



TALKS ON
VIVEKACHŪDĀMANI

by
SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

TALKS ON
VIVEKACHUDAMANI
OF SHANKARA

TEXT WITH WORD-FOR-WORD MEANING
TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

Swami Chinmayananda

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

DISCOURSES ON GEETA
COMMENTARIES ON UPANISHADS

ISA

KENA

KATHA

PRASNA

MUNDAKA

MANDUKYA

AITEREYA

TAITTEREYA

KAIVALYA

MEDITATION & LIFE, ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of any science cannot be undertaken without a preliminary understanding of the exact definitions of the terms used therein. The fundamental beliefs, the accepted theories of the past, the observed modes of behaviour recorded in the present are all the necessary data with which a modern scientist freely launches forth his new adventures into the realm of science. Similarly, in philosophy also, a fundamental knowledge of the terms used and the correct connotations in which various scientific words have been employed, is an unavoidable preliminary which a student must possess before he can start the study of Vedanta.

In this respect, Vedanta can be considered as the "Science of Life". Sankara, the great interpreter of Vedanta, not only gave us the great commentaries of the *Upaniṣads*, *Brahma Sūtrās* and *Gītā* in establishing his philosophical theory that the Ultimate Truth is 'one-without-a-second', but he also wrote many primary text-books which could introduce the seekers into the joys of Vedanta. One of the greatest text-books that has been written by him as an introduction to Vedanta is the *Viveka Chudāmani*.

As the title indicates (*Viveka*=discrimination; *Chuda*=crown; *Mani*=jewel), the very theme of the book is one which helps us to develop in ourselves the discriminative understanding of the real from the unreal, the true from the false. *Viveka Chudāmani* means "The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination".

A careful study of these stanzas with the full freedom to enquire shall give any student a correct understanding of the entire theory of Vedanta and he can, even without a very serious study of the *Scriptures*, start his daily practices with much benefit to himself.

Hundreds are the seekers, who without understanding all these fundamentals, are haphazardly struggling in a path, which, though false, they believe to be spiritual. Naturally they become only to suffer the agonies of a gruesome disappointment even after years of painstaking practices. An exhaustive study of this text-book avoids all pitfalls on the way to progress.

It is our intention to bring forth in every stanza not only its obvious meaning but also its suggestive imports which give a wealth of information and helpful suggestions for the seeker to ensure a steady progress. Apart from the Sanskrit stanza, we give the Roman transliteration, word-for-word meaning, a free translation and a running commentary wherein we shall not promise that we will be confining ourselves to the direct bearings upon the words of the stanzas. These stanzas have a great suggestive wealth which, when made available, can be made use of even in our ordinary market place activities with profit.

VIVEKA CHÜDĀMANI

सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तगोचरं तमगोचरम् ।

गोविन्दं परमानन्दं सद्गुरुं प्रणतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १ ॥

*sarva vedānta siddhānta gocaram tamagocaram
govindam paramānandam sadgurum praṇatosmyaham I.*

सर्व वेदान्तसिद्धान्त गोचरम् - Perceivable through the (suggestive import of) the conclusions of Vedānta, तम् - that, अगोचरम् - who is beyond sense-perception, गोविन्दम् - to Sri Govinda, परमानन्दम् - who is of nature Bliss Absolute, सद्गुरुम् - the Spiritual Master, प्रणतः - bowing respectfully, अस्मि - am, अहम् - I.

My 'salutations' to Sree Sad-Guru Govind who is of nature Bliss Absolute, who can be understood only through the suggestive import of the essence in all Vedānta—and who is ordinarily beyond the reach of the known instruments of perception.

It is very well-known that the great Sankaracharya was a disciple of Sree Govindapada—who in his turn is traditionally believed to have been the disciple of Sree Gaudapada of the *Kārikā* -fame. Here we have a stanza in which Sankara, the writer, does his physical prostration to Achārāya Govindapada, the worldly Guru of the master.

The stanza can be interpreted easily in two possible ways.. Considering this to be a mortal's physical act of prostrations unto a finite Guru, it has already been interpreted. The same stanza can be understood to mean a "spiritual salutation" of a man of wisdom to the Supreme Truth. When interpreted in this sense, the word 'aham', meaning I, should indicate the limited subjective concept which is always associated without body, mind and intellect. This ego-centre in the seeker comes to seek its identity with the Real and discovers for itself that the Supreme Govind—which is the essence in all Vedāntic literature, which is not perceivable

through the sense organs, through the human emotions, or through the reasoning intellect—can be experienced as the ego's own Real Nature when the contemplation takes place along the lines of discussion indicated in the *Scriptures*.

जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता
तस्माद्वैदिकधर्ममार्गपरता विद्वत्त्वमस्मात्परम् ।
आत्मानात्मविवेचनं स्वनुभवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थिति-
मुक्तिर्नो शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते ॥ २ ॥

*jantūnām nara-janma durlabhamatah puṁstvam tato vipratā
tasmādvaidikadharmamārgaparatā vidvatvamasmatparam
ātmanātmavivecanam svanubhavo brahmātmanā samsthiṭih
muktirno śatajanmakotisukṛtaiḥ puṇyairvinā labhyate 2.*

जन्तूनाम् - Among the living creatures; नर जन्म - human-birth, दुर्लभम् - rare, अतः - further, पुंस्त्वम् - manhood, ततः - thereupon, विप्रता - Brahmin-hood (sātwic life), तस्मात् - thereafter, वैदिकधर्ममार्ग परता - steadfastness on the path of spirituality enjoined by the Vedas, विद्वत्त्वम् - correct knowledge of the scriptures, अस्मात् - from this, परम् - higher; आत्मानात्म विवेचनम् - discrimination of the Real and the Unreal, स्वनुभवः - personal experience, ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिः - established in the identity with Brahman, मुक्तिः - liberation, न - not, शतजन्मकोटिसुकृतैः पुण्यैः - merits of a hundred crores of lives lived intelligently, विना - without, लभ्यते - gained.

Of all the living creatures, to be born as a human being is indeed rare; much more difficult it is to get the full manhood; rarer than this is the 'satwic' attitude to life. Even having gained all these rare chances, to have a steadfastness on the path of spiritual activity, as explained in the Vedic literature, is yet rarer; much more so, to have a correct knowledge of the deep significances of the Scriptures. Discrimination between the real and the unreal, a personal experience of the Spiritual Glory, and ultimately to get fully established in the living consciousness that "the Self in me is the Self in all"—these come only later on which ultimately ends in one's liberation. This kind of a perfect liberation cannot be had without earned merits of a hundred crores of lives lived intelligently.

In the very opening stanza of the text-book, Sankara is trying to emphasize upon the difficulty of awakening ourselves to the real communion of the Divine in us. In fact, there are numberless specimens of living creatures in the universe. Truth is the substratum of all and, therefore, the real nature of all living creatures—even of the insentient and the inert.

In stone life, too, Truth exhibits Itself as 'existence'; but, unfortunately, the stone is not aware of its own thoughts in the outer world of changing circumstances. A little more evolved is the plant life where it seems to be more and more aware of the world outside and therefore we consider the plant, compared with the stone, as a higher evolved specimen belonging to the world of beings. When we come to the animal life, we find that different species exhibit different degrees of awareness not only of their external worlds of 'stimuli' but of the world of their inner emotions and ideas.

Of them all, man seems to be the only living creature in the universe who is independent for its rational conquests and he is the sacred being that can through intellectual conviction come to gain a firm control over the mad emotions of the mind, and apply this regulated and controlled energy for purposes of transcending the very psychological existence and thereby peep over into the Boundless Realms of bliss and beauty, love and perfection. It is in this sense that the Hindu Rishis considered man as the supreme being; while the European idea is that man is great since man alone can perhaps write and declare that he is great! If one were to follow the European argument, one should feel that the monkey-world must be taking it as a great insult to them, when they overhear the modern man declaring that he is a descendant of the ape!

Here Sankara wanted to emphasize that this text book is meant only for the human beings since the *Viveka Chudāmani* will be explaining and expounding a theory of spiritual perfection which can be understood, practised, pursued and perfected only by man of a certain mental calibre and moral character. Such perfect ones, who are ripe for

a sudden and immediate spiritual self-development, are always rare in the world at any given period of its history. Thus the Acharya says that to get a human birth is rare; having got the human birth, to have the masculine manhood is still rarer.

Here a lot of misunderstanding has been entertained, and some even glorify their misunderstanding on the score of a Vedic sanction. Thus, Pundits of hasty study interpret this idea as a direct condemnation of women-folk. According to this thoughtless reading, women are not considered fit for Vedantic contemplation or Self-realisation. How such fantastic ideas gained currency in the country of the great Rishis is a mystery which cannot be easily solved. More than half of our scriptural declarations have been either given out by the divine mothers or were addressed to them directly by the great Rishis.

Then why this special preference shown to the masculine? At this juncture, we must bring all our discriminative capacity to understand that when these qualifications were given out, they had been given with no reference to the body. With the body no Vedantic '*sadhana*' can be undertaken. The main practices in Vedanta are 'reflection' and 'meditation' which are to be undertaken with a healthy mind and a keen intellect. Therefore, it means that the feminine qualities of mind and intellect are to be eschewed. A masculine inner personality fed with courage, discrimination, detachment, equilibrium, peace and cheer, is the fittest instrument for a quick march to the Goal indicated by Vedanta.

When applications are invited by any Government, say, for the police force as well as for engineers, the qualifications required in each category will be different from the other. An applicant for the police training will be rejected if his girth is less than the prescribed minimum; but an Engineer, if fully qualified and experienced, will be invited in even if he looks unhealthy, lean and pale ! For, in the former category what is wanted is a physical service, while in the latter, the candidate is expected to fulfil a subtler demand for the required intellectual quality. An expansive chest and a pair

of stony biceps are not needed in designing a bridge or in planning a power project for the nation; while not much intelligence or calculation is needed in making a successful *lathi* charge.

What we mean is that qualifications are declared according to the functions required of the applicant. A seeker in Vedanta is expected to do daring intellectual flights to the Unknown, through a process of deep study, vigorous reflections and tireless meditations. For such a work, when it is said that he must be, according to the *Sastra*, a "man-man", it must necessarily mean a special quality of his head and heart.

Woman is a symbol of softness, attachment, sentiments and anxieties—she is essentially a mother. As such wherever these qualities predominate there we have a "woman". In this sense, there are many "women" among the bearded-folk; and if firmness of determination, detachment, intellectual hardiness and steadiness of composure are the signs of a better evolution, these masculine tendencies of the head and heart are seen amply in many of our mothers. Therefore, the stanza under discussion is not a sanction to refuse one the chance to study the scriptures and seek through Vedanta one's self-development, simply because one happens to have a feminine form.

Vipratā :—This again is another term upon which the orthodoxy had built up an absurd interpretation that Vedantic Self-realisation is available only for those who are by sheer accident of birth worthy or unworthy sons-of-a-Brahmin. Here again a misunderstanding has been glorified into the status of wisdom and the amount of devastation it has brought to Hinduism looks as though almost irreparable now. As before we must consider this qualification also as indicating a special texture of the head and the heart.

'*Santosh*' (contentment), '*Samādhān*' (spirit of self-surrender) and '*Śānti*' (peace arising from right knowledge) are the special qualities (sattwic temperaments) of a well-evolved man. Any generation when observed closely reveals

itself to fall into three distinct categories: the animal-man; the man-man and the God-man. An individual ever a victim of his own gross instincts and a hopeless slave to his own emotions and impulses is classified as an animal-man. When he has disciplined himself to have the above-mentioned qualities he is considered as a full-grown man and we term him as the man-man. Such a *Vipra*—meaning a man-man—has the necessary *Vipratā* to strive rightly and grow steadily to the last stage in his evolution—the supermanhood or Godhood—when he becomes a God-man.

Vaidika Dharma Mārga-Paratā :—When one gets a human form, the serener qualities of the heart, and the ‘*Sātwic*’ attitude of the intellect, he is indeed blessed with all the preliminaries. But all these can run into waste if not properly harnessed and intelligently applied. So Sankara declares that even after gaining all the above qualifications, rarer still are those who will find the energy to apply himself faithfully to the methods of integration as suggested in the Vedic literature.

Selfless Karma—rituals and practices of devotion, *Japa*, *Puja*, etc.,—alone can purify the inner personality and bring more and more integration to it. Concentration increases through desireless-actions, and a personality that has a greater share of concentration (*Ekagratha*) is termed as a finer *Antahkarana*. To prepare a steady concentration must be the initial attempt of all seekers especially in the Path of Knowledge.

Vidvatvam :—When such a fully grown ‘man-man’ having developed a high concentration becomes fit for a profitable study of the *Scriptures*, without a true knowledge of the “Why” and the “Whereof” of the techniques, he in his intelligence cannot for long keep his enthusiasm in *Sādhana*. The literature that shows the Goal, declares the path and gives the rational arguments for them both, is the Upanishads. Therefore the study of the *Scripture* is indicated here.

When, as above-described, a man-man having developed his concentration powers through selfless actions, studies the

Scriptures properly, he gains in his discrimination between the spirit and matter, the real and the unreal; soon he comes to realise that the Self in him is the essential Self in all; and ere long he gets established in his experience of God-hood.

Sankara, in enumerating these stages of self-development, gives us in a nut-shell the unwritten chapters in Darwin's half-declared Theory of Evolution. Here we have all the various stages through which man consciously, through right-living and self-progress, climbs to the lap of the Lord, there to merge with Him and become the Siva. This is called *Mukti* or full and final liberation of a mortal from all his limitations.

The last line is not a cry of a pessimistic despair; it is the Call of Hope, urging man to wake up and act, to grow and achieve the highest gain. No reader of this stanza should consider himself as standing low down in this upward procession. One who feels charmed by the Call of Vedanta, who can appreciate its arguments, who feels a sympathetic understanding of the ideal indicated, is indeed in one of his last births and he is a product of an entire evolutionary past. If he could make use of his present chance with diligent and careful self-application, success is guaranteed to him by Vedanta. In short, the opening stanza is a Call to man to throw his lethargy, his dejections, his sentiments and self-pitying attitude, and to wake up to face life and through understanding grow fast to reach the Goal here and now.

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतद्देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।

मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुषसंश्रयः ॥ ३ ॥

durlabham trayamevaitad devānugrahaHetukam

manuṣyatvam mumukṣutvam mahāpuruṣasamśrayah 3.

दुर्लभम् - rare (to obtain), त्रयम् - three, एव - verily, एतत् - this, देवानुग्रह हेतुकम् - caused by the grace of the Lord, मनुष्यत्वम् - man-hood, मुमुक्षुत्वम् - a burning desire for liberation, महापुरुषसंश्रयः - refuge of a great man of wisdom.

Full manhood, a burning desire for liberation, capacity to surrender completely to a man of wisdom, these three things are indeed rare and, wherever they be, they ought to be considered as products of the Lord's own grace.

Earlier, we were told how rare indeed are the human birth and the necessary qualifications for a vital and potential living by which one can grow in one's inward evolution. In order to emphasize upon the seeker the qualities, which he should have when coming to a great man of learning seeking for the spiritual knowledge, we have here another stanza.

Sankara says that to get a chance to be born as a human being is but a sign of Lord's own grace. Having been born as a man, to come to exhibit in life a deep discriminative understanding and a perception of the ultimate futility in all the ordinary pursuits of life, and, therefore, to discover an enthusiasm within oneself to seek a nobler path of self-redemption is rarer still. Lastly, when a creature is born as a man, when he feels a gnawing sense of impatience at his own limitations, for him to find the right master to guide him across the thorny paths of his own imperfections into the softer meadows of limitless joys and bliss is still rarer; and Sankara here attributes all these three cases of luck in any life to the grace of the Almighty.

The Grace of the Almighty as expressed in Vedanta-is not to be understood as the blessings of God, a Sultan of the sky, sitting amidst the clouds showering down special packets of grace on chosen individuals!! What is meant here by God's grace is only the sum-total reactions gained during the healthy and intelligent way in which the individual had lived through his many lives of greater and nobler cultural pursuits.

लब्ध्वा कथंचिन्नरजन्म दुर्लभं

तत्रापि पुंस्त्वं श्रुतिपारदर्शनम् ।

यस्त्वात्ममुक्तौ न यतेत मूढधीः

स ह्यात्महा स्वं विनिहन्त्यसद्ग्रहात् ॥ ४ ॥

labdhvā kathamcinnarajanma durlabham

tatrāpi puṁstvaṁ śrutipāradarśanam

yastvātmamuktou na yateta mūdahdhīḥ

sahyātmahā svam vinihantyasadgrahāt 4.

लब्ध्वा - having gained, कथंचित् - somehow, नरजन्म - human birth, दुर्लभम् - rare, तत्रापि - there too, पुंस्वम् - masculine temperament, श्रुति पारदर्शनम् - complete knowledge of the scriptures, यः तु - whoever, आत्ममुक्तौ - for Self-realisation, न यतेत - shall not strive, मूढधीः - the foolish, सः - he, हि - indeed, आत्महा - commits suicide, स्वम् - himself, विनिहन्ति - kills, असद्ग्रहात् - clinging to the unreal.

Is there a man who having, by some unknown luck, gained a human embodiment and there too, having obtained a masculine temperament; and then as luck would have it, a complete knowledge of the Scriptures, who is foolish enough not to strive hard for Self-realization? He verily commits suicide clinging himself to things unreal.

The stanza indicates that having been born with a human form, having procured the necessary masculine qualities of the head and heart, when such an individual has also gained a thorough study of the deep significances of the scriptural techniques, if he has not got the enthusiasm to walk the sacred path and dash into the Divine Goal of self-perfection—such an individual, alas, commits himself but suicide. Having gained such a rare chance—a chance, one in a million—if he is not ready to catch hold of the occasion and invest it in a most profitable manner, he is indeed committing *Hara Kiri* and such a squanderer of life is very fittingly termed by Sankara as a “dull fool”—*Mudhadhihi*.

How does one commit this senseless suicide? It is because of one's false attachments with the objects of the world as available for him when he looks out into Truth from the parapet-walls of his body and mind. Forgetting his own Real Nature as the All-pervading Consciousness, he comes to misunderstand himself to be the matter envelopments which are nothing but thought-created encrustations around the Divine in him. When perceived thus through the prism of the body, mind and intellect, he sees the Truth splashed and splintered into endless plurality and these objects give a delusory enchantment to the senses and the mind. To satisfy these urges of his physical body and his inner mind, the individual runs after the objects. Necessarily,

such a self-deluded personality having misunderstood himself becomes the *samsāric* ego-centre who is a victim of his own ignorance. This fall of the Self to be the selfish ego is indicated here as the *Hara Kiri* of man.

There is not real suicide possible in the *Atman*. No danger can come to me simply because I dream the greatest of dangers, although the dreamer in me comes to suffer all the dangers in my dream. The moment I wake up I understand that the dangers as well as the dreamer who suffered the dangers were all my own mental creations that had risen up from my own misunderstanding of myself.

Thus, from the standpoint of Reality, there is no suicide but relatively Sankara comes down to the level of you and me to help us discriminate between the unreal and the Real, in and through our day-to-day life, and it is in this sense that he says that we commit our own suicide. It is not the destiny of the Self to suffer, but it is the lot of the ego : the ego that strives in this world to be the sacred and the divine God. In short, the stanza is a call to man to rediscover himself and regain his own real nature and live the life of God.

इतः कोन्वस्ति मूढात्मा यस्तु स्वार्थे प्रमाद्यति ।

दुर्लभं मानुषं देहं प्राप्य तत्रापि पौरुषम् ॥ ५ ॥

itah konvasti mūdhātmā yastu svārthe pramādyati
durlabham mānuṣam deham prāpya tatrāpi pouruṣam 5.

इतः - Than this, कः तु - who indeed, अस्ति - is, मूढात्मा - fool,
यः तु - whoever, स्वार्थे - in the real end of his (rediscovery of Self),
प्रमाद्यति - neglects, दुर्लभम् - rare, मानुषम् देहम् - human body, प्राप्य -
having gained, तत्र अपि - there too, पौरुषम् - masculine qualities.

Can there be here a greater fool who having got the rare chance of a human form, and there too, the masculine qualities of the head and the heart, who falls short in his efforts to rediscover himself.

Earlier it has been emphasized that to get the human form is indeed a rare chance. Till we come to the stage of

man, the creatures have to implicitly wait for millions and trillions of years until nature takes them up one by one in her sweet will to mould them to a greater equipment. In all the lower strata of existence, evolution is not a conscious development on the part of the individual but an involuntary thrust received by them from the fickle-minded nature.

Millennia must a tree wait as a tree before a particle in it can get a chance to become a fruit and having become the fruit, it is one in a million chances that it happens to be eaten up by a human being. Again, it is a rare chance, indeed, when that fruit becomes the sperm. This sperm has to make a great adventure to enter the womb and get its birth therein. Having thus got a human form, because of man's mind and intellect equipments, he is, to an extent, free from nature in evolving himself. Man alone, of all the species of the living kingdoms, can hasten his own evolution by co-operating himself with the great eternal scheme of things around him. Physically, he has evolved and nature has nothing more to do with him. His next lap of evolution awaits at the level of his mind and intellect and this is a process in which nature has no share at all. Later on, in this very book we will hear a declaration in which we are told that we shall have to evolve ourselves.

With this *Sāstric* conclusion in mind when the *Acharya* takes his pen to guide the generation, he must necessarily exclaim, as he has done in this stanza, and exclude that there can never be a greater fool than the one who, having gained this rare chance of a human embodiment and the required mental and intellectual capacities, does not intelligently invest them for the higher purpose of self-redemption and Self-rediscovery.

वदन्तु शास्त्राणि यजन्तु देवान् कुर्वन्तु कर्माणि भजन्तु देवताः ।
आत्मैक्यबोधेन विना विमुक्तिर्न सिध्यति ब्रह्मशतान्तरेपि ॥ ६ ॥

*vadantu śāstrāṇi yajantu devān kurvantu karmāṇi bhajantu devatāḥ
ātmaikyabodhena vinā vimuktir na sidhyati brahmaśatāntarepi 6.*

वदन्तु - Let people recite or quote, शास्त्राणि - the scriptures, यजन्तु - let (them) perform sacrifices, देवान् - to Gods, कुर्वन्तु - let them

perform, कर्माणि - rituals, भजन्तु - let them worship, देवताः - deities, आत्मैक्य बोधेन विना - without the experience of one's identity with the Self, विमुक्तिः - liberation, न सिध्यति - is not accomplished, ब्रह्मशतान्तरे अपि - even in the life-time of hundred Brahmas.

Let erudite scholars learn to quote all the scriptures, let gods be invoked through sacrifices; let elaborate rituals be done; let Personal Gods be propitiated – and, yet, without, the realization in an intimate personal experience of one's own identity with the entire universe, even in the life time of a hundred Brahmas put together, know, there shall be no liberation for the individual.

A disciple, who has come to the feet of a master of Vedanta, is expected to know already some of the known beliefs and preliminary technics of the religious world wherein for the purposes of the early trainings in taming the *animal*-man to a *man*-man decency, various paths of discipline have been advised, such as, a study of the *Scriptures*, sacrifices, offerings, worship of a Personal God and even selfless 'seva'. Here the master is talking to those rare few, who, having practised all these with sincerity and diligence for a long number of years, have come to feel poignantly for their unsatisfactory rewards, and in that growing dissatisfaction with religion, have rushed to the master's feet demanding guidance and expecting a clearer path for a fuller redemption. To such a student, the master had to tell the raw truth; all truth; nothing but the truth, and so here we read a passage which looks as though it is a total condemnation of all the schemes generally accepted as the recognised religious practices.

There is a type of dull seekers who have become so much addicted to their method of spiritual practices that they would rather claim a dreary patience with life and its pains, their disappointments in *Sādhana* and faith, than dare take up a more satisfying and advanced practice. This is in fact an expression of their superstitious fear at leaving the path which they have been practising for so long. For example, a devotee who has been, through *kīrtan*, *pūja*

japa, *dhyāna* developing his devotion for a Personal God for a number of years, will not dare to drop at least for a time even an iota of his daily routine, even if he be asked to do so by the greatest living master of the world. Just as one gets addicted to a false living, similarly, one can easily become habituated to some accepted good way of living. To be in a routine is not the secret of living in inspiration. We must have freedom at every moment to change our pattern and seek new methods of keeping the mind and intellect occupied in a lively warmth of love and cheer. To get habituated with any method is to baulk progress.

In this sense Vedānta is heretic. It is revolutionary. The attitude with which one should do the 'hearing' (*Śravanam*) of the *Scriptures* is totally different from the attitude with which one is asked to do 'reflection' (*manan*) upon what he 'heard'; and again, in 'meditation' neither the *Śhraddha* of *Śravanam* nor the intellectual freedom of *manan* is permitted to poison the deep serenity of the thought-less meditation hours. Thus, a vedantic student is taught from the very beginning to be original at every moment and to live ever in a white-heat of inspiration—at once thrilling, divine, ennobling.

Here as soon as the student reaches the master, he is swept clean of all his traditional beliefs; this is indeed in spiritualism a kind of shock-therapy by which the student is brutally shaken out of his deep ruts into new lines to follow the right and the straight path.

His wrong notions on religion, his confirmed belief in religious practices, his blind faith in hearsay information on Religion, the Science of Self-Perfection, are all denied here as having anything to do with the true and permanent liberation. Learning *Sastras*, invoking gods through sacrifices, self-less work and even devotion to a Personal God have been denied here as having any capacity to give us *mukti*—"even in the life-time of a hundred *Brahmas*"—which is, according to our mythology, equivalent to 311,040,000,000,000 years!! This is not a mere statement of despair that has been declared; a way of

self-discovery has been prescribed here. The only means of self-discovery is to realise the Self in the seeker to be the Self in all. The method of this discovery, the meaning of the Self, etc., are all the theme of the text book which will be later on explained in full.

अमृतत्वस्य नाशास्ति वित्तेनेत्येव हि श्रुतिः ।

ब्रवीति कर्मणो मुक्तेरहेतुत्वं स्फुटं यतः ॥ ७ ॥

amrtatvasya naśāsti vittenetyeva hi śrutih

bravīti karmano mukterahetutvam sphutam yatah 7.

अमृतत्वस्य - of immortality, न - not, आशा - hope, अस्ति - is, वित्तेन - by wealth, एवहि - thus indeed, श्रुतिः - the scripture, ब्रवीति - says, कर्मणः - works, मुक्तेः - for liberation, अहेतुत्वम् - not being the cause, स्फुटम् - clear, यतः - hence.

It is clear that liberation cannot be the effect of good works; Sruti herself declares that there is no hope for immortality by means of actions.

“*Amrtatvam*” is the Goal indicated in all the Upanishads. When it is translated as merely *immortality*, the ordinary readers are apt to misunderstand it to be a profit that can accrue to man only after his death. This misunderstanding must then take away the edge from religion and dry away all enthusiasm for spiritual living from especially the modern man. The modern youth is one of those who want immediate gains; he is not ready to invest even a thought in a proposition that would yield to him a great profit only at a future time. Even if we promise the seekers that they will have a great existence after death, the modern educated youth condemns it, since what he seeks is his own immediate joys and perfections, here and now.

At this healthy insistence of the sons of the land, the old orthodox *Pundit* becomes despaired and he brands them as atheists. This is an unfair conclusion. If directly interpreted, ‘immortality’ that has been promised by the *Śrutis* is not a state or condition that comes to us after our departure from this world. It is a perfection that can be lived even

when we are *here* and from right *now* onwards. By this term 'immortality' the Rishis were indicating a state of continuous existence which has in it no experience of the finitude. The disturbances caused by the multiple experiences, that rise and fall in us, are the cause for all our sorrows, and man, knowingly or unknowingly, is struggling hard to continue his experiences. It is very well-known that even deep sorrows if they are continuous, the experiencer must come to smile in his sorrow itself; or else we would not have had even one peal of laughter in the slum areas.

The rich man wants to stretch continuously his experience of joy but, alas, it diminishes with time. All over the world, the modern man is struggling—to increase his joys in life, to maintain his virulence, to lengthen the life-span of his countrymen and in a thousand and one other activities we find that there is an anxious impatience with the law of finitude that seems to whip man from all sides. The word 'immortality' in Vedanta indicates not a continuous and monotonous living in joy in a hazy *yonder there* but a perfection *here within* ourselves by which we can, irrespective of the experiences that play around us, come to live a continuous experience of tranquillity and peace.

This mental equilibrium which refuses to entertain any revolting or choking disturbances from without—this mental poise and intellectual dexterity, which makes it impossible for the mind to rise in revolt against itself in the bosom of the man—this endless peace—cannot be gained, says Sankara, through (*vittam*) the sense-objects. The word, though it generally means 'wealth', here means the 'wealth' that gives us immediately our experiences, and, indeed, it is the sense-objects that directly convey experiences to us from the external world. In short, Sankara is indicating that a continuous and infinite experience of peace and tranquillity, joy and perfection, cannot be had through the satisfaction of our animal urges by procuring, maintaining and enjoying mere ephemeral sense-objects.

In this sense, this stanza throws a flood of light on the previous one. No amount of sense-objects—even things as

sacred as the text-books of Vedas; no amount of activity—even such sacred actions as ‘yagnas’ or worship—can themselves take us to that mental poise. This idea which Sankara had already expressed is being reinforced by him in the stanza now under discussion by quoting the declaration of the *Śruti*.

All *Acharyas*, irrespective of their philosophical beliefs, accept the declarations of the *Scriptures* as absolute and as having unquestionable authority. This attitude may not be acceptable to the modern youth, who, in his colossal ignorance may very daringly question even the Rishis. He may not dare to question in his Physics class-room, but will silently and satisfactorily swallow down if he is told that the electrons and protons are moving with a terrific frequency around a neutron in every atom. His spirit of enquiry, courage of understanding etc., seem to get frozen when he comes to the modern text books; but the moment he hears the truth declared in the ancient text books he seems to find in himself an audacity to question, but, unfortunately not the courage to enquire, or the stamina to experiment with those ideas.

The great *Acharyas* of old were not as idiotic as we are prone to accept them to be. For, to accept them as an unintelligent-folk is to insult our own grandfathers; for, did they not believe them and follow them with benefit?

The sacred *Acharyas* accepted the declarations of the *Śrutis* because of the *bonafide* character and temperament of the Rishis who declared them. They did not, like a politician, come to the public to thrust their idea down the throats of their listeners. They were living in complete contentment and happiness in their own Self-discovery and to them the seekers made a foot-path, and reached with their questions and doubts upon life and its meaning, the goal and the path. To these seekers, out of sheer kindness, the men of realization declared the Truth of their own experiences, in a burning spirit of inspiration and love. They had no intentions to misguide these precious young hearts of the generation.

They had no *ashrama* to build or no mission to run, and so they wanted no agents to come down to the world to hoodwink the people and collect funds. They wanted nothing, they asked for nothing, they demanded nothing. Physically they themselves accepted, and they wanted the world to accept, that they are dead. To such men of wisdom, who had divorced themselves so completely from the general world of desires and demands, to impute low motives for misguiding their generation, would reflect only our lack of understanding of the literature. When we learn a Shakesperian drama, we make a lot of study to understand the life of the dramatist and the England of the Elizabethan time. These scientific methods are totally ignored when we come to the *Scriptures* where we never try to understand the mental attitude, the intellectual accomplishments, the physical environment, etc., under which the great Rishis served, worked and lived.

Because of the above reasons the *Acharyas*, as I said earlier, accepted the *Śruti*-declarations as eternal facts on the naked truth. Later on, for those who want more and more logic and reason, we shall be getting a lot of stanzas which explain the same assertion that work, however noble and divine it may be, cannot by itself tune the individual perfectly to that equanimous and peaceful mental attitude wherein he can come to experience, in this variegated world of pluralistic experiences, a continuous and unbroken peace of perfection.

अतो विमुक्त्यै प्रयतेत विद्वान् संन्यस्तबाह्यार्थसुखस्पृहः सन् ।

सन्तं महान्तं समुपेत्य देशिकं तेनोपादिष्टार्थसमाहितात्मा ॥ ८ ॥

*ato vimuktyai prayateta vidvān samnyastabāhyārthasukhaspṛhah san
santam mahāntam samupetya deśikam tenopadiṣṭārtha samāhitātmā*

अतः - therefore, विमुक्त्यै - for liberation, प्रयतेत - should strive
विद्वान् - the wise, संन्यस्ते बाह्यार्थ सुखस्पृहः सन् - having renounced all his
desires for the pleasures in the external sense-objects, सन्तम् - good,
महान्तम् - generous, समुपेत्य - having duly approached, देशिकम् - a
master, तेन - by him, उपादिष्टार्थ समाहितात्मा - being attuned himself to
the significances of the words taught.

Therefore, the learned seeker, who is striving to gain this freedom within and having renounced all his desires for the pleasures in the external sense-objects, should duly approach a good and generous master, and must live attuned himself to the true significances of the words advised by the masters.

If, as Sankara said earlier and as the *Śruti* declares "a man cannot achieve his self-redemption or Self-victory over his own inner weaknesses through actions however glorious and divine they may be", one is apt to conclude that there is no method by which one can redeem oneself. This despair, perhaps, the master noted on the face of his disciple and here, in this stanza, he hastens to console him. We have in this stanza a positive declaration of what exactly should a seeker do in order that he may be well-established on the path of truth-seeking.

A seeker in Vedanta is not a nobody who has walked into the sanctum of a temple or has casually thought of sitting in prayer or visiting a sacred place! These constitute but the very primary lessons in the spiritual life.

A student entering the Halls of Wisdom can gain his admission only when he has had enough education, not only in the market-place but also in the great text-books discussing the theory and meaning of life, and hence the word *Vidvān* is added here to indicate a true seeker. A student, therefore, having had a book knowledge of life and its meaning, when he realises the futility of running after the sense-objects, he, in his knowledge, comes to a certain amount of renunciation of his desires and he approaches his Master. Sankara in this stanza, with his inimitable pen, in as few a stroke as possible, has also given us a list of all the special qualifications that are necessary for a seeker in the spiritual path.

Santam : The word 'Santh' is often used in our vernacular to indicate a Sannyasin; but very rarely does the ordinary man realise what this term exactly means. He is a 'Santh' who is firmly established in the consciousness of pure Existence 'Satta.' A Guru must not only be a man of

full realization and experience but he should be '*mahantam*', large-hearted, sympathetic and kind person. Without these qualifications of the heart, he will not be able to come down from the high seat of his experience and mingle with the imperfect seekers who come to them, and fully understand their difficulties in the path. One can be a Guru only if he has the required large-heartedness, an intimate personal experience of the Divinity, and if he be well-versed in the great *Scriptures*.

A thorough study of the *Scriptures* gives the teacher the necessary language of expressions and also the required intellectual arguments to convert a student's doubts into abiding convictions. There are hundreds of great saints who have been in their own caves sitting silently, brimful with their experiences, and yet mum to the world at large. There are many now among us: and the difficulty with them is that they have music in them but have no flute to play it through, and hence the word '*Desikam*'—well-read in scriptures—is of special importance in this stanza.

Even if a seeker discovers such a perfect master, unless the student has got the necessary mental attitude, he will not be able to react himself favourably with the great master's presence or even his discussions. The necessary attitude is indicated by the word '*samupetya*'. The rule of approaching a master is not merely a prescription for a sapless formality. It mainly indicates a mental attitude. If we approach a master in an attitude of judging him by weighing his knowledge, certainly we are not going to be benefited. There are others who approach a man of wisdom to make him understand how far his guest is a man of wisdom himself! This exhibitionism of one's own laboriously gathered secondhand informations will choke our hearts and we will not be able to gain from the master's words rising from his own first-hand experiences. Water flows only to a lower level also, too, with the flow of knowledge. Unless we have the meekness and the spirit of surrender, knowledge cannot reach us.

This divine attitude of full receptivity is the aroma of a heart which has reverence and surrender to, faith in and

love for the Guru. These are therefore, insisted in the *Sastras*, which may to the modern man seem as arrangements set up by a team of social criminals to loot and plunder the credulous public ! Such an opinion reflects but the decadence into which the spiritual science has reached in our times.

Again, the stanza explains that with all qualifications if a seeker were to reach the feet of a perfect master, even then the transferred knowledge cannot take root in the student unless the student is ready to strive along the path. The instructions given here explaining how the student should employ himself in the presence of the master are very significant indeed, especially so in these days when we are all under terrible misunderstandings about this *Guru-Shishya* relationship.

After all a master can only explain truths and give sufficient logic to give the seeker some intellectual conviction. These ideas are at best but prescriptions for certain values of life which cannot yield any benefit unless they are taken up and made to become a part of the entire road. The major part of the work depends upon our own efforts in rehabilitating ourselves. Thus, it is said, that the individual should try to live the deep significances of the words uttered by the master.

More often than not, what we find around us, is that we try to follow what the master *did* and not what the master *said*. Here the stanza definitely indicates that you have nothing to do with what the master does. There are traders in *Bhakti* who conveniently declare that theirs is only the fifth marriage while their Lord had 16,008 ! There can be, indeed, very interesting varieties even in the methods of self-destruction !!

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं मग्नं संसारवारिधौ ।

योगारूढत्वामासाद्य सम्यग्दर्शननिष्ठया ॥ ९ ॥

*uddharedātmanātmanam magnam samsāravarīdhau
yogārūḍhatvamāsādhya samyagdarśananiṣṭayā 9.*

उद्वेत् - (one) should lift up, आत्मना - by oneself (one's own efforts), आत्मानम् - one's self, मग्नम् - drowned, संसारवारिधौ - in the ocean of change, योगारूढत्वम् - the state of *Yoga rudha*, समासाध्य - having attained, संयगद्दर्शनं निष्ठया - through devotion to right discrimination.

