

ATMA BODHA

(A Treatise on the knowledge of Atma)

by

SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA

Text in Roman Script with English translation
and Commentary

by

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FOREWORD

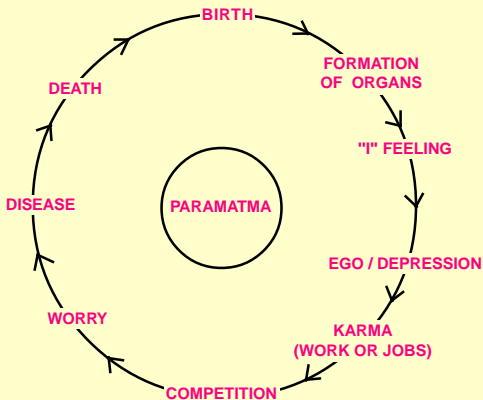
Sruti Smruti Puraanaanaam

Aalayam Karunaalayam

Namaami Bhagavatpaadam

Sankaram Loka Sankaram.

This book Atma Bodha or knowledge of Self (Atma) is an outcome of deep thinking about why we are born and living, influencing or getting influenced by every one around us, developing relations with them both physically and mentally, worrying for them and either losing them or leaving them temporarily due to life cycle and permanently by death. According to Bhagavatgeeta and Upanishads it is due to this Birth - Death Cycle.



For everyone this Birth Cycle is continuing. This is what worried the thinkers and philosophers. "How long should we dwell in these cycles? Is there no end.

Birth is the result of formation of organs of the Body and Mind. This is followed by the "I" feeling i.e., I am doing, I am successful, I am suffering etc., This "I" feeling results in either ego and depression. This ego results in Karma which results in competition which results in worry. The worry results in disease. Disease results in Death which is followed by another birth. The cycle continues thus.

The great Jnanis worked hard to find out how to put an end to these cycles of birth and death though the ignorant kept on asking why should we bother when no one guarantees a rebirth or a birth known to us or a birth in which we do not remember any thing about this birth. Such ignorant lived for physical pleasures, suffered or enjoyed as a result of their works and died. This Atma Bodha is not for them. This is for thinkers who are really interested to acquire wisdom and attain liberation for the soul (Atma) from the birth cycle.

Atma Bodha (Knowledge of Self) is one of the works of Adi Sankaracharya. In this work he expounds clearly with the help of homely analogies the nature of the consciousness (Self) and the means of self realisation. The speciality of this Atma Bodha is that though each Sloka has one direct meaning the concept and inner meaning of each Sloka is really more thoughtful and enlightens the reader. An attempt made to explain the inner meaning also.

Is the following books on Atma Bodha were consulted in the preparation of this translation.

1. Self knowledge of Sri Sankaracharya by Swami Nikilananda of Sri Ramakrishna Mission.
2. Atma Bodha by Swami Chinmayananda.

ATMA BODHA

(Treatise of the knowledge of Atma)

- 1. Tapobhiih Ksheenapaapaanaam
Santanaam Veetaraginaam
Mumukshoonaam Apekshyoyam
Atmabodho Vidheeyate*

This Atma Bodha is designed for the benefit of those who got rid of sins by doing penance, those who have a peaceful mind, those who could overcome their cravings, and those who are desirous of moksha or liberation.

2. *Bodho anya-Sadhanebhyo Hi*

Sakshan-Moksha Eka Sadhanam

Pakasya Vahnivat Jnanam

Vina Moksho Na Sidhyati

Though other articles such as rice, vegetables, water and pots are necessary, to cook a meal it is fire that actually cooks the meal. As fire is thus the direct cause of cooking, Knowledge of the Atma and not any other form of discipline i.e., practice of austerities and rituals, is the sole direct means to attain moksha or liberation. The purpose of austerities is purification of heart and creation of a mental condition to aid one's spiritual growth and render it fit for pursuing the path of knowledge (jnana marga)

3. *Avirodhitayaa Karma*

Navidyaam Vinivartayet

Vidya-Avidyaam Nihantyeva

Tejashtimira-sanghavat.

Karma or Action cannot destroy ignorance as it is not opposed to it. Knowledge or Jnana alone destroys ignorance as dense darkness is destroyed by light. By means of action one fulfill his desires. Therefore action is in harmony with ignorance and cannot therefore directly destroy it.

Here ignorance does not mean illiteracy or absence of book knowledge. According to Vedanta the knowledge of the nonduality of Brahma and Atma is the only true knowledge; all else is ignorance (Ajnana or Avidya). Such jnana alone removes the ignorance as dense darkness is destroyed by light.

4. *Paricchinna iva ajnanat*

Tannase Sati Kevalah

Swayam Prakasate hi Aatma

Meghapaaye Amsumaaniva

Due to Ajnana or ignorance, one imposes limits to Atma. When this Ajnana is destroyed, Atma can be visualised just as sun appears emerging when dark clouds are dispersed.

As the true nature of sun is hidden by a cloud, so the true nature of the eternal and self-luminous Atma is hidden by ignorance. On account of this ignorance the all pervading Atma seems to be a physical a finite being. Such ignorance is destroyed by means of contemplation and realisation of the truth contained in the vedic mahavakyas like Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma) and Prajnanam Brahma (Brahma is pure consciousness).

