



## JNANA VAHINI

“As fog before the Sun, Ignorance melts away before Knowledge.” Knowledge is acquired by uninterrupted Inquiry. One should constantly be engaged in the Inquiry of the nature of Brahman: the reality of the I, the transformations that occur to the individual at birth and at death and such matters. As you remove the husk that covers up the rice, so too the Ignorance that adheres to the mind has to be removed by the frequent application of the abrasive Atmic Inquiry. It is only when full knowledge is won that one can get liberated, or, in other words, attain *Moksha* (Liberation). After the attainment of the above said Atmic knowledge, one has to follow the path of *Brahman* (The absolute consciousness, God) and act according to the New Wisdom.

All doubts that afflict the mind have to be solved by consulting those who know, or the *Sadgurus*

(Philosophers and guides) one has the chance to meet. Until one gets firmly fixed in the path that *guru* (teacher) or *Sastras* (category of scripture) has shown, one has to obey the rules and directions steadfastly and be in their company or be associated with them one way or other. Because one can progress very fast if one keeps close to the Wise Person who has realised the Truth, one must, with unrestricted renunciation and sincere earnestness, follow the instructions of the Teacher and of the Sastras. This is the real *Tapas* (asceticism). This Tapas leads on to the highest stage.

When Ignorance and its concomitant Delusion disappear, the *Atma* (soul, inner motive force) in everyone shines in Its own splendour. All that we see is as a mirage, the superimposition of something over the Real and the mistaking of that for this. Things have a beginning and they end, they evolve and involve, there is evolution as well as involution. When all is subsumed by involution, or *Pralaya*, only *Moolaprakriti* or the Causal Substance endures. Only the Unmanifested Cause survives the universal dissolution.

When gold is melted in the crucible, it shines with a strange yellow glory. Where did that light emanate from? From the gold or from the fire? What happened was only the removal of the dross by the fire; the effulgence belonged to the gold itself. It is its very nature. The fire is only an instrument for the removal of

the dross. Nothing has been added to the gold, by the fire in the crucible!

If fire can give the splendour, then why does not a stick or blade or pebble placed in the fire become as shining as gold? So one has to conclude that the splendour came, not through fire, but out of its own inner nature. The *Prathyagatma*, or the Inner presiding Atma is separate from the Five Sheaths of the Individual, the *Panchakoshas*. It shines with its own splendour. It is the witness of the activities and consequences of the three *Gunas* (qualities). It is immovable. It is holy and pure. It is eternal. It is indivisible. It is self-manifested, it is Peace. It has no end. It is Wisdom itself; such an Atma has got to be cognised as Oneself.

To realise this Atma, this *Jnanaswarupa* (Embodiment of wisdom), there are four obstacles to be overcome: *Laya* (sleep), *Vikshepa* (waywardness, ignorance hiding truth), *Kshaya* (decline, disappearance), and *Rasa Aaswaadanam* (enjoyment of bliss). Let us take these one by one.

**LAYA:** Sleep; when the mind withdraws from the external world, it enters into deep sleep or *Sushupthi*, on account of the overpowering influence of *Samsara* (change or flux). The *Sadhaka* (aspirant for spiritual progress) should arrest this tendency and attempt to fix the mind on to *Atmavichara*, or the inquiry into the nature

of the Atma. He must keep watch over the mind, so that he may keep awake. He must discover the circumstances that induce the drowsiness and remove them in time. He must start the process of *Dhyana* (meditation) again and again. Of course, the usual producer of drowsiness and sleep during *Dhyana* is indigestion. Overfeeding, exhaustion through too much of moving about, want of sufficient sleep at night, these too cause sleepiness and drowsiness. So it is advisable to sleep a little during noon, on those days when you wake up after a sleeplessness night, though generally all those who engage in *Dhyanam* should avoid sleep during daytime. Do not eat, until you feel proper hunger. Practise the art of moderate eating. When you feel three-fourths full, desist from further eating; that is to say, you will have to stop even when you feel you can take a little more. The stomach can be educated in this way to behave properly. Over exercise too is not good. Even walking can be overdone. You can walk until you conquer drowsiness; but remember you cannot plunge into *Dhyanam*, immediately after you have warded off sleep.