Through a continuous and well-established discrimination when one has attained the state of 'Yogarudha' one should oneself lift oneself up from the ocean of change and finitude wherein one has come to be drowned.

When an individual has realised his own limitations and feels that he must by some means redeem himself from his weaknesses and get a mastery over himself, the stanza clearly declares that it is not sufficient if he merely surrenders to a master, however great he may be, or simply runs away from the world into a quiet jungle spot, or even makes a thorough and complete study of all the *Scriptures*. These efforts as study, etc., may be helpful to the individual but he can lift himself from his own inner weaknesses only by his own self-efforts.

Through study, instructions, practices of self-control and various spiritual "*Sadhanas*" that are generally undertaken in the name of religion, one can expect to develop the subtlety of one's own inner instruments for experiencing the world *as it is*, uncoloured by any of one's own personal prejudices, attachments or hatreds. This perception of the world *as it is*, in perfect detachment and discrimination, is called here as "*Samyag Darsan*". The word "*darsan*" in Sanskrit also means philosophy and, therefore, the term can also be interpreted as "the vision of the world through the eye of philosophy".

When we see life of the world through this correct angle of view and the right mode of perception, the individual slowly and steadily gains the state of a 'Yogarudha'* When

* In Gita VI—4, we have a description of the 'Yogarudha'—state. "When a man is not attached to sense objects or to actions, having renounced all thoughts, then he is said to have attained to Yoga". In this stanza, Bhagwan Krishna explains that state of living as the state of establishment in Yoga in which an individual's mind is no more wandering into the sense-objects, nor is it gurgling forth in itself out towards its desires.

desires are not murmuring, thought cannot rise; and where thoughts are not, there will be a complete cessation of actions motivated by deep desires or personal motives. When an individual, through study, *satsang* and intelligent thinking, has come to observe life and its happenings in the right attitude of a firm intellectual poise, he automatically comes to get established in *Yoga*.

The word '*Yoga*' has come to be associated with so much of paraphernalia that a student is apt to misunderstand rather than correctly grasp its import here. '*Yoga*' in its right sense is only that state of mind, in which the mind having recognised its weakness, tries to attune itself to a greater and more perfect ideal which the intellect has shown to it. Any attempt of the mind to rise from the low values of its present existence to a healthier and diviner scheme of living is '*Yoga*'. To get established in '*Yoga*' is to make it a habit to strive ever sincerely to rise above one's own known weaknesses in order that one may attain a recognised and understood ideal.

संन्यस्य सर्वकर्माणि भवबन्धविमुक्तये ।

यत्नतां पण्डितैर्धीरैरात्माभ्यास उपस्थितैः ॥ १० ॥

*samnyasya carvakarmāṇi bhavabandha vimuktaye
yatyatām paṇḍitair dīraiḥ ātmābhyāsa upasthitaiḥ 10.*

संन्यस्य - renouncing, सर्व कर्माणि - all actions, भवबन्ध विमुक्तये - for the liberation from the bonds of life and death, यत्नताम् - may efforts be but forth, पण्डितैः - the learned, धीरैः - the steadfast or wise men, आत्माभ्यासे - in the practice of rediscovering the Self, उपस्थितैः - remaining.

May the wise and the learned man give up all works which are motivated by desires and start the practice of rediscovering the Self and thereby attain freedom from the bonds of life and death.

Here is an advice given to a man who has had all the necessary theoretical knowledge of the "Science of Self-

perfection". He is told to renounce all activities motivated with self-aggrandising hopes or disintegrating desires.

This renunciation of world activities is not to be over-emphasised and misunderstood, as it is generally done, to mean that Vedanta is calling man to a life of 'lotus-eaters'. It is only asking us to reduce our excitement and wasteful expenditure of our mental and intellectual energies because of our unintelligent desires and nerve-shattering expectations. That "good and sincere work will yield noble fruits" is a sufficient direction to guarantee us a peaceful passage through our pilgrimage here. But to expect the impossible, to wait for a noble return out of a vicious and ill-planned activity is what the ordinary man invariably does, which, apart from the painful returns of sorrow, yields to us many a terrible hour of unproductive anxiety and suicidal worries. A seeker who is striving to integrate himself is advised to walk the path of intelligent living.

This renunciation of false values is only the negative aspect of self-making. Man making fulfils itself in God-discovery and this spiritual art of self-perfection is not gained by a mere negative endeavour. This positive aspect is indicated here, when Sankara says, "let him strive to practise the various means of Self-discovery".

चित्तस्य शुद्धये कर्म न तु वस्तूपलब्धये ।

वस्तुसिद्धिर्विचारेण न किञ्चित्कर्मकोटिभिः ॥ ११ ॥

cittasya suddhaye karma na tu vastupalabdhaye

vastusiddhir vicāreṇa na kimcitkarmakotibhiḥ 11.

चित्तस्य - Of the mind, शुद्धये - for purification, कर्म - action, न तु - not at all, वस्तु उपलब्धये - for the attainment of the Real, वस्तु सिद्धिः - the attainment of the Real, विचारेण - through discriminative analysis, न not, किञ्चित् - in the least, कर्म कोटिभिः - by crores of actions.

Self-less works and love acts help to purify the mind; but they do not contribute to the perception of the Reality. The discovery of the Self is brought about only by discriminative analysis and never by the amount of actions.

The above stanza may give to a novice an impression that Vedanta is decrying all the orthodox and accepted methods of religion. A child in his infant standards is advised by his parents to read every day his arithmetic tables ; and, obedient as he is, it has become his habit to start his day with a reading of the tables. But supposing the child continues his habit as a dull and unintelligent routine even in his post-graduate classes, it is but natural that his professor should laugh at his stupidity.

Similarly, in the halls of Vedanta, the seeker is laughed at for his habituated techniques of self-development in the above stanza. But that does not mean that Sankara or the Vedantins are against the purpose underlying them. The paths of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, etc., have certainly a place in the scheme of self-development and they are unavoidable in hauling up an animal-man through stages of self-development to the pinnacles of self-perfection.

Here in the stanza Shri Sankara points out that *Karma* when undertaken with a pure 'nishkama bhava' purifies the inner instruments of feeling and understanding. The word '*suddhi*' used in connection with the mind is to be understood in terms of the modern language as a greater degree of integration. The purer mind is that which has a large amount of concentration capacity. When an action is undertaken with an anxious motive, the individual must necessarily get shattered and fatigued under its prosecution; but, on the other hand an act of kindness or charity when fulfilled in a spirit of dedication and love, with no motive at all, the mind cosily comes to settle down itself, and in the *sadhana* the peace that rises within increases automatically when more and more integration takes place.

Selfless actions do not help a seeker directly in his flights to his Self-discovery; no doubt, they have certainly a place in the scheme of one's *sadhana* inasmuch as they prepare only the wings in the individual for the last flight to the Beyond.

Sankara is, in this stanza, uncompromisingly severe when he declares in his irrevocable statements that the Self

is not produced, nor the Knowledge created, as a result of the finite actions, however noble, divine and great they may be.

सम्यग्विचारतः सिद्धा रज्जुतत्त्वावधारणा ।

भ्रान्तोदितमहार्सपभयदुःखविनाशिनी ॥ १२ ॥

samyagvicārataḥ siddhā rajjutatvāvadhāraṇā

bhrāntoditamahāśarpabhayaḍukkhavināśinī 12.

सम्यग्विचारतः - by steady and balanced thinking, सिद्धा - is gained, रज्जुतत्त्व अवधारणा - the ascertainment of the truth of the rope, भ्रान्तोदित-महार्सपभयदुःखविनाशिनी - (which is) the destroyer of delusion-created-horrible-snake-fear and sorrow.

The fear and sorrow created by the delusory "serpent on the rope" can be ended only after fully ascertaining the truth of the rope which is available for recognition only through steady and balanced thinking.

Why the discovery of the Self is not possible through 'karma' and how this is possible through right thinking is being explained here by the famous analogy of the 'serpent and the rope.' In Vedānta, this example is often quoted to make the student understand how the names and forms created through ignorance of the Reality could end upon the re-discovery of the Truth beneath them. In the dusk, an approaching traveller misunderstands an innocent rope to be a serpent that has bitten him. The serpent-delusion is created in the mind of the traveller because of his ignorance of the rope-reality. It is never possible that a traveller, who has seen the rope as such, could also have the fear and the sorrow of the serpent bite.

Having thus bitten by a delusory serpent, the individual, so long as he is in his delusion, suffers the agony of a snake-bite and, if left alone, shall exhibit symptoms of blood-poisoning, but the traveller is advised to make an enquiry into his delusion. Faithful friends or dear and near relatives will approach the deluded one and exclaim, "Oh ! it is only a bit of a rope". The individual accepts this statement as a possibility upon his faith in the friend.

However much he may try to feel convinced of this truth, he will not enjoy a complete *shanti* unless he experiences the rope. The moment he is led to the place of the incident and in a clear light he rediscovers the rope for himself, then alone the fear and anxiety, and the pain of the delusory snake and its bite end. No amount of beating the rope in the darkness can ultimately kill the snake or finally bring peace, happiness and cheer to the individual. Even if we burn the rope, the individual cannot find his balance again and take his mind away from the thoughts of fear and pain caused by the snake-bite; for, he may still believe that he was bitten by a snake and the snake was burnt to ashes !

The earlier stanza explained how, through *karmas* performed even for thousands of years, one cannot come to that joy of Self-discovery and the only method is through the path of discriminative analysis. This example, famous in the Vedantic literature, is given by Sankara only to remind us how and in what way correct thinking can blot out miseries of a life earned in our misunderstanding and ignorance.

अर्थस्य निश्चयो दृष्टो विचारेण हितोक्तिः ।

न स्नानेन न दानेन प्राणायामशतेन वा ॥ १३ ॥

arthasya niścayo dṛṣṭo vicārena hitoktitah
na snānena nā dānena prāṇāyāmaśatena va 13.

अर्थस्य - Of the Reality, निश्चयः - the conviction, दृष्टः - is seen, विचारेण - by enquiry, हितोक्तिः - on the lines of the salutary advice, of the wise, न - not, स्नानेन - by sacred baths, न दानेन - not by giving charity, प्राणायामशतेन वा - not even by hundreds of *pranayamas*.

Neither sacred baths nor any amount of charity; nor even hundreds of pranayams (breath control) can give us the knowledge about our own Self but a firm experience of the Nature of the Self can be gained only when we send our thoughts along the rails of argument laid down in the salutary advices of the wise.

Here again we find the ordinarily known cheap methods of easy religion condemned thoroughly, since the seeker is a Vedantin and Sankara's efforts are to show him the right and direct path. In thus indicating to a student the correct path, every master has to be very severe about the cheaper by-lanes in religion. No doubt, they too can help in the progress of the individual, but they are all primary lessons.

Techniques followed in the kindergarten are not available in the college. A teacher has thus to pluck out the individual seeker from his low marshy ruts and re-establish him on the firm grounds of the metalled-road to Truth. Here we find that the cheap and ordinary methods of self-purification, such as taking baths at the sacred confluences of rivers, in various temples and other sacred places; the desire-prompted or even unselfish charities; or other muscular exercises, such as breath control or *āsanas* (postures) are, as a whole, condemned totally.

The modern hasty converts in Vedanta, all of a sudden, find it very convenient to give up every religious practice and call himself an accomplished Vedantin. This attitude has no sanction in the great master's advices. Here Sankara, even while condemning all the cheaper methods, is very strict and severe in prescribing what should be the more subtle and intense path of practice. For a Vedantin, he prescribes correct thinking and continuous self-analysis. Merely giving up the usual methods of religious discipline is not Vedanta as practised by the great *Acharya*. If at all they are given up, it is only for a greater and more subtle '*Abhyās*' called *Vichār*. This *Atma-Vichār* is not done in any manner as the individual likes. There is an exact method of intense and correct thinking and this method is advised in the Scriptures. Therefore, we are advised that '*Vichar*' should be undertaken as taught by the Great *Rishis* (*Hito-ktitah*), which alone can take us ultimately to our redemption.

अधिकारिणमाशास्ते फलसिद्धिर्विशेषतः ।

उपाय देशकालाद्याः सन्त्यस्मिन्सहकारिणः ॥ १४ ॥

*adhikāriṇamāśaste phalasiddhirviśeṣataḥ
upāyā deśakālādhyāḥ santyasminsahakāriṇaḥ 14.*

अधिकारिणम् - Upon the qualifications of the seeker, अशास्ते - depends, फलसिद्धिः - ultimate success (the fruit of endeavours), विशेषतः - essentially, उपायाः - means, देशकालाद्याः - such as place, time, etc., सन्ति - are, अस्मिन् - in this, सहकारिणः - auxiliary conveniences.

Ultimate success in spiritual endeavours depends entirely upon the degree of the fundamental qualifications in the seeker. Auxiliary conveniences such as time, place, etc., have all a place, indeed, but they are essentially secondary.

Here Sankara is trying to give a very sane suggestion to seekers who generally get disappointed at the very outset at some obstacles in their early *sādhana*. When a team of students are working under the instructions of the same master, it is always observed that some of them progress faster than others. Those who lack progress soon reach a state of despair and they complain the hollowness of the *Sāstrās*. Such students are advised to attribute their lack of development to some intrinsic, subjective mal-adjustments in their psychological and intellectual make-up.

But this word '*Adhikāri*' has been thoroughly misunderstood and the persecutions made with this word have a great responsibility in the decadence of Vedanta in this Land of the *Rishis*. The hasty Pundit used to reject the sincere seekers on the claim that they have not got all the necessary qualifications for Vedantic *Sādhana*. This is absurd. No living man can finally judge another especially upon these points. The qualifications necessary for a successful spiritual pilgrimage have been enumerated here by the great *Āchārya* only for self-checking up by the individual seekers themselves.

Sankara says here that if the success in the spiritual path has been slow or unsatisfactory, the seeker is to thank none but himself. It is invariably because of some cloggings

of the heart. All that he has to do in order to bring more progress in his efforts is to remove these cloggings and thereby bring a more intense self-application on the path of self-development.

This is true even in our every day life. If a brand new car with tank-full of petrol is on the road and when, it invariably happens, driven by the owner-driver, it develops troubles, rare indeed are such owner-drivers who know anything of things under the bonnet of his car. Sitting in the driver's seat he wrenches out all the switches and he labours with all the handles and when he finds that the response from the engine is not satisfactory, he leaves it on the kerb of the road and comes back home.

But if in his place there was a professional driver, he will be able to sense out at once where exactly is the trouble in the engine and invariably when the progress is thus blocked, he stops the car, gets out of his seat, raises the bonnet and checks up the possible points where the engine might have developed the trouble. After re-setting the engine, he comes back to his seat and the machine responds to his demands.

Similarly, when in meditation, a *Sādhak* finds himself blocked, there is no meaning in sitting in the '*āsana*' and kicking about in disappointment and cursing the entire hierarchy of *Rishis* or the entire Science of Vedānta. He must lift at once the bonnet of his bosom and look within to see if the necessary adjustments are all properly maintained within. The description of the "necessary qualifications" is for our guidance so that we may know what are the common troubles that could arise in the inner vehicle during our flight to the Beyond.

There are some seekers who wait for their spiritual progress, for better circumstance to do the *Sādhana*, a better time or for a greater master to initiate them. No doubt, Sankara says, time, place, etc., have got a place in the scheme of self-development, but he insists that they are all subsidiary. Without the required inner adjustments,

even if a *Sādhak* is placed under the best schemes of time and place, he will not be able to make use of them. On the other hand, even if he is adversely placed as regards time and place, a true seeker fully qualified will find his progress continuous. These necessary inner qualifications are described in detail later on in stanzas 16 and 17.

अतो विचारः कर्तव्यो जिज्ञासोरात्मवस्तुनः ।

समासाद्य दयासिन्धुं गुरुं ब्रह्मविदुत्तमम् ॥ १५ ॥

ato vicārah kartavyo jignāsorātmavastunah

samāsādhya dayāsindhum guram brāhmaviduttamam 15.

अतः - Therefore, विचारः - enquiry, कर्तव्यः - must be made, जिज्ञासोः - (by) the true seeker, आत्मवस्तुनः - of the Reality of the Self, समासाध्य - having duly approached, दयासिन्धुं - the Ocean of Compassion, गुरुम् - the Guru, ब्रह्मविदुत्तमम् - the best among the knowers of Brahman.

Therefore, a true seeker of the Self should learn to enquire and meditate after duly approaching a Guru who is one established in himself in the experience of the Self and also one who has an ocean of kindness in him.

Because of the reasons so far argued out, Sankara concludes that it should be the endeavour of the true seeker to find a true master and approach him duly to get himself initiated into the methods of enquiry through the process of meditation.

A *Guru* is described here. Just as there are qualifications necessary for a true disciple, there are some essential qualifications necessary in order to make a man of wisdom an efficient and true *Guru*... It is not every man of Self-realisation that can efficiently take up the work of directing others on the path towards the Goal. The qualifications for a true *Guru* are being explained here.

Sankara says that a *Guru* should be not only a man of Self-experience in himself but he should have a large heart flowing out in kindness for all types of seekers. This is so

very necessary because without it the master will not be able to come down to the level of the disciples and sympathetically appreciate the students' difficulties in understanding the *Sāstrās* and in living up to the high discipline that is expected of them in the *Śrutis*.

The word '*samāsādhyā*'—by duly approaching—is a simple word of pregnant suggestions used here in this stanza. This prescribes the mental attitude with which a seeker should approach the master in order that he may benefit the maximum during his intercourse with the teacher.

मेधावी पुरुषो विद्वान् उहापोहविचक्षणः ।

अधिकार्यात्मविद्यायामुक्तलक्षणक्षितः ॥ १६ ॥

medhāvi puruṣo vidvān uḥāpohāvicakṣaṇah

adhikāryātmavidhyāyāmuktalakṣaṇalakṣitaḥ 16.

मेधावी - (a man) acute memory, पुरुषः - a man, विद्वान् - who is learned, उहापोहविचक्षणः - capable of clear analysis, and of argument for and against, अधिकारी - a fit person, आत्मविद्यायां - for the knowledge of the Atman, उक्तलक्षणलक्षितः - one who has the above characteristics.

A man of acute memory, with enough general knowledge of the world outside and understanding of the world within, and with a fair efficiency in arguing, is one who is generally fit for Atma Vidya-meaning, fit for walking the Path of Knowledge.

Here we have the enumeration of some of the general qualities necessary before a student can successfully undertake even a study of the *Upantshads*. The faculty of memory (*medhā*) is not merely a prodigious capacity exhibited by some students who can memorise an impossible amount of Scriptures in a very short time. Among the men of letters in England, there was a mania once to memorise long poems, and we are told that many could repeat the whole of Milton's *Paradise Lost* or, perhaps the whole of Shakespearian

* Refer Verse 8.

dramas. This sort of a mechanical memorising is not what is meant by *Medhā* — memory power—here.

Here by the word 'memory' Sankara means a capacity on the part of the student to react intensively with an experience at the time of its occurrence so that later on automatically without an effort it springs forth into the level of memorised experiences. In this sense, none of us lacks in the power of memory. Even those who cannot memorise a single stanza or a paragraph of prose, could very efficiently remember some of the incidents of their childhood, which in itself clearly declares that they have generally a good memory power.

A student who is attending the discourses given out by a master is therefore required to intensively react to the words and thus make those ideas and theories explained as his own at the very time of listening to them. There is no question of writing down notes and learning them later on as in the case of modern examinations in college studies. The study of Vedānta is an immediate understanding. He, who has got this capacity, is fit for a study in Vedānta. In case there be a student who cannot understand what the master said on a previous occasion, then as the lessons proceed, the master will not be able to give his discourses freely since the student at every moment will have his own misunderstandings, doubts and confusions. Every time the teacher will have to go back to the chapters he had finished earlier which would necessarily mean no progress at all. Such a dull-headed, wool-gathering mind is not the fit instrument for the study of the Science of Vedānta.

The word 'manliness', as we have already said, is to be understood as the manliness of the head and heart.

'*Vidwān*' —learned or well-informed—is another qualification for a fit student of Vedānta. Hence it does not mean 'a learned man' or one 'well-versed in the scriptural texts.' This is impossible without listening to the discourses from

* Refer stanza 5.

the master's lips and as such no amount of self-study in the scriptures can make him a true 'Vidwān.' It is meant here only that the student must have a fairly good amount of general knowledge of the world outside and also an amount of insight into his own psychological and intellectual composition. The more general knowledge an aspirant has, the easier it will be for the master to make him understand the subtle truth through a variety of knowledge, examples, parallels and metaphors.

In the list of the enumerated qualities necessary for the individual an "argumentative spirit of enquiry and understanding" is absolutely necessary for walking the Path of Knowledge. In the other Paths of Self-discovery, this spirit of independent enquiry is not so much emphasized because the seekers walking them do not demand an explanation for personal conviction. But those who want to walk the Path of Knowledge, neither a blind faith in the Scriptures nor in the master, can supply a sufficient motive force. He needs a conviction that rises from himself born out of his own intelligent thinking and also his own intellectual absorption of the ideas.

In short, a student of Vedanta must be a man of receptive intellect, always agile in his subtle body, ready to hop up to catch every idea that the master gives and through a process of intellectual assimilation get at its true and vivid significances. If this agility of head and heart is lacking in an individual, he cannot hope to have a steady and unobstructed progress in meditation. Later on, in the following stanzas Sankara is giving more and more details of the qualities which are generally met with in all successful students of Vedanta.

विवेकिनो विरक्तस्य शमादिगुणशालिनः ।

मुमुक्षोरेव हि ब्रह्मजिज्ञासायोग्यता मता ॥ १७ ॥

vivekino viraktasya śamadiguṇaśālinah

mumukṣoreva hi brahma jīgnāśāyogyatā matā 17.

विवेकिनः - a man of discrimination, विरक्तस्य - of detachment, etc.,
शमादिगुणशालिनः - endowed with qualities like calmness, etc., मुमुक्षोः -

with a burning desire for liberation, एव - only, हि - indeed, ब्रह्म-
जिज्ञासा-योग्यता - qualified to enquire after the Supreme Reality, मता -
is considered.

He alone is considered qualified to enquire after the
Supreme Reality, who has discrimination, detachment,
qualities of calmness, etc., and a burning desire for self-
redemption.

If the former stanza gives us the family characteristics
of the students who are fit for Vedantic Path of Knowledge,
the stanza under discussion gives us the much more intimate
qualifications that really sort out the specimens in the family.

These terms have been found often frightening away
the students since the orthodox explanations of them have
been rather severe and relentless. But on a closer analysis,
these are found to be very healthy instincts which are avail-
able in the bosom of everyone of us; but only a very few of
us are conscious of them; and almost none of us is consci-
ously developing these qualities in us.

'*Viveka*' is the capacity in us to discriminate between the
real and the unreal, between the true and the false, between
the permanent and the impermanent. It is indeed a faculty
which we employ in almost all our day-to-day decisions and
this discriminative faculty, when brought to play within the
constitution of the individual, is called '*Viveka*'.

'*Vairāgya*' is not what we generally mean by its ortho-
dox translation given as 'detachment'. The word has now-a-
days come to gather so much of a magical fear about it that
an honest seeker is frightened out of his wits and he dares
not hope to gain that kind of a perfect detachment which is
almost impossible in the estimate of a modern man; and he
is perfectly right, for the '*vairagya*', as it is mis-understood,
points out more to a condition of living-death than to a state
of better and ampler living. The 'detachment' suggested by
Vedanta is only a fulfilment of '*viveka*'. Having discrimin-
ated between the real and the false, it is no more an agonis-
ing act for us to pluck ourselves away from the false things.

When intellectually we are once convinced, through our discrimination, of the fallacy of a way of thinking, detachment is the fructification of that discrimination and it automatically takes place to the degree we have been convinced by our own discrimination. When I am convinced that my shadow is a false representation of me, it does not take an iota of my energy to get myself rid from the sorrows of my shadow. Even if ten thousand elephants were to pass over my shadow, I shall still smile and be happy; for I know that any amount of crushing my shadow cannot bring pain unto myself.

When I have discovered the post, it is not at all difficult for me to detach myself from the fear or pain or sorrows caused by the delusory idea of the ghost.

'*Śama*'—calmness, etc. These will again be taken up by Sankara in the coming stanzas and we shall be thoroughly going into each one of them. For the time being, it is sufficient if we understand that these are the mental values of life which any healthy man of creative urge should have in himself. Success of any creative thinking will be directly proportional to the amount of these qualities in an individual. Even in the material world, an individual's constructive success can be raised if only he develops these qualities in himself.

Last but not the least of the four qualifications enumerated hereunder is '*Mumukṣutva*'—a burning desire for liberation. This word, again, in its old drapery may have an ugly look of an impracticable idea. Liberation is generally understood as a *post mortem* gain which the individual seeker would come to enjoy "after his death." This is not a sufficient guarantee to the modern man of impatience and unquenchable thirst for practical gains.

These are days when we want immediate gains. None of us seems to be ready to invest anything in the expectation of a promised immense gain on a future date. This being the attitude of the age we find that the promise of Vedanta, if explained in the old style, does not tell. On the other

hand, in its implications, *Mumukṣutva* certainly indicates an immediate gain which is directly proportional to the amount of effort put in by the seeker.

In short, *Mumukṣutva* is a deep desire to rid oneself of one's own limitations, felt and experienced by one during one's intercourse with the world whether it be through his body, with his mind or his intellect. A true seeker feels impatient with these physical, mental and intellectual limitations upon him in enjoying or in living his life, and such a one who has come to protest actively against life's limitations upon him and who is earnestly struggling to get over them is the *Mumukṣu* indicated here. The spirit of revolt of one against oneself at one's own self-shackling weaknesses is the true spirit that is absolutely necessary in order that in life we may set forth seeking new powers and gaining new strength.

साधनान्यत्र चत्वारि कथितानि मनीषिभिः ।

येषु सत्स्वेव सन्निष्ठा यद्भावे न सिध्यति ॥ १८ ॥

sādhānānyatra catvāri kathitāni manīṣibhiḥ

eṣu satsveva sannīṣṭhā yadabhāve na sidhyati 18.

साधनानि - Means (for attainment), अत्र - here, चत्वारि - four, कथितानि - are prescribed, मनीषिभिः - by sages, येषुसत्सुएव - only in the presence of these, सन्निष्ठा - proper attunement to the Goal, यत् अभावे in whose absence, न सिध्यति - (the attunement) is not gained.

The great sages of old have prescribed four qualifications for attainment and (they have declared) that the realisation of the Brahman (the achievement of our Goal) directly takes place in those in whom these are present; and, if they are absent, the Goal is not gained.

The ideas that have been discussed in Stanza 14 have been again repeated here more elaborately. The four great qualifications that have been described in the previous Stanzas are the determining factors in a seeker which guarantee success. To the degree the four qualifications are present in a *Sādhak*, to that degree his success in spiritual

endeavours is certainly assured. Wherever there is a seeker who is struggling on the path and not gaining any definite progress, he can observe for himself that he has not in him any, or, all of these qualifications.

By this, Sankara is trying to emphasize that a seeker must, first of all, try to see that he is fully equipped with these qualifications, and at all periodical reverses in spiritual progress, the *Sādhak* instead of physically getting despaired, must intelligently evaluate himself and discover the deficiencies in him.

As a doctor would put it, when a patient is pale, the deficiency in his constitution is to be immediately determined and in order to it make up, he must be fed upon those necessary ingredients. Similarly, here also when a spiritual seeker fags out, it is never due to any external obstacle, as generally people complain, but it is because of a dangerous deficiency in his spiritual constitution !!

आदौ नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः परिगण्यते ।

इहामुत्रफलभोगविरागस्तदनन्तरम् ॥

शमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिः मुमुक्षुत्वमिति स्फुटम् ॥ १९ ॥

ādau nityānityavastuvivekah pariganyate

ihāmutraphalabhogavirāgastadanantaram

śamādiṣaṭkasampattiḥ mumukṣutvamiti sphutam 19.

आदौ - In the beginning, first, नित्य अनित्य वस्तुविवेकः - discrimination between the real and unreal, परिगण्यते - is counted, इह-अमुत्र फलभोग विरागः - freedom from desires for the enjoyment of the fruits of actions here and hereafter (*iha* and *amutra*), तदनन्तरम् - after that, शमादिषट्क सम्पत्तिः - the six great qualifications like calmness, etc., मुमुक्षुत्वम् - a burning desire for liberation, इति - thus, स्फुटम् - clear.

(While enumerating the qualifications) first we count the faculty of discrimination between the real and the unreal; next comes a spirit of detachment from the enjoyment of

the fruits of actions here and hereafter; (next is) the team of six great qualifications like calmness, etc., and (lastly) a burning desire for self-liberation.

In the sequence here Sankara is repeating the various qualifications that are necessary for a student who is to be assured of success in the spiritual path. We have here a rough estimate of the four great qualifications and while enumerating them, the *Acharya* is giving general definition for both *Viveka* and *Vairāgya*.

Viveka—discriminating capacity. This faculty in us to distinguish between the real and the unreal is not generally available to all men of intelligence. However acutely intelligent the generations may be, it is left to the special blessing of the few to have the right "taste" in life : meaning, this subtle power of the intellect to delve deep into things and happenings, and discriminate therein the true from the false. Those who have evolved sufficiently exhibit a large share of this faculty, but those who have not got it now should not necessarily despair at its absence, because this faculty is not a God-given instinct which has to come into us from the heavens, but it is the aroma of the bosom wherein one's mind and intellect are fully developed and have, to a degree, integrated. Where there is a large amount of this *Viveka*, we can immediately presume that the individual has a fairly well-integrated inner personality.

Vairāgya—Detachment : Running away from life in cowardice, retiring to a jungle in a languor of the intellect, not to appreciate anything around and about us, to deny all physical things-of-necessity for the body—these are falsely considered to be the signs of detachment, by the ordinary Hindu. Why? Even many of the educated Pundits would, in their discourses, give us the idea that detachment, means a life of complete mourning and bereavement, an unnatural existence which has nothing to do with the life that is lived by others in the society !! This idea is false and the interpretation is more mischievous than healthy.

As a result of one's discriminative capacity when one comes to differentiate between the real and the unreal in the

world outside or in the world, within, automatically in that individual the false drops off from his interest. When once we have understood a thing to be full of bitterness, pain and imperfections, rarely is there a man who would still court that known object-of-sorrow.

Invariably, we run after a thing only when we have a hope of getting out of it a greater fulfilment of joy or peace. Once, we have come to understand, in our intellectual appreciation, that the object in question is riddled with sorrow, no thinking human being can entertain any more desire for it, nor will he strive to earn it, or to hear it or to observe it. The immediate attempt on the part of everyone would be to get rid of it.

Thus *Vairāgya*, born out of *Viveka*, is what is meant here by the term 'detachment'. In fact, *Vairāgya* is the fulfilment of *Viveka* and wherever the former is strong, the latter gains in essence and efficiency.

Therefore, when Sankara defines, in the vocabulary of his times, *Vairāgya* as a detachment from all the fruits of one's own actions here or hereafter, he only means the same idea—that a spiritual seeker must have come to a sufficiently strong intellectual conviction that fruits born as a result of actions cannot however be infinite, and therefore, they, the seekers of the Infinite, should necessarily have that spirit of detachment from and renunciation of the results of their actions. Results of actions reach us in the form of circumstances in the outer world, mental condition within, and when *that* mind reacts with *those* circumstances, we gain also our day-to-day experiences.

The other two items that have already been hinted at (in Stanza 17) are again just mentioned here : viz., the six qualifications, such as, *Śama*, etc., and a passion to redeem oneself (*Mumukutvam*).

ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्येत्येवंरूपो विनिश्चयः ।

सोऽयं नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः समुदाहृतः ॥ २० ॥

brahmasatyam jaganmithyetevamrūpo viniścayah

so (a) yam nityānityavastuvivekah samudāhṛtah 20.

ब्रह्म - The Brahman, सत्यम् - real, जगत् - the phenomenal world, मिथ्या - unreal, इति - thus, एवं रूपः - this conclusion, विनिश्चयः - a firm conviction; सः - that, अयम् - this, नित्य अनित्य वस्तु विवेकः - as discrimination between the real and the unreal, समुदाहृतः - is considered.

A firm conviction of the intellect that “Brahman is real and the phenomenal world unreal” is known as discrimination between the real and the unreal.

Here we have a complete and exhaustive definition of the faculty of discrimination. As meant here in its application to a student of *Vedanta*, discrimination is a capacity to know, out of a mixture of things, the real from the unreal. Philosophically, a thing is called the Truth or Reality when it is changeless and ever-present.

Just as scientists are enquiring about the fundamental in life through the analysis of things of the outer world, so too, the scientists of the inner world—the *Rishis*—tried to understand the fundamental life in us. When we say the fundamental, it means in its application that it is the one Truth factor which is changeless and ever-present in all, at all times. When we thus enquire into and try to understand life in its pure essence, we come to experience that Life which is ever-present everywhere, that universal Factor called the Ground is what is meant by the word ‘*Brahman*’ in *Vedanta*.

To come to a logical understanding and to arrive at a complete intellectual appreciation of the fact that this Permanent alone is the ever-existent, the changeless, the formless, and, therefore, the Immortal, is to understand at once that the fundamental factor, *Brahman* is the Real and the world of plurality, that we cognise now, is unreal, meaning imperfect—a magnificent and wondrous manifestation into changeable commodity, impermanent and joyless. To build up life in this correct perspective and to order our existence on the basis of this value is called *Viveka* in *Vedanta*.

तद्वैराग्यं जिहासा या दर्शनश्रवणादिभिः ।

देहादिब्रह्मपर्यन्तेह्यनित्ये भोगवस्तुनि ॥ २१ ॥

*tadvairāgyam jihāsā yā darśanaśravanādibhih
tehādibrahmaparyante hyanītye bhogavastuni 21.*

तत - that, (is) वैराग्यं - detachment, जिहासा - the desire to give up,
या - those, दर्शन श्रवणादिभिः - seeing, hearing, etc., देहादि ब्रह्मपर्यन्ते -
ranging from the body of a mortal to the Creator, हि - indeed,
अनित्ये - which are transient, भोगवस्तुनि - in the objects of enjoyment.

That is called 'detachment' or renunciation which is the desire to give up all transitory enjoyments gained through the sense organs and also experiences gained through equipments ranging from the body of a mortal to the form of (Brahma) the Creator.

A complete and authentic explanation of *Vairāgya*, as meant by the word-usage in Vedānta, is given here. It is not only a detachment from the external object and circumstances conducive of joyous experiences, but it is a mental condition in which the mind no longer runs after the phenomenal world in the hopes of gaining any amount of peace or joy. The idea is that through discrimination when the individual has come to at least intellectually appreciate that the sense objects have not in themselves any intrinsic value of joy and that they are ephemeral, naturally, his mind will never take off for wandering flights into the realm of the objects with a craving for them.

It has been philosophically concluded in our *Śāstrās* that a man's mind will constantly take off, hover around and land on objects only when it is convinced that there are three desirable qualities in them. They are a sense of 'reality' (*Satyatvam*) of the objects; a belief in the 'permanency' (*Nityatvam*) of the objects; a faith that they contain 'potentialities for satisfying our craving for joy' (*Sama-cīnatvam*). When we understand through our discrimination that the objects as perceived through the senses are all, in fact, non-real (*Asat*), ephemeral (*Anitya*) and that they do not have any capacity to give us real joy but that they are riddled with sorrows (*A-samicīna*) our minds can no longer pant forth gasping after those sense objects.

In Shri Gynaneshwari commentary on Gita, the Yogiraj beautifully brings out this idea in a series of inimitable similes. In describing what should be the attitude of a man of detachment towards the sense objects, he gives some examples which are very striking, effective and efficient. He says that a man of true detachment (*Vairāgya*) will run towards the sense objects with as much enthusiasm as one would rush out to embrace a dead queen's rotting body; with as much satisfaction, one would decide to satisfy one's thirst by drinking the pus that is flowing out from a leper's wound; with as much readiness as one would enter a boiling cauldron of molten iron, to take a refreshing bath etc. In short, it is a very powerful way of expressing the idea that where the intellect has come to a firm conviction at the hollowness of the sense-objects, mind will not gush forth towards them with hopes and expectations of a satisfaction therein. This sense of detachment that arises from a full application of one's discriminative faculty is called true *Vairāgya*.

विरज्य विषयव्रातादोषदृष्ट्या मुहुर्मुहुः ।

स्वलक्ष्ये नियतावस्था मनसः शम उच्यते ॥ २२ ॥

*virajya viṣayavrātadoṣadrṣṭyā muhurmuḥuh
svalakṣye niyatāvasthā manasaḥ śama ucyate 22.*

विरज्य - Having detached, विषय व्रातान् - from the chaos of sense-objects, दोषदृष्ट्या - through a process of observation of their defects, मुहुर्मुहुः - again and again, स्वलक्ष्ये - in its goal, नियतावस्था - resting constantly in contemplation, मनसः - of the mind, शमः - calmness, उच्यते - it is said.

The peaceful state of the mind when it rests constantly upon the contemplation of the Goal (the Brahman) after having again and again detached itself from the chaos of the sense objects, through a process of continuous observation of their defects, is called "Sama" or calmness.

After having described so fully the first two great qualifications necessary for a true seeker walking the Path of

Vedanta, here Sankara enters into a discussion of the six great qualities which are unavoidable in the constitution of a mind and intellect which are making a pilgrimage to their complete fulfilment in *Gyāna*. These are not to be understood, as are ordinarily taken them to mean, as mere qualifications to frighten away the unqualified. I have already emphasized the idea that the discussion of the "necessary qualifications" in Vedanta is more for a self-adjustment and analysis than for a tyranny upon the seekers.