5. *Ajnana Kalusham Jeevam*

Jnanaabhyasat Vinirmalam

Krutwa Jnanam Swayam Nasyet

Jalam Katakarenuvat.

The embodied soul. Jivatma, rendered dirty by ignorance is purified by knowledge through long and uninterrupted meditation on Brahma, and then itself disappears as the powder of Kataka nut (cleaning nut) precipitates itself after precipitating impurities suspended in muddy water.

The jivatma is rendered dirty by illusory ideas of birth and death, happiness and unhappiness which are superimposed upon the self due to ignorance. Long and uninterrupted meditation on Brahma firmly stamps a man's consciousness with the knowledge of his true divine nature and such self knowledge makes a man realise that he is not the doer or an experiencer but the all

pervading Brahma, Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute (Satchit Anand). After having thus sublimated the mind, knowledge itself disappears like the powder of kataka nut which disappears after cleansing muddy water.

6. *Samsarah Swapnatulyo hi*

Ragadweshadi Samkulah

Swakaale Satyavatbhati

Prabodhe sati Asadbhavet.

The world, which is filled with attachments, or aversions, love or hate pain or pleasure and other dual experiences, is like a dream. It appears to be really happening as long as the dream continues, but appears unreal, when one is awake. Similarly one's dual experiments in this world appear illusory when one attains self-knowledge through contemplation of such vedic statements as Tatwamasi (Thou art that) and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma)

7. *Taavat satyam Jagadbhati*

Suktikaa Rajatam Yatha

Yavanna Jnayate Brahma

Sarvadhistaanam-Advayam.

When we look into an oyster shell, it appears like silver. But it is only a silvery shining. Similarly till we know the indivisible and Supreme Self which is called Brahma, all this creation appears to be real and permanent.

Actually every thing we see, hear and feel is creation of Brahma. Whereas Brahma is indivisible, unique and permanent, his creation appears to be different beings which is nothing but illusion. Because of the effect of this Maya or ignorance, this world reflects itself as different beings and things. Once we know Brahma the ignorance is dispelled. The world that appeared to be real ceases to delude us.

8 *Upadane Akhilaadhare*
Jaganti Paramesware
Sarga sthiti Layaanyanti
Budbudaaneeva Vaarini

As bubble are developed in water, the whole world is created, developed and destroyed by the Brahma and exists because of the very Brahma.

The interesting thing is that Brahma is in the form of Pure Satchidananda and is like pure water. The bubble is this world which appears to have emanated from Brahma. But it has limited time of existence. As water bubble blows off to become absorbed in water, this world which is very very temporary remains for some time and is destroyed and absorbed in Brahma only.

9 *Satchidaatmani Anusyooto*

Nitye-Vishnow Prakalpitaah

Vyaktayo Vividhassarvaa

Haatake Katakaadivat.

All gold ornaments have different names but are basically of gold only. Similarly all the manifested world of things with different names are basically forms of the all pervading Vishnu, whose nature is Existence Intelligence (Satchit Atma).

When we take any gold ornament to a jeweller, he fixes its rate or value as gold only but not as that particular ornament. Similarly the man with Adhyatma outlook sees everything in this creation as Brahma but not as beings with dissimilar names.

10 *Yathakaso Hrushikeso*

Nanopadhi gatho Vibhuh

Tadbhedat Bhinnavat Bhati

Tannase Kevalo Bhavet.

Just as the all pervading Akasa appears to be diverse an account of its association with various conditionings (upadhis) which are different from each other, the omnipresent truth appears to be diverse on account of its association with the various "Upadhis". The omnipresent truth becomes one after the various upadhis are destroyed.

Whatever is above earth is sky. Then what is in a house is also sky though we are distinguishing the house as drawing room, bed room, kitchen and bath room, or by constructing walls. The walls are man made and due to worldly reasoning keeping us in a belief that they are all different rooms though they are actually sky. Once the walls are removed, there is no room and no house.

What is left there is sky. Similarly if man-made reasoning can be ignored, then we can see Parmatma in every being. Here just thinking is not enough but one must be able to feel and believe this concept whole heartedly.

11 Naanopaadhi Vasaadeva

Jaati Varnaasra maadayah

Atmanya aropitah thoye

Rasa Varnadi Bhedavat

Ideas such as caste, colour and position are imposed upon the Atman on account of its association with different upadhis, just as flavour, colour etc., are imposed upon water.

Pure water is same every where and has no colour, taste and smell. Only when subjected to human reasoning, we feel colour or taste or smell. Similarly because of faulty reasoning we feel Pure Atma as different body

beings, different races and of different origins. Even great scholars are influenced by the Maya of Paramatma so much that Atma is overshadowed by Anatma and we distinguish human being as man or woman of a particular race and particular religion.

If one can look beyond this faulty reasoning, the Pure Atma in every being can be visualised.

12 Pancheekruta Mahaabhoota

Sambhavam Karma Sanchitam

Sareeram Sukha-Dukhanaam

Bhogaayatanam Uchyate.