**VIKSHEPA:** Waywardness; the mind seeks to run after external objects and so, constant effort is needed to turn it inwards, away from the attractions of sensory impressions. This has to be done through the rigorous exercise of the Intellect, of Inquiry. Discriminate and get the conviction driven into you that these are evanescent,

temporary, transformable, liable to decay, and therefore, unreal (*Mithya*) not *Sathya* (truth). Convince yourselves that what is sought after as pleasurable and avoided as painful are only the fleeting products of sensory contacts. Train yourself in this way to avoid the distractions of the external world and dive deep into Dhyanam.

A sparrow pursued by a hawk flies in despair for shelter into a house; but it is anxious to fly again into the outer world, isn't it? So also, the mind is anxious to go again into the outer world, from the Atma where it takes refuge. Vikshepa is this mental attitude, the urge to run back into the world from one's shelter. The removal of Vikshepa alone will help the concentration of the mind in Dhyanam.

**KSHAYA** (decline): The mind is drawn with immense force by all the unconscious and subconscious impulses and instincts of passion and attachment towards the external world and its multitudinous attractions. It therefore experiences untold misery and might even get lost in its depths. This is the stage called Kshaya or Decline.

The state of inertia into which one is driven by despair cannot be called Samadhi; or, one might even indulge in daydreaming in order to escape from present misery; or, one might start building castles in the air. All this is due to attachment, to the temptations of the outer

world. There is another type of attachment too, the attachment to the inner world, the planning within oneself of various schemes to better oneself in the future as compared to the past. Both these form part of what is called Kshaya. The basis for both is the attraction of the outer world. Attachment brings about desire, desire leads to planning.

**RASA-AASWAADANA:** When Kshaya and Vikshepa are overcome, one attains the Savikalpananda, the Bliss of the Highest Subject-Object Contact. This stage is what is called Rasa Aaswaananda or the Enjoyment of Bliss. Even this is not the Highest of the Supreme Bliss, which one does not attain or acquire, but simply IS, becomes aware of, so to say. The Rasa, or the sweetness of the Subject-Object Samadhi is a temptation one has to avoid, for it is only the second best. It is enough joy to act as a handicap. The joy is as great as that of a person who has just deposited a huge load he has been long carrying, or as that of a greedy person who has just killed a serpent guarding a vast treasure he wanted to grab. The killing of the serpent is Savikalpasamadhi. The acquisition of the treasure, *that* is the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, the highest stage.

When the sun rises, darkness as well as the troubles arising from it disappear. Similarly, for those who have realised the Atma, there is no more any bondage, nor the sorrow arising from the bondage. Delusion comes only to those who forget their bearings: egoism is the greatest

factor in making people forget their very basic Truth. Once egoism enters into man, he slips from the ideal and precipitates himself from the top of the stairs in quick falls from step to step, down to the very bottom floor. Egoism breeds schisms, hatreds and attachments. Through attachments and affection, and even envy and hatred, one plunges into activity and gets immersed in the world. This leads to embodiment in the physical frame and further egoism. In order to become free from the twin pulls of pleasure and pain, one must rid oneself of the body-consciousness, and keep clear of self-centred actions. This again involves the absence of attachment and hatred. Desire is the number one enemy of Liberation, or Moksha. Desire binds one to the wheel of birth and death. It brings about endless worry and tribulations.

Through inquiry on these lines, knowledge is rendered clearer and brighter; and liberation is achieved. Moksha is only another word for independence, not depending on any outside thing or person.

If nicely controlled and trained, the mind can lead one on to Moksha. It must be saturated in the thought of God; that will help the inquiry into the nature of Reality. The consciousness of the ego itself will fade away, when the mind is free from pulls and when it is rendered pure. Not to be affected in any way by the world; that is the path to self-realisation. It cannot be got in *Swarga* (heaven) or in Mount Kailasa (The abode of Shiva).

The flame of desire cannot be put out without the conquest of the mind. The mind cannot be overcome without the scotching of the flames of desire. The mind is the seed, desire is the tree. *Atma Jnana* (Awareness of the Atma) alone can uproot that tree. So, these three are interdependent: mind, desire, and Atma Jnana.