A close study of the six qualifications, as described by Sankara here, would help to remove many of our pet misunderstandings which we at present entertain regarding these instructions.

Among the six qualifications, the most important is (*Śama*) the 'calmness' of mind which, as it were, descends upon it when the mind has come to rest upon its meditations, without its natural agitations created by its constant and continuous desires for attaining or gaining certain sense-objects. When the mind is thus taken away from the sense-objects, it cannot be relieved of all its sense-thoughts at once.

It is the character of the mind to entertain thoughts and if it has nothing else to think of, it should necessarily entertain the thoughts of some other object of the outer world. Therefore, in all the *Yogas* there is a prescription in one way or the other to soak the mind with a greater idea, more noble and divine than the sense objects. Unless we thus train the mind to revel itself in a subtler and diviner field, it invariably cannot get itself redeemed from the field of its ordinary pursuits. In *Bhakti*, the devotee employs his mind constantly in the meditation of his beloved Lord and therefore, the mind becomes automatically drawn away from its ordinary pursuits after the sense-objects.

In the path of knowledge, therefore, the mind is to be, in the early stages, given an alternative field for its exercises and, therefore, Sankara says here that a mind basking in the contemplation of the idea of an All-pervading Consciousness or Awareness, *Brahman*, alone is the mind that can successfully detach itself from the sense objects.

Not only should the mind maintain itself and revel on *Brahman* by merely meditating upon the qualities and glories of the Goal but it is to be whipped away from its mischievous fields of false-entertainments, by constantly making the mind realise the weaknesses of and imperfections in the 'field-of-objects'. In short, the more we gain a control over the mind, and through that control, we withdraw the mind from its revellings in a mad field of finite objects, the more it will become equanimous, peaceful and serene, and this condition of "*Calmness in the mind*" consciously brought about by a lived discipline is meant by the term '*Śama*'.

विषयेभ्यः परावर्त्य स्थापनं स्व-स्वगोलके ।

उभयेषामिन्द्रियाणां स दमः परिकीर्तितः ॥

बाह्यानालम्बनं वृत्तेरेषोपरतिरुत्तमा ॥ २३ ॥

*viṣayebhyah parāvartya sthāpanam sva svagolake
ubhayeshāmindriyānām sa damah parikīrtitah
bāhyānālambanam vṛtterēṣoparatiruttama 23.*

विषयेभ्यः - from the objects, परावर्त्य - having turned back, स्थापनम् - placing them, स्वस्वगोलके - in their respective centres of activity, उभयेषाम् - the two kinds of, इन्द्रियाणाम् - sense organs, सः - that, दमः - self-control, परिकीर्तितः - is declared, बाह्यानालम्बनम् - freedom from the influence of external objects, वृत्तेः - of the thought-waves, एषः - this, उपरतिः - self-withdrawal, उत्तमा - the best.

To steer round both the kinds of sense organs from their respective sense objects and to place them in their respective centres of activity is called *Dama* or self control. The best *Uparati* or self-withdrawal consists in that condition of the thought-waves in which they are no longer affected by the external happenings in the world of objects.

In this stanza we have the explanations of two of the great conditions of the mind and the intellect which are unavoidable in a student of Vedānta. They are *Dama* and *Uparati*. We have already discussed and explained the quality of "*Śama*" and we have been told that it is a mental con-

dition which arises as a result of the control of our mind deep within our bosom.

Compared with *Śama*, we can consider *Dama* as a system of discipline in a relatively outer field since it prescribes a control for the sense organs. To withdraw our mental rays—that shoot out through the sense organs for the perception of their independent sets of objects—and to absorb those rays of perception within the sense organs is *Dama*, self-control. That is to say, *Dama* is a self-control of the sense organs, while *Śama* is a condition experienced by the mind when it does not function in other departments of its activities, but is quietly settled upon the contemplation of the Supreme Goal.

When thus one has gained a degree of proficiency in both *Sama* and *Dama*, self-withdrawal (*Uparati*) automatically happens wherein the seeker's mental condition is such that it does no longer get affected by any disturbances created by the external objects.

When we think of these, it is possible that we may understand it as a very delicate, difficult and distressing feat, but in fact, the more we try to practise it, the more easily we shall come to understand that after all what Sankara says is but a verbal explanation of the state of mind of anyone who is trying to achieve or execute a great work. Even in the material sphere, we find that these are the qualifications unavoidable in an individual if he wants to guarantee his success in his activities. In any successful businessman, we observe a certain amount of self-control within, and a self-control without, at least while he is at his desk, and he exhibits a share of *Uparati*. Of course, the comparison of these qualities with the qualities exhibited by the materialist or the money-hunter, is not fair because a seeker needs a subtlety in himself, a million times more than in the case of the materialist. Yet, to a large extent, we can come to appreciate and understand these "qualifications" within ourselves when we watch for them and experience them as available in our work-a-day world.

सहनं सर्वदुःखानामप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् ।

चिन्तविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥ २४ ॥

*saḥanaṁ sarva duḥkḥānāmapratīkārapūrvakam
cintāvilāparahitam sā titikṣā nigadyate 24.*

सहनम् - Endurance, सर्वदुःखानाम् - of all sorrows, अप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् - without struggling for redress or revenge, चिन्ताविलापरहितम् - free always from anxiety and lament, सा - that, तितिक्षा - as forbearance, निगद्यते - is proclaimed.

Titiksha is the capacity to endure all sorrows and sufferings without struggling for redress or for revenge, being free always from anxiety (or lament) over them.

Describing the fourth psychological sign in a man of true spiritual stamina, Sankara states here, in a full and scientific definition, the quality of 'silent endurance' which is glorified in all religions of the world. Meek surrender and silent suffering are the watchwords in all religious discipline. This quality to endure and to suffer for a cause which has been accepted by the individual as the ideal and the perfect finds a place in every great philosophy whether it is religious or secular. In order to bring about a revolution even in the world outside, the believers of that political philosophy are called upon to make silent sacrifices in order to establish that philosophy in life. How much more is it then essential in the inner revolution of an individual who is trying to get himself freed from his own psychological and intellectual limitations? This spirit of *Titikṣā* is to be cultivated and pursued to ensure success in all schemes of subjective rehabilitation.

In the name of this great qualification, many an absurd over-acting is now in vogue. I have met unintelligent people who in the name of spiritual seeking persecute themselves physically and mentally, and as a result of their self-persecution all that they gain at the end of years of suffering is but a crooked, ugly, deformed mind and life! They do not however reach any amount of inward beauty or proportion.

By discarding the clothes or starving oneself to a skinny existence; either by denying your body the necessities of its thriving or by giving an unnecessary pain to the mind, either by running away from life or by preserving oneself on inhuman diets in some solitary cave; either by living an animal's life open to the brutal climate or by breaking the body, in an effort to make it endure more discomforts—none of the above is true *Titikṣā*. And yet, how many a blind seeker has foundered himself upon this rock of ignorance.

Titikṣā (power of endurance) is that fault of the mind which it maintains when intellectually it is governed by a tempo and a conviction which is complete and self-ordained, divine and noble. When the intellect is fully convinced of its new values of life, of the sacredness of the Goal of Life that it has discovered for itself, thereafter in gaining it the mind smilingly faces all difficulties and obstacles. This capacity of the mind to accommodate cheerfully all its vicissitudes and suffer patiently any obstacles that might come on its way is called *Titikṣā*.

शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यबुद्धयवधारणम् ।

सा श्रद्धा कथिता सद्भिः यया वस्तुपलभ्यते ॥ २५ ॥

sāstrasya guruvākyasya satyabudhyavadhāranam

sā śraddhā kathitā śadbhir yayā vastupalabhayate 25.

शास्त्रस्य - Of the Scriptural texts, गुरुवाक्यस्य - of the words of the preceptor, सत्य बुध्यवधारणम् - understanding readily the exact import (of the above), सा - that, श्रद्धा - (as) faith, कथिता - is told, सद्भिः - by the wise, यया - by which, वस्तु - the real, उपलभ्यते - could be gained.

That is called the spirit of faith (Śraddha) by which an individual understands readily the exact import of the Scriptural texts as well as the pregnant words of advices of the preceptor by which alone the Reality of things becomes manifestly clear.

As fifth of the great qualifications necessary for the healthy mind and intellect which alone can ensure a smooth and successful career on the path of spirituality, here we

have the description of *Śraddha*. Perhaps, no other spiritual term has been so far so badly handled by the priest-class and so profitably polluted by the laity in Hinduism as this pregnant word of healthy suggestions, *Śraddha*.

In the name of '*Śraddha*' a perverted set of priests started trading upon the highly credulous but extremely ignorant community, shamelessly but successfully. *Śraddha* is not a blind faith as it is generally understood now. Here it is very clear in the definition of the *Acharya* that *Śraddha* is but a very healthy attempt at a clear intellectual appreciation of the secret depths of significance behind the pregnant words of the texts as well as of the teachers.

And indeed this is an unavoidable qualification for anyone who is trying to master the truths of the Scriptures. Scriptures give us through the technique of suggestions as clear a description of the Infinite Truth as possible, through the finite sounds and words. As such, the Pure Consciousness which is the core of the Reality in life, cannot be defined or expressed in words, but this supreme point of human evolution has been only indicated by the text of the Scriptures. As such, an honest and sincere effort on the part of the readers and students is unavoidable if the words indicating the Truth are to be correctly interpreted, understood and efficiently made use of. This capacity at realizing the words of the Scriptures in all their pregnant suggestiveness is termed as *Śraddha*.

A certain amount of *Śraddha* is even used by us in our everyday life. When my friend is narrating to me how he failed in love or how he was insulted by another, in his narrations, it is not so much the words that give me a complete idea of what he experienced but it is always my *Śraddha* in his words that illumines for me in all vividness his experience. If in the material world, it is my *Śraddha* in the words of the poet that makes me see the face of beauty; it is my *Śraddha* in the strokes and in the hues on the canvas that makes me realize the experiences of the painter; if it is my *Śraddha* in a given prospect that gives me a glimpse of its message of beauty and innocence—if, in the gross outer

life, *Śraddha* is so unavoidable, how much more it should be so in my attempt to understand the suggestive beauty, the indicative message and the implied meanings of the pregnant words of the Scriptures and of the teacher.

सर्वदा स्थापनं बुद्धेः शुद्धे ब्रह्मणि सर्वथा ।

तत्समाधानमित्युक्तं न तु चित्तस्य लालनम् ॥ २६ ॥

*sarvadā sthāpānam buddheḥ śuddhe brahmani sarvathā
tatsamādhānamityuktam na tu cittasya lālanam 26*

सर्वदा - Always, स्थापनम् - engaging, बुद्धेः - of the intellect, शुद्धे ब्रह्मणि - in the pure Brahman, सर्वथा - in all conditions, तत् - that, समाधानम् - tranquillity, इति - thus, उक्तम् - it is said, न तु - but not, चित्तस्यलालनम् - the oscillations of the intellect.

Samadhaṇ (Tranquillity) is that condition (experienced within) when the mind is constantly engaged in the contemplation of the Supreme Reality in all conditions; and it is not gained through any amount of intellectual oscillations.

There are everywhere in this country pseudo-Vedantins walking the path of false practices who have come to believe that a certain type of mental living is a Vedantic *sadhak's* trade marks ! These misguided people have been more a bane to the Indian culture than those who, in utter ignorance of our philosophy, have condemned it from the house-tops !

Generally in any country the atheist or the vehement critics do attract the general people towards an independent enquiry into the main text-books, but when we find that the so-called men of our culture, living the values of life supposed to have been advised in the traditions of our country, behave as low despicable creatures of crumbled values, necessarily the ordinary man of average intelligence comes immediately to a decision that there is something fundamentally wrong with that tradition. It is the lip-vedantins and pseudo-seekers that have damaged our edifice of Perfection and Truth more than a Ghazni or an Aurangzeb. They did break the idols; but by this the idols had become almost mud-pieces. It is the half-cooked Vedantins and seeming *Bhaktās*

that have, indeed, brought the mortal wounds upon the revered body of our society.

As we walk out and look round, we find the entire society falling under two groups—those who are ‘believers’ and those who are ‘non-believers’. The ‘believers’ are those who in their cowardice dare not face life properly, and have, therefore, come to blindly accept some superstitious ideas of religion and they live the life aimlessly in continuous fears and vague tremblings. These ineffectual beings, roaming about in languorous idleness are necessarily procreating more and more ‘non-believers’ in any healthy society; for, those who are alive to the beauties of life, who have a dignity of existence, who believe in the noble things of life, such an educated and potent society of healthy men will not and cannot—rather should not—subscribe to a faith that parades itself in self-suppression and in a tortoise-existence in their mental and intellectual life.

Samādhān, as it is understood today, is an ineffectual attitude towards both good and bad—especially towards insults and failures, threats and despairs! They believe that *Samādhān* is the mental attitude of an individual who has completely hardened himself and has grown to be insensible to the lashes of failures or to the spears of insults.

However, the *Acharya’s* definition of *Samādhān* does not sanction such a superstitious belief. Sankara is quite clear here in his meaning when he defines *Samādhān* as a state of poise and tranquillity that the mind comes to gain when it is trained sufficiently to revel continuously in the concept of a perfect ideal, at once universal and omnipotent.

Not only did Sankara define in positive terms *Samādhān* but the genius of the *Acharya* was not satisfied with his indirect definition; for, perhaps, he, in his own times, found that this term might be misunderstood by the faithful and easily misinterpreted. Therefore, he, in his definition also, denies that which is not true *Samādhān*.

He insists that *Samādhān* is not that state of the mind wherein in cowardice the individual sits quiet, daring not to

face life and its challenges, but mentally in the secret of his bosom goes on protesting against the scheme of destiny that he has to face in life. The tossings of the mind created by one's passive revolts against the life are the only gains he comes to earn from them. And if, at the same time, physically and intellectually he accepts it all silently in consummate cowardice, it is not *Samādhān* —as the term is generally understood. *Samādhān* is that mental state of stable equilibrium which comes to one when intellectually he is of deep foundations and mentally he soars to the highest pinnacles of greater visions.

When we are on the ground, certainly our neighbours are a nuisance to us. There may be a bitter and agonizing hatred born out of jealousy between ourselves and an individual or a party far away from us, say 10 or 20 miles in another village or town. But when we have taken off in a plane and the moment we have lifted ourselves a few hundred yards from the ground, all differences between *my* property and the *neighbour's* property merge; even mine and my enemy's properties smoulder into one unbroken mist of beauty—the glorious sight of mother earth lying stretched in all her grandeur and charm deep down spread out for us. In the aerial view of the world there is no disquieting mental agitations, because, in that vision of the oneness, the little differences of opinion about a boundary line seem to lose all their meaning and contents.

Similarly, when a spiritual aspirant raises himself into the nobler realms of the spiritual visions, his mind can no longer come to entertain any agitations at the ordinary levels of likes and dislikes. This poise, that is gained by the seekers as a result of their constant contemplation on the Supreme and the Divine, is termed as *Samadhan*; and naturally, this must be a special qualification for every seeker on the Path of Knowledge.

These six great qualifications that have been so far described, it is evident, are the unavoidable psychological traits in a fully evolved man who alone can walk the last lap of this journey with hope of success.

अहंकारादि देहान्तान्बन्धानज्ञान कल्पितान् ।

स्वस्वरूपावबोधेन मोक्तुमिच्छा मुमुक्षुता ॥ २७ ॥

*ahamkārādi dehāntān bandhān agnyāna kalpitān
svasvarūpāvabodhena moktumicchā mumukṣutā 27.*

अहंकारादिदेहान्तान् - From egoism to the body, बन्धान् - bondages, अज्ञान कल्पितान् - created by ignorance, स्व स्वरूपावबोधेन - by the knowledge of one's own real nature, मोक्तुम् - to be free, इच्छा - desire, मुमुक्षुता - (is) mumukṣuta.

Mumukshuta is the impatient and burning desires to release oneself from all bondages created in us through our ignorance of our Real Nature. The ignorance creates delusory chains of egoism for the body and the liberation is caused at the knowledge of the Real Nature of the Self.

In our discussions on the essential qualities in a successful spiritual seeker, we have discussed (i) discriminative capacity to understand the real from the unreal; (ii) capacity to get ourselves completely detached from the false which we have rightly understood now as unreal; (iii) the calmness, self-control, inner peace, forbearance, faith, self-settledness, which are explained as the qualities of the head and the heart to be positively developed; and as the last of the serial we have here (iv) a complete definition of the "spirit of seeking" that is unavoidable in every *Sādhak* called *Mumukṣutva*.

The burning aspiration of a seeker should not be an idle enthusiasm to gain some unknown goal through some mysterious intervention of a God or a teacher. He should definitely know what are his limitations and also what are the causes that provide him with his limitations. Also, he must definitely know what is his Goal and also the various techniques and paths by which he can gain his Goal. All these points are hinted at in this pithy small stanza.

Because of our *non-apprehension* of our Real Nature, *misapprehensions* about ourselves arise in our mind, such as the ego-centric identification with the body, mind and in-

tellec, together called the 'ego' and it is these identifications that give us our sense of limitations. The limitations are not of the Self. The Self knows no limitations. It is Infinite. It is absolute. It is perfection. While forgetting our Real Nature we come to estimate ourselves to be something other than ourselves, and this misunderstood personality is the sufferer, the finite mortal. To rediscover ourselves is to end all our sorrows. This is the consummate point of evolution pointed out by Vedanta.

A Lalaji having a substantial meal retires to a comfortable bed with his wife and children to take rest. There he starts his dream and experiences that he is a destitute thrown out into a wide world wherein, in a jungle, famished and broken he is running for safety and shelter when a lurking wild-beast follows him with equal hunger. The Lalaji runs, pants and toils to save himself and consequently jumps into the Ganges, and the touch of the cold water makes him wake up—only to find that he is profusely perspiring in his own little room.

The dreamer Lalaji, because of his misunderstandings about himself, forgetting his own real nature in which he is in all security sleeping with his wife and children in his own house, came to identify himself with his own mental creations and thus became the destitute of his dream. The moment he woke up, he rediscovered his real nature and he need not then run to the cupboard to take his gun and open the door to walk into the darkness, if not to kill, atleast to frighten that lion for once! The moment he woke up, he understood that he had never a hunger and that he was never in a jungle and that the lion was nothing but a delusion of his own creation.

Thus, in the ignorance of our real nature we start identifying with our ego-centric concepts—such as "I am the body", "I am the mind", "I am the intellect"—and thereafter the conditions of the body, mind and intellect become my conditions in my stupidity! To end this ignorance is to gain the Wisdom of the Reality.

A seeker, who has understood thus the logic of the true philosophical concept of the Self and the Vedantic explanation of his seeming sense of finitude and limitations, is the one who is meant here by Sankara when he explains a true seeker. Therefore, it is evident from the above that a *Mumukṣu* is not a blind seeker vaguely wanting to gain some unknown pleasures or developments within himself by some pseudo-spiritual activities and that too pursued only at a given time during the day. To be a seeker only for half-an-hour in the morning and in the evening is not to be a right pursuer of Knowledge.

To rediscover ourselves is to invite into life's cognition the greater intellect and the diviner consciousness. In order to turn the entire beam of my consciousness upon myself, I need purification of my mind and intellect and then slowly and steadily give them a turn; so that they may come to contemplate upon themselves. This inner revolution cannot be accomplished in a half-hearted hobby but it can only be the result of a life-long dedication and a full-time endeavour. Such a true seeker who is ready to live every moment of his awareful life in a diligent pursuit after the Real is the one who is meant here as a *Mumukṣu*.

मन्दमध्यमरूपापि वैराग्येण शमाधिना ।

प्रसादेन गुरोः सेयं प्रवृद्धा स्यते फलम् ॥ २८ ॥

*mandamadhyaamarūpāpi vairāgyena samādhinā
prasādena guruḥ seyam pravṛddhā syate phalam 28.*

मन्दमध्यमरूपापि - Even though it (the mumukṣutva) is dull or mediocre, शमाधिना - by calmness of the mind, etc., वैराग्येण - by detachment, प्रसादेन - by the grace, गुरोः - of the preceptor, स that, इयम् - this, प्रवृद्धा - increased, स्यते - produces, फलम् - fruit,

Third-rate and second-rate aspirations in a seeker may come to bear fruit through the grace of the Guru and by means of renunciation, calmness, etc.

The burning desire for self-redemption from one's known weaknesses and limitations can be increased and kept

at its highest tempo when one through steady and slow pursuit develops the above-mentioned qualities of a true seeker. By developing a capacity to discriminate between the Real and the unreal, when one has gained an easy control over oneself in renouncing that which is unreal, when one has, in his psychological make-up, cultivated by steady and conscious self-effort the qualities of self-control, tranquillity of the mind, inward peace, endurance, faith and mental poise, the aspirations in him gain an edge and an irresistible effectiveness.

In short, the four great qualities that have been enumerated now by Sankara, have got among themselves a relationship, so much so that having developed one, the others automatically come to flourish in the same bosom. Therefore, one who has got only a minimum share of aspirations or just a mediocre aspiration need not despair but is advised by the great *Acharya* to cultivate in himself the other above-mentioned three qualities and he promises that the student shall come to experience more and more of the burning aspiration for the Highest.

The "Guru-grace-trick" has been a very lucrative profession in our country during recent years. The credulous public, who were themselves demanding the cheap methods for the highest gains, were made an easy prey by self-appointed *Gurus* in this sacred land. *Gurudom* had been a very big concern in recent times of our economic poverty. Without any investment, if a young man wants to make immense and quick gains, there can be no better profession than to become one of those unscrupulous *Gurus* in our country. The trade has come to such low depths that there are *Gurus* available now who can, through the nation's postal service, send to their distant disciples packets of grace and glory of curative strength and prosperity, of failure-resisting-talisman and children-bearing seeds, or even of packets of God's own vermilion-glory! All these mind you, at a reasonable rate quoted *ex-godown*!! Sankara's statement here does not of course want such a free trade in ignominy.

A true teacher of inward vision and perfect life cannot by any logic come to dispense a greater share of his grace to known people of his own choice, nor can he withhold his grace from another. In fact, the distribution of grace is not controlled by the *Guru* but it is a question of the capacity of the recipient.

The perfect-man living as his own Self equally disseminates his joyous perfections, cheer and bliss to all, at all times. It depends upon the equipments that come around him to take a greater or a lesser share.

The waters of the ocean do not put a ban upon the quantity that you can carry from it; the limitations are the limitations of your own pot. The sun does not ration its light from house to house or from room to room but it is the walls that deny the entry of sunlight into a room. The river flows : everything depends upon the canals that you cut in taking its waters to your land.

Similarly, a *Guru* or the teacher, beaming in his own perfections, give out the knowledge in his own intimate language and experience, and it depends upon the individual seekers to get themselves benefited as much as they can.

The expression here only shows that when a seeker has developed in himself, *viveka*, *vairāgya* and *śad sampati*, his *mumukṣutva* increases automatically, and one, who has got these four great qualifications, can come in contact with the *Guru* more profitably. The greater these qualifications manifest in an individual, the greater will the seeker be in tune with the master and, therefore, he will be able to understand the significances of the teacher's words more completely and exhaustively.

वैराग्यं च मुमुक्षुत्वं तीव्रं यस्य तु विद्यते ।

तस्मिन्नेवार्थवन्तः स्युः फलवन्तः शमादयः ॥ २९ ॥

vairāgyam ca mumukṣutvam tīvram yasya tu vidyate
tasminnevārthavanth syuh phalavantah śamādayah 29

वैराग्यम् - Spirit of renunciation, च - and, मुमुक्षुत्वम् - yearning for freedom, तीव्रम् - intense, यस्य - in whom, तु - indeed, विद्यते - is, तस्मिन् - in him, एव - alone, अर्थवन्तः - meaningful, स्युः - shall be, फलवन्तः - fruitful, शमादयः - the (practice of) calmness, etc.

Calmness and other practices have their meaning and they bear fruit, indeed, only in whom has an intense spirit of renunciation and yearning for freedom.

There are many seekers who, having practised for long the great six qualities, such as, calmness, etc., complain that they have not been progressing at all. Vedantic practice is not a training in ethics or morality. These great qualities are mainly to create an ethical and moral atmosphere in the psychological field of the seeker. "Merely by living an honest life", there are many spiritual cowards who ask, "can't we reach the Perfection which is explained as Godhood?" This question has become very rampant in these days and they, in their confusion, and perhaps, intellectual fatigue, refuse to make a thorough study of the *Śāstras*.

They merely claim for themselves a "true living" in their own honest endeavours in life: they say, "I am very dutiful; I earn honestly; I look after my home and dependants, and to the extent I can afford it, I share my wealth with others in a spirit of charity. I believe that I am a nobler soul than those who practise the so-called spiritual discipline."

This wrong notion has been answered by Sankara when he says that the qualities of self-restraint, self-control, purity, etc., can bear their ultimate fruit only when they are in an individual who has the complete sense of detachment born out of discrimination and a burning aspiration to peep over the limitations of his mortal existence in the finite world of plurality. The destiny of those whom I have met, who had been living "an honest life all the time", is indeed quite heart-rending!! They live this finite world in sensuous excesses, running after the mirage of wealth, power, popularity, enjoyments, etc., and though their means are fair, their

goal has always been of a low finite nature. And, therefore, whenever they come across, in their pilgrimage, a ditch of hatred or a mount of challenge, they sit back fatigued and weary, to blame religion and their own philosophy based upon a hollow and meaningless ethical living. Since they have not got any spiritual evolution out of their pure living, whenever the scheme of things around them change, they find themselves lost. Without the spiritual stamina, no one can stand up to the threats and onslaughts of circumstances in life. Sankara here is very clear when he says that *śama* (Calmness) etc., cannot bear fruit unless they grow in a heart watered by detachment and ploughed by an intense wish-for-liberation.

एतयोर्मन्दता यत्र विरक्तत्वमुमुक्षयोः ।

मरौ सलिलवत्तत्र शमादेर्भानमात्रता ॥ ३० ॥

*etayormandatā yatra viraktatvamumukṣayoh
marou salilavattatra śamāderbhānamātrātā 30.*

एतयोः - These two, मन्दता - dull, यत्र - wherever, विरक्तत्वमुमुक्षयोः - detachment and desire for liberation, मरौ - in the desert, सलिलवत् - like water, तत्र - there, शमादेः - of calmness of mind, etc., भानमात्रता - only an appearance,

Calmness, etc., become as ineffectual as 'the mirage water' in his who has but a weak detachment and a fitful yearning for freedom.

The idea expressed in the previous stanza is now reinforced with another statement in this stanza. Not only that calmness, etc., can bear fruit in a heart of detachment and sense of self-discovery, but Sankara says that *śama*, etc., cannot even effervesce in a bosom where detachment is weak and the yearning for liberation brittle, spasmodic and eccentric. Seekers, who are now facing a blind alley in their progress may very well—perhaps with much profit—look back upon their own wasteful days of seeming practices and re-equip themselves for a surer and faster flight to success. A correct understanding about themselves shall, certainly, give them the secret key to the Halls of Success.

In those who have neither the spirit of detachment from the unreal, nor a consistent aspiration to evolve themselves, true calmness etc., cannot flourish. The *Acharya* says that in such people self-control, self-restraint, joy and happiness are all mere delusions; they are only a similitude of Reality; they do not come to thrive well and flower forth to bear fruits. This we can observe even among many of our present *Mahatmās*, who, by their dress and profession, declare their detachment and *Mumukṣutva* and yet, in their life they seem to enjoy no calmness, etc., to experience no joy, to practise no self-control. In such individuals where true *vairāgya* and *Mumukṣutva* are absent, *śama* etc., can never bear fruit, or grow, or even germinate.

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ।

स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥ ३१ ॥

mokṣākāraṇasāmagryām bhaktirevya garīyasi
svasvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate

मोक्षकारणसामग्र्यां - Among the instruments and conditions necessary for liberation, भक्तिः - devotion, एव - alone, गरीयसी - the most important, स्वस्वरूपानुसन्धानम् - constant attempt to live up to one's own Real Nature, भक्तिः इति - as Bhakti (devotion), अभिधीयते - is designated.

Among the instruments and conditions necessary for liberation, the most important is Bhakti (devotion) alone. A constant attempt to live up to one's own Real Nature is called single-pointed Devotion.

Assuming for once that the seeker has a large share of intelligent detachment, a conspicuous amount of anxiety to liberate from his own inborn weaknesses, and also a fully developed moral and ethical life in himself, the question comes to one's mind, "what should be the practice that one should adopt in order that one may integrate oneself into a proportionately beautiful divine existence.

According to Vedānta, the means of self-integration on the Path of Knowledge is "*Ātma Vichar*" or constant medi-

tations upon the nature of the Eternal Self in us. But Sankara is trying to make use of a popular word to indicate the subtle practice of meditation. In so doing, there are critics who complain that the *Prachhan Bowddha* (the "veiled Buddhist," as they called Sankara sometimes) is playing upon the credulity of the people and taking away the folk with the familiar name into his own den! There are *Dwaitins* who criticize this stanza and say that the *Acharya* is deceiving the true seekers by the word '*Bhakti*', mis-interpreted and mis-conceived as pure meditation!

According to Sankara, *Bhakti* is the path; but he adds a codicil explaining the term *Bhakti*. According to the author of the Upanishad commentaries, the great champion of Non-dualism, *Bhakti* is not a practice of beggary at the feet of a noble ideal, however noble and transcendental that Truth be; but, he defines 'Devotion' openly as "a constant and consistent self-effort in raising the ego-centre from the welter of its false values to the memory and dignity of the Self-hood".

In thus defining *Bhakti*, Sankara cannot be criticized, at least by those who understand what he says. *Bhakti*, as it has come down to us today, represents almost a superstitious conception, stinking in its own decadence, a moral dread, a disgusting intellectual slavery, a crawling mental attitude, a blind dependence upon a Supreme God to take us away from all our own self-created mischiefs—*Bhakti* has come to mean this in the popular conception today—and we find a self-ruined society being faithfully courted by a profit-seeking priest-class, functioning generally from spiritually polluted centres that have come to be called as 'temples'. Individuals, in these days, who are visiting the temples with the seeming symptoms of devotion, after psycho-analysis, are found to be a set of hapless personalities with neither the courage to face life, nor, the conviction to renounce, neither the mental stamina to live, nor the intellectual vigour to enquire, neither the imagination to believe, nor the daring to disbelieve—they are mainly a crowd of men flocking towards the sanctum—half in fear and half in deluded hopes!!

Such a devotee, in the presence of his 'dreadful' God who will be angry at every weakness of the mortal, but can be a convenient abettor to the devotee's own criminal intentions in society and life, cannot be expected to grow spiritually or to gain any satisfaction from his Religion. This is an ugly caricature of the great theory of *Bhakti* as expounded by Vyasa in his *Narada Bhakti Sutra*. According to the *Bhakti Sutra*, God-devotion has been described as "*Para-anurakti*", the supreme, unquestioned love for the Lord which seeks no reward for itself.

As a Middle-East writer beautifully says, "Love gives naught but itself, and takes naught but itself; Love possesses not, nor would it be possessed; for, love is sufficient unto love." This being so, the best of love is in the lover's attunement with the beloved. The attunement is successful to the degree the lover identifies himself with the beloved.

Thus, identification is the measuring-rod of life. When the identification is complete, the love is fulfilled. Identification of the little ego with all its weaknesses, imperfections and limitations with the Absolute Reality, Perfection, Bliss, Knowledge-Pure, is achieved through a constant remembrance of the Nature of the Self. When the finite ego-centre gets itself released from its false notions of limitations, it itself discovers to be nothing other than the Supreme, and in this self-discovery it experiences its complete identification with the self. Then alone is love entirely fulfilled.

This process is accomplished through a constant awareness of the Divine in us. This constant awareness can be maintained only if we maintain in ourselves an unbroken streak of divine thoughts. Thus, *Anusandhān* when it is unbroken, increases the frequency of the divine thoughts in us, and the frequency of a thought when it comes to the degree of frequency with which the ego-idea is persisting now in our hearts, we shall be able to experience the Divine as intimately and freely as we experience now our own ego-centric life.

Therefore, with a correct understanding of the practical implication of "*ātma vicār*" and the suggestions of the

Bhakti Mārga, when we re-read the stanza, we find that Sankara is only too true when he says that for those who want to walk the Path of Knowledge and reach the Ultimate, the most efficient technique is *Bhakti* re-stated in its correct meaning.

स्वात्मतत्त्वानुसन्धानं भक्तिरित्यपरे जगुः ।

उपसीदेद्गुरुं प्राज्ञं यस्माद्बन्धविमोक्षणम् ॥

उक्तसाधनसम्पन्नस्तत्त्वजिज्ञासुरात्मनः ॥ ३२ ॥

*svātmataṭvānusandhānam bhaktirityapare jaguh
upasīdedgurum prāṅnam yasmādbandhavimokṣanam
uktasādhanaśampannastatvajīgnāsurātmanah 32.*

स्वात्मतत्त्वानुसन्धानं - Constant enquiry into the Real Nature of one's own Self, भक्तिः इति - as Bhakti (devotion), अपरे - others, जगुः - declared, उपसीदेत् - should approach, प्राज्ञं गुरुम् - the learned preceptor, यस्मात् - by which (contact), बन्धविमोक्षणम् - release from bondages (is gained), उक्त साधन सम्पन्नः - the one who has the above mentioned qualifications, तत्त्वजिज्ञासुरात्मनः - who is anxious to know the contents of the Self.

Others say that Bhakti means a constant enquiry into the Real Nature of one's own Self—One who has got the above mentioned qualifications and is anxious to know the Self must, therefore, devotedly serve a teacher well-established in Knowledge for redeeming him from his bondage.

Continuing the definition of *Bhakti*, Sankara quotes some other great writers who had declared before him that true devotion lies in a constant awareness of one's own Real Nature. There is a subtle difference between the previous definition and the present. The previous definition prescribes the *path* by which devotion is gained, and the present one declares *love as its own goal*. One is said to be 'devoted' to his profession when he is constantly aware of his duties in his profession. A full-time dedicated life towards any activity is called, even in our ordinary life, as *devotion*. Examples of devoted wife, devoted son, devoted husband, devoted student etc., are not very uncommon in our every day language.

To live as the Self, and to meet others in life during our life's intercourses, standing upon this solid foundation of the true nature of the Self, is the culmination of Knowledge—and this is termed by Sankara as *Bhakti*. In short, he is defining *Bhakti* both as the means and an end in itself; love is the means to gain love, and love which is the means is itself its own true end. The royal path of a seeker is through love to Love.

In thus hinting at the glory of true devotion both in its application and in its living, the author continues prescribing other practices necessary for a Vedantic seeker during his process of self-evolution. That seeker who has the above-mentioned qualifications—such as (i) discrimination (ii) detachment; (iii) the six qualities of calmness etc.; and (iv) a burning desire for liberation—in order that he may get himself redeemed from his own inner weaknesses, attachment, animalisms and false values, he is advised to serve with devotion a teacher who is well-established in the experience of the Self.

We have already decried* the *Guru-trick* in India, which has brought a credulous society fall so precipitously into the depths of its own utter decadence. As without an instructor we cannot learn even as simple a thing as opening the door of a car, or the art of typing, or even the art of eating, we cannot decry the need for a teacher in instructing us to live intelligently. The difficulty now-a-days is to find the right type of teacher whom the Scriptures call the '*Guru*'. Sankara indicates the qualities of the *Guru* by the simple but pregnant expression *Pragnyān*—meaning, 'one who is established in his own intimate experience of the Divine Consciousness in himself'.

'Upasana of the *Guru*' is not a mere servile attendance upon him in an attitude of growing disgust, or in a mood of melancholy dis-satisfaction. The disciple, out of sheer love and reverence for the master, forgets himself and serves the master at all times and in all ways; thereby the student is

* In the elaborations of Stanza 28.

made to remember constantly the glories and qualities of the master. This constant mental awareness of the ideal in the *Guru* slowly and steadily raises the moral tempo and ethical goodness in the student, who thereby finds himself well-established in his inward purity, which would have, otherwise, taken him painful years to develop.

Again, this sort of love-making with the *Guru*, not through the heart and its sentiments, but through the intellect and its idealisation, makes the disciple efficient to set himself in unison with the master which is an unavoidable necessity for the student if he is to be really benefited by the master's original ideas, minted in the seer's own inward experiences. When words of suggestions and deep import are given out by a teacher in an all-consuming spirit of inspiration, the student understands the teacher, not necessarily because of the word-meanings, but because of the inspired suggestiveness of the teacher's pregnant words. It is for this sacred reason that Sankara is compelled to declare that as a result of *Guru Upāsana* the student is rendered capable of liberating himself from his own limitations.

श्रोत्रियोऽवृजिनोऽकामहतो यो ब्रह्मवित्तमः ।
 ब्रह्मण्युपरतः शान्तो निरिन्धन इवानलः ।
 अहेतुकदयासिन्धुर्बन्धुरानमतां सताम् ॥ ३३ ॥

*śrotriyovrjino (a) kāmahato yo brahmavittamah
 brahmanyuparatah sānto nirindhana ivānalah
 aheturakadayāsindhurbandhurānamatām satām 33.*

श्रोत्रियः - (he who is) well versed in scriptures, अवृजिनः - sinless, अकामहतः - unsmitten by desires, यः - he who, ब्रह्मवित्तमः - a full knower of the Supreme, ब्रह्मणि - in the Supreme, उपरतः - abiding, शान्तः - peaceful, निरिन्धनः - devoid of fuel, अनलःइव - like fire, अहेतुकदयासिन्धुः - ocean of mercy that needs no cause for its expression, बन्धुः - an intimate friend, आनमताम् सताम् - to those good people who surrender unto him.