Due to a particular formulation of five elements of Nature (Pancha Bhootas) which are Earth, Fire, Sky, Water and Air, the human body is made. This is called Sthoola Sareera (gross body) the medium through which the Atma experiences and pleasure and pain. This

is given by Paramatma on the basis of Karma done by it in its previous births.

The process of such formulation of the five elements is called Panchikarana where one half of each of the five elements mixes with one of the other four.

Modern science concepts are worked in a different way but basically it is the nature's five elements that make human body. Science says it is made up of cells. A cell is made of organic matter which is called by our ancient Jnanis as earth.

Science agrees that Air and Water are there in the body. The Sky is actually anything empty. There is a lot of empty space in our body which is Sky. There is fire in in our body though we cannot see it. Modern Science calls it acidic reactions which are vital for digestion.

So the conclusion that human body is made up of just organic matter is only half the story. Jnanis consider that the main part of the formation of the human body has to do with sanchita karma i.e., the vast store of past actions the fruits of which have not been reaped.

13 Panchapraana Mano Buddhi

Dasendriya Samanvitam

Apancheekruta Bhootottham

Sookshmaangam Bhogasaadhanam.

The five Pranas are Prana, Apana, Vyna, Udana and Samana. Ten Organs are : five organs of perception - Eyes, Ears, Tongue, Nose and Skin and five organs of activity - Speech (Mouth), Hands, Legs and organs of excretion)

The Sookshma Sareera, subtle body is a combination of seventeen ingredients, five Pranas, ten Organs, Mind and Intellect, the instruments with which we experience pain pleasure.

The Sthoola Sareera gross body, is the one that gets old, diseased and dies. Sookshma Sareera leaves the gross body at the time of death and gets rebirth. It is not Atma that gets rebirth, according to Adwaita Doctrine. Atma is nothing but a form of Paramatma. It manifests itself in Sookshma Sareera and gets involved in the ties of human relations and gets elations and sorrows. It also does various Karmas both good and bad. Naturally the results follow and the Sookshma Sareera gets the rewards called good births and punishments called mean births. This process of rebirths stops only if in any birth this Sookshma Sareera gets out of Maya and understands the Atma in its body and gives up all worldly attachments and starts leading a life that befits Paramatma. Then it will join Paramatma which is called Moksha. Till it is attained this worldly pleasures and sorrows will be hunting it in every birth.

14 Anaadyavidya Anirvaachyaa

Kaaranopaadhi ruchyate

Upaadhi Tritayaadanyam

Atmaanam Avadhaarayet.

Avidya, ignorance, has no beginning and also quite difficult to difine. This is also called Karana Sareera (Causal Body). So every living body has three farms of sareera viz., Sthoola (gross body), Sookshma (subtle body) and Karana (causal body). The gross body and subtle body are products of Avidya and therefore Avidya is called the causal body. Known for certain that Atma is none of these. It is the witness to their three bodies and never to be identified with them. Atma or self luminous consciousness, illumines the acitivites of the gross and subtle bodies. It is itself detached from all the bodies. Because of ignorance we think and attribute all the qualities of the three Sareeras to Atma.

**15 Panchakosaadi Yogena
Tat Tanmaya Iva Sthitah
Suddhaatma Neelavastraadi
Yogena Sphatiko Yathaa.**

When covered by a blue cloth, a pure colourless crystal looks like a blue crystal. Similarly because of the union with the Five Kosas, the pure Atma appears to have borrowed their qualities upon itself.

The Five Kosas (sheaths) are : Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnana Maya and Ananda Maya.

The details of all these Kosas are well discribed in the second chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad.

Annamaya Kosa is the physical body. Pranamaya Kosa is the one that has Five Pranas that breathes life into this physical body. Manomaya Kosa is responsible for our twin feelings like happiness and sorrow. It

controls our mind Vijnanamaya Kosa controls our intellect. These three constitute the Sookshma Sareera.

The Anandamaya Kosa which belongs to our Karana Sareera and controls our emotions is not real Ananda. Real and Saswata Ananda belongs to Atma. It is therefore established that none of the three sareeras is Atma.

16 *Vapus Tushadibhih Kosaih*

Yuktam Yuktya Avaghaatatah

Atmanam Antaram Suddham

Vivichyaat Tandulam Yatha.

Just as rice is obtained by pounding paddy and separating the husk, bran etc., we can separate Pure Atma within from the encircling of Five Kosas through careful discrimination. When one clearly realises the soul to be distinct from the Kosas, he becomes detached from them. This detachment is followed by knowledge of the self.

17 *Sada Sarvagato Apyatmaa*
 Na Sarvatra Avabhaasate
Buddhaaveva Avabhaaseta
 Swaccheshu Pratibimbavat

Atma pervades every where. But it will not shine in every thing. It will manifest only in the purest form of Buddhi. As a perfect image is reflected in a perfect mirror, Atma can shine only in the purest form of Buddhi or intellect which is an integral part of Sookshma Sareera.

18 *Dehendriya Mano Buddhi*
 Prakrutibhyo Vilakshanam
Tadvrutti Sakshinam Vidya
 Atmaanam Raajavat Sada

As a king observes the entertainment in his court hall without being a participant, Atma is distinct from the body, senses, mind and intellect and is the witness of their functions.

