha or people rooted or established in Pure Consciousness' belongs to the people of our country. Let us pride upon these and try to live up to those ideals. The whole world goes on as per the dispensations of Paramaatman alone; whatever natural laws or regulations are seen in this world — they are all the laws stipulated by that Supreme Lord or Paramaatman alone. Therefore, we should all try to

behave in accordance with His dispensations. Those of us who live in this southern region of India recite during our prayers — “Raamakshetre”. Raama was that Paramaatman or Supreme Lord who exemplified to the people at large the virtues of uttering the truth and behaving according to religious tenets; thus this region is emblematic of truth and virtuous behaviour. That culture which is brought to our mind by the words like — “Bharata Varsha”, “Bharatakhanda” — that Adhyaatmaavidya or spiritual knowledge or Self Knowledge alone is our national culture and heritage. Let us all protect this national culture and heritage and popularise it! For all of us to attain happiness and peace, we should all surrender unto Paramaatman alone. Let everyone have deep faith in the existence of the Supreme Lord or Paramaatman! The Lord has given an assurance (in the Bhagavadgeeta) that “those who invoke Me alone with singular devotion — they exist in Me alone; I also exist in them alone.” Let the belief or faith that — “Aatmanaa Vindate Veeryam, Vidyayaa Vindate Amritam” meaning, “From the Lord alone the natural and perpetual strength is acquired; from the Lord alone immortality is attained” — get rooted in us and never leave us! The strength that is acquired — by amassing wealth, by piling up military equipments and lethal weapons, by getting the support of Super Powers, or through practising witchcraft or by the power of medicinal drugs, by virtue of penance and Yogasiddhis etc. — none of these is eternal or permanent; none of these is enough or capable of protecting us from mortality or death. By means of attaining the steadfast establishment in Paramaatman

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of the essential nature of Pure Consciousness alone that strength and raw courage of facing even death are acquired. Let us utilize properly the God-given body, senses, mind and intellect and with good actions, devotion and contemplation let us worship that Supreme Lord alone! Let the spiritual knowledge of the Supreme Self alone be our very breath! If That is there, we exist; otherwise not. Let everyone have faith in this Atmavidya or Self-Knowledge, be virtuous, be the devotee of the Lord; let us enhance our mutual affection and live ever happily! Let us pray to that Supreme Lord Naaraayana that His grace should grant these to every human being in this universe!

OM TAT SAT