He who is well-versed in the Scriptures, sinless, unsmitten by desires, a full-knower of the supreme, who has retired himself into the Consciousness of the Supreme, who is as calm as the fire that has burnt up all the fuel, who is a boundless ocean of mercy that knows no cause for its expression and who is a 'father' of those who approach him with due reverence and meekness.

Sankara exhausts his enumeration of the qualities of the true *Guru* in this stanza, and supplements his previous declaration that the master should be well-established in the Supreme-Consciousness. He adds here certain qualities which, on a closer observation, declare that every man of realization and wisdom cannot aspire to and become an efficient teacher in spiritualism. To guide and instruct a deluded soul and help him to unwind himself out of the knotty wrong traits in him, one must have something more than a perfect experience. The teacher must have, no doubt, full realization, but he must also have a complete grasp of the great Scriptures; because, without the study of the Scriptures, the master who has experience, will not have the language or the technique of expression to convey his deep Knowledge to his disciples.

Apart from the spiritual knowledge and erudition, the individual must have a large share of self-control and the immense riches of a well-developed heart. He must have an irresistible flow of mercy which demands no special cause for its manifestations, especially when it descends upon those who have surrendered themselves to him and have desperately reached the feet of the master as a spiritual 'refugee'.

It is to be noted that, as in any constitution, the laws are prescribed both for the governors and the governed; similarly, here also, since *Viveka Chūdāmani* is a text-book laying down the rules for, and explaining the laws of spiritual progress, Sankara is as much vehement in prescribing the qualities necessary for a spiritual seeker as he is equally exhaustive in describing the qualities of an honest and true teacher.

तमाराध्यं गुरुं भक्त्या प्रह्वप्रश्रयसेवनैः ।

प्रसन्नं तमनुप्राप्य पृच्छेज्ज्ञातव्यमात्मनः ॥ ३४ ॥

*tamārādhyā gurum bhaktyā prahvaprāśrayasevanaih
prasannam tamanuprāpya prechetgnātavyamātmanah 34.*

तम् - that, गुरुम् - the preceptor, आराध्य - worshipping, प्रह्वप्रश्रय
सेवनैः - with surrender, humility and service, प्रसन्नम् - pleased, तम् -
him, अनुप्राप्य - approaching, पृच्छेत् - should ask, ज्ञातव्यम् - what is to
be known, आत्मनः - by one.

Worshipping that Guru in deep devotion through nursing,
serving and comforting him, when he is pleased with your
humility and service, you must approach him and ask him
what you want to know.

The stanza makes it clear that no amount of enquiring
into or discussing with a teacher is of any avail unless the
student has taken enough time to tune himself with the
teacher. The essence of Sat-Sang lies in the perfect attune-
ment.

Spiritualism is not a thing that we can start discussing
and arguing among ourselves to while away an idle hour,
completely forgetting all about it in a third-class waiting-
room on the Indian Railways. In fact it is to be under-
stood in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity; and in
this understanding, it is an attempt at comprehending the
deep experiences of the master expressed not through words,
but perhaps, through the ring of the words and the flavour
of sincerity that the words carry when they come from his
heart, throbbing with his own 'niṣṭa.' As such, Sankara
here is explaining how the seeker should approach the
teacher and learn, first of all, to love him, and later on,
through love-inspired acts of service, how he must get into
a loving intimacy soaked with reverence.

In Vedanta, the method of approaching the teacher has
almost been over-emphasized. But these are, unfortunately,
days when, over the 'phone', a seeker from the other end of
the city enquires of a teacher to convince him about the

Goal of Life, the Path, the Means, etc.! Such a telephone-tuition is not possible in spiritualism, and the seeker of spiritual life and religious Truth is asked to approach the master with an attitude of surrender and receptivity. Then alone can the teacher fill the disciple with the Knowledge of the Self.

In this stanza, it has been very clearly indicated that seekers should not misuse the teacher and discuss with him secular questions or domestic problems. It is almost prohibited. He has to ask him only of that special Knowledge of the Self in which the teacher is perfect.

स्वामिन्नमस्ते नतलोकबन्धो

कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवाब्धौ ।

मामुद्धरात्मीयकटाक्षदृष्ट्या

ऋज्व्यातिकारुण्यसुधाभिवृष्ट्या ॥ ३५ ॥

svāminnamaste natalokabandho

kārunyasindho patitam bhavābdhou

māmuddharātmīyakatākṣadṛṣṭyā

ṛjvṛyātīkārunyasudhābhivṛṣṭyā 35.

स्वामिन् - O Master, नमः - salutation, ते - to thee, नतलोकबन्धो - O father of those who reverentially surrender to thee, कारुण्यसिन्धो - Thou, the ocean of mercy, पतितम् - fallen, भवाब्धौ - in the sea of change, माम् - me, उद्धरीय - save, ऋज्व्या - with a direct, अति कारुण्य-सुधाभिवृष्ट्या - raining the nectarine grace supreme, आत्मीय कटाक्षदृष्ट्या - thy eyes' glance.

O Master, O father of those who reverentially surrender to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I bow to thee; save me who has fallen into the "Sea of Change" with a direct glance from thy eyes which rain the nectarine grace supreme.

Characteristically oriental in style, the poet Sankara here gets himself beyond the control of the philosopher in him. Any estimate of Sankara as a philosopher cannot be complete without recognizing the Poet in him and there are

moments when even while writing his commentaries upon the Upanishads, he forgets himself that he is a philosopher, whose religion should be in economy of words and precision of expression. There are moments when the poet Sankara supersedes the philosopher. Here is an example where he uses an expression full of hyperbole. The modern newspaper reading generation may not easily come to experience directly the poetic beauty of the stanza unless they are hauled up and made to notice it.

This is a stanza which provides the seekers with a perfect prayer-verse addressed to the *Guru*. Prayer is not a beggary, although in almost all the religions of the world today, it has come to gather meaning almost scandalous and painful in utter beggary. To beg of the Lord for something or the other, and for the sake of which we chant and sing glorified words of praise for Him along with sweets and candles, is an act with which we are pulling down the Immortal and the Perfect to the level of desire-riddled human creatures. God in His own Glory needs none of our glorifications; nor has He any desire to partake the objects that the devotee in his love can offer Him: He being the giver of all and ever the Perfectly Satisfied.

And yet, how is it that every prophet, irrespective of clime and the period of His manifestation, has invariably advised his devotees to approach the Lord with offerings and prayers? When we analyse the science of these prophets the Eternal Masters of the world, invariably we notice that they have emphasized the idea that God is not purchasable nor is He available for one's persuasions to be an ally in one's animalistic activities. But a true devotee is advised to surrender himself at the feet of the Lord through prayer, love and devotion in order that during the surrender, the Nobler and the Diviner in him now lying dormant may come to manifest.

Here is a trick of "stooping to conquer". The devotee in love while he prostrates in front of the idol, he, to that degree comes to surrender his ego, the vanities of false values in him and his attachments to his body, mind, etc.

It is these false attachments that make one the animal that one is and effectively cut him away from his own divine nature as the Pure, Almighty Consciousness, or Life. The surrender of the ego is the unveiling of more and more of the Divine in oneself and to the degree the Divine is manifest, to that degree the individual raises himself in his potency to face life and to remain composed in all circumstances.

Here a Vedantic student is asked to surrender himself to the *Guru* and to praise him in *kīrtan* and serve him with meek surrender. This prescription is not to make the student intellectually a slave to the teacher but these are the practices that are mentioned, which, when pursued for some time, easily make the student fully tuned up to the teacher's heart. What the teacher has to convey is the experience of the Transcendental. The Infinite cannot be defined in finite words. As such, the words of the master echo their messages only in a bosom that has been stilled in complete love.

The discordant notes echoed in the bosom of the disciple create disturbances, which molest, rape and disturb the true significance of the scriptural words, which the master uses during his discourses. In order that the instrument in us may not create of its own accord any discordant notes and break the harmony, the student is asked to serve and surrender, to pray and worship at the master's feet.

दुर्वारसंसारदवाग्नितप्तं

दोधूयमानं दुरदृष्टवातैः ।

भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाहि मृत्योः

शरण्यमन्यं यदहं न जाने ॥ ३६ ॥

durvārasamsāradavāgnitaptam

dodhūyamānam duradr̥ṣṭavātaiḥ

bhītam prapanham paripāhi mṛtyoh

śaranyamanyam yadaham na jāne 36.

दुर्वार संसार द्वाग्निमयम् - being roasted in the blazing infernal 'fire of change', दोधूयमानम् - being tossed, दुरदृष्ट्वातैः - by the storms of misfortunes, भीतम् - terrified, प्रपन्नम् - seeking refuge, (as I am), परिपाहि - save me, मृत्योः - from the death process, शरण्यम् - abode of refuge, अन्यम् - another, यद् - because, अहम् - I, न - not, जाने - know.

I am being roasted in the blazing infernal 'Fire of Change';
I am being tossed in the cruel storms of life; I am terrified
(without and within)—O Lord! save me from the death—
process; I seek refuge in thee; for, I do not know of any
other harbour wherein to seek my shelter.

A comparison of the rhyme and tune of this stanza with the previous would certainly give us an insight into the mastery of Sankara with his pen in poetry. If the former is a melodious flow of peaceful tranquillity, a flow that removes all the cloggings of the heart and allows it to move freely into molten love and liquid surrender, this stanza in its brisk trot-movement exhibits in its very rhythm and sound an irresistible impatience and a pressing urgency.

The first line in the stanza explains the dangers to which the seeker is exposed; while in the second line, we have an indication of the dangers that he has realised which are besetting him from his within. In the outer world of his contact with things, he is overwhelmed by sorrows of an over-changing pattern, while in himself he recognises an endless storm caused by his likes and dislikes, his loves and hatreds, his hopes and disappointments. In short, these two lines beautifully summarize the experience of finitude which is the lot of all seekers before he enters the Hall of Wisdom.

It is only when an individual comes to develop his sensibility, so subtle as to recognize these weaknesses in life that he comes to feel such a pressing urgency for liberation as it is expressed herein. When he comes to experience thus a burning desire for liberation he comes to demand of the *Guru* a safety and shelter from the threatening songs of death with its poisoning evil experiences in him in life. Here we should not construe *death* to mean only the experience

called death, with which we are so familiar, but it is to be understood in the largest sense of the term as the poison of finitude. Every moment there is death, each experience dies away, and out of the ashes, as it were, springs the next circumstance to be experienced. The disciple is asking for guidance to the Realms beyond death—a state of living in which the experience of life is one continuous, homogeneous, Bliss Absolute !

This stanza, again, is a prayer addressed to the *Guru* which the student is repeating from the bottom of his heart, thereby making his attunement with the *Guru* more and more perfect and complete.

शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो

वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः ।

तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्णवं जना

नहेतुनान्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥ ३७ ॥

śāntā mahānto nivasanti santo

vasantavalloka-hitam carantah

tīrṇāḥ svayam bhīmabhavarṇavam janān

ahetunānyānapi tārayantah 37.

शान्ताः - Peaceful, महान्तः - magnanimous, सन्तः - saintly souls, निवसन्ति - live, वसन्तवत् - (who) like the spring season, लोकहितम् - the good of humanity, चरन्तः - doing, तीर्णाः - who have crossed over, स्वयम् - themselves, भीमभवार्णवम् - the dreadful ocean of finitude, अन्यान् - other, जनान् - people, अपि - also, अहेतुना - without any motive whatsoever, तारयन्तः - help them cross (the ocean of finitude).

There are peaceful and magnanimous, saintly souls, who, out of their own nature, ever do good to others, as the spring does in the world, and, who, having crossed themselves the dreadful ocean of finitude through their own self-effort, help others also to cross the same without any motive whatsoever.

Here is a stanza which explains the ever-flowing instinctive goodness of a saintly person who is a true teacher. A man of full realization becomes instinctively a lover of the entire universe—a love which demands no cause for it to bloom into a wealth of blossom. One who has discovered the Self within himself to be nothing other than the All-Pervading Consciousness which is One-without-a-second, he instantaneously discovers his own Self to be at the core for all the pluralistic forms around him.

Living, as he does, in this intimate understanding of oneness, he cannot but love others as himself. In his case, the universal love is not an art to be practised, not a formality to be followed, or a goal to be reached, but it is the very breath of his existence. This can be brought within the understanding of the ordinary people through a comparison.

There can be no occasion when you can ever feel a constant and continuous hatred with any part of your own body. Even if the hand or the leg had given you a dose of pain, on realizing it to be your own hand or leg, you suddenly cool down to a divine mercy. For example, if your right hand finger strikes your own right eye, it is a case of a part of your body giving pain to another part of your own body. At such moments, with a terrible protest of anger mixed with pain, we think for a while, and immediately when we realize that it is our own right hand fore-finger that was the accused, we seem to cool down into an irresistible spirit of mercy and tolerance, and paternally ignore both of them!!

This is a case where we are perfectly aware that any punishment given to the fore-finger would be only at best an added dose of pain to ourselves. Similarly, when an individual has realized that his own Reality within himself is the pith of the substance that constitutes the others in the universe, mercy and tolerance, love and kindness are natural and continuous in his bosom for all others in the world.

On understanding the essence of the truth in ourselves, we come to gain a freedom from the sense of finitude which was ours so long as we were identifying ourselves with the

body, mind and intellect. Since these disturbances can no longer reach the bosom of a Man-of-perfection, it is one of the surest symptoms of knowledge and saintliness if we can observe an individual under all provocative circumstances, infinitely at peace with himself and the world. Thus, *Śānt* is a symbol of a man of true broad-mindedness which thrives on kindness, tolerance, etc., and is the Flag of Realization.

To say that a *Mahāpuruṣa* after self-realization, casting off his desires, will retire totally to a dark corner in the Himalayas to count his days of forced existence in this corporeal form is a misreading of our sacred texts. He may dwell in the cave, or may walk out in the market place; where he will live is no problem at all for him. But the sign of realization is that, wherever he be—either in a jail among criminals, or among devotees in a temple—irresistibly, instinctively, he will be spreading around him an aura of knowledge, light, cheer, joy and peace. It is irresistible with him. It is not caused by him. It is his nature. We cannot say that the fire creates or generates heat; heat is the nature of fire.

Here, Sankara gives us an inimitable example when he compares the *Mahātmās*, and the joy-touch that they lend to the world at large, with the spring season. We cannot say that when the spring comes, it courts every tree to bring forth its flowers; nor does the spring reach the world and successfully canvas the moon to be brighter, the sky to be clearer and cleaner, the grass to be thicker, and every heart to be more joyous; The presence of the spring and the above conditions of the season are both instantaneous. One cannot be without the other.

Similarly, it is necessarily an active plan and programme of the *Mahātmā* to spread knowledge and cheer around him, and whenever the world of seekers reach such a great Seer, we find that irresistibly they are drawn to bask in the benign beams of cheer.

The poetic suggestion in thus explaining the qualities of a master is that a teacher, revelling in his own experience,

is one who helps unasked even others to cross the shores of delusions and sorrows; and therefore, to surrender to such a one, requesting him to save us from our misunderstandings, is to assure for us a sure liberation—almost a luxury-boat of Truth.

अयं स्वभावः स्वतः एव यत्परः

श्रमापनोदप्रवर्णं महात्मनाम् ।

सुधांशुरेष स्वयमर्ककर्कश-

प्रभाभितप्तमवति क्षितिं किल ॥ ३८ ॥

ayam svabhāvaḥ svata eva yatparah

śramāpanodapraṇaṇam mahātmanām

sudhāmsūreṣa svayamarkakarkāśa

prabhābhitaptā mavati kṣitim kila 38.

अयम् - This, स्वभावः - nature, स्वतः - natural, एव - indeed, यत् - which, परश्रमापनोदप्रवर्णं - inclination to remove the troubles of others, महात्मनाम् - of the magnanimous, सुधांशुः - moon, एषः - this, स्वयम् - by itself, अर्ककर्कशः प्रभाभितप्तम् - scorched by the flaming rays of the sun, क्षितम् - the earth, अवति - saves (cools), किल - does it not ?

It is but the nature of Mahatmas to stir about in their magnanimity in removing, of their own accord, all the troubles of others. Thus, moon, for instance, voluntarily saves (cools), as everybody knows, the earth scorched by the flaming rays of the sun.

To emphasize that the noble qualities of magnanimity, cheer, etc., noticed in a perfect master are but natural with him and are not the product of his self-tutored habit, Sankara is giving another mellifluous stanza. In painting fully the irresistible nature of the *Mahātmanās* which is, to serve others in sheer love, he compares a seer with the moon. He directs our attention to the fact that moon is the one who alone can, and with effortless ease does cool the parched earth when it gets roasted itself under the burning rays of the sun. Here, it also indicates that nothing else can cool the earth so satisfactorily as the moon-light, and also that

here is no chance ever of the moon-light adding a single calorie of heat to the earth. The company of the wise is the surest remedy to cool down our bosom to complete peace and happiness when it is in conflagration with its desires and hatreds, attachments and yearnings.

In stanza 34, we have been told that the disciple should, having approached a true master, make him pleased with his service and prostrations. Sankara has, so far, spent four stanzas in praise of the masters to express the attitude of total surrender of the disciple to the teacher. In the following stanza, we hear a definite and pointed request to the master to answer the doubts so that with his inspired discourses and explanations the seeker may be lifted out of the ruts of his own wrong thinking. It is an elaborate metaphor, so beautifully executed that its finish and grace remind us of some of the classical works in Sanskrit.

ब्रह्मानन्दरसानुभूतिकलितैः पूतैः सुशीतैर्युतै-
 र्युष्मद्वाक्कलशोज्जितैः श्रुतिसुखैर्वाक्यामृतैः सेचय ।
 संतप्तं भवतापदावदहनज्वालाभिरेनं प्रभो
 धन्यास्ते भवदीक्षणक्षणगतेः पात्रीकृताः स्वीकृताः ॥ ३९ ॥

*brahmānandasāsānubhūṭikalitaiḥ pūtaiḥ suśīṭairyutaiḥ
 uṣmadvākkalaśojjitaiḥ śrutisukhairvākyaṃrtaiḥ secaya
 samtaptam bhavatāpadāvadahanajvālābhirenam prabho
 dhanyāste bhava dīkṣanakṣanagateḥ patrikṛtāḥ svīkṛtāḥ 39*

ब्रह्मानन्दरसानुभूतिकलितैः - honeyed by the enjoyment of the elixir-like bliss of Brahman, पूतैः - pure, सुशीतैः युतैः - and cooling too, युष्मद्वाक्कलशोज्जितैः - issuing in streams from thy lips as from a pitcher, श्रुतिसुखैः - delightful to the ear, वाक्यामृतैः - with the nectar-like speech, सेचय - do thou shower, संतप्तम् - tormented, भवतापदावदहनज्वालाभिः - by earthly afflictions as by the tongues of the forest fire, एनम् - this man (me), प्रभो - O Lord, धन्याः - blessed, ते - are those, भवदीक्षणक्षणगतेः - for the movement of thy glance for a moment, पात्रीकृताः - who have been made the recipients, स्वीकृताः - who have been taken under your protection.

O Lord, with thy nectarine speech, honeyed by the enjoyment of the elixir-like bliss of Brahman, pure, cooling, issuing in streams from thy lips as from a water-pot, and delightful to the ear—do thou shower upon me who am tormented by earthly afflictions as by the tongues of the forest fire. Blessed are those on whom falls even a sick-glance from thine eyes, accepting them under your protection as thine own.

Sanskrit metaphors cannot contain themselves in the embrace of the English vocabulary, and however much we may try to translate them, they read as a confused jumble of words.

Here is an instance where Sankara, the philosopher, has taken up his literary pen to write in a style of a *Kavya*, a chiseled poem of exquisite beauty, depth and serenity, both in diction and cadence.

When we carefully open up the various metaphors and discard the literary embellishments to know its indicated expression, it says, "Have pity on me Master, and teach me the way of transcending the world and its sorrows".

कथं तरेयं भवसिन्धुमेतं

का वा गतिर्मे कतमोऽस्त्युपायः ।

जाने न किञ्चित्कृपयाऽव मां प्रभो

संसारदुःखक्षतिमातनुष्व ॥ ४० ॥

katham tareyam bhavasindhumetam

kā vā gatirme katamostyupayah

jane na kincitkrpayāva mām prabho

samsāraduhk akṣatimātanuṣva 40.

कथम् - how, तरेयम् - I shall cross over, एतम् - this, भवसिन्धुम् - ocean of birth and death, का वा - what may be, मे गतिः - my destination, कतमः - which, अस्ति - is, उपायः - the means, न जाने - I do not know, किञ्चित् - any, कृपया - please, अव - save, माम् - me, प्रभो - O Lord, संसारदुःखक्षतिम् - for the end of all miseries of this life in the finite, आतनुष्व - describe in detail.

How to cross this ocean of relative existence? What is to be my ultimate destination? Which of the many means should I adopt? I know, in fact, almost nothing. O! Lord! save me and describe in all detail how to end the misery of this life in the finite.

The stanza narrates the type of questions the student should ask when he has approached the master and has served him sufficiently long to get himself perfectly tuned up with the master. These questions, in themselves, show a volume of clear thinking and logical conclusions which the student has reached of his own accord. He has lived intelligently his life of varied experiences and has evaluated it correctly. Neither has he been afraid of the desperateness of his conclusions, nor is he ready to make any compromise with Truth. He has analysed his experiences in life and has come to the same conclusion that the finite objects cannot give him anything but finite satisfaction. He has looked within himself and has estimated correctly his own demands in life as nothing short of an Infinite perfection, which alone can yield to him the Infinite happiness. He wants to know from the master how he can come to experience the Infinite and thereby gain a complete transcendence of the finite. Hence he asks, "*how to cross this ocean of relative existence*"?

Unless he, somehow or other, fulfils this self-evolution and reaches the portals of the Infinite and experiences the Real, he wonders as what would be his "*ultimate destination*." This question does not necessarily mean his own ignorance of what the destination would be. In fact, it is a dreadful premonition of the consequences that he understood in himself, that, unless he was able to experience the Transcendental, he would be getting himself entangled in the finite world of desires, excitements and endless responsibilities of satisfying each nerve ticklings.

Though he has thus independently come to the conclusion about the life which he is living now, and though he knows the Goal, yet, he seems to be not very sure as to what exactly is the method by which he can end his delusions and

reach the Goal. The doubt expressed is this: that the student has already read a lot of the Science of Life as expounded in the literature on religion, and he finds therein different methods of self-perfection prescribed; therefore, he wants to know exactly as to what would be the path for him. Through a process of error and trial, one can, for himself, find the right path, but it is most convenient and, indeed, a sacred blessing if we can have a true teacher to explain to us the correct path of self-development. Therefore, the student is asking, "Which of the means should I follow"?

The expression that 'I know nothing' is not a dull-witted confusion of ignorance on the part of the student, but it is an expression of modesty and a confession of devotion and reverence for the teacher.

तथा वदन्तं शरणागतं स्वं

संसारदावानलतापतप्तम् ।

निरीक्ष्य कारुण्यरसाद्रदृष्ट्या

दद्यादभीतिं सहसा महात्मा ॥ ४१ ॥

tathā vadantam śaraṇāgatam svam

samsāradāvānalatāpataptam

nirīkṣya kāruṇyarasādradrṣṭyā

dahyādabhitim sahasā mahātmā 41.

तथा - As, (thus), वदन्तम् - speaking, स्वम् - of one's own, शरणागतम् - the man seeking refuge, संसारदावानलतापतप्तम् - tormented by the heat of the forest-fire of Samsar, कारुण्यरसाद्रदृष्ट्या - with a look showering pity and kindness, निरीक्ष्य - seeing (the seeker), महात्मा - the great teacher, सहसा - spontaneously, अभीतिम् - protection from fear, दद्यात् - would bestow.

The great teacher looks up in all pity and kindness on the one who has thus come to seek his protection from the conflagration of the fire of Samsar, and spontaneously bids him to give up all fears.

Just as the *Śāstra* lays its codes of behaviour of the student, it, with equal emphasis, formulates the law govern-

ing the teacher. There is a school of thinkers in Vedanta which says that a perfect master is beyond all laws: he is a lord unto himself—not even the Vedas dare to lay down codes of morality or rules of behaviour for a perfect master. This does not mean that a perfect master is free from all moral obligations and ethical perfections. No laws are applicable to him in the sense that what he does is to be the code of perfect action. He cannot go wrong in his actions, because he never acts in the dull and low ego-centric concept of himself. He has surrendered himself completely to the Supreme experience, and as such, the only music that can come out of his action is the music of the spirit. The very *Śāstras* and Vedas are expressions codified, expressing the perfect behaviour of the masters under given circumstances. Therefore, there are critics who would object to the interpretation that the stanza lays down codes for the *Gurus*; and such critics should be considered as right.

What is meant here by “laws prescribed for the teachers”? It is a mere re-statement of what a master would do under the circumstances. It only says that all masters, if they are true to their attitude, and if they are fully experiencing the perfect tranquillity, would not dare to run away from such perfect seekers but, unquestioningly will oblige them with their vast experience and knowledge. To an individual who has approached the master with infinite fears, he (the master) should immediately give a message of hope, assuring him that there is nothing for him to fear, or to despair.

Later on, we shall find that when the student crystallizes his thoughts into definite questions, the master also uses less of his sweeping generalisations, and gives more and more definite and pointed answers.

विद्वान् स तस्मा उपसत्तिमीयुषे
 मुमुक्षवे साधु यथोक्तकारिणे ।
 प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय
 तत्त्वोपदेशं कृपयैव कुर्यात् ॥ ४२ ॥

*vidvān sa tasmā upasattimīyuse
 mumukṣave sādhu yatoktakāriṇe
 praśāntacittāya śamānvitāya
 tatvopadeśam kṛpayāiva kuryāt 42.*

विद्वान् - the learned (master), सः - he, तस्मै - to that man, (seeker), उपसत्तिम् - who has sought his protection, ईयुषे - who has thirst for liberation, साधु - rightly, duly, यथोक्तकारिणे - who abides by the injunctions, प्रशान्तचित्ताय - who is of serene mind, शमान्विताय - who is endowed with tranquillity, तत्वोपदेशम् - instruction about the Real, कृपया - with kindness, एव - indeed, कुर्यात् - should give.

To him, who, in his anxiety for liberation, sought the protection of the teacher, when he is found to be ready to obey the injunctions of the Scriptures, when he discovers him to be serene in mind, calm in composure, the master should pour out his knowledge with utmost kindness.

The instructions given previously have been completed in this stanza. The teacher is advised to initiate the student only after testing whether the knowledge given out would take root in the heart of the disciple. This testing of the student and the qualities for a successful spiritual seeker are enumerated in Vedānta not for the purpose of denying this benefit to any single individual; it is out of sheer kindness that *Śruti* prescribes these qualifications, for, unless an individual has these mental and intellectual qualities, it will always be a sheer waste of the energy of the teacher to inculcate the knowledge to the undeserving. Also spiritual knowledge and the accompanying strength would be misplaced in an imperfect student as he will make use of it for his own annihilation as well as the annihilation of the world. When an unscrupulous man comes to power in any country, we know that he is a menace to society.

If the student has a burning sense of anxiety to liberate himself from his own known weaknesses, if he is meek and ready to follow the prescribed path and the necessary self-discipline, then the teacher is asked to initiate him into the Path of Knowledge.

The above-mentioned qualities are, no doubt, quite unavoidable, but we must also note that they are all external features of daring and readiness to act. Since spiritual seeking is not the march of an army, a mere outward discipline in itself will not suffice. It requires of the student some mental and intellectual qualities which are unavoidable and, therefore, it is insisted that he must be well-disciplined in his sense impulses and equally well-balanced in his mental emotions.

Even when he is well under self-restraint, and his mind does not agitate with low trends for sensuousness, even then, the philosophy being so subtle a theme, it is not possible for ordinary people to understand it immediately in all its deep significance at the very first hearing. If the teacher is impatient and has not got the kindness to repeat for the hundredth time, if need be, with equal love and consideration, the student will not be benefited by that teacher. Hence the teacher has been advised to undertake the job of initiating the student with extreme kindness. He should not forget that he himself was at one time a seeker, and in his own times he had his own doubts and difficulties. If the teacher is not divinely kind and godly in his sympathies, the relationship between the teacher and the taught will be broken and thereafter the student can never be guided to the within.

The word '*Kripa*' has unfortunately, no corresponding word, in English. It is not mere 'kindness'; nor is it some superficial sympathy. If at all we must convey the idea in English, we will have to say that *Kripa* is an attitude of sympathy, cooked in kindness, honeyed with love, and served in golden dishes of understanding. A man of bad temper and extreme impatience, lacking in sympathy, tolerance and kindness, cannot become a teacher in the path of spirituality, however noble he may be, and however deep his experiences be.

[श्री गुरुवाच]

मा भैष्ट विद्वंस्तव नास्त्यपायः

संसारसिन्धोस्तरणेऽस्त्युपायः ।

येनैव याता यतयोऽस्य पारं

तमेव मार्गं तव निर्दिशामि ॥ ४३ ॥

ma bhaiṣṭa vidvamsṭava nāstyapāyah

samsārasindhostaranestyupāyah

yenaiva yata yatayosya pāram

tameva mārgam tava nirdiśāmi 43.

मा भैष्ट - fear not, विद्वन् - O Brilliant one, तव - for you, न अस्ति there is not, अपायः - danger, संसारसिन्धोः - of the ocean of Samsar, तरणे - in crossing, उपायः - means, अस्ति - there is, येन - by which, एव - alone, याताः - have gone, यतयः - saints, अस्य - this, पारम् - the other shore, तम् - that, एव - the same, मार्गं - the path, तव - to you, निर्दिशामि I shall instruct.

Fear not, O! brilliant one! There is no death for you! There is a way to cross over this Ocean of Change. I shall instruct you the very path by which the ancient Rishis walked to the Death's beyond.

The perfect disciple, having duly reached the master's feet, expresses his own despairing fears that he will never be able to grow himself out of the disturbing conceptions of 'time' and 'place' which provide for the individual experiences the unending sorrows of finitude. Things change in their relationship with both 'time and place.' Objects remaining the same, they, with reference to different sets of 'time and place', come to react upon the same individual differently. These pluralistic experiences produce agitations in the mind which, in their totality, is the conception that is indicated here* by the word *Samsāra Dukha*. The student reached the master despairingly requesting him, "condescend to save me, O! Lord! and describe in full length how to put an end to the misery of this relative existence".

* Please refer stanza 40 wherein the disciple expressed his spiritual agitations in the language of his own fears and despairs.

The teacher, in this stanza now under discussion, has started delivering the answer to the student's question. Psychologically, when the questioner is extremely upset, due to any fear or agitation in him, he is not in a mental mood to receive any philosophical idea, even when elaborately explained. Therefore, a sympathetic teacher, if he knows the art of his job, should, first of all, pacify the student and give him hope and spiritual solace. Then alone does he become fit to receive the logical conclusions arrived at by a fully rational philosophy. Thus most fittingly, the master, with a fatherly consideration and love, is here assuring the student that what he fears from is only a myth.

This is not a false assurance, an idle hope, given to the student just to save him from his own imagined fears. From the stand-point of the master he views and sees clearly the spiritual destiny and the divine perfection which lie in the innermost core of the disciple. Change is only at the level of the mind and intellect. The Pure Consciousness, Eternal and Infinite, when functions through these equipments, gathers unto itself a delusive vision which interprets a world in terms of change and plurality. Death is then, not a phenomenon in the spirit but is a hallucination of the minds. Therefore, with all confidence, the teacher assures the student, *'There is no death for you.'*

The theory may be consoling and the assertion quite hopeful, but if there is no practical method to realize it in our life it has no place in the Hindu philosophy. Therefore, the teacher asserts here, *'There IS a way of crossing'* this sorrowful Ocean of changes and pains.

The stanza also, in its own words, indicates that this is not a theory of his own intellect, but that this is the Real Path, hallowed by the foot-prints of the ancient Seers, who had themselves crossed over from the finite to the Infinite Divinity, using this same route. We are assured that what is to follow now in the teacher's discourse is an exhaustive discussion upon this sacred Path of Self-realization, the efficiency of which has been endorsed by an endless array of brilliant Rishis of old.

अस्त्युपायो महान्कश्चित्संसारभयनाशनः ।

तेन तीर्त्वा भवाम्भोधिं परमानन्दमाप्स्यसि ॥ ४४ ॥

*astyupāyo mahānkascitsamsārabhayanāśanah
tena tīrtvā bhayāmbhodhim paramānandamāpsyasi 44.*

अस्ति - there is, उपायः - means, महान् - great, कश्चित् - one, संसार-भयनाशनः - capable of destroying the fear of Samsar, तेन - by which, तीर्त्वा - crossing, भवाम्भोधिम् - the ocean of Samsar, परमानन्दम् - the supreme Bliss, अवाप्स्यसि - shall gain.

There is a great means by which we can put an end to our fear of relative existence; through that route will you cross the sea of samsar and gain the Suprem Bliss.

In this stanza the psychological assurance is again repeated in a flood of love that pours out from the heart of the teacher. The repetition is not merely for the sake of an extra emphasis, but it also clearly reveals the infinite consideration and divine sympathy which the teacher entertains for his student.

It is the one insisting assurance of the Vedānta that there is a sovereign means by which our mental misunderstanding and the consequent false evaluation of life in us can be completely crushed and ultimately ended in right understanding. This method is explained in the following stanza.

वेदान्तार्थविचारेण जायते ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

तेनात्यन्तिकसंसारदुःखनाशो भवत्यनु ॥ ४५ ॥

*vedāntārthavicāreṇa jāyate gnānamuttamam
tenātyantikasamsāraduhkanāśo bhavatyanu 45.*

वेदान्तार्थविचारेण - through the contemplation of the meaning of the Upanisad mantras, जायते - is born, ज्ञानम् - Knowledge, उत्तमम् - the highest, तेन - by that, अत्यन्तिकसंसारदुःखनाशः - the destruction of all sorrows of birth and death, भवति - takes place, अनु - following.

Knowledge of Reality arises out of sincere contemplation upon the meaning of the Upanishadic Mantras. By this Knowledge, immediately a total annihilation of all sorrows, born out of the "perception of change," takes place.

The previous stanza merely assured that there is a sovereign means by which we can cross over the world of our finite experiences. In this stanza here, we are given a definition in the form of a clear declaration of what that Path is.

Constant and continuous *Vicāra* over the meaning of Vedanta leads us to True Knowledge. *Vicāra* is a term which has no corresponding word, equally pregnant, in the English vocabulary. Words like thinking, contemplating, reasoning, analysing etc., are each too incomplete to express fully the technique of *Vichar*. *Vicāra* comprises all these in a synthesis, with certain unavoidable mental and intellectual discipline in the individual doing *Vicāra*. With a mind and intellect trained and made steady, a seeker rips open the Upanishad declarations, one by one, leisurely, and comes to experience the implications and the deeper suggestiveness of each mantra; this process is called *Vicāra*.

The honey in a flower is always secreted in the secret bowels of its fragrant beauty. Its enchanted lover, the honey-bee, that courts the flower with adoration and ardour, alone can scent the honey pouch, and groping through the "dusty halls" of the flower's veiled harem, reach the heart-treasure of the blossom !!

Similarly, in the garden of Vedanta are the flowers of the Upanishad *mantras*, and each has its real sweetness secreted, not in its outer words, most fascinating though they are, but it lies hidden in the pulsating bosom where its immortal heart throbs with the thrilling ecstasy of Love fulfilled and Perfection experienced. This divine secret is treasured in the sacred-heart of each *mantra*, and a seeker is to reach this meaning by using his prepared mind and intellect.

The process by which the acutely intellectual and the divinely sympathetic head-and-heart of a seeker come to live

in their subjective experience, the strangely enchanting, voiceless cadence, rising from the Rishi's heart, is called *Vicāra*.

During the moments of meditation* when we strive hard to experience the meaning of the Upanishad *mantrās* we are in the realm of *Vicāra*. Through the *Vicār*, our misunderstandings about ourselves, which are the expressions of our ignorance of ourselves, are removed; and where ignorance has moved off, Knowledge comes to shine forth. With this right Knowledge, instantaneously, all the delusive sorrows of *samsār* end. After waking up from our dream, the moment we realize our waking-state-identity, all the sorrows created in us, due to our dreamer-identification and its dream-world, end instantaneously! On the re-discovery of our spiritual nature to be of pure Knowledge, uncontaminated by any trace of ignorance, we come to our own divine heritage of perfection and bliss—ever beyond even the penumbra of any possible misery or sorrow thereafter.

श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगान्मुमुक्षो

हेतून्वक्ति साक्षाच्छ्रुतेर्गीः

यो वा एतेष्वेव तिष्ठत्यमुष्य

मोक्षोऽविद्याकल्पितादेहबन्धात् ॥ ४६ ॥

śraddhābhaktidhyānayogānmumukṣor

hetūnvakti sākṣāchrutergh

yo va eṭeṣveva tiṣṭatyamuṣya

mokṣo(a)vidhyākalpitādrehabandhāt 46.

श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगान् - the practices of faith, devotion and meditation, मुमुक्षोः - of one desirous of liberation, मुक्तेः - for liberation, हेतून् - chief factors, वक्ति - are mentioned, साक्षात् - clearly, श्रुतेर्गीः - by the words of Sruti, यः वा - whoever he be, एतेषु एव - in these alone, तिष्ठति - remains, अमुष्य - his, मोक्षः - liberation, अविद्याकल्पितान् from the ignorance created, देहबन्धात् - bondage of the body.

* For practical suggestions, theoretical explanations and graded lessons in the art of meditation, study Swamiji's MEDITATION and LIFE.