19 *Vyapruteshu Indriyeshu Atmaa*
 Vyaapaareeva Avivekinaam
Drusyate Abhreshu Dhavatsu
 Dhavanniva Yathaa Sasee.

An ignorant person thinks that the moon is moving whereas it is the clouds that are really moving. Similarly to the non-discriminating people, the Atma appears to be active when it is observed through the functions of the sense - organs.

20 *Atma Chaitanyam aasritya*
 Dehendriya Manodhiyah
Swakriyartheshu Vartante
 Suryaalokam Yatha Janaah.

As men do their own work in the light of sun, the body, organs, Manas and Buddhi do their own work in Atma Chaitanya or consciousness.

When the sun shines we do so many acts both good and bad in sunlight though the sun is in no way responsible other than giving light.

Similarly for the actions of body organs, Manas or Buddhi, Atma is not to be held responsible.

21 Dehendriya Gunaan Karmaani

Amale Satchidatmani

Adhyasyanti avivekena

Gagane Neelataadivat.

As one believes the sky is blue, all the deeds and characteristics of body and organs are attributed to blemishless Atma due to lack of power of discrimination.

Pure Atma is blemishless and it has both Sat and Chit. It has no birth, age, death, achievements or failures. It is not therefore possible to characterise it.

Body and organs do both good and bad deeds. Their result will go to Sookshma Sareera but not to Pure Atma. That is why Adisankara argues that Pure Atma is the light within but not Jeevatma which is forced to take births till it attains purity and becomes Pure Atma or Brahma. The deeds done by body and organs are like illusions as far as Pure Atma is concerned. It is like the deeds of a character in a play or drama which do not affect the person donning the role.

22 *Ajnaanat maanasopadheh*

Kartrutwaadeeni cha Atmani

Kalpyante Abugate Chandre

Chalanadi Yatha Ambhasah.

The reflection of moon in water that is not still gives an impression that the moon is moving because of ignorance. Similarly due to ignorance, the deeds, feelings and responsibilities are attributed to Atma though they belong to Sookshma Sareera.

When we say some person has done a good or bad deed or his thinking is evil or noble or he is enjoying or suffering, every time we mean his body but not his pure Atma.

23 *Raagechaa Sukha Duhkhaadi*
 Buddhow Satyaam Pravartate
Sushuptow Naasti Tannaase
Tasmaad Buddhestu Naatmanah.

Attachment, desire, happiness, pain and such other feelings are perceived to exist so long as mind or intellect functions. They are not perceived in deep sleep (sushupti) when the mind ceases to exist. Therefore they belong to the mind alone and not to Atma.

24 *Prakaaso Arkasya Toyasya*
 Saityam Agneryathoshnataa
Swabhaavah Satchidananda
Nitya Nirmalata Atmanah.

Brightness is sun's nature, coolness is water's nature, heat fire's nature. Similarly the nature of Atma is Sath (Absolute Existence), Chith (Absolute Knowledge) Ananda (Absolute Bliss), Permanence and Purity.

25 Atmanah Satchidamsascha

Buddheh vruttiriti Dwayam

Samyojya cha Avivekena

Jaanaameeti Pravartate.

Due to the indiscriminate blending of (1) the existence knowledge aspect of Atma and (2) the thought wave of the Budhi or Intellect, there arises the notion of 'I know'.

Atma's nature is Sath and Chith which is absolute without Time and Space. The mind's behaviour is always limited to Time and Space.

When we get Atma Jnana there is only Jnana but no learner and nothing to learn. Pure Atma does not have any of the

weaknesses of Manas. That is why it does not think "I know". It is the mind's weakness like Ego that causes ignorance and makes one think "I know".

26 *Atmano Vikriyaa naasti*

Buddherbodhohna Jaatwiti

Jeevah Sarvam Alam Jnatwa

Jnataa Drusteti Muhyati.

Atma never does anything. It is eternal. It is knowledge itself and is not affected by the mental thoughts and physical actions. Buddhi or Intellect has no capacity to experience "I know". But the individuality (Jeeva) in us in its ignorance of its true nature falsely identifies itself with the Body - Mind and Intellect and thinks out of delusion that himself is the see and the knower.

27 *Rajju Sarpavad Aatmaanam*
Jeevam Jnatvaa Bhayam Vaheth
Naaham Jeevah Paraatmeti
Jnateschet Nirbhayo Bhaveth.

Just as one regards a mere rope as a snake and is overcome by fear because of illusion and fears to touch it, the Jiva due to thinking that he is a human being but not Paramatma itself is overcome by fear. But when he learns with definite Jnana that he is Brahma himself he will be above all such reactions and never fears of anything.

28 *Atma Avabhasayatyeke*
Buddhyadeen Indriyaanyapi
Deepo Ghataadi vat Swaatmaa
Jadai Stair Na Avabhasyate.

Just as a lamp illumines a pot or a jar, the Atma illumines the mind and the sense

organs also. These material objects like pot cannot illumine themselves because they are inert and have no chaitanya. The Atma in us is the one illuminating factor, the Pure consciousness, which alone illumines the mind (Buddhi) and sense organs.