Faith Devotion and the practice of Meditation—these are mentioned in the songs of the Sruti as the chief factors that help a seeker to attain his liberation. Whoever pursues these can come to gain his liberation from the bondage of the body which is a projection mysteriously accomplished by his spiritual ignorance.

In the previous stanzas, the 'technique of *Vicār*' was exhaustively analysed and emphatically insisted upon. The power to do *Vicār*, it was shown, is the very fuel which helps the spiritual vehicle to run ahead. What constitute *Vicār* was also explained. Here, in the stanza, we have got an enumeration of the factors which we must follow strictly and sincerely so that our capacity to perform *Vicār* may be intensified and the *Vicār* itself rendered most efficient.

Faith and *Bhakti* encourage and increase one's meditative poise, and these three together constitute the entire technique of self development, as visualized by the Rishis of old. It is interesting to note how each proceeding one strengthens and nourishes each succeeding factor enumerated here. Faith increases *Bhakti*, and in a man of Faith and *Bhakti*, meditation is automatic and assured. Herein we must clearly understand Faith in the same sense as it has been described earlier* in this text-book. So also we must not confuse the term *Bhakti* with its cheap, decadent meaning which, we in our ignorance, have come to give to it. It is to be rightly understood† as our identification with the great concept or ideal.

When thus we are truly helped by faith and devotion we are able to meditate properly, and through meditation we come to realize our true nature. Having experienced our divine glory we shall no more misconceive ourselves to be the limited creatures as we now understand us to be, because of our identification with the matter envelopments in us.

* "Through a personal judgment to arrive at an independent reasoning, and accept as true what the scriptures declare and Guru instructs is called *Sradha*"—refer Śloka 25.

† Ibid—Ślokas 31 and 32 : "The seeking for one's own real nature as the Eternal Atman is true devotion".

The false identifications are created by the ignorance of our own Spiritual Glory in us. The body-mind-and-intellect are all mere super-impositions upon the glorious Self, and yet, we consider them all as real and permanent. These misunderstandings, superimposed upon the Self, are the true bondage upon us and due to them we come to feel the limitations of the mortal. He who abides in Faith, Devotion and Meditation, in his inward experience comes to re-cognize his Infinite nature of Bliss and Perfection, and thus gets himself released from the bondage of matter.

अज्ञानयोगात्परमात्मनस्तव

ह्यनात्मबन्धत्तत एव संसृतिः ।

तयोर्विवेकोदितबोधवद्भि

रज्ञानकार्यं प्रदहेत्समूलम् ॥ ४७ ॥

agnānāyogātparamātmānastava

hyanātmabandhastata eva samśrtih

tayorvivekoditabodhavanhih

ragñānakāryam pradhetsamulam 47.

अज्ञानयोगात् - through the contact with the ignorance, परमात्मनः - the Supreme Self, तव - yours, हि - indeed, अनात्म बन्धः - the bondage of the non-self, ततः - whence, एव - only, संसृतिः - the birth and death, तयोः - between these two, विवेकोदितबोधवद्भिः - the blaze of knowledge rising from discrimination, अज्ञान कार्यम् - the effects of ignorance, प्रदहेत् - shall burn, समूलम् - together with the roots.

It is, indeed, through the contact with ignorance that you who are in yourself the Supreme Self, experience yourself to be under the bondage of the non-self. From this misunderstanding alone proceed the worlds of birth and death. All the effects of ignorance including their very route (ignorance) are burnt down by the blaze of Knowledge, which arises from our discrimination between these two—the Atma and Anatma, the Self and the Non-Self.

What causes the Supreme Self to come to suffer these bondages, and what exactly is that which compels us there-

after to struggle hard and regain our true divine glory through the delicate process of Self re-discovery, is here explained in this stanza.

Just as a ghost-vision is possible in a way-side post only when there is the ignorance of the post, so too, it is the ignorance of the Self in us that gives birth to the 'thought flow,' called the mind. The mind projects the sense-organs at the level of the body, and beyond them it gives us the apparent vision of the Five Great Elements and the world of sense-objects. The Pure Consciousness or Life gets reflected in the 'pool of thoughts' and, in our pre-occupation with our mental life, we come to misunderstand that we are this ego-centre—which is nothing else but Life conditioned by our own thoughts in a given scheme of time and place.

The sorrows of life, the limitations in the equipments, the imperfections of the world, the concept of likes and dislikes, the pulls of pleasures and pains, the tearing forces of merit and sin . . . all these are affected by this Ego. To end the Ego's ignorance of its divine, free nature, its eternal and divine aspect of bliss is the tomb of the mortal and the field where he himself realizes and attains his immortality.

Ego is ended only upon its own funeral pyre lit by itself into a conflagration of Knowledge. The fire arising out of constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal, between the Self and the non-self, between the Spirit and the matter, is fanned into a blazing brilliance through steady *Vicār* in which all the effects of ignorance along with the very route of their cause, the spiritual ignorance, are burnt down.

Where the light has come to shine, there darkness cannot remain; where Knowledge has come to rule, ignorance must quit. Where the cause has been eliminated, the effect cannot remain; thus, where ignorance has ended all its effects—the five *Kośas* constituting the three bodies—the three planes of consciousness: the world of the waker, dreamer and the deep-sleeper—the realms of pains: made up of the sense-objects, the feelings and the ideas—all these must end instantaneously, totally.

शिष्य उवाच

कृपया श्रयतां स्वामिन् ! प्रश्नोऽयं क्रियते मया ।

यदुत्तरमहं श्रुत्वा कृतार्थः स्यां भवन्मुखात् ॥ ४८ ॥

Sishya Uvāca:

*krpayā śrūyatām svāmin praśnoyam kriate mayā
yaduttaramaham śrutvā kṛtārthah syām bhavanmukhāt 48.*

कृपया - kindly, श्रूयताम् - may it be listened, स्वामिन् - O master,
प्रश्नः - question, अयम् - this, क्रियते - made, मया - by me, यदुत्तरम् -
whose reply, अहम् - I, श्रुत्वा - listening, कृतार्थः - satisfied, स्याम् - I
shall be, भवन्मुखात् - from your mouth.

The disciple said:

Kindly listen, O! Master! to the questions that I now raise.
Hearing your answers for them from your mouth, I shall
feel entirely satisfied.

The entire *Vivekachūdāmani* has even become an out-
standing poem and literary master-piece because, in writing
this great work, Sankara had often forgotten the philosopher
in him, and had taken the pen of a poet to splash the entire
work with brilliant colours of pure literary flashes. Anyone
with a poetic temperament and taste for music cannot but
feel enchanted by the ring of the mellifluous words used
here in the construction of each stanza. Apart from this,
there is a perfect artistry in this literary garland of beauty
and rhythm.

I would certainly say that in his *Bhāṣya*, Sankara was
too impatiently pre-occupied with his philosophical theory,
that therein he was a pure philosopher depicting but his
Vision of Oneness. But when he took up leisurely his ex-
perienced pen to produce *Vivekachūdāmani*— indeed, a crest
jewel, both in style and substance—Sankara, the poet, has
blended with Sankara, the philosopher. Acharya Sankara
has a place, indeed, in the “poet’s corner”; perhaps, he will
be remembered as the world’s best and noblest poet that
ever wielded a pen to give a cultural revival.

The very conversational style relieves the monotony of the philosophy and brings into its arid fields the touch of the human heart and the thrills of a warm pulsating life. An ignorant student reaches a Seer who is the fountain of Knowledge, and through a process of discussion, tries to attune himself with his teacher, and thus walks out of his own dark ignorance into the brilliant fields of the master's sunlit court-yards.

It is evident that a silent student sitting mum like a stone-carving in front of the greatest teacher, for the longest period of time, cannot gain any development out of such a stony contact! The student has to rub his ideas and thoughts against the experienced heart and head of the teacher, and thus gain for himself a polish and a fragrance, at once Divine and Perfect. Discussion is the pulse of a *Satsang*.

The *Rudrākṣamāla* on the bosom of Sankara remained nearest to the heart of the great philosopher all his life, and kept company with him for a greater period perhaps, than his disciples, Throdaka and Sureswara ever could. But both these disciples have been immortalized, and so long as we remember Acharya Sankara, we shall, with equal devotion and reverence, remember these two men not merely as disciples of the Acharya but as God-men themselves. The poor *Rudrākṣa Māla* !

The stones in the inner walls of the *Sanctum Sanctorum* in the greatest temple known, that stay always facing the Lord, remain ever as silicon even after thousands of years, while hundreds of devotees who come to stand for a few moments in front of the altar and react with the divine atmosphere get themselves lifted from their sense of finitude and go away enveloped in the joys of a greater existence lived out of a fuller evolution experienced.

It is unavoidable that mentally and intellectually, we must come to wrestle with the mind and intellect of the master so that we may develop within a rounded health and an inward beauty of symmetry and vitality. *Vivekachūdāmani*, written throughout in a conversational style, is thus, a great message to the world of seekers.

को नाम बन्धः कथमेष आगतः

कथं प्रतिष्ठास्य कथं विमोक्षः ।

कोऽसावनात्मा परमः क आत्मा

तयोर्विवेकः कथमेतदुच्यताम् ॥ ४९ ॥

ko nāma bandha kathameṣa āgataḥ

katham pratiṣṭāsyā katham vimokṣaḥ

kośāvanātmā paramaḥ ka ātmā

tayor vivekaḥ kathametaaducyatām 49.

को नाम - What is this, बन्धः - bondage, कथम् - how, एवः - this, आगतः - has come into being, कथम् - how is, प्रतिष्ठा - the stay, अस्य - of this, कथम् - how is, विमोक्षः - liberation, कः - what is, असौ - that, अनात्मा - non-self, परमः - the supreme, आत्मा - the Self, कः - what, तयोः - of these two, विवेकः - discrimination, कथम् - how, एतत् - this, उच्यताम् - may be explained,

What is bondage? How has it come? How does it continue to stay? How can one get out of it completely? What is the Non-Self? Who is the Supreme Self? And what is the process of discrimination between these two (Atma and Anatma)?—Please explain all these to me.

Herein, we have a series of seven questions which the student had put to the teacher in *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*. The teacher will take up these questions now, one by one, and answer them exhaustively.

These set of questions almost exhaust the entire field of ignorance and the ignorance-created confusions. Therefore, they are not to be treated as a particular set of questions asked by some individual; they are the general questions that would be asked by a type of seekers who are intellectually curious to know, to understand, to evaluate and to explain the confusing world of endless plurality. Thus, these questions give us an inkling of the type of questions we should put, or the spirit which we must adopt to open our discussions as we approach a divine master.

To go to a Saint with flowers and camphor, fruits and sweets, is a method of approaching a wild bull; it is not the correct technique of approaching one's spiritual Guru ! This wrong tradition has created a set of fruit-gatherers as *Gurus*, and flower-throwers as disciples, and in their combination, they have completely dug the grave of the sacred Vedanta, and have come to hoist the skelton of Hinduism on that spot !!

These thirsty questions, seeking for an understanding, and demanding an explanation for the sense of limitations and confusions experienced by us are, each in itself, an exhaustive declaration of the intelligent analysis the student had already made upon his own original observations of life, as it is available within and without for him.

Again, these questions also show how intelligently the student had followed what the master had been declaring so long. In all the previous stanzas, all along, the teacher was talking in terms of 'bondages', 'liberation', 'non-self', 'Supreme Self', and about the 'discrimination between the Self and the non-self'. Till now these terms were freely used; but the student who is not merely satisfied with a simple understanding of the theory of Vedanta but wants to live it for himself, is now holding the teacher, by his collar, as it were, and is pointedly asking him to explain more clearly. Naturally, the teacher gets the contagion of the boy's enthusiasm, and we shall see how enthusiastically the teacher himself warms up to the discussion. He, exhaustively, answers all these questions, one by one.

श्रीगुरुवाच

धन्योऽसि कृतकृत्योऽसि पावितं ते कुलं त्वया ।

यदविद्याबन्धमुक्त्या ब्रह्मीभवितुमिच्छसि ॥ ५० ॥

*dhanyosi kṛtakṛtyosi pāvitaṁ te kulam tvayā
yadavidhyābandhamuktyā brahmībhavitumichasi 50.*

धन्यः - Blessed, असि - you are, कृतकृत्यः - fulfilled, असि - you are, पावितम् - sanctified, ते - your, कुलम् - clam, त्वया - by you,

यत्तुच्छसि - that you wish, अविद्याबन्धमुक्त्या - by getting free from the bondage of ignorance, ब्रह्मीभवितुम् - to attain the State of Brahman.

Guru Replied:

You are a Blessed one! You are wishing to attain the absolute Brahman by freeing yourself from the bondages of your ignorance. Indeed, you have fulfilled your life and have glorified your clan.

Before answering the various questions raised by the disciple, the teacher's face beams into a smile of satisfaction, and soon, words expressing his overwhelming satisfaction and appreciation at meeting such a perfect student gush out from the teacher with a thrill and joy. The very fact that the boy had decided to get himself freed from all his weakness, and walk out into the boundless fields of Perfection has made him blessed; not only that he has glorified himself but "*has even sanctified his entire clan*" (*Kulam*).

The word *Kulam* is not merely the family, but it connotes all the ancestors and the future descendants. Family means only the present living members and the immediate forefathers.

And this is not a statement of exaggeration. It had already been explained that rare indeed, are those who come to exhibit such a burning thirst for liberation among the living creatures at any period of human history. Evidently, the boy is a highly evolved being*, and hence he is feeling his acute impatience for his own liberation.

A blind enthusiasm to seek the Truth through discussions with a perfect Guru will become the only responsibility of a student of Vedanta, if he accepts the words of this mantra too literally when it says "*You have fulfilled your Life*". This statement is to be understood not as a declaration of literal truth, but as a statement indicating a fact.

In ordinary life also we make use of such expressions as "baking the bread", when we know that the bread need not be baked. In such cases, we generally use the immediate future fulfilment to indicate the present activity. Similarly, enquiry into the life and its relationship with its cause, with

* Stanza 2: "It is not to be attained except through the well-earned merits of a hundred crores of births".

a burning desire to live and accomplish the ultimate Perfection in one's own Self, is the present activity which will, in a short time, end in the consummate fulfilment of the life. And, therefore, the teacher, prematurely, declares that the boy has fulfilled his life. Very rarely do we say "the foetus in the womb", but we invariably use the term "child in the womb", although in its pre-natal condition it is not yet a child.

To release ourselves from our ignorance is not merely to know the Knowledge, but, on transcending the ignorance-created projection of the body, mind and intellect, we come to live and experience the Reality in Itself. Therefore, the teacher says, "You wish to attain the Brahman-hood or the God-hood".

ऋणमोचनकर्तारः पितुः सन्ति सुतादयः ।

बन्धमोचनकर्ता तु स्वस्मादन्यो न कश्चन ॥ ५१ ॥

ṛṇamocana kartārah pituh santi sutādayah

bandhamocanakartā tu swasmādanyo na kascana 51.

ऋणमोचन कर्तारः - To relive from debts and obligations, पितुः - of the father, सन्ति - are, सुतादयः - sons, etc., बन्धमोचनकर्ता - a redeemer from bondage, तु - indeed, स्वस्मात् - than oneself, अन्यः - कश्चन - any other person; न - (there, is) not.

A father has his sons and others to save him from his financial debts, but to redeem him from his own delusions, there is none but himself.

मस्तकन्यस्तभारार्देदुःखमन्यैर्निवार्यते ।

क्षुधादिकृतदुःखं तु विना स्वेन न केनचित् ॥ ५२ ॥

mastakanyastabhārāderduhkhamayairnivāryate

kṣudhādikṛtaduhkham tu vinā svena na kenacit 52.

मस्तकन्यस्तभारार्तेः - Of the load, etc., placed on the head, दुःखम् - pain, अन्यैः - by other, निवार्यते - is relieved, क्षुधाति कृतदुःखम् - the sorrow caused by hunger etc., तु - but, स्वेनविना - except by oneself न - not, केनचित् - by anyone.

Exhaustion and fatigue caused by carrying a load on the head can be relieved by others coming to our help. But none but one's own self can end the pain caused by hunger and the like.

पथ्यमौषधसेवा च क्रियते येन रोगिणा ।

आरोग्यसिद्धिर्दृष्टास्य नान्यानुष्ठितकर्मणा ॥ ५३ ॥

pathyamouṣadhaseva ca kryate yena rogiṇā

arogyasiddhirdrṣṭasya nānyānuṣṭitakarmanā 53.

पथ्यम् - The prescribed diet, etc., च - and, औषधसेवा - taking the medicine, etc., क्रियते - followed, येन - by which, रोगिणा - by the patient, आरोग्यसिद्धिः - recovery of health, दृष्टा - is seen, अस्य - of this man, न - not, अन्यानुष्ठितकर्मणा - by another underfoing the treatment.

When a patient faithfully follows the right diet and takes in the proper medicine, he alone is found to recover from his illness; no one recovers because another had undergone the treatment.

In these three stanzas the master is trying to nail down the idea of self-effort firmly upon the understanding of the student. Any amount of hearing, study, intellectual thinking and logical discussion cannot in themselves bring about our liberation from our own misconceptions and false evaluations in life. Cultural text-books or religious scriptures are no talisman by which satan can be kept away. In order to bring this idea perfectly home to the student, the teacher is, here giving in three continuous stanzas, three different examples. These homely analogies which fall within the experience of everyone, are to remove any possible misunderstanding in the student regarding the technique of Self-realization.

All other sciences in the world can be mastered by merely studying them. The man who studies the law of the country with all its implications can become a lawyer; one who knows the symptoms of diseases and the medicines for their cure is a doctor. An advocate of criminal law need not be a criminal himself; a doctor need not, himself, be a patient so that he may come to know the science of medi-

cine. But *Atma Vidya* is fulfilled only when it has brought about a complete cultural rejuvenation in the individual who is the student of that science. It is a subjective achievement and not an objective acquisition. Therefore, no teacher, however great he may be, can impart the Knowledge as such to a student. All that the teacher can supply the student with is the clear vision of the goal and all the logical arguments to prove the blessedness and perfection of both the goal and the path.

The examples given in the three stanzas are very telling. A father may be suffering agony and mental agitations due to his debts, in which case, his children, dutiful and sympathetic, can certainly relieve him from his debts by their kindly co-operation and help. But the sorrows and agitations created in him due to his own mental constitution can be relieved only by himself; none else can share it.

If a traveller is suffering from fatigue and exhaustion because of the extreme heaviness of the load he is carrying on his head he can be helped and relieved by the fellow-travellers—nay, even a stony load-rest on the wayside can relieve the man. But the pain that he is suffering because of his hunger, which is a subjective inner disturbance, cannot be removed by somebody taking a sumptuous dinner for him !! He himself must eat his dinner and fill his belly !

The teacher, not satisfied with the two very striking examples, invests yet another stanza to drive home to the student the unavoidable necessity for his conscious personal effort. The teacher says that, in life, he has found that only those patients get cured of their ailments who follow *themselves* faithfully the prescribed diet and take in the right medicines. A patient suffers because of some mal-adjustments in *his* physical system, and the medicine must get assimilated and absorbed by *his* body, so that it may remove the causes of *his* illness. One cannot cure one's illness by the medicines another has taken !!

In fact, health is the natural condition of man; but some cause or causes have entered the system which are obstructing the experience of the body's true vitality; and the patient

suffers. The medicine does not create health, but it only removes the enemies of the health within and, perhaps, produces a conducive atmosphere within, wherein more and more of the true health can come to manifest. The conducive conditions necessary for this consummate existence in perfect health are to be accomplished in the very individual who is unhealthy, and therefore, he has to take the medicine himself. Nobody else can help him by taking his medicine. Similarly, the misunderstandings created by one's own ignorance can be removed and the necessary conditions required for a fuller expression of the Reality in him can be brought about in him only by his own efforts. In short, each one of us has to walk the path alone, guided by the instructions of the teacher and the Scriptures.

वस्तुस्वरूपं स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा

स्वेनैव वेद्यं न तु पण्डितेन ।

चन्द्रस्वरूपं निजचक्षुषैव

ज्ञातव्यमन्यैरवगम्यते किम् ॥ ५४ ॥

vastusvarūpam sphutabodhacakṣuṣā

svenaiva vedyam na tu paṇḍitena

candrasvarūpam nijacakṣuṣaiva

gnatāvyamanyairavagamyate kim 54.

वस्तुस्वरूपम् - The real nature of things, स्फुटबोधचक्षुषा - through the eye of clear understanding, स्वेन एव - by one's own, वेद्यम् - to be known, न तु पण्डितेन - but not through learned men, चन्द्रस्वरूपम् - the real form of the moon, निजचक्षुषा - through one's own eye, एव - alone, ज्ञातव्यम् - to be experienced, अन्यैः - through others, अवगम्यते किम् - can it be made understood?

The actuality of things is to be known by a first hand personal experience through the eye of clear understanding, and not through reports of any other learned men. The joyous experience of the moon is to be realised by one's own eyes. Can one know it through others?

Not satisfied with the earlier set of three examples given to prove the necessity of a subjective enquiry and an ulti-

mate realisation by the seeker himself, Sankara is here giving yet another stanza, putting, as it were, the last nail on the coffin of our doubt regarding this problem.

The beauty, the brilliance, the soft glory, the queenly dignity, the serene consolation, the message of love and leisure, of peace and quietude, of music and thrill, which the moon sheds as she glides across the spring-time skies are indeed, not words to be quoted, but are experiences to be enjoyed—a thrill to be lived! The vision of her majestic flight is to be experienced by one's own eyes and realised in a satisfying suggestive silence. The hushed ecstasy that one can enjoy under the spring-time moon cannot be conveyed to us by any one, however vivid his explanation be. It is to be enjoyed by ourselves; the experience must be, with our own instruments, brought into our own bosom. A blind man cannot enjoy the love messages of the moonlit night.

The Self rises in the dark bosom of Ignorance to glide across the horizon of our experiences; those experiences cannot be described to us fully by another who had reached this fulfilment of life. Each must come to witness it in himself. This analogy of the moon-rise in the outer world is indeed the most poetic, and on all sides the perfect example to indicate the soft silvery light of knowledge that comes to illumine with its milky peace and perfection, the dark atmosphere in the bosom of the ignorant.

अविद्याकामकर्मादिपाशबन्धं विमोचितुम् ।

कः शक्नुयाद्विनात्मानं कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ॥ ५५ ॥

avidhyākāmakarmādipāśabandham vimocitum

kah saknuyādvinaātmānam kalpakotiśatairapi 55.

अविद्याकामकर्मादिपाशबन्धम् - The bondage caused by the fetters of ignorance, desire and action, विमोचितुम् - to get rid of, कः - who, शक्नुयात् - will be able, आत्मानम् विना - except oneself, कल्पकोटिशतैः - by hundred crores of Kalpas, अपि - even.

Who can, except oneself, help to rid oneself of the bondage caused by the chains of ignorance, desire, action etc.—even in a hundred crore of Kalpas?

The bondage felt by the mortal is caused by his own spiritual ignorance of the Divine that he is. This ignorance of his own all-fullness in his spiritual personality creates in his intellect waves of desires to make himself full. These desires create in him thought-waves, and thoughts express themselves in action. These three—ignorance, desire and action—are together called in *Vedānta śāstrā* as the 'heart-knots'. These are the bondages that bind the misunderstood-self, the Ego, to the finiteness and the sorrows of a mortal. In this stanza Sankara enumerates, "*ignorance, desire, action and the like*", meaning the residual impressions (*Vāsanās*) left on the mind when a desire-prompted activity is consciously undertaken. These *Vāsanās* thicken our ignorance, darken our desires, agitate our thoughts and propel us into a world of frenzied activities.

The *Acharya*, naturally, asks as to who can save anybody from his own internal subjective chaos—in his intellectual and mental sheaths—which produces his rabid activities in his outer world of objects and his painful confusions in his relationship with his own fellow beings. The question in its very words answers that none can save another; one can save himself but by himself.

"*Not even*", says the master, "*In thousands of years*" can one be saved by another. The term *Kalpa* is used to indicate the entire duration of one Universe from its day of creation to the day of its doom. It has been calculated that the life of the Universe is one day of the Creator which is equivalent to 432 million years, in terms of our calculation of time, possible with our finite and limited mind.

न योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा नो न विद्यया ।

ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन मोक्षः सिध्यति नान्यथा ॥ ५६ ॥

na yogena na sāṅkhyena karmanā na na vidyayā

brahmātmaikatvabodhena mokṣaḥ sidhyati nānyathā 56.

न - Not, योगेन - by Yoga, न - not, सांख्येन - by Sankhya, नो कर्मणा - not through actions, न विद्यया - not by learning, ब्रह्मात्मैकत्वबोधेन - by the realisation of the identity of oneself with Brahman, मोक्षः - liberation, सिध्यति - is gained, न not, अन्यथा - otherwise.

Neither by Yoga, nor by Sankhya, nor by ritualism, nor by much learning, can liberation be possible. Only by the realisation of the identity of oneself with Brahman can final realisation be possible for one — not by any other means.

None of these paths enumerated in the stanza is in itself a fulfilment, if without his own co-operation, ardent and sincere, a student is only mechanically following any or all these paths.

There are altogether six schools of philosophical thoughts in India; only some of them are indicated here; not that the others are positively against man's self-realisation, or that they are against the very principles of self-realisation. The three or four of them mentioned here indicate and include all the rest. By the term "Yoga", here Sankara means the path of mysticism developed and maintained through the exercise of *Hatha-Yoga*. The "*Sankhyan*" philosophy is one of the main fountain-heads into which Vedanta often retires for inspiration. Vedanta has sprung out from its early roots to reach a greater precision of thought and perfection of detail from the elaborate philosophy of the "*Sāṅkhya*".

According to the "*Sankhyan*" philosophy—essentially a dualistic philosophy—the world is constituted of two essential factors—the *Puruṣa* and the *Prakṛiti*: the Spirit and the Matter. The Spirit is sentient, intelligent and is the knowing-principle; the vital factor, the source of all life, that comes to exhibit through the physical structure. *Prakṛiti* is insentient, unintelligent and lifeless in itself, but it comes to exhibit these qualities when it is blessed by the presence of the Spirit in close proximity. The Supreme has in Itself, no dynamism or activity; all the activities of life are only when the Divine puts on the robe of matter.

Prakṛiti herself is inert; *Puruṣa*, in himself, cannot achieve or execute; but when these two are wedded to each other, both seem to gain a divinity, might and power, as a result of each one blessing the other. In this philosophical concept, their logic of thinking had to take them, naturally, to a conclusion that the *Puruṣa* revelling within each sam-

ple of matter is different from the *Puruṣās* in all other vehicles. Liberation from the entanglements of *Prakṛiti* is gained by the *Puruṣa* when it comes to discriminate on all occasions and in all conditions, the Eternal Spirit separate from the finite matter. One step ahead from the “*Sankhyān*” is the Vedānta philosophy which explains that on realizing the ‘*Puruṣa*’, the *Atman*, it becomes the experience of the Yogi, that *Prakṛiti* is only a super-imposition upon the *Puruṣa* and that the *Puruṣa* : : alone, one-without-a-second revels everywhere, the Subtlest of the subtle, the Pure Principle of Consciousness.

The term “Karma” is here used to include and incorporate the *Mīmāṃsakās* who believe that the ritualistic activity, divine and sacred, yields for them merits; to enjoy which, they will be shifted to realms of intense pleasure, and when these merits are exhausted through enjoyments, they will be returning back to the physical forms for a short period to earn the merits required for enjoying again thousands of years. This is their *Mokṣa* ! Their *Amṛitatwam* !!

The term *Vidyā* may be taken both in its Vedic connotation and in its literal dictionary meaning. In its vedic application, *Vidyā* means *Upāsana*—concentrated and devoted meditation wherein the intellect tries to get away from its circumscribed vanities through a deliberate identification of itself with a vaster concept—as “I am Prana, the All-pervading” or as “I am Sun, the Almighty” or as “I am Fire, the Effulgent” or “I am Indra, the Omnipotent” etc. In the latter case, *Vidyā* stands for mere learning or book-knowledge.

All these, shown in this stanza, are themselves techniques of self-development, but they are not in themselves a fulfilment. The Calcutta-route is not Calcutta, the Bombay-road is not Bombay; of course, they both, if consistently pursued, can take us certainly to Calcutta or to Bombay. And in neither of the cities, having reached there, shall we find the stretches of roads that we had travelled to reach each of these cities. *Yoga*, *Vidyā* etc., are all means; they do not represent the end.

The Goal is in realising that in our true nature, the Self in us is the same as the Self in everything and in every being. This realisation of the divine nature of man, individually experienced, each for himself, is the only method by which we can get liberated from our bondage—our intellectual restlessness, our mental agitations and our physical cravings.

In order to avoid any possible doubt in the mind of the student that there may be, perhaps, some method other than *Yoga, Sāṅkhya* etc. which has not been described by the teacher, Sankara says point-blank here, “*and by no other means*”. To realise the Self is the only method, and there is no other means by which our present experiences of finitude and limitations can all be destroyed root and branch.

वीणाया रूपसौन्दर्यं तन्त्रीवादनसौष्ठवम् ।

प्रजारञ्जनमात्रं तन्न साम्राज्याय कल्पते ॥ ५७ ॥

vināyā rūpasoundaryam tantrīvādanasouṣṭavam

prajārañjana mātram tanna sāmrajyāya kalpate 57.

वीणाया - Of the Vina, रूपसौन्दर्यं - the beautiful form, तन्त्रीवादन-
सौष्ठवम् - the proficiencies of one in playing on its chords,
प्रजारञ्जनमात्रम् - to please an audience only, तत् - that, न - not
साम्राज्याय - for sovereignty, कल्पते - makes competent.

The beauty of the Veena and the proficiency of one in playing on its chords serve but to please the audience; they do not, in themselves, ever prove sufficient to confer full sovereignty upon him.

In using analogies, nobody has yet come to the field of philosophy, who can beat Sankara's efficiency and perfection. According to him, the schools of philosophy that argue nicely, that describe beautifully, and that enunciate exhaustively, discussions that give clear intellectual pictures of the why and the wherefore of this Universe, are all nothing but the beauty of the instrument or the efficiency of one who plays on it. A player on an instrument with his proficiency may, during one afternoon, entertain the largest conceivable audience, and for the time being, the listeners

may even consider him as a king of artistes on that instrument; and yet, in effect, he can never gain a sovereignty, permanent and complete, over his audience through his instrument.

Similarly, the various schools of philosophy are intellectual entertainments no doubt; and yet, the seeker cannot gain the status of God-hood by merely dabbling in philosophy. To a king, playing upon any instrument of music may provide an entertainment to himself and to his friends; but his empire is not won, or order maintained among the people, and the royal dignity nourished through his *Veena*-proficiency.

On the whole, the idea that *Acharya* Sankara wants to emphasize is that any amount of philosophical studies, even a mastery of all the six different schools, cannot bring about the complete evolutionary fulfilment in ourselves.

The term *Samrājya* has a pregnant Upanishadic flavour; in the ancient literature this term is used for the Kingdom of God within.

वाग्वैखरी शब्दझरी शास्त्रव्याख्यानकौशलम् ।

वैदुष्यं विदुषां तद्वद्भुक्तये न तु मुक्तये ॥ ५८ ॥

vāgvaikhari śabdhanjarī śāstravyākhyānakauśalam

vaiduṣyaṃ viduṣāṃ tadvadbhuktaye na tu muktaye 58.

वाग्वैखरी - Loud speech, शब्दझरी - a stream of words, शास्त्रव्याख्यान कौशलम् - efficiency in commenting upon the scriptures, वैदुष्यम् - erudition, विदुषाम् - of learned people, तद्वत् - like that, भुक्तये - for material satisfaction, न - not, तु - but, मुक्तये - for liberation.

Loud speech in an avalanche of words, the efficiency in expounding or commenting upon the great text-books, extreme erudition—these bring but a little joyous, material satisfaction to the scholar; but they are insufficient for liberating him completely; only Bhog and not Yog.

According to the *Yoga śāstra* they give us the various subtle stages of metamorphosis of a thought or a desire be-

fore it is expressed in the form of sounds and words. Altogether they describe four distinct stages in a thought's manifestation as an expression in words. First of all, the thought should arise from or must have a contact with the Reality or Life in us, and at this stage, it is called as *Para*. When it manifests sufficiently so that the Ego in us becomes conscious of that thought in us, it is grosser than its previous state, and at this moment of its perceptible existence it is called *Paśyanti*. A thought of which we have become conscious, passes through a state of inward moulding in the crucible of any known language, and this state of transcribing thought into a series of symbolical sounds for the purpose of conveying it into another's bosom is called *Madhyama*. And when, actually, the symbols indicated by the mind are relayed through expressed audible sounds, it is that thought, in its grossest state of manifestation, called as *Vaikhari*.

In short, by using the term, *Vaikhari* here, Sankara means the unproductive and noisy discussions on philosophy which some students of Vedanta make in the name of 'study circles'. They are laughed at, condemned, and almost ignored by all the great *Acharyas* like Sankara. To the *Rishis* an ounce of practice is more sacred than tons of discussion around a table.

According to Sankara, mere knowledge of the philosophical thoughts can be used only for purposes of eking out a profit for one's own livelihood, or for gaining some insignificant popularity or glory for the time being.

अविज्ञाते परे तत्त्वे शास्त्रार्थीतिस्तु निष्फला ।

विज्ञातेऽपि परे तत्त्वे शास्त्रार्थीतिस्तु निष्फला ॥ ५९ ॥

avignāte pare tatve śāstrādhītistu niṣphalā

vignātepi pare tatve śāstrādhītistu niṣphalā 59

परे तत्त्वे - When the Supreme Reality, अविज्ञाते - has not been known, शास्त्रार्थीतिः - the study of the scriptures, निष्फला - is futile, विज्ञाते अपि - has been known, अपि - even, परे तत्त्वे - the Supreme Reality, शास्त्रार्थीतिः - the study of the śāstrās, तु - indeed, निष्फला - futile.

Without knowing the Supreme Reality, the study of the Sastras is futile. Having known the Supreme Reality, the study of the Sastras is futile.

Here is an exquisite example of hammering in a joint into a student while creating in him a sense of wonderment through the use of a deliberate 'statement of contradiction'. The stanza, when you read, even in its tenth reading, leaves but a staggering sense of amazement and confusion. Wonder is an emotion in which there is dizzy pause of our individual thinking, and at this moment of complete restfulness, the stanza is digested by the student, and when he realises the meaning fully, it goes straight into the deeper-most vaults of his heart-cave.

The riddle is solved in this stanza when we give a little conscious application of a purified intellect on the word *knowing* in both the lines. In the first line it is used '*without knowing*', and in the second, it is used as '*having known*'. In both the places, the term *knowing* has a different meaning; the literal and the indicative. In the first line, *knowing* means, '*intellectually understanding*', and in the second line, *knowing* means '*realising*'.

Thus, re-reading the stanza with these appropriate words added on, it becomes a clear statement of truth. Sankara means to say that so long as we have *no right intellectual appreciation* of what the Vedanta-texts indicate, all study of the Scripture is futile. Again, when we *have realised the Truth* in ourselves, Scripture, which is but the vain attempt made by sentimental masters in their moments of ignorance in order to bless their generation of disciples, is indeed, empty, hollow and futile.

Elsewhere in the Vedantic literature, it is said* that the efforts of all the Vedas is to ultimately deny everything in the plurality: a sorrowful dream projected forth by the individual mind itself: a delusive dream super-imposed upon the *Atman*, the substratum. All the arguments that we

* It is said : "All Sastras but endeavour to explain what is not, and deny the delusion."

would, in our kindness, give to pacify our friend and to negate for him the ghost-vision he had seen in a moment of delusion, together constitute the 'Scripture' that indicates the post ! Naturally, therefore, any Man of Realization, when he reads even the best of the scriptures in this world, must laugh in his own sleeves at the colossal inefficiency of Mother *Sruti* ! !

And those who have no conception of the Reality, to them no Scriptural study can give even an idea of thrill. Elsewhere we read in the Vedantic text books that to such immature intellects the Upanishads are empty words. Just as "*children can never understand the physical thrill of married life*", so too, poor things, they have not the instruments to understand, or the maturity to comprehend Truth. As they grow, even if it is not taught, they will instinctively learn to feel or to know it. This idea is indicated in the first line of this stanza.

शब्दजालं महारण्यं चित्तभ्रमणकारणम् ।

अतः प्रयत्नाज्ज्ञातव्यं तत्त्वज्ञैस्तत्त्वमात्मनः ॥ ६० ॥

śabdajālam mahāraṇyam cittabhraṇakāraṇam

atah prayatnājñātavyam tatvāgnaiṣtatvamātmanah 60.

शब्दजालम् - collection of words (the philosophical text-books), महारण्यम् - is a thick jungle, चित्तभ्रमणकारणम् - cause for the confusion of mind, अतः - therefore, प्रयत्नात् - by effort, ज्ञातव्यम् - should come to experience, तत्त्वज्ञैः - the true seekers of Brahman, तत्त्वम् - the real nature, आत्मनः - of the Self.

Commentaries and philosophies constitute a thick jungle in which a mind that roams may easily get lost, in its own delusion. Therefore, true seekers of Brahman should, through right efforts, come to experience the Real Nature of the Self in them.

In this brilliant metaphor *Acharya* Sankara successfully woos both poetry and philosophy with the ardour and the fervour of a true and noble lover. We may say that in *Vivekachudāmani* Sankara handles philosophy and dandles

poetry. In brilliant flashes, off and on, he gives us such glimpses of his poetic heart that, were he given a longer lease of life, we wonder, could he not have outwitted Vyasa as a poet-philosopher?