29 *Swabodhe Naanya Bodhecchaa*
 Bodha Rupertaya Atmanah
 Na Deepasya Anya Deepecchaa
 Yadhaa Swatma Prakaasane.

Atma which is knowledge itself does not require other knowledge to know it, just as a lighted lamp does not need another lamp to illumine its light.

Atma as explained earlier is itself the illuminating one. What else can illuminate it? The only requirement is removal of ignorance. Then automatically the illumination of Atma comes out.

30 *Nishidhya Nikhilopaadheen*
Neti Neteeti Vakyatah
Vidyadaikyam Mahaavaakyaih
Jeevatma Paramaatmanoh.

The oneness of the individual soul (Jeevatma) and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) as indicated by the Vedic aphorisms (Mahavakyas) has to be realised by a process of negation of the conditionings (upadhis) through the help of spiritual statemtns, "It is not this", "It is not this". (Neti Neti)

The Vedic apporisms (Maha Vakyas) are :

- 1) Rigveda : 'Prajnanam Brahma' meaning consciousness itself is Brahma.
- 2) Yajurveda : "Aham Brahmasmi" meaning I am Brahma.
- 3) Sama Veda : "Tathwamasi" meaning 'That one is you'.
- 4) Adharwa Veda : "Ayamatma Brahma" meaning This Atma itself is Brahma.

If one understands the Maha Vakyas in all the vedas he can start realising that Atma is not Manas. Likewise by discriminating and eliminating one by one, we can find out Jivatma is nothing but Paramatma.

31 *Aavidyakam Sareeraadi Drusyam*

Budbudavat Ksharam

Etat Vilakshanam Vidyaat

Aham Brahmeti Niramalam

The forms of all three Sareeras viz' the gross (sthoola), the subtle (sookshma) and the causal (karana) are time bound like bubbles in water. Atma is none of these and is Pure Brahma itself.

Once any one realises through discrimination that he is nothing but Pure Brahma, he will not identify himself with any

of the Sareeras and is immune to all dualities and feelings.

32 *Deha Anyatvat Na me Janma*

Jara Kaarsya Layaadayah

Sabdaadi Vishayaih Sango

Nireendriya tayaa Na Cha.

The following meditation (slokas 32 to 36) is suggested in order to strengthen the knowledge of the soul's oneness with Brahma.

"I am not the body that has time bound existence, birth, old age, weakness and death. I have nothing to do with the sense objects such as sound and taste, for I am without the sense organs."

We are talking about Pure Atma. For a Brahma Jnani, only Atma is the concern. All the organs and body that constitute the three forms of Sareera are of no relevance to him.

He will not get attached to any of them. So for him there are no births, no attachments and no interest in the pleasures and pains caused by sense organs. By getting detachment from them, he is able to get Eternal Bliss.

As explained earlier, the process of discrimination is taking place by confirming one by one that 'I' is not this and this. First it is confirmed that, 'I' is not body or organs.

33 *Amanastwaat Na me*

Dukha Raaga Dwesha Bhayaadayah

Apraano Hi Amanaassubhra

Ityaadi Sruti saasanaat

"I am not Manas and hence I am not having sorrow, attachment, malice and fear".

The commandment of the upanishads is that Atma is without breath and without mind and is pure. The atma does not have any features of the mind (manas).

Manas only experiences happiness and sorrow. When we are in deep sleep, we are not experiencing any of the features of Manas. But Atma exists even in deep sleep. Hence Atma is not Manas (mind).

34 *Nirguno Nishkriyo Nityo*

Nirvikalpo Niranjanah

Nirvikaaro Niraakaaro

Nitya Muktosmi Nirmalah.

Atma is without attributes and actions. It is eternal, without any desire or thought, without any vasanas, without any change, without form, ever liberated and ever pure.

Here Atma's nature is described. It is Eternal because it has no limits time and space. It is free from any attachment because it has nothing to do with mind. It has no actions because it has nothing to do with the body or organs.

35 *Aham Aakaasavath Sarvam*
 Bahir Antargato Achyutah
 Sadaa Sarva Samassuddho
 Nissango Nirmalo Achalah

"Like the space (Akasa). I fill all things within and without. I am changeless and the same in all. I am Pure, unattached, stainless and motionless."

36 *Nitya Suddha Vimuktaikam*
 Akhanda Anandam Advayam
 Satyam Jnanam Anamtam
 Yatparam Brahma Aham eva tat

"I alone an the supreme Brahma which is pure, eternal and free and which is indivisible, non-dual and changeless in all the periods of time. It is knowledge itself and is infinite."

These slokas 32-36 there is a discussion of Brahma as defined in

Upanishads like Taittiriya. So for a better understanding the reader is advised to go through the Upanishad.

*37 Evam Nirantara Abhyastaa
Brahmaiva asmeeti Vaasanaa
Harati Avidya Vikshepaan
Rogaaniva rasaayanam.*

Thus, the impression (Vasana) created by constant practice of 'Aham Brahmasmi destroys ignorance and the agitation (vikshepa) caused by Avidya, just as medicine destroys disease.

The practice of Aham Brahmasmi has to be intensified by long reflection to destroy ignorance.

Let us now find out how to do this.

38 *Vivikta Desa Aaseeno*
 Viraago Vijitendriyah
Bhaavayet Ekam Aatmaanam
 Tam Anantam Ananyadheeh.

One should sit in a solitary place with a mind free from desires and controlling the sense organs, meditate with unswerving attention on the Atma which is infinite and one without a second.

39 *Atmanyeva Akhilam Drusyam*
 Pravilaapya Dhiyaa Sudheeh
Bhavayet Ekam Aatmaanam
 Nirmala Akaasavat Sadaa.

The wise man should merge this visible world with Atma alone in an intelligent way and constantly think of the Atma as the stainless or pure sky.

Here the intelligence needed is the power of discrimination. Merging the visible world with Atma is by visualising the Atma in everything in the world that has Chetana and is seen by the eyes.

40 *Roopa Varnaadikam Sarvam*

Vihaaya Paramaarthavit

Paripoorna Chidananda

Svaroopena Avatishtate.

One who has realised by constant practice of meditation the Supreme Paramatma discards all things with names and forms. He then remains as an embodiment of the infinite consciousness and bliss.

Such an Aatma Jnani will not only experience Chidananda but becomes Ananda personified.

41 *Jnaatru Jnaana Jneya Bhedah*
 Pare na Atmani Vidyate
Chidananda Eka Roopatwaat
 Deepyate Swayameva hi.

There are no distinctions, such as 'knower' 'knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge' in the Supreme self (Paramatma). As the nature of Paramatma is endless Bliss and self luminous, there are no such distinctions within itself. At alone shines.

42 *Evam Aatma Aranau Dhyaana*
 Mathane Satatam Krute
Uditaava Gatir Jvaalaa
 Sarva Ajnaana Indhanam Dahet.

In ancient days, the sacrificial fire was kindled by rubbing of two pieces of wood one placed upon another (Arani).

By churning in the form of constant contemplation on the maha mantra, Aham Brahmasmi. (I am the supreme self) in the Arani of Atma with mind as the lower piece and 'om' as upper piece, the fire of knowledge (Jnana) is born and it shall burn down all the ignorance (Ajnana) in us.

43 *Arune neva Bodhena*

Poorva Santamase Hrute

Tata Aavirbhavet Aatmaa

Swayameva Amsumaaniva.

The Lord of early dawn, Aruna, drives away darkness of the night and heralds sunrise. Similarly while the darkness of Ajnana is destroyed by knowledge, Atma rises within of its own accord like sunrise

44 *Atmaatu Satatam Praapto*

Api Apraptavat Avidyayaa

Tannase Praaptavat Bhaati

Swa Kanthaabharanam Yatthaa

Atma is an ever present reality (Sat). Yet it is not realised due to ignorance (Ajnana). When ignorance is destroyed. Atman is realised as an object newly gained, just as the ornament of one's neck.

A person searches for the gold ornament already in his neck due to his forgetfulness. When he later finds it, he feels very happy as if he found a new ornament. He has thus lamented over a thing which is not lost.

The Atma is ever with us. We only recognise it when the cause for its veiling viz., ignorance (Ajnana) is removed through constant and sincere sadhana.

45 *Sthaanau Purushavat Bhraantyaay*

Krutaa Brahmani Jeevataa

Jeevasya Taathvike Roope

Tasmin Drushte Nivartate.

Due to delusion, a tree appears to be a man. Similarly Brahman who is Paramatma appears to be Jivatma because of delusion. When such delusion is destroyed, the real nature of Jiva is realised as the Atma.

46 *Tathva Swaroopaa Anubhavaa*

Utpannam Jnaanam Anjasaa

Aham Mameti cha Ajnaanam

Baadhate Digbhramadivat.

Just as the identity of directions East, West, North, South is known when sunrises and dispels darkness, the knowledge produced by the realisation of the true nature of Atma destroys the ignorance (Ajnana) which gave rise to the wrong notions of possession - the "I" and "mine" in every one.

The sense of "I" and the concept of "mine" both become meaningless and delusory when the Atma is realised as one universal reality.

47 *Samyak Vijnanavaan Yogee*
 Swatmanyeva Akhilaam Jagat
Ekam Cha Sarvam Atmaana
Eekshyate Jnana Chakshushaa

The yogi of perfect realisation sees through his eye of wisdom (Jnana Chakshu) the entire universe (Jagat) as the manifestation of his own Atma and regards everything else as his own Atma and nothing else.

48 *Atma eva idam Jagat sarvam*
 Atmano Anyat na Vidyate
Mrudo Yadvat Ghataadeeni
Swatmaanam Sarvam Eekshyate

The entire universe is verily Atma. Nothing other than Atma exists. Pots, Jars and other potteries are made of clay (mud). They come out of mud and finally go back to the same mud. There is no separate existence

for the mud pots or jars apart from the mud. So too Atma is the reality (Sat) which has given shape to the world (Jagat) of different names and forms. This is rightly understood by the man of wisdom (Jnani).

49 *Jeevan Muktastu Tat Vidvaan*

Poorvopaadhi Gunaan Tyajet

Satchidananda Roopatvaat

Bhavet Bhramara Keetavat.