Here, by this stanza, he wants to convey to us the idea that mere philosophical discussion is a dangerous jungle, dark and dreary, with luxuriously growing poisonous weeds here and there, and wild beasts of prey lying in wait, always ready to pounce upon us, the innocent pilgrims! No better description of the dialectics can be given when we think of the endless arguments of all the six schools of philosophy in India, each trying to argue out all the others to establish his own point and view and theories!!

Into this jungle, infested with dangerous flora and fauna, an un-prepared mind, if it carelessly enters in its innocence and frail strength, might get destroyed or molested by the dangers there. Even a master of juvenile intellect, of erudition and perfect scholarship can, now and then, tumble down into unseen pit-holes and come to suffer mental deformity! As such, the warning given here by the benevolent *Acharya* is of extreme service to the new initiates entering the portals of Vedanta.

He says that in the jungle of noisy confusions, let not ordinary seekers enter with a hasty enthusiasm, since the chances are that more often their minds will get over-burdened with the contradictory arguments of the great champions of the different philosophical view-points, and they will get ultimately lost in the blind alleys of wordy arguments. A seeker of self-realisation, hence, should set about *knowing* the true nature of the Self, through the above mentioned method of *Atma Vicār* when he has fully acquired the necessary qualification for it through *Upāsana*s and meditations.

अज्ञानसर्पदंष्ट्रस्य ब्रह्मज्ञानौषधं विना ।

किमु वेदैश्च शास्त्रैश्च किमु मन्त्रैः किमौषधैः ॥ ६१ ॥

agnānasarpadaṣṭasya brahmagnānousadham vinā

kimu vedaisha śāstraiṣca kimu mantraiḥ kimouśadhaiḥ 61.

अज्ञान सर्पदष्टस्य - Of one smitten by the cobronce of ignormce,
 ब्रह्मज्ञानम् औषधम् - the remedy of the knowledge of Brahman, विना -
 without, किम् - of what avail, वेदैः - the Vedas च - and, शास्त्रैः - the
 Scriptures, च - and, किम् - what benefit, मन्त्रैः - with the mantras,
 किम् - of what avail, औषधैः - are the medicines.

For one who has been smitten by the cobra of Ignorance,
 the only remedy is the Knowledge of Brahman. Of what
 use are the Vedas and the Scriptures, Mantras and
 Medicines to such a victim of poison?

The Supreme, as it were poisoned by its own self-forget-
 fulness, has come to suffer the burning agony of delusive
 limitations and sorrows. It has forgotten Its divine nature
 and, identifying with the matter envelopments, it sobs at its
 mortality, its sorrows, its imperfection. To one who has
 realised these and has come to feel a choking impatience to
 get relieved from the tyranny of their pains, to him nothing
 but his Self-re-discovery can be satisfactory. A victim,
 smitten by the cobra of Ignorance, can be relieved from his
 painful delirium only through his own self-realisation, when
 he comes to live as the Spirit, and in the plane of conscious-
 ness he comes to realise himself essentially to be the Reality
 in everything and every being.

It is natural that when one recognises that he has been
 smitten by a cobra, he will have no more the ordinary pre-
 judices of faith or creed, position or status, time or place;
 but any help that reaches from any quarter, offered in any
 attitude, will only be too gladly welcomed by him. At that
 moment of his dire sorrow, in the magnitude of his tragedy,
 he realises the urgency of the situation, and his only demand
 is for some medicine which will take out the poison and give
 him back his essential and natural health and vitality. He
 will not deny any help because the helper belongs to an-
 other creed, nation, caste or colour. Any help is acceptable
 because the danger is so dire, so imminent, so tragic !

Similarly, once a seeker has realised that he has been
 smitten by the most dangerous of all serpents met with

mainly in the wild jungles of the uncultured and uncultivated hearts called Ignorance, thereafter, he will take the best from all *Śāstras* and will try to bring immediately to himself the specific cure for Ignorance, which is nothing other than the Knowledge of the Real.

Of what avail is the slower and the more comfortable means such as the study of the Vedas and the Sastras, repetition of Mantras or the noisy arguments for and against each school of philosophical thoughts to him?

न गच्छति विना पानं व्याधिरौषधशब्दतः ।

विनाऽपरोक्षानुभवं ब्रह्मशब्देन मुच्यते ॥ ६२ ॥

na gachati vinā pānam vyādhirōṣadhaśabdatah

vinā (a) parokṣānubhavam brahmasabdairna mucyate 62.

न Not गच्छति - goes, विना पानम् - without drinking, व्याधिः - the disease, औषधशब्दतः - by mere utterances of the name of the medicine, विना परोक्षानुभवम् - without a direct realisation, ब्रह्मशब्दैः - by the simple utterance of the word Brahman, न मुच्यते - (one) is not liberated.

A disease is not cured by the mere repeated utterances of the name of the medicine, without taking it; without a direct realization, by the simple utterance of the word 'Brahman', none can be liberated.

How and why mere chanting of a *mantra* is considered in itself impotent are described here. Any individual suffering from ignorance cannot expect to get a cure by merely repeating unto himself *Brahman*, the name of the Absolute Reality. Repeated utterances of *Brahma-Aham-Asmi* (Brahman I am), or a mechanical murmuring of endless "*Sivoham Sivoham*" cannot, by itself produce any cure in us. However efficient the medicine may be, no patient is known to have gained a cure simply by repeated reading of a prescription.

When one is suffering from headache, by repeating for hours the name of *Aspro* or *Aspirin* he can only increase the headache, and never hope to cure the pain. The only

method for cure is to take in the medicine, assimilate and absorb, and allow it to become one with the patient by which process the patient gets complete cure and relief.

Similarly, here also a mere repetition of the sacred truths of Vedanta is futile without struggling to raise ourselves to the subtler joys of a higher culture and a divine way of living by individually assimilating the Truth of the Upanishad, and becoming one with it by intimate personal experience. Subjective realisation, most intimate and immediate, total and permanent, is called *Aparokṣa Anubhava* of the Self. No doubt, this must be preceded by an intellectual understanding of the Truth called in Sanskrit '*Parokṣa Guṇam*.'

In short, intellectual appreciation is *the way* to reach the Truth; a full spiritual apprehension of the Self is *the goal*. Liberation from our delusions can come only when the delusions have ended in Pure Knowledge. Darkness can end only when light has come to illumine it.

अकृत्वा दृश्यविलयमज्ञात्वा तत्त्वमात्मनः ।

ब्रह्मशब्दैः कुतो मुक्तिरुक्तिमात्रफलैर्नृणाम् ॥ ६३ ॥

akrtvā drśyavilayamagnātvā tatvamātmanah

brahmaśabdaiḥ kuto muktiruktimātraphalairnṛnām 63.

अकृत्वा - Having not caused, दृश्यविलयम् - the dissolution of the world of perception, अज्ञात्वा - not having realised, तत्त्वम् आत्मनः - the real nature of the Self, ब्रह्मशब्दैः - by the word (repetition of) Brahman, कुतः - how, मुक्तिः - liberation, उक्तिमात्रफलैः - (it would bear) the fruits of only word, नृणाम् - of men.

Without forcing the pluralistic world of perceived objects to disappear and without realising the real nature of the Self, how can one achieve full liberation by the mere repetitions of the word Brahman? — surely, it can end only in a wasteful effort of speech.

The conditions preceding the full state of liberation are being explained here. In the white-heat of intense medi-

tation, when the single-pointed mental-rays of the individual have been turned completely inwards to *re-cognise* the Self within, the world of perceptions gets lifted in the experience just as the world of the dream naturally rolls away from the waker's comprehension. We perceive the pluralistic world from the levels of the body, from the plains of the mind and from the peaks of the intellect. With the body and through the body we recognise the waking-state-world of forms and names outside ourselves; with the mind, we perceive a world of feelings, emotions, sentiments and throbbings; and from the peaks of the intellect, we recognise and experience our world of ideas which has never a declared boundary.

On transcending our identifications with the body, mind and intellect, our worlds reporting to us through the sense-organs, mind and intellect get themselves absorbed, as it were, into what remains in us the Pure Self or the Truth. On waking from a dream it cannot be said to have rolled away into some other point of time and place, but we will have to accept in our own experience that the dreamer in us rose as a result of our own complete forgetfulness of our nature as the waker or the deep-sleeper! On waking, the dream is considered to have vanished'; similarly, on awakening ourselves to the full Spiritual Consciousness, through achieved spiritual God-hood, the world of change and finitude is experienced as totally 'vanished'.

Without coming to this state of total Self-realisation experienced at least for a moment in our life, there is no liberation possible from the instinctive weaknesses that one suffers in one's own false identifications. This is the way shown in our Scriptures. This is the path by which the endless team of perfect men have gained their goal of Life in the past. And in our own times, many a noble soul has come to enjoy the fulfilment of the mission of their life, walking the very same path and reaching the very same Goal !!

Lip-Vedanta has never helped any one to come to any perfection. Mere discussions, idle repetitions, boisterous

arguments, have never brought to anyone any substantial blessings, except the exhaustion of over-talking ! Sankara encourages the seeker to talk less and do more.

अकृत्वा शत्रुसंहारमगत्वाखिलभूश्रियम् ।

राजाऽहमिति शब्दान्नो राजा भवितुमर्हति ॥ ६४ ॥

akrtvā śatrusaṁhāramagatvākhilabhūśriyam

rajāhamiti śabdānno rāja bhavitumarhati 64.

अकृत्वा - Without having accomplished, शत्रुसंहारम् - the elimination of enemies, अगत्वा - having not brought, अखिलभूश्रियम् - all the wealth of the country (under his way), राजाहम् - I am the emperor, इति - thus, शब्दात् - by mere declaration न - not, राजा - emperor, भवितुम् - to become, अर्हति - does not deserve.

Without eliminating his enemies, and without bringing the entire land of his kingdom under his impervious sway, by merely repeating, 'I am the Emperor,' he cannot become a real Sovereign Power.

In the last stanza, Sankara insists upon the necessity of accomplishing all the required conditions in one's inner bosom before one can come to experience the Infinite, the Divine. Self-mastery is a reward one comes to enjoy when one has conquered all the inner enemies, and has come to rule over all the different matter-provinces in one's own personality.

Here, in this stanza, the *Acharya* is trying to throw a flood of light into the previous declaration. By an apt example, he is trying to make us understand that by mere repeat and without bringing with his own might and power all the in ourselves. A fool, who, without annihilating his enemies and without bringing with his own might and power all the provinces his sway, by merely repeating that he is an Emperor, can never become one for all his loud claims. Certain necessary conditions are to precede before one can hope to gain the Sceptre and the Crown and be a recognised Emperor in any part of the world. An Emperor is one who has

no enemies within his own empire, and everyone living in his empire is directly under his will and command.

If these conditions are accomplished by an individual in any time and place, thereafter he need not even care to announce or declare that he is the Emperor of that area. The world will do it for him. Similarly, if a seeker has successfully destroyed all his inner enemies—of desires and thoughts, his physical demands, mental appetites and intellectual wanderings—and if that seeker has established his mastery over the vast provinces of the waking, the dream and the deep-sleep-states of consciousness, he need not thereafter repeat 'I am Brahman', but, every cell in him, every thought and every idea that rises in him shall be singing in a chorus his sovereignty over all, at all times and in all conditions.

This idea, that man's self effort in the right direction alone can make him re-discover for himself that the spiritual essence in him is divine and all-powerful, is vividly brought out by the following exquisite stanza, rich in melody, fragrant with suggestions, perfect in its flow, rhythm and proportion.

आप्तोक्तिं खननं तथोपरि शिलाद्यत्कर्षणं स्वीकृतिं
निक्षेपः समपेक्षते न हि बहिः शब्दैस्तु निर्गच्छति ॥
तद्वद्ब्रह्मविदोपदेशमननध्यानादिभिर्लभ्यते
मायाकार्यतिरोहितं स्वममलं तत्त्वं न दुर्युक्तिभिः ॥ ६५ ॥

*aptoktim khananam tathopari śilādhyutukarṣaṇam svīkṛtim
nikṣepah samapekṣate na hi bahiḥ śabdaistu nirgachati
tadvadbrahmavidopadeśamananadhyānādibhirlabhyate
māyākāryatirohitam svamalam tatvam na duryuktibhiḥ 65.*

आप्तोक्तिम् - Instruction of a competent person, खननम् - excavation, शिलोद्युत्कर्षणम् - removing of stones, etc., तथा - in that way, उपरि - (all things) lying above, स्वीकृतिम् - grasping, निक्षेपः - treasure, समपेक्षते - requires, न - not, हि - indeed, बहिःशब्दैः - by words called out, तु - but, निर्गच्छति - never comes out, तद्वत् - so too,

ब्रह्मविदः - by the knower of Brahman, उपदेशमननध्यानादिभिः - through the instruction, reflection, meditation, etc., लभ्यते - is gained, मायाकार्यतिरोहितम् - hidden under delusion and its effects, स्वम् - the Self, अमलम् - Pure, तत्त्वम् - the reality, न - not, दुर्युक्तिभिः - perverted arguments.

A treasure hidden deep below the earth can be found only on knowing the exact site, excavation carried out, and the earth, stones etc., hiding it are removed; never can it come out if it is called out by name. Similarly, the Pure Truth of the Self which is lying hidden beneath our delusion and its effects can be attained through the instructions of one who has realised the Eternal, followed by reflection, meditation and so forth—but ever, never can the Self, on its own accord, emerge out, however much we may repeat our own perverted arguments.

In the course of the last many stanzas, Sankara had been trying to bring home to us the utter necessity and urgency for self-effort undertaken in the right direction. That no amount of study and philosophical dialectics can take one, even by a fraction, the nearer to the Divine experience which is the life's fulfilment, has already been elaborately discussed. The same idea has been brought out to us in this stanza which, we may consider, is the summary of a library of books on spiritual literature.

In order to explain this idea, Sankara brings the picture of one digging out a treasure. One may wonder how the treasure-hunters' activities can be a theme by which the spiritual technique can be explained; a poet always sees much more meaning in a factual happening than an ordinary matter-of-fact observer does.

A treasure-hunt can be successful only when the digger has correct information of the place where the treasure is hidden. He must have also the enthusiasm and the energy to dig and find the treasure. He must slowly and steadily, with hopeful patience and perseverance continue digging

and remove all obstacles that meet with on his way till he reaches the goal of his seeking—the treasure trove. At last, when he comes to the very rich vaults he must be level-headed and calm enough not to lose his balance so that he is in a position to gather the treasure and make use of it.

In the same fashion, the Infinitely rich treasure of Perfection that lies unseen beneath the outer crude layers of matter-envelopments in the bosom of man is to be discovered as his own Self. The seeker must have the assiduity, industry, hope and patience to dig in the right place, in the right fashion, constantly and continuously with unabated enthusiasm, in the face of even the greatest obstacles, until at last he comes not only to see the treasure but to gather it, to possess it, and to enjoy it, as its sole proprietor! Here also he should not try to “dig” anywhere, but must start his endeavour in the right direction as advised by those who know the Truth (*Āpta-Vākya*m) in the Scriptures.

In the spiritual treasure-hunting, the endeavour of digging is with the pickaxe of thought and the spade of discrimination. With these we remove our earth—earthly attachments with the body, mind and intellect, which are but the effects of our ignorance of the Self. *Avidya* creates in us various misunderstandings and it is these agitations of the mind (*Vikṣepa*), and negative thought-veilings in the intellect (*Āvaraṇa*) that conceals the Treasure Divine—the Self. These can be removed by reflection and meditation.

Manana and *Dhyāna*, Reflection and Meditation, prepare the seeker's mind to a single-pointedness, when his inner personality becomes the least agitated. This is the condition of a mind and intellect that is fit for *Vicār*, which is the highest Spiritual *Sādhana* known to man, and this is exhaustively indicated only in Vedānta.

Faithful to his arguments, honest to his convictions, obedient to his own experiences, *Acārya* Sankara had to cry out his assertion that the above-described is the *only* path for complete and permanent liberation from the chaotic confusions created by our own ignorance of the underlying di-

vinity in ourselves. Naturally, he points out the hollowness of all other methods and the immaturity of all other techniques which are, according to him, putrified logic, soured reason, distorted vision and false assertions, compared with the perfect and right Philosophy, the full and elaborate technique of Vedanta.

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन भवबन्धविमुक्तये ।

स्वैरेव यत्नः कर्तव्यो रोगादारिव पण्डितैः ॥ ६६ ॥

tasmātsarvaprayatnena bhavabandhavimuktaye

sveraiṣa yatnah kartavyo ragādāviva paṇḍitaiḥ 66.

तस्मात् Therefore, सर्व प्रयत्नेन - by all means भवबन्ध विमुक्तये - for the liberation from the bodages of birth and death, स्वेः - by one's own means, एव - alone, यत्नः - effort, कर्तव्यः - must be done, रोगादौ इव - as in the beginning of illness, पण्डितैः - by the intelligent seekers.

Therefore, an intelligent seeker should, as in the case of illness etc., personally strive hard by all the means in his power to get himself freed from the bondage of birth and change.

The preceding nine stanzas are being now concluded with this tenth sloka. Naturally, the term "therefore" with which this stanza opens indicates all the reasons shown and explained in the previous stanzas.

In stanza 56 Sankara started this discussion and has carried it all through these nine *ślokās*. All the time, he had been emphasising the noble truth that self-effort is unavoidable and, compared with it, mere *śāstra* studies and capacity to discourse upon are all of no avail. Because of those reasons it should be logically understood that each seeker must, for himself, individually and personally, strive with all sincerity and regularity in the right drection, so that he may come to realise in himself the Eternal God-hood in his spiritual nature.

The simile used here is very significant. Like a sick patient, we are to consider ourselves as infected with the microbes of ignorance. Health is the Real Nature of all living beings. Illness is the condition of the physical body when it has, due to some reasons known or unknown, fallen away from its essential health. Health is not created, but all our efforts are to remove the causes that created the disease. A body rid of its disease-germs comes to manifest in time full health and vigour. Similarly, here the ignorance creates in us all the mal-adjustments through which the Spiritual dynamism, the Divine Glory, the Supreme Perfection etc., get drained out from us.

No two patients can be cured of the same disease with the same dosage of the same medicine. Same medicines can be the cure for the disease, but dosages and diet must change from person to person. Similarly, though the Vedānta Sādhana is always the same to all seekers, in its application, individually, each seeker must get his own right dose. Merely taking the medicine does not assure the cure. It depends upon a dozen other factors; of them *Tapas* is the most essential. The patient may have temptations to enjoy things which are denied to him by his doctor; but he has to avoid them scrupulously; or else, the medicine, instead of curing, may kill him !

यस्त्वयाऽद्य कृतः प्रश्नो वरीयाञ्छास्त्रविन्मतः ।

सूत्रप्रायो निगूढार्थो ज्ञातव्यश्च मुमुक्षुभिः ॥ ६७ ॥

yastvayādhyā kṛtaḥ praśno varīyāñchāstravinmataḥ
sūtraprāyo nigūḍhartho gnātavyaśca mumukṣubhiḥ 67.

यः - whichever, त्वया - by you, अद्य - today, कृतः - made, प्रश्नः - question, वरीयान् - are excellent, शास्त्रविन्मतः - accepted by those well-versed in the scriptures, सूत्रप्रायः - aphoristic, निगूढार्थः - pregnant with meaning, च - and, ज्ञातव्यम् - fit to be known, मुमुक्षुभिः - by the seekers.

The questions which you raised today are excellent, fit to be in the mouth of all those who are well-versed in the Sastras : aphoristic, pregnant with meaning, and they are such that the answers of them are fit to be known by all seekers after liberation.

When the student asked some questions* the teacher, instead of replying him directly and immediately, indulged in a long and exhaustive discourse upon the futility of mere discussions if they were not to be accompanied by an all-out enthusiastic self-effort at raising oneself from one's own known inner deformities. This is no idle digression on the part of the teacher, but it expresses his burning concern that his disciple should not misunderstand and misuse the freedom given to him to ask questions, and get his doubts cleared. There are always in the society a set of wise-looking foolish disciples who misuse the freedom given to them, and prostitute their privilege of discussing with their teacher.

They, poor folk, have fallen in love with their own questions that they repeat them with a passion almost amounting to sheer lunacy !! In order that the student may not fall into this intellectual ditch and bury his own self-development, Sankara, by ten explicit stanzas, has warned the world of seekers. After concluding the digressions, he now comes to answer pointedly all the seven questions raised by the disciple.

In the stanza now under discussion, the master is complimenting the student at the intelligence of the questions and the beauty of precision that graces every form in which the questions had been framed. The glories that are enumerated here by the Guru are the perfections that should be when a chiseled thought is packed in any language and offered at the feet of True Wisdom . When a true disciple reaches his master's feet, he feels choked with admiration, reverence, devotion and love for the master, that he dares not disturb the divine atmosphere of tranquillity around the teacher with his thoughtless blabberings and empty talks.

* Ibid stanza 49—When the disciple asked seven short, pithy questions upon his burning doubts.

A fit student is one who has unto himself crystallized his idea and, after his logical discussions within himself, has come across certain insurmountable obstacles, for the removal of which he has reached the teacher. Since the doubt was really felt by him, the student could present it in the fewest number of words, indicating at once the logic of his thought.

When, on a dark night, if you had fallen into a wayside well, indeed, your condition is unenviable! You are extremely anxious to relieve yourself from pain. At this moment you hear a pedestrian's steps approaching, and you cry out for help. The benevolent friend reaches the well. Would you, then, from the bottom of the well, begin to narrate to him the entire story of how you came up to the well at that late hour, and how you fell, what all thoughts you had to keep company with in the sandy bottom of the well, etc., etc. besides your name, details of your family, position, status etc.?

No. Under such critical moments you will only cry *"I am here in the well ; save me please. O ! Please, save me immediately. Help me to come out of the well. Save me, Save me."* Any other talk will be unnatural. Similarly, a student who has understood that he, in the darkness of his ignorance, has fallen into the dry-well of limitations and sorrow, when sees the master, to that saviour, the Guru, he will have no stories to tell, no idle discussions to make, except his one heart-rending cry, *"Save Me ! Save Me !"*

Sankara, here, through his words of compliments to the disciple, is advising the generations of seekers not to be too wordy when they approach a master. This does not take away from us our liberty to talk to him, in our attempt to evaluate the master. Sankara only means here that having accepted one as a teacher, when one approaches him for purposes of correct initiation into the subtle Truth of Vedanta, he should not destroy the sanctity of the atmosphere by his exhibition of knowledge and sentiment.

The questions asked by the student here were all couched in a precise, aphoristic style, indicative of the stu-

dent's own independent attempts at understanding the preliminary thoughts in the philosophy. These questions are pregnant with secret thoughts which are not in their literal word-meanings. Also, these discussions are not Sunday magazine themes written out to entertain the vulgar tastes and cheap demands of an idle holiday crowd. These rake up the innermost depths of the tranquil investigations undertaken, which are possible only for a human intellect blessed with acute reasoning capacities. These topics are of interest only to those who like to get away from these known limitations and wish to come to the essential freedom in their own pure nature as the Self.

शृणुष्वऽवहितो विद्वन् यन्मया समुदीर्यते ।

तदेतच्छ्रवणात्सद्यो भवबन्धाद्विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ६८ ॥

srnuṣṣvāhito vidvan yanmayā samudīryate

tadetachhrvanātsadhyo bhavabandhādvimokṣyase 68.

शृणुष्व - Listen, अवहितः - being attentive, विद्वन् - O learned seeker, यत् - to what, मया - by me, समुदीर्यते - is enunciated, तत् - that, एतत् श्रवणात् - by hearing this, भवबन्धात् - from bondages of Samsar, विमोक्ष्यसे - you shall be liberated completely.

Listen attentively, O, learned one, to what I am now going to tell you. By listening to it, you shall gain immediately a thorough liberation from all the bondage born out of the pluralistic perception.

In this Stanza, the *Acharya* is giving the student the full assurance that if he were to listen properly to all the subtle and lucid words the teacher is going to tell, the student shall attain a sense of complete fulfilment in life.

"Indeed, this Vedanta is cheap! A seeker of liberation has only to discover a Teacher as great as Sri Sankara and listen carefully to his words, and immediately the student shall experience a total release from all his physical imperfections, mental debilities and intellectual weakness created by his own subjective spiritual ignorance! Indeed, Vedanta, then, is cheap! Just listen and feel liberated! Can there be

an easier Path ? Vedanta is cheap !"—thus one may be tempted to exclaim.

This stanza is a clear example which amply illustrates the truth that literal word-meanings do not convey the right philosophical implications in Vedantic literature. If, by listening, one could liberate himself, the *entry* into the spiritual kingdom, *Mokṣa*, would have been so cheap that we could have easily made it universal. The scripture cannot be false; and mere listening cannot be a path for a total spiritual redemption. Therefore, we must understand that the word '*listening*' is used here in a sense much more ample and accommodative than its dictionary meaning.

From what you have been told so far, you know how essential it is for a student to get himself completely and fully tuned up to the Master. The student has, already through a process of self-discipline, made his inner Kingdom clean and peaceful, wherein he stands in all devotion and meekness, receptivity and alertness. When such an individual *listens* to the inspired words of the Master, full of subtle suggestions, the seeker, from within himself, starts living the unsaid chapters that are made to ring through the said words.

As the tongue of the temple-bell strikes the bellcup, there is, indeed, a harsh metallic sound; but as we listen to it, it warbles out into a lingering melody before it slowly dies out into the very silence in which it was born. Similarly, the words of the Scriptures have a harsh sound and a lingering music. The harsh sounds are caught in a web of language and preserved in the text books, while the warbling notes are to be produced at each reading in the secret caves of the seeker's heart.

This preparation is indicated by the practices of reflection and meditation, concentration and devotion, self-control and celibacy, moral purity and ethical goodness advised for the *Sādhakas*.

A student thus prepared, when comes to *hear* a discourse from a Master, not only hears the words but spiri-

tually lives the Truth; this process is called 'listening', in the stanza. According to Vedanta, unlike in other techniques of self-perfection like Yoga, Devotion etc., here, the student has nothing to do and to gain than *hear* and truly *listen*. In the other paths, the technique is explained and advised, and the experience comes to the student when he gains a certain amount of perfection in the quiet practice of them.

But, in Vedanta, it is a mere Scriptural discussion between a saint of inward experience and a student of inner purity—*Guru Sishya-Samvada*—and the experience of Reality which is the theme of discussion, is brought within the experience of the student immediately and instantaneously. Therefore, Sankara is perfectly orthodox when he declared that the disciple shall experience liberation if only he knew the *art of listening* to the spiritual voice that sings through the Master's words.

मोक्षस्य हेतुः प्रथमो निगद्यते

वैराग्यमत्यन्तमनित्यवस्तुषु ।

ततः शमश्चापि दमस्तितीक्षा

न्यासः प्रसक्ताखिलकर्मणां भृशम् ॥ ६९ ॥

mokṣasya hetuḥ prathamo nigadyate

vairāgyamatyantamanityavastuṣu

tataḥ śamāścāpi damastitīkṣā

nyāsaḥ prasaktākhilakarmanām br̥śam 69.

मोक्षस्य - For liberation, हेतुः - cause, प्रथमः - first, निगद्यते - is considered, वैराग्यम् अत्यन्तम् - extreme detachment, अनित्य वस्तुषु - in finite objects of sense-enjoyment, ततः - then, शमः - calmness, च - and, अपि - also, दमः - self-control, तितीक्षा - forbearance, न्यासः - renunciation, प्रसक्ताखिलकर्मणाम् - selfish actions, भृशम् - completely.

In enumerating the cause for liberation, we come first to extreme detachment from finite objects of sensual satisfaction. Then follow calmness, self-control, forbearance and complete renunciation of all work.

Vivekachūdāmaṇi is a text book, apparently describing the theories in Vedantic Philosophy, but in fact, it is a book

of instructions to a real seeker who wants to get fully established on the path of spirituality and maintain his progress in his programme of self-development. Naturally, any true seeker will be impatiently thirsty not only to understand the nature of liberation but also to get a detailed discussion on the specific causes and conditions under which the final liberation from his known pains of mortality and sorrows of finitude can be had. Here, the *Acharya* is enumerating the conditions of the mind in which the true wisdom can blaze forth in one's bosom.

Among them, the capacity to get oneself completely detached from the craving for things known to be finite and perishable is considered as the most important. A discriminative intellect (*Viveka*) can grow and fulfil itself only when there is full detachment (*Vairāgya*). Thus, without gaining sufficient non-interestedness in the acquisition, possession and enjoyment of the sense-objects of the world, we cannot enter the Portals of True Wisdom. When we become actually conscious of the finite and the impermanent nature of the world-of-objects, our minds, which always athirst for stability, continuity and perfection, will immediately get repelled from their usual playgrounds, the sub-lanes of sensuousness, where we spend a large amount of our vital energy every day. Detachment is a scheme of economy in the expenditure of our life's energy, and by disciplining, conserving and rightly applying this newfound energy, we can raise ourselves from the state of bondage to inward freedom and spiritual suzerainty.

Calmness of the mind (*Śama*), self-control (*Dama*) and a capacity to joyously suffer with philosophical resignation the pinpricks of life and the tragedies of situations (*Titikṣa*), are again factors* to be fulfilled by the seeker himself, so that he may get the newly released energies disciplined and trained for the right application in a concentrated, single-pointed meditation.

* These four great qualities have already been defined earlier in this text-book —Ibid stanzas 20-24. In *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* also, there is a famous reference to these qualities of self-control, forbearance etc. 'IV, iv. 23'.

When detachment has risen as a result of pure discriminative perception of a better-equated intellect, and when this mental condition is reinforced by self-control, calmness and forbearance, the individual comes to entertain no more egoistic desire-prompted schemes of activity. He comes to relinquish† all desire-prompted activities, ritualistic or otherwise, sacred or secular. All these are contributing to the true preparedness of an intellect for the higher flights to the very brilliant peaks of the transcendental glory and perfection.

ततः श्रुतिस्तन्मननं सतत्त्व-

ध्यानं चिरं नित्यनिरन्तरं मुनेः ।

ततोऽविकल्पं परमेत्य विद्वा-

निहैव निर्वाणसुखं समृच्छति ॥ ७० ॥

tata śrutistatmanmananam satatva

dhyānam ciram nityānirantaram muneh

tato (a) vikalpam parametya vidva

nihaiva nirvānasukhām srmrchati

ततः - thereafter, श्रुतिः - hearing, तत् मननम् - reflection thereof, चिरम् - for a long time, नित्यनिरन्तरम् - constant and unbroken, मुनेः - for the Muni, ततः - thereafter, अविकल्पम् - state free from fluctuation, परम् - supreme, एत्य - having reached, विद्वान् - the learned seeker, इह एव - here itself, निर्वाणसुखम् - the bliss of Nirvana, समृच्छति - realises.

Thereafter comes 'hearing', then reflection on what had been heard, and, lastly, long, constant and unbroken meditation on the Truth - for the Muni. Ultimately, that learned Seeker attains the Supreme Nir-vikalpa state, and realises the bliss of Nirvana in this very life.

In the previous stanza, Sankara started an enumeration of the various techniques to be followed by one on his march

† The idea of renunciation of all activities is not to be misunderstood as amounting to an inert existence as the rocks of the Ganges banks. Refer discourses upon stanza 10 earlier in this volume. ,

towards realising the Eternal freedom of the Soul. Here, in this Sloka, the *Acharya* is counting upon the different stages of practices which one must follow when one has come to renounce all pursuits in ego-prompted, desire-ridden activities contributing to a life of mere sensuous happiness.

An individual who has enough detachment from enjoyment arising out of the finite objects, who has cultivated within himself calmness, self-control and forbearance, and who has renounced all his self-motivated activities, is fit for the process called in Vedanta '*hearing*' the scriptures. Scriptures are text-books which explain life as we perceive and live now and indicate the Truth, our goal, through finite words. Therefore, a direct approach to the text-book may mis-guide the seeker by his wrong understanding.

It is imperative that one must *listen* to one text-book at least completely from a true, reliable teacher. In this transaction of wisdom, the master also uses but finite words to explain the absolute. Therefore, the student must be fully tuned up to the teacher's bosom so that the experiences of the teacher may, in resonance, be amplified and conveyed to echo in the heart-chambers of the student.

This process of '*listening*' to the discourses (*Śravaṇa*) is to be followed by inward arguments and final assimilation by the intellect of the seeker in a process called reflection (*Manana*), by which process alone can the ideas in the text-book become the philosophy of the student. Even this intellectual conviction is not sufficient since the Hindu Philosophy seeks a fulfilment not in merely founding a theory to explain the happenings of the world and the destinies of our life, but to lift man to the highest pinnacles of his evolution of cultural purity, so that he may revel thereafter as a God-man upon the earth.

And therefore, the individual is to attain the Truth through a process of re-discovery by detaching himself from his wrong and false identification with matter. This technique of detaching oneself from the false, and re-discovering one's identity to be the Self through disciplined currents of

constant thought-flow is called meditation (*Dhyāna*). It is indicated here by Sankara that when *Dhyāna* is practised for a long period daily and constantly—every word is important—for a long period of years (*Ciram*), daily (*Nityam*) and constantly (*Nirantaram*)—he gets established in God-consciousness, and thus attains the Nirvāna state.

The word *Nirvāna* means 'blown out'. Modern physics tells us that the rip of a candle flame, though apparently solid and steady, is constituted of independent flickerings at a great frequency. Just as the pictures thrown on a screen in a film-show are constantly changing, yet because of the frequency, we gain the conception of a continuity, so too, we apparently recognise a solid flame tip in a burning candle. This example is often quoted in *Yoga Śāstras* to explain the mind in man which seems to be a substantial factor, though created by the frequency and continuity of the individual thought-waves. In one who has realised his own Self and has transcended his mind, there is no more any thought arising; and this state is indicated by the term *Nirvāna*, the state of Self-realisation.

This *Mokṣa*-condition can be in two stages, just as before sleep we have a period of dosing, followed by a deep-sleep-state. During the dosing period we are conscious that we are 'going to sleep' and that our conceptions and perceptions of the outer worlds are being slowly and steadily dazed away from us; and the deep-sleep-state is the period when we are neither conscious of the outer world or even of ourselves.

Similarly, in meditation also we come to a dusky period of awareness, wherein we are conscious of ourselves nearing the Transcendental, and that state of *Samādhi*, where the last traces of Ego still linger is called '*Savikalpa Samādhi*'. The Ego-less moment where the subject alone revels in his own glory, when the *Yogi* experiences the Infinite Bliss of Pure Existence, that state of mind is called '*Nirvikalpa Samādhi*'. That is the experience of God-hood, and after this *Iśvara darśan*, there is no falling back into the values and impulses of the lower life any more.

Not only does Sankara explain the various stages *en route* this Divine pilgrimage and describe exhaustively the Goal and its experience, but he, in this stanza, also insists that this is not a 'post-mortem' experience to be gained in some other future embodiment, after the death of this body, in another special area called the heaven or another world. He insists that a *Muni* realises the *Bliss* of *Nirvāna* "even here, now". *Muni* in Sanskrit, in its etymological meaning, has an import equivalent to a "man of discriminative reflection"—*Manana Silavān*.

यद्बोद्धव्यं तवेदानीमात्मानात्मविवेचनम् ।

तदुच्यते मया सम्यक्श्रुत्वात्मन्यवधारय ॥ ७१ ॥

yadboddhavyam tavedānimātmānātmavivecanam
taducyate mayā samyak śrutvātmanyavudhāraya

यत् - whichever, बोद्धव्यम् - to be known, तव - to you, इदानीम् - now, आत्मानात्मविवेचनम् - discrimination between the Self and the non-Self, तत् - that, उच्यते - is described, मया - by me, संयक् - clearly, श्रुत्वा - listening to (that), आत्मनि - in the mind, अवधारय - receive well.

Now I am going to describe the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self most elaborately—it is what you ought to know. Listen to it properly and digest it fully in your mind.

Earlier, the student had asked the master some half a dozen questions* and among them was an enquiry on what exactly is the discrimination between the Self and the non-self. From this stanza onwards, Sankara is giving an elaborate description of the various layers of matter envelopments in man which together constitute the non-Self, identifying with which the Self behaves as though it is limited, bound and conditioned to suffer as the *Samsārin*. A mere repetition that "*Viveka* means discrimination between the

* Ibid Sloka 49. Among the questions "how is one freed from the limitations", has been answered in the last two stanzas; Sankara is taking up now the next question.

Self and the non-Self" will not in itself be very helpful to a seeker unless he is able to realise the exact meaning of the Self as contrasted with the perceived world of unreality.

The *Acharya* brings home to his disciple the importance of this theme of his discussions by saying that each student should not only listen but must come, through a process of his own independent discriminative Self analysis, to a firm conviction of what is discussed hereunder.

मज्जास्थिमेदःपलरक्तचर्म -

त्वगाह्वयैर्धातुभिरेभिरन्वितम् ।

पादोरुवक्षोभुजपृष्ठमस्तकै

रङ्गेरुपाङ्गैरुपयुक्तमेतत् ॥ ७२ ॥

majjāsthimedahpalaraktacarma

tvagāhvayairdhātubhirebhiranvitam

pādoruvakṣobhujaprṣṭamastakai

rangairupāṅgairupayuktametāt 72.

मज्जास्थिमेदः पलरक्तचर्म त्वगाह्वयैः - Known as marrow, bones, fat, flesh, blood, dermis, and epidermis, एभिः - these, धातुभिः - ingredients, अन्वितम् - composed of, पादोरुवक्षोभुजपृष्ठमस्तकैः - legs, thighs, chest, arms, back and the head, अङ्गेऽपाङ्गैः - (and their) parts, उपयुक्तम् - united with, एतत् - this.