A Jivanmukta i.e, one who has realised the Atma by long years of meditation upon the divine nature of the Atma and has become completely free from ignorance (Avidya), even while he lives in his body, gives up the traits of the gross, subtle and casual bodies (upadhis) On account of his nature of Sat Chit Ananda, he verily becomes Brahma, like the worm which grows up in the mud nest for a long time and transforms into a wasp after contemplation over the form and nature of the wasp.

50 *Teertva Mohaarnavam Hatvaa*
 Raaga Dveshadi Rakshasaan
Yogee Saanti Samayuktah
 Atmaa Ramo Viraaajate

The Yogi who crosses the ocean of Moha (delusion) and kills the demons called likes and dislikes will be peaceful and dwells in the glory of his own real self as an Atma Rama.

Here the phrase Atma Rama is used suggesting that Atma is godly like Rama, the incarnation of Paramatma who crossed the real ocean and killed demon Ravana.

51 *Baahya Anitya Sukhaasaktim*
 Hitva Atma Sukha Nirvruttah
Ghatastha Deepavat Svasthah
 Swarntareva Prakaasate.

The Jeevan Mukta who relinquishes all his attachments to the illusory (Anitya) and external (Bahya) happiness and is satisfied with the bliss derived from Atma, shines inwardly like a lamp placed in a pot.

As the Jeevanmukta detaches from all sense organs, he turns the mind inward it will be still without any delusions. Then his mind experiences this inward light of the Supreme Brahma.

52 *Upadhisthopi Tatdharmaih*

Alipto Vyomavanmunih

Sarvavit Moodhavat Tishteth

Asakto Vaayuvat Chareth.

The state of Jeevan Mukhta is further described in this sloka. Though he lives in the upadhis, he remains untainted like the sky (Vyomavat) and he moves abouts like the wind, perfectly unattached.

53 *Upadhi Vilayaat Vishnau*
 Nirvisesham Visermunih
Jale Jalam Viyat Vyomni
 Tejas Tejasi Va Yatha.

When the upadhis are destroyed, a person who constantly contemplates on the divine, is totally absorbed in Vishnu, the all pervading spirit, just as water is absorbed into water, space into space and light into light.

54 *Yallabhat Na Aparo Labho*
 Yat Sukhat Na Aparam Sukham
Yat Jnanaat Na Aparam Jnaanam
 Tath Brahmeti Avadharayet.

Realise that to be Brahma, the attainment of which leaves nothing more

to be attained, the blessedness (sukham) which is far more superior to any other blessedness, and the Jnana which is superior to any other knowledge.

The supreme experience of realization of Brahma is explained in this sloka as (1) the greatest gain, (2) the greatest knowledge (jnana) after gaining which none will like to add any more to it, (3) the greatest bliss of the self after enjoying which none will strive for a greater bliss.

All Upanishads like Bruhadaranyaka and Mundaka confirm this. The highest goal is to know Brahma and become Brahma only.

55 *Yat Drustvaa na Aparam Drusyam*
 Yat bhootvaa na Punarbhavah
 Yat Jnaatvaa na Aparam Jneyam
 Tat Brahmeti Avadhaarayet.

After seeing which there is nothing else to be seen, after attaining which there will not be any more birth and after knowing which there is nothing else to be known, that is to be understood as Brahma.

For the Yogi who attained the highest goals of Adhyatma and became a Brahma Jnani, nothing else is required because everything else is dismal compared to the Brahma.

Bhagavat Gita calls this highest goal as the Supreme Abode and Yogis reach there never to return. (Chap 2-72)

56 *Tiryak Oordhvam Adhah Poornam*
 Satchidanandam Advayam
Anantam Nityam Ekam Yat
 Tat Brahmeti Avadhaarayet.

The one that pervades in all places even above and below is Brahma. It is one without a second. It is infinite, eternal and filled with Satchidananda. It exists as only one. That one is to be understood as Brahma.

This description of Brahma is in Mundaka Upanishad which also says that it is immortal and is there before and exists behind and in all sides.

57 *Atat Vyaavrutti Roopena*
 Vedaantaih Lakshyate Advayam
Akhandanandam Ekam Yat
Tat Brahmeti Avadhaarayety.

This Brahma is nondual, indivisible, blissful and always exists as only one. The Upanishads indicate that this Brahma is reached by a process of negation of what it is not and of assertion of what it is.

58 *Akhandananda Roopasya Tasya*
 Ananda Lavaasritaah
Brahmaadyaah Taaratamyena
Bhavanti Anandino Akhilaah.

All the deities like Indra, Varuna and others worshipped by us, are only a particle of the unlimited bliss of Para Brahma and accordingly enjoy their proportionate share of that particle.

Every living being who worships deities enjoy the bliss of Paramatma according to his capacity . But it is only a very small fraction of the total Atmananda the Parabrahma is capable of giving.

According to vedanta all meritorious and righteous men after death enjoy a particle of the Bliss of Paramatma. After the fraction of Bliss of Paramatma is exhausted, they are again born as great men and help to establish Dharma.

We can imagine this easily. In the Paramatma's incarnation as Lord Krishna. Who told, "I will be born again and again to destroy Adharma and to establish Dharma."