Composed of the seven ingredients such as marrow (Majja) bones (Asthi), fat (Medah), flesh (Pala), blood (Raktha), dermis (Carma) and epidermis (Twak), and consisting of the following parts—legs (Pada), thigh (Uru), chest (Vaksha), arms (Bhuja), back (Prishta), and the head (Mastak)...

अहं ममेति प्रथितं शरीरं

मोहास्पदं स्थूलमितीर्यते बुधैः ।

नभोनभस्वदहनाम्बुभूयः

सूक्ष्माणि भूतानि भवन्ति तानि ॥ ७३ ॥

ahaṁ mameti prathitam śarīraṁ

mohāspadam sthūlamitīryate budhaiḥ

nabhoṇabhasvadrhanāmbubhūyah

sūkṣmāṇi bhūtāni bhavanti tāni 73.

अहम् - I, मम - mine, इति - thus, प्रथितम् - expressed, शरीरम् - the body, मोहास्पदं - the seat of delusion, स्थूलम् - by wise men, नमो-
नमस्वद्दहनाम्बुभूमयः - the Space, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth, सूक्ष्माणि -
subtle, भूतानि - elements, भवन्ति - are, तानि - they.

This body, the seat of delusion, expressed in terms of 'I and me' is termed by reputed sages as the gross body. The Sky, Air, Water and Earth are the subtle elements.

In the above two stanzas Sankara is trying to indicate to the student the gross body. In biology, we find frequently that an organ is discussed by describing its anatomy by an explanation of its cross sections. This method seems to be not very unfamiliar to our ancient tradition, since it is seen used very freely and liberally even in the realm of philosophy, when a philosopher explains to us even such subtle themes as the layers of a human being! Here, Sankara is making a free use of this technique of explaining through a cross section examination. In the earlier stanza* we have a beautiful description, layer by layer, of a cross section of the physical body.

For example, let us suppose that the upper arm is cut transversely at its middle, and we are looking into the circular surface of the broken piece, in order to study the constitution of the body. Therein we shall find that at its centre is the pulpy white-matter called the *marrow*, which is the innermost content of the bones. Surrounding it, we get the bones, and still outwardly, there is a layer of *fat* which is enveloped by the *flesh*. On the outer layers of the flesh we see conspicuously a layer of *blood*, and all these are packed beautifully with two layers of skins of which the inner cream-coloured tissues are called the dermis (*charma*) and the outer thicker one which is available for our perception is called epidermis (*Twak*). These seven items together constitute the bulk of the body at any point in it.

These materials are gathered together in the sequence enumerated and they are moulded into the shape of a human

* Ibid Sloka 72.

form considered as the beautiful*. This physical structure consists of the various parts and limbs enumerated in the same stanza.

In the following stanza† we are told how this body, the harem of all our Ego-centric assertions and misunderstandings, is the very seat of our vanities and possessiveness. All our I-ness and my-ness function from their headquarters, the physical body. This seat of all painful activities and ego-prompted criminalities against our own Divine Nature—constituted of the above mentioned ingredients, fashioned out with the enumerated limbs and portions—is described by the great *Rishis* of old as the gross body.

The five great elements are described here, and they are first created in their subtle form, and then through a process of combinations among themselves they become the gross elements which we are able to perceive without sense-organs in our worldly life. This process by which the subtle elements become the perceivable gross elements will be described in the following stanza.

परस्परांशैर्मिलितानि भूत्वा

स्थूलानि च स्थूलशारीरहेतवः ।

मात्रास्तदीया विषया भवन्ति

शब्दादयः पञ्च सुखाय भोक्तुः ॥ ७३ ॥

parasparamśairmilitāni bhūtvā

sthulāni ca sthūlaśārīrahetavah

mātrāstadiyā viṣayā bhavanti

śabdādayah pañca sukhāya bhoktuh 74.

परस्परांशैः - With parts of one another, मिलितानि - united, भूत्वा - having become, स्थूलानि च - gross forms, स्थूलशारीरहेतवः - the cause of gross body, मात्राः - subtle essence, तदीयाः - of them, विषयाः - sense-objects, भवन्ति - become, शब्दादयः - sound etc., पञ्च - five in number सुखाय - for the happiness, भोक्तुः - of the experiencer.

* It has been declared by the greatest artists in the world, time without number, that the male human form outwits in beauty to everything else under the Sun.

† Sloka 73.

Having united with parts of one another, they become gross, and in that form they become the cause for the formation of the gross body. Their subtle essence constitutes the sense objects, five in number, such as sound etc., which contribute to the enjoyment of the experiencer, the individual ego.

In the previous stanza, a mere mention was made of the subtle elements, and in this stanza we are told how they, by a process of mutual combination, become 'condensed to sufficient grossness that they become perceptible to our sense organs. This process by which the subtle elements become the Five gross Elements accepted even by modern science as the unit of matter in the world, is called in Sanskrit, '*Pancikaranam*', a pentamerous self-duplication and mutual combinations.

This process is explained in Vedanta as taking place in four distinct stages of "self-division and mutual combinations". The rudimentary subtle elements are constituted of units called *Tanmatrās*. There are five distinct *Tanmatrās* for the five great elements, the Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. Each *Tanmātra*, (unit of each of the five Elements) in the *first stage* of their self-grossification, shows a tendency to divide itself into two halves. In the *second stage*, each *Tanmatra* of the Five Elements becomes bifurcated into two equal parts.

During the third stage, one half of all the Five Elements remain intact* while the other half (of each Element) gets itself divided into four equal parts. Thus, under the column '*Ether*', we have in its third stage, half a *Tanmātra* remaining intact (the blacked-half) and the other half divided itself into four equal parts, each not constituting, therefore, $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the original *Tanmātra*

* Refer Swamiji's "Talk on Atmabodha".

In the fourth stage of its development with each $\frac{1}{2}$ *Tanmatra*, $\frac{1}{8}$ th *Tanmatra* of all other Elements combine and constitute one unit of the gross element. Thus, in the above chart, one half of Ether is joined with four $\frac{1}{8}$ th-bits borrowed from all the other three Elements (half Ether plus $\frac{1}{8}$ th '2' plus $\frac{1}{8}$ th '3' plus $\frac{1}{8}$ th '4' plus $\frac{1}{8}$ th '5') together becoming one unit of the gross *Akasha*. Similarly, half of Air plus $\frac{1}{8}$ th-bit borrowed from Ether, Fire, Water and Earth, becomes one unit of gross Air. Thus, in every one, until we reach the Earth; in the composition of Earth, we find in each unit there is half a *Tanmatra* of Earth and $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the *Tanmatras* of Ether, Air, Fire and Water.

This process is called *Pancikarana*, the pentamerous "self-division and combination" process. This idea is indicated in the stanza under review. Out of these gross Elements the physical body is formed. But the sense-objects,—meaning, sound, touch, form, taste and smell—are constituted of nothing other than the subtle *Tanmātras* of the rudimentary Elements. The gross Elements provide the instrument to enjoy the subtle Elements through. All these arrangements are made so that the ego-centre may experience a life of happiness and miseries as he planned in his ignorance in a world of plurality.

The enjoyer is the Self conditioned by the mind and intellect. The ego (or the *jiva*) is the enjoyer and sufferer which is none but the Self-conditioned by the thought-flow in each one of us. This conditioning can never bring about any real bondage to the Self just as any harm done to my reflections in a mirror can never harm me, the object of whose reflections is in the mirror.

य एषु मूढा विषयेषु बद्धा
 रागोरूपाशेन सुदुर्दमेन ।
 आयान्ति निर्यान्त्यथ ऊर्ध्वमुच्चैः
 स्वकर्मदृतेन जवेन नीताः ॥ ७५ ॥

ya eṣu mada viṣayeṣu baddhā
 rāgorupāśena sudurdamena
 āyānti niryāntyadha ūrdhvamuchai
 svakarmadūtena javena nītāh 75.

ये - Whosoever, एषु - these, मुढाः - thoughtless men, विषयेषु -
 objects, बद्धाः - are bound, रागोरुपाशेन - by the stout ropes of attach-
 ment, सुदुर्दमेन - very difficult to break asunder, आयाति - come,
 निर्याति - depart, अधः - down, ऊर्ध्वम् - up, उच्चैः - powerful, स्वकर्मदूतेन -
 by the emissary of one's own actions, जवेन - quickly, नीताः - carried.

Those thoughtless ones who are bound to these sense-objects
 by the stout ropes called 'attachment', so very difficult to
 break asunder, come and depart — up and down — carried
 by the compelling force of the powerful Angel, who is
 nothing other than the re-actions of their own past actions.

We have found that the sense-objects are innocent
Tanmātras which, in another form, become the sense-organs
 and the gross-body. Steam cannot bind water, both being
 nothing but the same water in its subtle and gross forms.

But, a *Samsārin* is one who is under the persecution of
 the sense-objects and this has come about because of his
 attachment for them. These attachments become almost
 unbreakable by which the ordinary worldly man binds him-
 self to the sense-objects. Thus bound to the gross, the ego
 comes to earn its experiences and yearn for more, and per-
 petrate every moment endless activities, each providing its
 own reactions to be enjoyed or suffered by the same ego.
 Thus in repeated forms, the same ego, visits different fields
 of activities and in a variety of environments. It, again and
 again, enters and leaves the arena of existence, reaping its
 reactions, and sowing new seeds through desire-prompted
 activities, compelling it to come again to reap the fruits of
 the new cultivation when it grows into proper ripeness !

Here, in this stanza, in the last line, are two innocent
 looking phrases which in an aphoristic form gives us the
 theory of *karma* as understood by the Vedantin,

According to the *Mīmāṃsākās* God is that Almighty Power, Omniscient and Omnipotent, Just and True, who distributes the fruits of our actions according to the purity of our motives, the clarity of our conscience, the sincerity of our application, the faithfulness of our obedience to the eternal prescriptions laid down in the immortal Vedas. But, according to the Vedānta, much more intellectually satisfactory is the theory that the reaction of an action is not anything different from the action itself.

An action conditioned by the immediate scheme of time and place, fulfills itself, perhaps, in another place and in a future time, in its own fruits. A bud fulfils itself in its fruit, and there is no need for a fruit-giving supreme power's intervention for the petals to fall off and the fruits to mature ! The half-read history of a thought-expressed (action) is the immediate action, which in reality is concluded only in its reaction; 'action and reaction are equal and opposite' is one of the laws of Newton, perhaps, with its application in the world of Philosophy also.

Thus, here it is said that result of actions undertaken and performed at the instance of our delusory attachment with the sense-objects, guides each ego-centre to its own self-dictated destinies of enjoyment or sorrow in future. Thought by thought, wading through actions, the ego creates for itself a future world wherein it can come to enjoy its own demands : be it the life of a pig or the life of a God. This is indicated here by the term 'carried up and down' the ladder of evolution and devolution. Through right activity and through discrimination when we develop detachment, then the sense objects can no longer bind us, and our activities would be to end our ignorance through discovery and knowledge of the Eternal and True Principle of Divinity in us.

In *Vedānta Śāstra*, the possible wombs for taking births are considered to fall under two distinct groups, the higher and the lower. In the *higher yonies*, we are born only to enjoy the etherial sense-objects, which can provide, through the necessary instruments of perception and enjoyment, a

greater share of finite joys for a longer period of existence. This is called the experience of 'Heaven'. The other type is called the *lower wombs* which comprise the existence in the form of the animals and birds, plants and trees. These lower *yonies* introduce us into a plane of consciousness wherein the individual egos, with their different degrees of dullness, come to experience an immense amount of concentrated sorrow. These two paths exhaust all possibilities of the future and they are indicated here by the term '*carried up and down*'.

The reactions of the past neither tend for too much enjoyment, nor too much suffering when they are almost equibanced; then such ego-centre with its slight tendencies to be either good or bad, present itself in a human form here on this globe. As a man, in one's life time, every one of us has chances to smile and to sob, to enjoy success and to suffer failures; and also, we are provided with a discriminative intellect which can be used to understand the Real from the unreal. Here, in this world, neither are we dead-drunk with happiness, nor fully doped with sorrow; and thus, a chance is given to every one to consciously move either up or down, or towards the infinite Freedom of Pure God-hood. Spiritual endeavour is possible neither in the planes of experiences indicated by the term '*up*', or in the fields of sorrows covered by the term, '*down*'.

Each of us comes to gain our required field, appropriate to our past and perfectly forming a logical sequence with our motives, thoughts and desires entertained in the past. Guided by the very instincts created in us as a result of the past Karmas, ordered by our own *karma-dāta*, we reach our destinations created by ourselves, which are nothing but the frozen past intentions !

शद्धादीभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च

पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन बद्धाः ।

कुरङ्गमातङ्गपतङ्गमीन-

भृङ्गा नरः पञ्चभिरश्रितः किम् ॥ ७६ ॥

*śabdādibhiḥ pancabhireva pañca
 pancatvamāpuḥ svagunena baddhāḥ
 kurangamātangaṭaṅgamīna
 bhrngā narah pancabhirancitah kim 76.*

शब्दादिभिः - By sound, etc., पञ्चभिः five, एव - alone, पञ्चत्वम् - the dissolution of the five elements (death), अपुः - is met with, स्वगुणेन - (and) by its own guna, बद्धा - are bound, कुरङ्गमातङ्गपतङ्गमीनशृङ्गाः पञ्च - the five, deer, elephant, moth, fish and honey-bee, नरः - man, पञ्चभिः - with these five, अञ्चितः - attached (as he is), किम् - what (to speak of him).

The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and the honey-bee — these five get themselves annihilated because of their slavery to one or the other of the sense-objects, such as sound etc., through their own attachment. What then can be in store for man who is attached to all these five?

The theme under discussion is how our attachment to the sense-objects bind and enslave us, and destroy our peace of mind and freedom of true living. At this moment, it is but appropriate that Sankara is reminded of the various examples in nature where species come to their extinction due to their extreme attachment to one or the other sense-objects.

These examples clearly show that Sankara was not living the misunderstood Hinduism of "perfect Ganges-stone-Samādhī". He was alive to the world of beauties and thrills, the world of incidents and happenings around him.

The deer likes melodious sound and the deer-hunter sings to charm the deer. Attracted with the melody of sound, the deer forgets the danger and turns towards the hunter who shoots the innocent animal. The elephants, especially in their mating season, become extremely attached to the sense of touch; rubbing against each other and walking without caution, they fall into the pits got ready to catch them. The moth is attracted irresistibly by form, and charmed by the brilliance of a flame, it flutters towards it with an

appetising impatience and gets itself burnt in the flame. The fishes, ravenously hungry at all times, in their gluttony, swallow the worm along with the hook which the angler had thrown, and thus meet their grave in the stomach of the fish-eaters. The poor honey-bee, pursuing its industrious vocation, collects honey from the flowers, and hoards it in its cells, until at last the heart-less man reaches the hive and sets fire to the entire colony in order to loot the honey-wealth of the bee.

Thus, Sankara gives us five typical examples wherein each has met with its doom because of its attachment to one or the other of the sense-objects. Most impressive it becomes when Sankara concludes with an exclamation, 'What then is in store for man who is attached to all these five? (Sense objects).

A man of ignorance, when he wills neither discrimination nor detachment, vulgarly running after empty sense-objects of fancied satisfactions for his temporary nerve-ticklings, is said to be a sad victim of cruel delusion, where his calamitous end is inevitable as he has allowed himself to be bound by the five strong ropes.*

दोषेण तीव्रो विषयः कृष्णसर्पविषादपि ।

विषं निहन्ति भोक्तारं द्रष्टारं चक्षुषाप्ययम् ॥ ७७ ॥

doṣeṇa tīvro viṣayah kṛṣṇasarpaviṣādapi

viṣam nihanti bhoktāram draṣṭāram cakṣuṣāpyayam 77.

दोषेण - by its evil effects, तीव्रः - more virulent, विषयः - the sense objects, कृष्णसर्पविषात् - than the poison of the cobra, इवः - even, विषम् - the poison, निहन्ति - kills, भोक्तारम् - the one who takes it, अयम् - this, चक्षुषा - with the eye, द्रष्टारम् - one who looks at, अपि - even.

Sense-objects are even more virulent in their tragic effects than the cobra poison. Poison is fatal to one who swallows it, but the sense-objects kill him who but looks at them with his eyes.

* The Sanskrit word 'Guna' has two meanings, (a) rope (b) mental tendency.

At this juncture, Sankara is discussing how dangerous it is for a seeker to have attachment for the enjoyment of sense-objects. He has already told us how tragic is the end of those living beings who have but a single sense-appetite. In order to bring this idea home to a seeker and to paint for us the virulence of the sense-poison, Sankara is giving yet another stanza. This stanza is very famous in-as-much as we often hear it from all pulpits.

Explaining the dangerous intensity of this poison, Sankara compares it with the venom of the cobra. If there is a distance between the cobra and the individual, it is clear that the poison in the cobra cannot affect the individual. Nobody is known to have died of poison because he merely saw a cobra in a zoo ! The venom can be fatal to an individual only when he is bitten by the cobra. That it can be fatal only when the poison has affected the victim, is a limitation in the poisonous potency of the cobra. Compared with this, the sense-objects are more virulent, says Sankara, because, they can annihilate the individual even by looking at them. The mention of the 'organ of vision' *Cakṣuṣa Api*—in the stanza is a typical example; it indicates a similar end when all other sense-organs, individually or collectively, run after their sense-objects. How indulgence in each sense-organ brings about total annihilation has been shown in the previous stanza.

विषयाशामहापाशाद्यो विमुक्तः सुदुस्त्यजात् ।

स एव कल्पते मुक्त्यै नान्यः षट्शास्त्रवेद्यपि ॥ ७८ ॥

viṣayāśāmahāpaśādyo vimuktah sudustyajāt

sa eva kalpate muktyai nānyah ṣaḍśāstravedhyapi 78.

विषय आशामहापाशात् - From the binding ropes desires for sense-objects, यः - he who, विमुक्तः - is liberated, सुदुस्त्यजात् - so very difficult to renounce, सः - he, एव - alone, कल्पते - becomes fit, मुक्त्यै - for liberation, न अन्यः - none else, षट्शास्त्रवेदी अपि - even though he well-versed in all the six schools of philosophy.

He who has liberated himself from the terrible bonds of desires for the sense-objects, (no doubt) so very difficult to renounce, is alone fit for liberation; and none else, even though he is well-versed in all the six schools of Indian Philosophy.

While discussing the various qualities necessary for a fit student to walk the path of Vedanta successfully, he had been told that *Vairāgya*—total detachment from all desires for earning any joy through indulgence in the sense-objects—is an unavoidable and salient factor. The same idea was again repeated in describing the six qualities where they enumerated and described both the calmness of the mind (*Śama*) and self-control (*Dama*). Thus, altogether, it is evident that Sankara had indicated that without total and complete *Vairāgya*, the powers in us, now spent out in wrong directions, will not be conserved so that the seeker may rightly use it for the greater purposes of self-culture and ultimately of Self re-discovery.

Indeed, the Vedantic Masters were not impractical men who were ignorant of the ordinary man's sense-attachment. They, certainly, realised that to control the sense-organs and avoid their gushing forth into their respective sense-objects is too very difficult for an ordinary man. And yet, where *Viveka* has come, *Vairāgya* is natural, and the stanza insists in declaring that one who has gained a certain amount of freedom from the charms of the sense-objects alone is fit for liberation. The idea is that so long as the individual hungers for anything, his entire personality will be flowing towards the acquisition and possession of it, so that there will be nothing left in him to supply him with the required dynamism for listening, or reflecting, or meditating upon the contents of our Scriptures.

The idea that such an one '*alone is fit for liberation*' is made very positive by denying the sensuous people any chance for success in the spiritual life—'*and none else*'. Not even men who are erudite scholars in all the six schools of Indian Philosophy are recognised by the *Śāstra* as fit for total liberation from their ignorance and the ignorance-created

mis-understandings in themselves. In short, with a mere book learning, without the heart's purity, mind's tranquillity, intellect's application and body's self-denial, no progress in the spiritual life taking us towards a complete liberation from our limitations is ever possible.

आपातवैराग्यवतोमुमुक्षुः

भवाब्धिपारं प्रतियातुमुद्यतान् ।

आशाग्रहो मज्जयतेऽन्तराले

निगृह्य कण्ठे विनिवर्त्य वेगात् ॥ ७९ ॥

āpātavairāgyavato mumkṣuḥ

bhavābhipāraṃ pratiyātumudhyatān

āśāgraho majjayatentarāle

nīgrhya kaṇṭhe vinivartya vegāt 79

आपातवैराग्यवतः - possessing an apparent detachment, मुमुक्षुः - men desirous of attainment, भवाब्धिपारम् - to the other shores of the ocean of change, प्रतियातुम् - to go towards, उद्यतान् - those who have undertaken, आशाग्रहः - the crocodile of desire, मज्जयते - drowns them, अन्तराले - halfway, निगृह्य - having caught, कण्ठे - by their throats, विनिवर्त्य - turning, वेगात् - suddenly.

Those who have got only an apparent dispassion (Vyrāgya) and who are trying to cross the ocean of change are caught by their throats by the crocodile of desires who violently snatching them along, drowns them in the middle of the ocean !

In the last stanza, we noticed how Sankara, with an enthusiasm, almost amounting to fanaticism, insisted that spiritual life can be claimed as a birth-right only by those who have a true spirit of dispassion. Here the *Acharya* is warning that false *Vairāgya* cannot sustain us for long, efficiently. A spirit of detachment and a craving for dispassion may be found generated in us as a result of repeated tragedies.

A tragic bereavement, a shocking disappointment, a painful failure, an agonising physical pain, all these have

been found, either individually or collectively, capable of creating a temporary sense of *Vairāgya*, termed in Sanskrit as '*Smaśāna Vairāgya*' —'burial-ground' sense of aversion for life and its finitude. This passing phase of a temporary mood is not a solid capital upon which an individual can build up his entire future destiny in the spiritual world. No doubt, these temporary mental moods may be capitalised in training our mind and intellect to generate more and more sense of discrimination.

True dispassion is a wise condition of the ego, created out of a deep intellectual conviction, which, in its turn, has its roots in perfect *Viveka*. Such a dispassion alone can afford to smile forth into blossoms of success in the spring of study and reflection. As time passes on, in the maturity of an individual's spiritual florescence, one can hope to gather the fruits of wisdom.

False *Vairāgya* has ruined men more than what true atheism had ever done! Hundreds and thousands of such persons belonging to almost all religions of the world have reached sanctuaries of their respective monasteries. In the long run, they discover that they are not fit for a life of total renunciation and perfect self-control. So many of them who find sufficient moral courage return to the market-place and the world of contentions to "fight for, acquire and enjoy" material wealth. But many had come to live a choking life of frustrations and sorrows, with neither the capacity to live the life of renunciation, nor the daring to return! A few, wearing the apparel of the seekers, still live the life of the sensuous; they are the leprous ulcers walking the world's spiritual fields, contaminating the serene atmosphere and vitiating the salubrious climate thereof!

The *Acharya* has so briefly indicated these dangers by comparing men of cheap *Vairāgya* to those who are wrecked on the 'ocean of change' which is infested with ravenous crocodiles of sensuous desires. These desires jump at the throat of the poor victims and drag them down, drown them mid-way on their great pilgrimage to the Beyond.

विषयाख्यग्रहो येन सुविरक्त्यसिना हतः ।

स गच्छति भवाम्भोधेः पारं प्रत्यहवर्जितः ॥ ८० ॥

viṣayākhyagraho yena suviraktyasinā hatah

sa gachhati bhavāmbhodheh pāraṁ pratyahavarjitāh 80.

विषयाख्यग्रहः - The shark known as sense-objects, येन by whom, सुविरक्त्यसिना - with the sword of mature dispassion, हतः destroyed, सः - he, गच्छति - crosses, भवाम्भोधेः - of the ocean of Samsar, पारम् - the shores, प्रत्यहवर्जितः - free from obstacles.

He who has destroyed the crocodile known as sense-object with the sword of mature dispassion, crosses the ocean of Samsar, unobstructed.

Continuing the idea of the previous stanza, it is described here that he who had destroyed the crocodile of desire lurking in the Ocean of Samsar alone can safely cross over to the other shores of this Ocean of Change. In order to kill the enemy, we have no other instrument but the sword of 'discriminative knowledge'. With *Viveka* alone can we end our desires. Desires can come and sabotage our happiness only when the discriminative faculties in us have, as it were, gone to sleep. So long as our pure intellect is awake, the whims and fancies of the mind cannot emerge out to loot and plunder the inner kingdom. Only in the darkness of the bosom, when the illuminating intellect has disappeared behind a cloud of ignorance, can the temptations and desires of the heart walk out of their hide-outs to thief the wealth of peace and tranquillity which the individual enjoys for himself.

Once within the grasp of these minions-of-the-Moon, the individual identifying with these desires, gets choked and drowned in the stormy sea of plurality and contentions. To live intellectually with discriminative analysis and bright awareness, ever conscious of the fallacies in each thought, and not being victimised by the fanciful desires, is to live in *Viveka*. Where *Viveka* is steady, bright and glorious, the desires, however strong they may be, will not dare to attack.

It is rightly said by Sankara that with the Sword of Dispassion, the seeker must destroy the Crocodiles of Desires and make his way safe to cross to the other shores of Samsar.

विषमविषयमार्गैः गच्छतोऽनच्छबुद्धेः

प्रतिपदमभियातो मृत्युरप्येष विद्धि ।

हितसुजनगुरुक्त्या गच्छतः स्वस्य युक्त्या

प्रभवति फलसिद्धिः सत्यमित्येव विद्धि ॥ ८१ ॥

viṣamaviṣayamārgergachato (a) nachabudpkeh

pratipadamabhiyāto mytyurāpyeṣa viddhi

hitasujadagurūṅktya gachatah svasya yuktyā

prabhavati phalasiddhih satyamityeva viddhi 81.

विषमविषयमार्गैः - through the dangerous ways of sense-pleasures, गच्छतः - he who walks, अनच्छबुद्धेः - of foolish intellect, प्रतिपदम् - at every step, अभियातः - overtakes, मृत्युः - death, अपि - also, एषः - this, विद्धि - understand, हितसुजनगुरुक्त्या - through the instructions of a well-meaning and noble Guru, गच्छतः - he who goes, स्वस्य - by one's own, युक्त्या - reasoning faculty, प्रभवति - comes (to him), फलसिद्धिः - the achievement of fruit, सत्यम् - true इति एव - for certain, विद्धि - know.

Know that mortality soon overtakes a foolish man who walks the dangerous path of sense-pleasures. Whereas one who sticks to the path of divinity, in accordance with the instructions of well-meaning and worthy Gurus, constantly walks his Path Divine, helped by his own reasoning faculty —he achieves his end; understand this to be true.

In Vedanta, meditation is the technique for final experience of the Self re-discovery. Meditation can be successful only when the mind is not agitated by endless desires. Sensuousness is a life in which the bosom is never without some desire or other. Thus the same individual cannot have success both in the world of meditation and in the life of sensuousness. If one is suffering from fatigue due to long walks; he cannot recoup if he continues walking. A diabetic

cannot bring his sugar down even though he is getting saline injections daily if he is continuously consuming sugar !!

A human mind is disintegrated because of its desires, and it cannot be brought back to its state of healthy integration, without it renouncing the very germs of its present disease. Thus, in Vedanta, a great insistence has been put always upon the necessity of avoiding the mind running amock with its uncontrolled appetites.

This idea is again explained here in a very powerful style. Sankara crisply repeats what the Rishis have been continuously repeating in the pages of the Scriptures, that the path of sensuousness leads us straight into the 'tomb of mortality', while the Path Divine, takes us to the 'womb of Immortality'. Physiology also, in a much more limited sense of the term, declares that over-indulgence impoverishes our vitality and brings the physical structure to its doom and death. In Vedanta, however, the term 'death' connotes, not only the condition of the body when the expression of life has ebbed out from it, but includes the very *principle* of change and finitude.

Thus, sensuous activities, with motives of pleasure and indulgence, harden the animal impressions in our mind, and thereafter, thoughts begin to flow in that direction more and more powerfully and strongly. Such a stupid man becomes more and more daring in his criminalities, until at last, getting irredeemable, slips down from the ladder of evolution. Like an avalanche, at each yard of its fall, it gathers both in its mass and in its speed, and carrying everything before it, it rushes down ultimately to get itself destroyed at the end of a trail of destructions !

On the other hand, the way up the evolution! is also open to man by walking which he can slowly climb to the very pinnacles of total fulfilment and joyous self-satisfaction. This path has been beautifully described in the third line of the stanza. It insists that we must follow the instructions given by the reliable guides on the path of spirituality, called the '*Gurus*'.

They must be well-meaning and worthy *Gurus*. These epithets provided here indicate a volume of suggestions. They must be well-meaning, in the sense that they should not be mere gramophone records repeating what the *Śāstra* has said, but must be men, so well-established in their own experiences, and so well-familiar with the path, that they must be able to interpret the path to the different types of students belonging to the different climes and different ages in the world.

Also, the teacher must be a worthy man (*Sujana*). There are many *Gurus* available all over the world who are scriptural in words but cruel in actions. Like a tape-recorder, they repeat what the *Rishis* had said, but in their daily activities, they follow faithfully what the *Rakṣasās* did! Such an one is not worthy to be a guide for a true seeker on the path of God-seeking. The *Guru* must be perfect in all his conducts; there is no excuse for him to be vulgar in any of his aspects of living.

If there be, thus, a sacred *Guru*, and if the disciples surrender unto him, these in themselves cannot bear any fruit, unless the students are ready to actively co-operate with the teacher and cultivate themselves the Perfection indicated to them by the *Guru*.

Each of the disciples must, all through his contact with his *Guru*, bring into his field of enquiry his entire powers of reasoning, bright and intelligent, independent and original. He should not, on any score, allow himself to be overwhelmed by the Master. No teacher worth the name will allow the disciple to get his own independent reasoning faculty choked; the best of teachers have always been endeavouring their best to cultivate a better crop of reasoning in the intellect of their disciples.

Such a student who has turned away from the tragic path of sensuousness and has stepped on to the glorious ways of the Divine, who is prepared to go forward under the guidance of a true teacher with nothing but his own independent discriminative reasoning to supply him with his agility

and strength, he surely reaches his goal of Self re-discovery. In order to declare the validity of these declarations in the stanza, the last line is closed with a powerful rejoinder, an emphatic re-assertion: 'Know this to be True'.

मोक्षस्य कांक्षा यदि वै तवास्ति

त्यजातिदूराद्विषयान्विषं यथा ।

पीयूषवत्तोषदयाक्षमार्जव

प्रशान्तिदान्तीर्भज नित्यमादरात् ॥ ८२ ॥

mokṣasya yaḍi vai tavāsti

tyajātidurādvīṣayānviṣam yathā

pīyūṣavāṭṭoṣadayākṣmārjava

praśāntidāntīrbhaja nityamādarāt 82.

मोक्षस्य - Of liberation, कांक्षा - desire, यदि - if, वै - indeed, तव - yours, अस्ति - is, त्यज - avoid अतिदूरात् - from a good distance, विषयान् - sense-objects, विषम् यथा - as poison, पीयूषवत् - like nectar, तोषदयाक्षमार्जव प्रशान्तिदान्तीः - contentment, sympathy, forgiveness, straight-forwardness, calmness, and self-control, भज - cultivate, नित्यम् - daily, आदरात् - religiously.

If you have, indeed, a craving for liberation, avoid sense-objects at a distance, just as you would things known to be poisonous; and with a respectful reverence, daily cultivate the nectarine—life giving—forgiveness, straightforwardness, calmness and self-control.

So far, Sankara was, through the mouth of the Guru in *Vivekachūdāmaṇi*, advising the disciple-class in Vedānta on what they should do in order to realise their Self, and thus end their misunderstandings and sorrows in life. He has already insisted upon and thoroughly exposed the importance of *Viveka* and *Vairāgya*. And here, he is slowly coming round to a discussion to encourage the development of the noble qualities of the head and heart which, we discussed earlier as the third item of adjustments to be made perfect in a fit student before a guaranteed success could be assured to him in the Vedānta-method of Self-realisation.

Having known a thing to be poisonous, however thirsty or hungry you may be, you will not have the temptation to drink or eat it; so too, however tempting the sense-objects may look, an individual who craves for self-liberation should renounce totally the idea that sense-objects contain even a bit of real potency to supply joy.

In thus withdrawing our sense-organs from their fields of activity, we are releasing a tremendous amount of energy which would have been, otherwise, wasted. If this new-found energy is not immediately harnessed to do special work, the chances are that we will be spending this dynamism in mentally dreaming of sense-indulgence. This brings about an ugly deformity in the individual concerned. To remain physically inert and mentally sensuous impoverishes man and makes him a distorted personality, drained of all its brilliance and beauty through suppressed thoughts and unseen mental dissipations !!

It is to avoid these dangerous consequences in the mental plane that we have here the guidance of the teacher. To employ the newly-released energy 'fresh fields have been discovered, where they can, not only exhaust themselves but bring smiling crops of beauty and profit! We are told how an individual who has learnt to shun sense-objects and keep himself away from them, must immediately take up the constructive scheme of developing the positive qualities of a potent and effective personality. We are asked to cultivate qualities of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straightforwardness, calmness and self-control. When you analyse them, you will find that each one of these qualities is, in itself, an attitude of our mind which will not suffer even the least disturbance in our mind. As we diligently practise them, necessarily, we will be seeking and establishing an identity without fellow-beings and come to enjoy the intimate brotherhood of man and the divine Father-hood of the soul !

अनुक्षणं यत्परिहृत्य कृत्य-
मनाद्यविद्याकृतबन्धमोक्षणम् ।
देह परार्थोऽयममुष्य पोषणे
यः सज्जते स स्वमनेन हन्ति ॥ ८३ ॥

*anukṣaṇam yatparihṛtya kṛtya
 manādhyaavidhyākṛtabandhamokṣaṇam
 dehah parārtho (a) yamamuṣya poṣaṇe
 yah sajjāte sa svamanena hanti 83.*

अनुक्षणम् - Always, यत् which, परिहृत्य - living aside, कृत्यम् - what should be done, अनाद्यविद्याकृत बन्धमोक्षणम् - emancipation from the bondage caused by beginningless ignorance, अयम् - this, देहः - body, परार्थः - meant for others, (or an instrument for realising the Parama, the Supreme), अमुष्य - of this body, पोषणे - in nourishing, यः - he who सज्जते - clings to, सः he, स्वम् - himself, अनेन - by this, हन्ति - kills.

This body is essentially meant for Parartham—an instrument for realising the Paramatman. He who does not constantly use this body for liberating himself from the bondage, born out of the beginningless ignorance, but struggles to fatten it, is destroying himself.

Every physical sheath in plant life or in animal life, we have found, is an instrument for its mind and intellect to eke out from the outer world of situations, a definite quota of experiences. The body provides for the time being, as it were, a locus for the mind and intellect to function from. Identifying itself with its own ignorance, it may behave as if it is the doer and the enjoyer, and use the physical body to its own damnation.

A drunken driver identifying himself with his own drunken hallucinations may use the vehicle to dash along and finally crash himself into a wayside tree !

The very same physical structure can be made use of properly by an intellect identifying itself with a greater discriminating capacity, when it shall serve the ego as a vehicle to take it to its Supreme Goal of Self-rediscovery.

A sensible driver, with all his wits about, can drive his vehicle easily and pleasantly, with speed and comfort, straight to his own destination !

Sankara thus reminds the students that the body is not meant merely for gross activities and indulgence in sensuous enjoyments, but it is meant for rightly experiencing the imperfections of the world and striving hard for our self-redemption. Having gained this wondrous instrument, if one is not making use of it on proper lines, he is, in effect, committing suicide.

The entire meaning of this stanza pivots round the crucial word *Parārtham*, in the third line. This word, in Sanskrit, can be milked to yield two different and distinct meanings of which the nobler and more spiritual has already been indicated. Out of the same word, we can coax out another meaning; "an object that is meant for the others to enjoy" is also *Parārtham*. In this sense, we get, in that single term, a beautiful summary of the biography of the body.

Born in the womb, the body grew, nourished by the mother's assimilated food; the body born in the world was fed by the milk of the mother and it grew to childhood. Till death it is being fed, from within and without, with various nutritive diets, and oil massages. But after death, the very same body, so laboriously tended, so carefully nourished, so lovingly fattened, becomes a substantial lunch and dinner for the worms of the earth for a few days, if it was lucky to be buried deep! Else, it becomes food for the wolves or dogs, for the vultures and crows!! This is a timely reminder for the discriminative spiritual students to realise the futility of fattening their bodies or living a life dedicated to the health and adjustment of this disgusting bundle.

शरीरपोषणार्थी सन् य आत्मानं दिदृक्षते ।

ग्राहं दारुधिया धृत्वा नदीं तर्तुं स गच्छति ॥ ८४ ॥

śārīrapoṣaṇārthī san ya ātmānam didr̥kṣati

grāham dārudhiyā dhrtvā nadīm tartum sa gachati 84.

यः - whoever, शरीरपोषणार्थी सन् - being desirous of fattening the body, आत्मानम् - the self, दिदृक्षति - desises to realise, सः - he, ग्राहम् - of a crocodile, दारुधिया - taking it for a log, धृत्वा - holding on to it, नदीम् - river, तर्तुम् - to cross over, गच्छति - proceeds.

Whoever seeks to rediscover the Self by devoting himself to the fattening of the body, proceeds to cross a river, holding on to a crocodile which he had mistaken for a log of wood !

In this striking stanza Sankara brings out how dangerous and hopelessly suicidal is the attempt of the individual to perfect himself through indulgences and physical enjoyments. Anxiety for the body is an expression of our bitter identification with it. This can come only when we have deluded ourselves, and when in our delusion we have totally forgotten the essential nature of our Divinity.