59 *Tad Yuktam Akhilam Vastu*
Vyavahaara satadanvitah
Tasmaat Sarvagatam Brahma
Ksheere Sarpiriva Akhile.

The whole creation is pervaded by Brahma. It is because of Brahma only all actions are taking place in this universe. Brahma permeates everything as butter permeates milk.

Here the example of Butter and Milk is given because butter is in milk but not directly visible. To get butter one has to churn milk. Similarly Brahma is spread in the whole universe but not visible. Only by intense meditation, it is possible to realise Brahma. Not able to see does not mean it does not exist. This is a perfect example given in vedanta to explain Paramatma's existence.

60 *Ananu Asthoolam Ahraswam*
 Adeergham Ajam Avyayam
Aroopa Guna Varnaakhyam
 Tat Brahmeti Avadharayet

Brahma is neither subtle nor gross, neither short nor long. It has no birth, no changes, no form, no quality, no colour and even no particular name.

Some of these qualities are explained in Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad where one gets more detailed discussion about Brahmatatwa which is imperceptible to the mind and hence cannot be described.

61 *Yadbhaasaa Bhaasate Arkadi*
 Bhasyairyattu Na Bhasyate
Yena Sarvamidam Bhati
 Tat Brahmeti Avadhaarayeti.

All heavenly bodies are illuminated by Brahma and are shining. But Brahma is not illuminated by their light.

It is once again confirmed in this sloka that but for the illuminating power of Brahma nothing can shine in this universe.

*62 Swayam Antar Bahir Vyapya
Bhasayan Akhilam Jagat
Brahma Prakaasate Vahni
Pratapta Ayasa Pindavat.*

The Supreme Brahma while pervading the entire universe outwardly and inwardly, shines of itself like the fire that permeates a red hot iron-ball and glow as fire itself.

An iron ball when in contact with fire for a sufficiently long time comes to glow as fire itself.

63 *Jagat Vilakshanam Brahma*
 Brahmano Anyata Kinchana
 Brahma Anyat Bhatichet Mithya
 Yadha Maru Mareechikaa.

Brahma is entirely different from universe, but there exists nothing in the universe that is not Brahma. If any object in universe other than Brahma appears to exist, it is unreal like the mirage which appears to be giving water in a desert.

64 *Drusyate Srooyate Yadyat*
 Brahmano Anyan Na Tat Bhavet
 Tathvajnaanaat Cha Tadbrahma
 Satchidanandam Advayam

All that is perceived or heard through the sense organs is Brahma only. The Brahma that is non dual and which is in the form of Satchidananda is known only after attaining the knowledge of the Reality.

Whatever exists either in this limited body, mind and intellect or in the outer created world, they are all manifestations of the Brahma and nothing else. When this truth is realised and experienced, one can see the entire universe in which the Brahma revels as satchit Ananda absolute because it is one and only one Ekam Eva Advitiyam Brahma.

65 *Sarvagam Satchidaatmaanam*

Jnana Chakshur Nireekshate

Ajnaana Chakshur Na Eekshet

Bhaswantam Bhanum Andhavat

We can visualise Atma that has universal existence with the help of Jnana netra (eye of knowledge) only, just as the blind cannot see the resplendent sun.

66 *Sravanaadibhi Uddepta*

Jnaanaagni Paritapitah

Jeeva Sarvamalat Muktah

Swarnavat Dyotate Swayam

The Jeeva is purified by heating in the fire of knowledge kindled by hearing, reasoning and deep contemplation on what has been heard and reasoned out. Then the Jeeva shines of itself like pure gold obtained after melting and purifying the gold ore. Just as one heats gold ore in a crucible to purify it, one has to use the fire of Jnana to purify the mind.

Jnana can be achieved according to Hindu philosophy by Sravana (hearing) Manana (reasoning of truth) and Nidhi Dhyasana (deep contemplation). Then the mind will be free from impure thoughts, and the feeling of Jeeva gets automatically extinguished. Then only the self-illuminating Atma exists.

67 *Hrudaakaasodito hi Atmaa*

Bodha Bhaanus Tamopahrut

Sarva Vyaapee Sarva Dhaaree

Bhaati Bhaasayate Akhilam

The Atma, Sun of Knowledge, which rises in the sky of the heart, destroys the darkness of ignorance, pervades everything and sustains all. It shines and makes everything in the universe to shine.

Heart here means the arena of the mind from where noble and humane thoughts flow.

Here Sun is brought into comparison because it is the ultimate source of light visible to the naked eye.

*68 Dikdesa Kaa laadi Anapekshya Sarvagam
Seetadi Hrunnitya Sukham Niramjanam
Yassvaatma Teerdham Bhajate Vinishkriyam
Sa Sarvavit Sarva Gato Amruto Bhavet.*

The Jnani who

- (1) is free from all the limitations of time, space and direction.
- (2) worships the holy place of his own Atma which is present everywhere, which destroys heat and cold and which is bliss eternal and stainless becomes all knowing and all pervading and attains immortality.

Thus ends Atma Bodha May God Bless all the beings of universe.

Om Tat Sat



This book is dedicated to
Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Varu