Ignorance and knowledge cannot remain in one and the same place at the same time; the ghost and the post cannot be perceptible at once. Where the post is recognised, there the ghost is non-existent; and one who recognises the post, to him the ghost is not available at all. Similarly, the beloved of the dream is non-existent in the waking state, and it is a folly on the part of man to weep for the Lady-of-his-dream while he is awake !

Similarly, the one who is attached to his body and is wasting his time and energy for nourishing and fattening it, is indeed, a fool, as far removed from his goal as the consoling vision, and as the recognition of the rope is from the one who is dying in his delusion that he has been bitten by the imaginary serpent in it.

मोह एव महामृत्युर्मुमुक्षोर्वेपुरादिषु ।

मोहो विनिर्जितो येन स मुक्तिपदमर्हति ॥ ८५ ॥

moha eva mahāmṛtyurmumukṣorvapurādiṣu

moho vinirjito yena sa muktīpadamarhati 85.

मोहः - Infatuation, एव - alone, महामृत्युः a tragic death, मुमुक्षोः - for seeker seeking liberation, वेपुरादिषु - in the body etc., मोहः - delusion, विनिर्जितः - entirely conquered, येन - by whom, सः - he, मुक्तिपदम् - state of liberation, अर्हति - deserves.

For a student seeking liberation, infatuation for the body etc., is a "tragic death". He who has totally conquered this attachment comes to deserve the state of liberation.

To one who is aspiring to rise above the fascinations of the sense-organs and the calamitous confusions of emotions and the thoughts, it is indeed a dire tragedy if he allows himself to be tempted away by the fields of immediate pleasures which the body can experience in the midst of sense-objects. To turn our attention away from the sense-world and to seek diligently the experience of the transcendental is the path by which the higher can be unfolded. Prompted by the old *Vāsanās*, the individual might meet situations and moments when he is irresistibly jerked out of his contemplative mood to run riot, seeking fulfilment in the world of objects around. This would destroy the equipoise of the seeker, and, therefore, Sankara characterizes this tragedy as the "dire death" (*Mahā-Mrtyu*).

On the other hand, he who has won a victory over his own delusory misconceptions (*Moha*) and is not off and on tempted by the outer world, discovers in himself a steadiness of contemplation with which he can certainly learn to withdraw himself from the whirls of matter and come to experience the Pure Self. This is the condition of utter liberation from the entanglements and fascinations of the matter vestures.

मोहं जहि महामृत्युं देहदारसुतादिषु ।

यं जित्वा मुनयो यान्ति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥ ८६ ॥

mohaṃ jahi mahāmṛtyuṃ dehadārasutādiṣu

yaṃ jitvā munayo yānti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam 86.

जहि - Kill, महामृत्युम् - the great death, मोहम् - this infatuation, देहदार सुतादिषु - over the body, wife, children, etc., यम् - which, जित्वा - having conquered, मुनयः - sages, यान्ति - reach, तत् - that, विष्णोः of Lord Viṣṇu, परमम् - the Supreme, पदम् - State.

Conquer this great death of infatuation over your body, wife, children etc. By conquering thus, the sages reach the Supreme State of Vishnu.

Explaining the great "tragic death" of the seeker indicated in the previous stanza, here Sankara pin-points what exactly is this death. Infatuation for the body, no doubt, makes the seeker constantly search for more and more sense-objects in the world outside, so that he may discover a greater fulfilment and happiness in his life. The body here may be considered as to indicate all layers of man's personality, that together constitute the individual "subject".

Wife (*dāra*) is to be understood not only the wedded partner in life, but in philosophy, the term often indicates "all those on whom you depend for your happiness", and sons (*suta*) stand for all those who depend upon you". In the world of mutual relationship, each individual is a link, holding in position all the other parts of the chain. As an individual I exist in the world, looking up to people who help me in my happy existence and I have to look after those who are looking up to me for their comforts. In the language of the spiritual masters, "wife-and-children" is an idiom that includes all these relationships.

In the midst of all these webs of relationships, an individual exists, keeping different types of intimate attachments, which have a knack of growing in their thralldom. Suffocated by these, the seeker gets exhausted, and this is the "grand death" for all the aspirations in the seeker.

Men of reflection (Munayoh) conquer this meaningless infatuation and thus victoriously rise above the hungers of the flesh, and come to experience the joyous bliss of the Supreme State. Here the word '*Viṣṇu*', the 'long strident', as has been already explained earlier, stands for the 'All-Pervading'.

A spiritual seeker has got a healthy attitude towards things, and he keeps the healthiest relationships with every thing around him in life. He loves them and he does his duties towards them. But will never allow the world of relationships around to bind him down and to loot him of all his freedom to grow. He keeps ample elbow-room for him to wage his war against the lower nature in him. Such an

individual, intelligently organizing this connections with the world around, is the one who shall certainly dash towards his goal and enter the state of freedom to experience the Supreme *Viṣṇu* -hood.

त्वङमांसरुधिरस्नायुमेदोमज्जास्थिसंकुलम् ।

पूर्णं मूत्रपुरीषाभ्यां स्थूलं निन्द्यमिदं वपुः ॥ ८७ ॥

tvangmāmsarudhirasnāyumedomajjāsthisaṅkulam
pūrṇam mūtrapurīṣābhyāṁ sthūlam nindhyamidam vapuḥ 87

त्वङमांस रुधिर स्नायुमेदोमज्जास्थिसंकुलम् - mixed with skin, flesh, blood vessels, fat, marrow and bones, पूर्णम् - filled, मूत्रपुरीषाभ्याम् - with urine and faecal matter, स्थूलम् - the gross, निन्द्यम् - offensive-
इदम् - this, वपुः - body.

This gross body is most unholy, as it is consisted of skin, flesh, blood-vessels, fat, marrow and bones, and also it is ever filled with urine and faecal matter.

In order to create the necessary sense of detachment from the body, in order to persuade the mind from all its inborn infatuation of the body, Sankara bring the seeker's scientific attention focussed completely upon his own physical body. Infatuation can arise only through hasty observations, and, through scientific close study, when the nature of the thing becomes fully evident, this infatuation must get lifted. There the right understanding dawns. For this purpose, the human physical body is kept under close scrutiny in this stanza.

The body is itself made up of unholy things, which in themselves cannot engender any fascination to any thinking man. Sometimes it happens that the container may be ugly but the contents can, even then, enrich the container. Even this excuse is not there in our physical body, as a filth-container contains nothing other than gallons of filth. It is this packet of inauspiciousness that man hugs on, pants to experience peace and happiness through them. When we realize the folly of loving a thing which is so abominable. Our endless attachment and attraction for the body will tend to cease.

In more details the body is analysed for the purpose of observing closely its contribution to the total experience of the individual, in the following stanza.

पञ्चीकृतेभ्यो भूतेभ्यो स्थूलेभ्यः पूर्वकर्मणा ।
 समुत्पन्नमिदं स्थूलं भोगायतनमात्मनः ।
 अवस्था जागरस्तस्य स्थूलार्थानुभवो यतः ॥ ८८ ॥

*pañcīkrtebhyo bhūtebhyo śthūlebhyaḥ pūrvakarmṇā
 samutpannamidaṁ sthūlaṁ bhogāyatanamātmanah
 avasthā jāgarastasya sthūlārthānubhavo yataḥ 88.*

पञ्चीकृतेभ्यः - Those that have undergone five, fold self-division and mutual combination, भूतेभ्यः - from the (five) elements, पूर्व-कर्मणा - by the past actions, समुत्पन्नम् - produced, इदम् स्थूलम् - this gross body, भोगायतनम् - the seat of enjoyment, आत्मनः - of the self, अवस्था - state, जागरः - of wakefulness, तस्य - that, स्थूलार्थानुभवः - the experience of gross objects, यतः - by which.

Made up of the gross Five Elements—that have gone through the process* of “Five-fold self-division and mutual-combination”,—ordered by the actions of the individual in the past, this gross body is the house-of-experience for the Self. The state in which it experiences the world of gross-objects is its waking-condition.

Anything gross must necessarily rise up from its previous condition of subtle existence. The five gross elements that can be perceived by the sense-organs must have risen from their previous condition of subtlety, when they were not perceivable. In this, their naescent state they are called ‘Tanmātrās’. The theory that explains how these five subtle elements, from their naescent condition have become grossified, is called in Vedānta as the process of “five fold self-division and mutual-combination” (*Pañcīkarana*).

The Five Elements that have gone through this process are the very material with which all gross bodies are made, and they are fashioned out according to the result of the actions done in the past by the ‘indweller’ of any given body.

The gross body so formed is the hutment-of-experiences, the 'temple' of joy and sorrow. The indweller of the body experiences his joys and sorrows only through his physical body. The condition in which the individual ego, making use of its physical body, comes in contact with the world-of-objects and ekes out its joys and sorrows of the gross world is the *waking*-condition of the *Jeeva*.

बाह्येन्द्रियैः स्थूलपदार्थसेवां
 स्त्रक्चन्दनस्त्रयादिविचित्ररूपाम् ।
 करोति जीवः स्वयमेतदात्मना
 तस्मात्प्रशस्तिर्वपुषोऽस्य जागरे ॥८९॥

bāhyendriyaiḥ sthūlapadārthasevām
śrakcandanastrayādivicitrarūpām
karoti jīvaḥ svayametadātmanā
tasmātpraśastirvapuṣoḥsya jāgare 89.

बाह्येन्द्रियैः - External sense-organs, स्थूलपदार्थसेवाम् - enjoyment of the gross objects, स्त्रक्चन्दनस्त्रयादि - garlands, sandal paste, women, etc., विचित्ररूपाम् - of an endless variety, करोति - does, जीवः - the ego, स्वयम् - by itself, एतदात्मना - identifying with this, तस्मात् - therefore, प्रशस्ति - the eminence, अस्यवपुषः - of this body, जागरे - in the waking state.

The individualised ego, identifying itself with this body enjoys the gross objects such as garlands, sandal paste, women etc., of an endless variety by means of the external sense-organs. Therefore, this body has the greatest play in the waking-state.

The Self, identifying with the gross body, expresses itself as the 'perceiver', and thereafter recognises the world-of-objects other than itself crowding around him. Expressing through the physical body and its sense-organs, the individuality (*Jeeva*) gathers its quota of pleasures by indulging itself among the sense-objects. All the endless varieties of objects that cater to man's sense-gratifications are comprehended by the idiom 'garland-sandal paste-woman' (*Srak-*

chandana-stree) in the Indian philosopher's language, and even these are enjoyed by the individual according to his whim and fancy in a thousand variegated combinations and arrangements.

Thus to the *Jeeva*, the gross physical body is the vehicle by which he can come in contact with and indulge in the world-of-objects. When an individual is not conscious of the physical body, he cannot perceive the world-of-objects, around him. The world-of-waking experiences is available only when we are conscious of the physical body, and when we express ourselves through its sense-organs. Therefore, Sankara concludes that in the *waking*-condition is the fullest expression of this gross body (Annamaya-Kosa).

सर्वोऽपि बाह्यसंसारः पुरुषस्य यदाश्रयः

विद्धि देहमिदं स्थूलं गृहवद्गृहमेधिनः ॥९०॥

sarvopi bāhyasaṁsārah puruṣasya yadāśrayah

viddhi dehamidam sthūlam grhavadgrhamedhinah 90.

सर्वः - All, अपि - even, बाह्यसंसारः - dealings with the external world, पुरुषस्य - of the man, यदाश्रयः - dependent on whom, विद्धि - understand that, इदम् - this, स्थूलम् - gross, देहम् - body, गृहवत् - like a house, गृहमेधिनः - of the house-holder.

Know this gross body to be the 'Shelter' for the individual to complete all his dealings with the external world just as a house is to the house-holder.

A man of the world dwells in his house, and daily goes out into the world outside to strive for and achieve his livelihood. After earning his means of existence he retires back to his own home to enjoy what he has earned and to rest a while therein. Replenished with his rest and relaxation under the security of his roof, the individual, on the following day, brimming with energy, moves out again to meet the brave challenges of the new day. In the same fashion, the individual ego moves out of this physical body to contact the sense-objects and returns back to the bosom to experience its joys and sorrows.

When conducive or unconducive environments are around us, we do not feel the resultant joy or sorrow outside ourselves. They are always felt within our own bosom. The objects are indeed always outside us. And therefore, the mind has to go out of our bosom to contact the objects; but having contacted, the mind returns to the individual's own heart to experience the consequent joy or sorrow.

Thus the physical body is not only an instrument for experiencing the world outside, but it is also a 'shelter' for the experienter to return back and rest therein.

Exhausted by the exertions of the day, the individual leaves the fields of his endeavour and always comes to rest for the day to his residence; the mind each day returns to the body. Therefore, the exquisite beauty and the dynamic grace of this simile used here by the Acharya.

स्थूलस्य सम्भवजरामरणानि धर्माः

स्थौल्यादयो बहुविधाः शिशुताद्यवस्थाः ।

वर्णाश्रमादिनियमा बहुधाऽमयाः स्युः

पूजावमानबहुमानमुखा विशेषाः ॥९१॥

sthūlasya sambhavarāmarañāni dharmāḥ

sthoulyādayo bahuvīdhāḥ śiśutādhyavasthāḥ

varṇaśramādiniyamā bahudhāmayāḥ syuh

pūjāvamānabahumānamukhā viśeṣāḥ 91.

स्थूलस्य - Of the gross body, **सम्भवजरामरणानि** - birth, decay, and death, **धर्माः** - essential properties, **स्थौल्यादयः** - fatness, etc., **बहुविधाः** - different conditions, **शिशुताद्यवस्थाः** - childhood and such other states, **वर्णाश्रमादिनियमाः** - the rules of caste and orders of life, **बहुधाः** - many, **आमयाः** - diseases, **पूजावमान बहुमानमुखाः** - worship, dishonour, honour, etc., **विशेषाः** - distinctions, **स्युः** - subject to.

Birth, decay, death are the various essential properties of the gross body; fatness etc. childhood etc., are its different conditions; it has got rules of caste and orders of life; it is subject to a variety of diseases and it is this body that meets with different kinds of treatment such as worship, dishonour, honour etc.

In order to make the student focuss his entire attention on this sheath under discussion, the author is enumerating the characteristics, the various conditions, the different rules of conduct, etc. of the gross-body. Change is the characteristic of all things finite, and the body has its essential property (*dharma*) of undergoing modifications such as birth, growth, decay, disease and death. It is again the nature of the body to express itself as stout, lean, tall or short. The human form goes through its stages of growth such as childhood, youth and old-age, when the body gathers to itself new dimension and looks.

It is with reference to the physical body and its relations with the world around, that the social codes of behaviour are prescribed and strictly followed by the cultured. The various regulations of communal living and standards of behaviour laid down for the various orders-of-life *aṣṛama* are all prescribed for the discipline of the body, and they have a sanction only with reference to the embodied. It is the body that becomes the seat of all diseases. It is, indeed, for the body all worship (*pūja*) is offered, all honour (*māṇa*) given all dishonour *apamāna* shown.

With these indicatives sure strokes of his poetic pen Acharya Sankara has brought the student's mind focussed upon the gross physical body (*annamaya-koṣa*) which is the abode of the individual-ego who experiences his world of joys-and-sorrows through this physical body.

बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि श्रवणं त्वगाक्षि
 घ्राणं च जिह्वा विषयावबोधनात् ।
 वाक्पाणिपादा गुदमप्युपस्थः
 कर्मेन्द्रियाणि प्रवणेन कर्मसु ॥९२॥

*buddhīndriyāṇi śravaṇaṃ tvagakṣi
 grāṇaṃ ca jihvā viṣayāvabodhanāt
 vākpañipādā gudamapyupasthaḥ
 karmendriyāṇi pravaṇenā karmasu 92.*

बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि - The organs of knowledge, श्रवणम् - the ears, त्वक् - skin, आक्षि - eyes, घ्राणम् - nose, च - and, जिह्वा - tongue, (sense of taste), विषयावबोधनात् - for gaining knowledge of the objects, वाक्पाणिपादाः - the organ of speech, hands, गुदम् - the anus, अपि - also, उपस्थः - the genital organ, कर्मेन्द्रियाणि - organs of action, प्रवणेन - by their tendency, कर्मसु - in actions.

The ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue are the organs-of-knowledge, for they help us to gain the knowledge of the objects (stimuli—Vishayas). The organ of speech, hands, legs, the anus and the genital organ are the organs-of-action, since they have a tendency for work.

Here the teacher is undertaking to enumerate the various aspects in our personality that together constitute the “subtle body”. These factors in their aggregate express through the gross-body, from its within, and thus establish the individual’s contact with the world-of-objects around, from wherein each one draws out his own experiences of the world.

Enumerating the factors in us that constitute the “subtle body”, here the teacher points out to the organs-of-knowledge (*gyāna-indriyās*) and the organs-of-action (*Karma-indriyās*.) To perceive the stimuli reaching us and to respond to them, together constitute the expression of life through any individual.

The inlets that allow the stimuli to reach our bosom are called the organs-of-knowledge because they perceive the world around us. These sense-organs are the ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue.

When the stimuli are received an intelligent man responds to them and our responses are expressed through the motor-organs, and they too are five in number. These are called the organs-of-action, as our responses expressed at our body level are our own reactions to the received field of stimuli. They are organ of speech, hands, the legs, the anus and the genital-organ. Since these are the points at which

the individual explodes into action while expressing his responses, they are called organs-of-functions or action.

निगद्यतेऽन्तःकरणं मनोधी-

रहंकृतिश्चित्तमिति स्ववृत्तिभिः ।

मनस्तु संकल्पविकल्पनादिभि-

बुद्धिः पदार्थाध्यवसायधर्मतः ॥ ९३ ॥

अत्राभिमानादहमित्यहंकृतिः ।

स्वार्थानुसन्धानगुणेन चित्तम् ॥ ९४ ॥

nigaddyatentahkaraṇam manodhi

rahamkrtiscittamiti svavrttibhih

manastu samakalpavikalpnādibhir

buddhih padārthādhyaavasāyadharmatah 93.

atrābhimānādahamityahamkrtih

svārthānusandhānagūṇena cittam 94.

निगद्यते - Is called, अन्तःकरणम् - as inner-organ, मनः - mind, धीः - intellect, अहंकृतिः - ego, चित्तम् - citta, इति - thus, स्ववृत्तिभिः - by their own functions, मनः - mind, तु - verily, संकल्पविकल्पनादिभिः - by its doubts and hesitations, बुद्धिः - the intellect, पदार्थाध्यवसायधर्मतः - by its nature of determining the truth of objects, अत्र - here, अभिमानात् - on account of identification, अहम् इति - with 'I am' etc., अहंकृतिः - the ego, स्वार्थानुसन्धानगुणेन - from its function of remembering (contemplating) things it is interested in, चित्तम् - citta.

The "inner-organ" is called, according to their functions as mind, intellect, ego and chitta: Mind, from its doubts and hesitations; the buddhi, from its function of determining the truth of objects; the ego, in its identification with both these, and chitta from its function of constantly illumining all the above.

After describing in the previous stanza the "outer-instruments" of perception and action, the Science of Self logically proceeds to indicate to us what are the subtle factors that constitute the "inner-equipments" (*antahkarana*). It is evidently clear that the eyes do not see by themselves,

but the eyes are instruments of seeing for the "inner" person. The "inner-equipment" has got different names, but they are all functional nominations. In fact one and the same mental stuff, called the "inner equipment", has different function and so different names. Of course, they all are constituted of thoughts only.

When the thoughts are in a state of chaos, undetermined, agitated with doubts and despairs, it is called in that state as the '*mind*'. When it has determined its perceptions with reference to its own memories of similar or dissimilar objects experienced in the past, that condition of relative quiet, caused by the determination, is called the '*intellect*'. Willing, wishing, desiring, judging etc. are some of the functions of the intellect.

To have a doubt regarding any outer phenomenal factor and to come to a decision about it, are the two equal yoke-fellows in the process of intellectual living, so constantly experienced by each one of us. The continuous procession of this dual-functions together gives us the experience of the intellectual living that man alone is capable of. In this process, it is not very difficult for us to detect that the doubts and the decisions must belong to one and the same individual in order to create in him the experience of intellectual living, i.e., the doubt must be mine and the ultimate understanding also must be mine, so that I may experience the ending of my doubt. This vanity of the individual, that arrogates to himself both the doubts and the decisions as his own is called the 'ego', expressed in us, in our day-to-day life, as 'I' and 'mine'.

My doubts and my decisions constantly singing their breathless duet is the unbroken experience of intellectual living and this is not possible unless we are continuously aware of *our doubts*, conscious of *our decisions* and unless fully experience that it is *our doubt* and *our decisions*. In short, we must be aware of the mind, the intellect and the ego. This Awareness or Consciousness, playing upon the mind-intellect-ego is called '*Chitta*'. In its pure state, unconditioned by these three, the *Chitta* becomes the Pure Cons-

ciousness, the Infinite (*Chid*). Chitta is that which constantly illumines my personality, constituted of my ego, my mind and my intellect (*swārthānusandhān*)

These four factors mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahamkar*) and awareness of these (*chitta*) together constitute the “inner-equipments” whose play through the physical organs of perception-and-action makes it possible for an individual to come in contact with his world around. Therefore, as a contrast to the outer equipments (*Pahir-karana*), these are together called as the “inner-instruments” (*antahkarana*).

प्राणापानव्यानोदानसमाना भवत्यसौ प्राणः ।

स्वयमेव वृत्तिभेदाद्विकृतिभेदात्सुवर्णसलिलादिवत् ॥ ९५ ॥

prāṇāpānavyānōdānasamāna bhāvātyasou prāṇah

svayameva vrttibhedādvikrtibhedātsuvarṇasalilādivat 95.

प्राणापानव्यानोदानसमानाः - Prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana, भवति - becomes, असौ - this, प्राणः - vital force, स्वयम् - itself, एव - alone, वृत्तिभेदात् - due to difference in functions, विकृतिभेदात् - due to difference in modifications, सुवर्णसलिलवत् - like gold, wates, etc.

One and the same Prana (Vital Life) becomes, Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana, according to their functions and modifications like gold, water etc.

Prāṇa is very often misunderstood as breath. As a philosophical terminology, *Prāṇa* stands for the manifested Life Energy which expresses itself in the various physiological functions such as perceptions (*Prāṇā*) excretion (*Apana*), digestion (*Vyāna*) circulation (*samāna*) and thinking-new thoughts (*udāna*). These varying name sare given to one and the same Vital Energy of Life only because they are all various modifications of the same, and these terms connote only Life's functional names.

As an individual grows into a mature age we find all these departments of activities become weak and shattered,

and, ultimately at the time of death, all of them cease. For easy comprehension of the average reader we can recommend him to consider these five together, constituting the physiological systems in the physical body.

The *Prāṇa* layer of personality is that which holds the gross physical-body and the inner subtler-body together. The sense-organs must be in contact with the "inner-equipment" (*antahkarana*) and it is the *Prāṇa* that maintains this vital connection. Since thus the *Prāṇa* holds the gross and the subtle bodies together, some commentators consider the *Prāṇa* along with the gross-body and others along with the subtle-body. Both are not wrong since one aspect of *Prana* has got intimate connection with the gross while at the same time another aspect of it has got an equally ardent relationship with the subtle. The simile used here is very appropriate. One and the same Life in us expresses itself in its diversified functions different in their activities, and therefore, they have different names just as the same gold is called bangles or chains or ear-rings according to their functions and the seat of their use.

वागादि पञ्च श्रवणादि पञ्च

प्राणादि पञ्चाभ्रमुखानि पञ्च ।

बुद्ध्याद्यविद्यापि च कामकर्मणि

पुर्यष्टकं सूक्ष्मशरीरमाहुः ॥ ९६ ॥

vāgādi panca śravaṇādi panca

prāṇādi pancabhrāmukhāṇi panca

budhyādhyavidhyāpi ca kāmakarmanī

puryaṣṭakam sūkṣmasarīramāhuh 96.

वागादि - Speech, etc; पञ्च - five; श्रवणादि - ears, etc, पञ्च - five, प्राणादि - Prana, etc., अभ्रमुखानि - the space, and other elements, पञ्च - five, बुद्ध्यादि - the intellect, etc., अविद्या - Ignorance, अपि - also, च - and, कामकर्मणि - desire and action, पुर्यष्टकम् - the eight cities, सूक्ष्म-शरीरम् - as subtle body, आहुः - (the wise) say.

The (1) five organs-of-action, such, as speech etc., the (2) five organs-of-perception, such as the ears etc., the (3) five Pranas, the (4) Five Element starting with space, along with the (5) discriminative intellect (*buddhi*) etc. and also (6) ignorance, (7) desire and (8) action—these eight ‘cities’ together constitute the subtle body.

After describing the gross-body in all details, Sankara took up in his logical unravelling of the Science and Art of Vedanta, the description of the subtle-body.* Here in the stanza under discussion he is summing up all the factors that together constitute the subtle-body. The organs-of-action and the organs-of-perception and the five *Prāṇas* were already discussed in the previous stanzas. The five Great Elements are that which in their mutual combinations become the very material-cause for the world-of-objects recognised by us, and the very same Elements in their subtle form goes into the building up of the subtle-body.

The discriminative intellect etc. is a term used in this stanza to indicate all the factors that together make up the “inner-equipment” (*antahkarana*). All these can express themselves only when there is the non-apprehension of Reality and this ignorance of the spiritual truth in our subjective personality is called *Avidya*.

When the true nature is not known, human mind imagines things which are not there, and thus an individualised ego sense rises when the universal oneness is not cognised. This individuality experiencing its own limitations comes to suffer a gnawing sense of restlessness and discontentment. Human intellect conceives and plans various possibilities by which the confused ego can come to experience its unlimited true nature of perfections. These plans suggested by the intellect are called “desires.”

Thus *avidya* generates “desires” and the desires expressed at the body-level in the world around are the “actions”. All these eight factors, expressed here as “eight-cities”—together in their totality constitute the subtle-body.

* Verse 96.

इदं शरीरं शृणु सूक्ष्मसंज्ञितं
 लिङ्गं त्वपञ्चीकृतभूतसम्भवम् ।
 सवासनं कर्मफलानुभावकं
 स्वाज्ञानतोऽनादिरूपाधिरात्मनः ॥ ९७ ॥

idam śarīraṃ śṛṇu sūkṣmasaṃgnitam
lingaṃ tvapāncīkṛtabhūtasambhavam
savāsanaṃ karmaphalānubhāvakaṃ
svāgnānato (a) nadirupādhirātmanah 97.

इदम् - this, शरीरम् - body, शृणु - listen, सूक्ष्मसंज्ञितम् - which is known as 'subtle', लिङ्गम् - (also called as) Lingam, तु - indeed, अपञ्चीकृतभूतसम्भवम् - produced by the elements that have not undergone the process of pañcikarāṇa, सवासनम् - possessing tendencies, कर्मफलानुभावकम् - that causes enjoyment of fruits of past actions, स्वाज्ञानतः - because of its own ignorance, अनादिः - beginningless, उपाधिः - conditionings, आत्मानः - of the Atman.

This subtle-body, listen carefully, called also as the Linga-body, produced out of the subtle-elements, is possessed of the inclinations (vāsana), and it causes the individual to experience the "fruits" of his past actions. It constitutes the beginningless conditioning on the Self brought about by Its own "ignorance".

The body described in the previous stanzas consisting of the "eight-cities" constitute the *subtle-body*, which is otherwise called as the "*Linga-body*". The term *linga* means a symbol of something that is not yet revealed". The subtle-body reveals the latent urges in the individual, and therefore, it is called the *Linga-body*. This body, made up of thoughts and their functions, is composed of the subtle five Great Elements that have not yet gone through the process of "self-multiplication and mutual combination"*.

The subtle-body along with its *Vāsanās* becomes the conditioning on the Self to create the sense of an imperfect, individualised ego. *Vāsanās* are, as it were, the foot-prints

of the past thoughts and actions, left over by them upon the heart of one's own personality. These impressions of the past (*Vāsanās*) provide the direction for the thoughts in their expression, and thus these *Vāsanās* condition our present thoughts, providing them with their specific texture, quality and fragrance.

The *Vāsanās* erupt similar thoughts, as the very thoughts which created them, which flowing out from us, prompt each one to endless activities. Along with *Vāsanās* the subtle-body causes the individual entity to experience the joys and sorrows of the world which are the rewards and punishments, good and bad, right and wrong, performed in the past.

Time itself is a concept of the *antahkarana*—of the intellect. Intellect expresses itself only when the thoughts are flowing in a continuous unbroken train. Therefore, when the “first-thought” rose in Infinite, there was no concept of “time”. Identifying with the “first-thought”, the Self allows the second, third, fourth, thoughts in a continuous procession, thus generating the concept of the intellect and its perception of “time” and “space”. It is now self-evident that in the nascent intellect, meaning, when the very “first-thought” rose up, “time” was not yet born, and therefore, conditioning of thoughts upon the Self is *before* time (*anādi*)

स्वप्नो भवत्यस्य विभक्त्यवस्था

स्वमात्रशेषेण विभाति यत्र ।

स्वप्ने तु बुद्धिः स्वयमेव जाग्र-

त्कालीननानाविधवासनाभिः ॥ ९८ ॥

कर्त्रादिभावं प्रतिपद्य राजते

यत्र स्वयं भाति ह्ययं परात्मा ।

धर्मात्रकोपाधिरशेषसाक्षी

न लिप्यते तत्कृतकर्मलेशैः ।

यस्मादसङ्गस्तत एव कर्मभि-

र्न लिप्यते किञ्चिदुपाधिना कृतैः ॥ ९९ ॥

*śvapno bhavatyasya vibhaktyavasthā
svamātraśeṣena vibhāti yatra
śvapne tu buddhiḥ svayameva jāgra-
tkālīnanānāvidhavyāsanābhīh 98. .*

*kartrādibhāvam p atipadhyā rājāte
yatra svayam bhāti hyayam parātma
dhīmātrakopādhirāśeṣasākṣi
na lipyate tatkratakarmaleśaih
yasmādasangastata eva karmabhir
na lipyate kincitdupadhinā krtaih 99.*

स्वप्नः - dream, भवति - is, अस्य - of this, विभक्त्यवस्था - distinct (from the waking) state, स्वमात्रशेषेण - itself remaining alone, बिभाति - shines, यत्र - where, स्वप्ने - in dream, तु - indeed, बुद्धिः - indeed, स्वयम् - by itself, एव - only, जाग्रत्कालीन नानाविधवासनाभिः - due to the impressions collected during the time of waking.

कर्तादिभावम् - Am the doer, mentality, etc., प्रतिपद्य - having assumed, राजते - shines, यत्र where, स्वयं - itself, भाति - shines, हि - indeed, अयम् - this, परात्मा - the supreme Self, धीमात्रकोपाधिः - with, Buddhi as its only conditioning, अशेषसाक्षी - witness to everything, न not, लिप्यते - touched, तत्कृतकर्मलेशैः - by the least work done by it, यस्मात् - because, असङ्गः (the self is) unattached, ततःएव - by the same reason, कर्मभिः - by actions, न - not, लिप्यते - is touched, किञ्चित् - in the least, उपाधिना - by the conditionings, कृतैः done.

Dream is the state when this (subtle-body) is distinctly in expression, where it expresses all by itself. In dream the intellect by itself revels as the agent-of-experiences and the like due to the various impressions gathered by it in its waking-state. In this condition the Supreme Self shines in Its own glory—with intellect as Its only condition, Witness of everything, and It is not contaminated in the least by the activities of the intellect. Since it is entirely unattached, it is not tainted by any action that Its apparent conditionings may perform.

Dream is the State of Consciousness when the Self functions exclusively. In the waking-condition Consciousness expresses through the subtle and the gross-bodies. Naturally, therefore, Sankara here, wanting to demonstrate for the students what exactly is the subtle-body indicates that its exclusive expression is available to us in our dream State of Consciousness. In short, the subtle-body is the body in which we are during our dreams.

Describing the dream, the Acharya continues that it is the mind recognising its own agitations, at a time when the discriminating intellect is partially doped with its fatigue and sleep. What we see in our dreams are the expressions of the latent impressions (*Vāsnās*) gathered as suppressions and repression during the waking-condition and the vivid experiences lived therein by us.

In this great inner drama where the mind tickled by its own memories, projects out a world-of-objects wherein the dreamer lives Its joys and sorrows, and the Self, the Pure Consciousness, stands apart, as it were a mere Witness, illuminating everything. This Light of Consciousness, apparently thus conditioned by the intellect is the "dreamer" seeing its own dream. Since It is ever a Witness, It is not contaminated by the activities and agitations of the mind-intellect equipment.

The Atman is thus untouched in all states of our experiences. In waking, dream and deep-sleep conditions, Consciousness is an unattached Witness of all that is happening within and without us. Since, He is thus a mere "onlooker", He is not involved in the joys and sorrows in any one of these levels of Consciousness.

To summarise, Sankara indicates that none of the activities of the equipments—body, mind and intellect—can ever bring about any contamination upon the immaculate Reality, the Self. The Atman though lends Its Existence and Energy to the whirls of matter around It for their activities, Itself is never involved in the imperfect pantings of the inert matter-conditionings.

सर्वव्यापृतिकरणं लिङ्गमिदं स्याच्चिदात्मनः पुंसः ।

वास्यादिकमिव तक्षणस्तेनैवात्मा भवत्यसङ्गोऽयम् ॥ १७० ॥

*sarvavyāptikaraṇaṁ lingamidaṁ syācidātmanah. puṁsah
vāsyādikamiva takṣaṇastenaivātmā bhavatyasango (a) yām 100*

सर्वव्यापृतिकरणम् - Instrument of all activities, लिङ्गमिदम् - this subtle body, स्यात् becomes, चिदात्मनः पुंसः - of the Atman, who is Absolute Consciousness, वास्यादिकम् - chistle, etc., इव - like, तक्षण - of the carpenter, तेन एव - for that reason only, आत्मा - the Self, भवति - is, असङ्गः - unattached, अयम् - this.

This Linga-body is to the Atman, the Knowledge Absolute, the instrument for all Its expressions, just as the chistle, etc., are to the carpenter. Therefore, this Self is totally unattached.

The subtle-body is the flute through which Krishna, the Self, sings His own songs. The life-giving songful breath is the Self and the instrument is the subtle-body, and the Light of Consciousness dazzles upon the subtle body. There is a manifestation of the individuality (*jīva*) who, according to his *Vāsanās*, expresses himself in appropriate fields of endeavour, receiving and responding to the available stimuli around through its gross-body. In this arrangement of things the vehicles are instruments of expression of the dynamism of Life.

Any artisan must have special instruments of work without which his knowledge cannot be expressed in the outer world. Nobody confused the instrument for the man, and instruments alone cannot execute the piece of art or perform the work, without the intelligence and efficiency of the workman behind. In the same way, the subtle-body is the centre for the Life to express as an individualised ego, but the mind and intellect themselves are inert and have no capacities to fulfil any action. In short, Atman, the Self, is perfectly unattached and It is not involved in the joys and sorrows of the gross or of the subtle-bodies in each one of us.

अन्धत्वमन्दत्वपटुत्वधर्माः

सौगुण्यवैगुण्यवशाद्धिं चक्षुषः ।

वाधिर्यमूकत्वमुखास्तथैव

श्रोत्रादिधर्मा न तु वेत्तुरात्मनः ॥ १०१ ॥

andhatvamandatvapātutva dharmāh

souguṇyavaigūṇyavaśāddhi cakṣuṣaḥ

vādhiryamūkatvamukhastāthaiva

śrotrādidharmā na tu vetturātmanah 101.

अन्धत्वमन्दत्वपटुत्वधर्माः - Blindness, weakness, and sharpness are conditions, सौगुण्यवैगुण्य वशात् - as per the fitness of defectiveness, हि - indeed, चक्षुषः - of the eye, वाधिर्यमूकत्वमुखाः - deafness, muteness, etc., तथा - so too, एव - only, श्रोत्रादिधर्माः - the conditions of ear, etc., न - not, तु - but, वेत्तुः - of the All knower, आत्मनः - the Atman.

Blindness, weakness and sharpness are conditions of the eyes according to its healthy or unhealthy state. So are deafness, dumbness etc., according to the healthy or unhealthy conditions of the ear etc. But they are never of the Atman, the Knower.

That the Self is really not involved in the activities and that it is perfectly unattached with the equipments, is not a fact so easily grasped by the early students of Vedanta, and therefore, Sankara is here elucidating this idea more elaborately. To an intelligent student it must be his doubt that we see varieties of people in the world around and so the Atman must be of different types. The differences in the expressions of the individuals can be explained only if the Atman is different in each individual. Sankara is trying to tell us that the difference that we notice in the structure, function and efficiencies of people are all due to the differences in the textures, quality and arrangement of their matter vehicles.

Two examples are taken here as representative illustrations—the eyes and the ears. Some are blind, others have weak sight, and a few have sharp and clear vision. These

distinctions are the distinctions in the condition of the instrument-of-vision and not of the Consciousness that illumines whatever stimuli that are received by the eyes. So too there are dumb men.

In both these cases the Life is not deaf or mute, but the instruments of hearing and speech are defective in the individual, and therefore, he becomes Conscious of those defects; Consciousness. Itself is not defective.

Electricity is not defective when the bulb is dim or bright, which all depends upon the energy of the filament in the bulb. The equipments have their own defects because of which when Life surges through them there are different expressions of the individuality. On the whole, to a student of deep reflection, Sankara indicates that in this vast world of manifold manifestations, the one Truth is the Infinite Self and it is ever perfect, pure and uncontaminated by the sins and merits, the beauty and ugliness, the joys and sorrows of the manifested world.

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