The *Jivanmuktha* (Liberated even when alive) is established firmly in the knowledge of the Atma. He has achieved it by dwelling on the Mithya (unreality) of the world and contemplating its failings and faults. By this means, he has developed an insight into the nature of pleasure and pain and an equanimity in both. He knows that wealth, worldly joy and pleasure are all worthless and even poisonous. He takes praise, blame and even blows with a calm assurance, unaffected by both honour and dishonour. Of course, the Jivanmuktha reached that stage only after long years of systematic discipline and unflagging zeal when distress and doubt assailed him. Defeat only made him more rigorous in self-examination and more earnest about following the prescribed discipline. The Jivanmuktha has no trace of the “will to live.” He is ever ready to drop into the lap of Death.

*Aparokshabrahmajnana* or Direct Perception of Brahman is the name given to the stage in which the aspirant is free from all doubt regarding improbability or impossibility, and is certain that the two entities, Jiva and Brahman are One, and have been One, and will ever

be One. When this state is attained, the aspirant will suffer no confusion anymore, he will not mistake one thing for another, or superimpose one thing on another. He will not mistake the rope for the snake. He will know that all along there was only one thing, the rope.

He will not suffer from *Abhasa Avaranam* also; that is to say, he will not declare as he was wont to do previously, that the effulgence of Brahman is not in him. In the heart and centre of every Jivi, *Paramatma* (Godhead, the supreme self) exists, minuter than the minutest molecule, huger than the hugest conceivable object, smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest. Therefore, the *Jnani* who has had a vision of the Atma in him will never suffer sorrow. The Atma is there, in all living things, in the ant as well as the elephant. The whole world is enveloped and sustained by this subtle Atma. The Sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) has to direct his attention away from the external world and become insighted, he has to turn his vision towards the Atma. He must analyse the processes of his mind and discover for himself wherefrom all the modifications and agitations of the mind originate. By this means, every trace of “intention” and “will” has to disappear. Afterwards, the only idea that will get fixed in the mind will be the idea of Brahman. The only feeling which will occupy the mind will be the feeling of Bliss, arising out of its establishment in the *Satchidananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss) stage.

Such a Jnani will be unaffected by joy or grief; for, he will be fully immersed in the ocean of *Atmananda* (bliss to the soul), above and beyond the reach of worldly things. The constant contemplation of the Atma and its glory is what is connoted by the terms, *Brahmabhyasa* and *Jnanabhyasa*, the practice of Brahman or the cultivation of *Jnana* (wisdom).

The mind is so influenced by the passion for objective pleasure and delusion of ignorance that it pursues with amazing quickness the fleeting objects of the world; so, it has to be again and again led on towards higher ideals. Of course, this is difficult at first; but with persistent training, the mind can be tamed. Then it will get fixed in the perpetual enjoyment of the *Pranava, OM*. The mind can be trained by following the methods of quiet persuasion, the promise of attractive inducements, the practice of withdrawing the senses from the outer world, the endurance of pain and travail, the cultivation of sincerity and constancy and the acquisition of mental equipoise, that is to say, the methods of *Sama, Dama, Uparathi, Thithiksha, Sraddha* and *Samaadhaana*.

The mind can be turned towards Brahman and the constant contemplation of Brahman by the study of the Upanishads, the adoption of regular prayer, the sharing with others of the ecstasy of *Bhajan* (devotional singing), and the adherence to Truth. Very often with the progress of Dhyana, new desires and new resolutions arise in the mind. But one need not despair. The mind

can be broken, provided one takes up the task in right earnest and follows a regular routine of training. The final result of this training is Nirvikalpa Samadhi or the Unlimited, Unmodified Bliss-Consciousness.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi gives full knowledge of Brahman; and that, in turn, results in Moksha or Liberation from birth and death. The mind must be attuned to the contemplation of Brahman, one must strive to tread the path of Brahman, and live in Brahman, with Brahman. Atma Jnana can be won only by the triple path of “giving up Vasanas,” “uprooting the mind” and “the analysis of experience, to grasp the reality.” Without these three, the Jnana of the Atma will not dawn. The Vasanas or instincts and impulses prod the mind on towards the sensory world and bind the individual to joy and misery. So the Vasanas must be put down. This can be achieved by means of discrimination (*Viveka*), meditation on the Atma (*Atmachintana*), inquiry (*Vicharana*), control of the senses (*Samam*), control of the desires (*Damam*), renunciation (*Vairagya*) and such disciplines.

The mind is a bundle of Vasanas. Verily, the mind is the *Jagath* (cosmos, universe) itself. It is all the world for the individual. While in deep sleep, the mind does not function and so the *Jagath* is practically non-existent for the individual. The *Jagath* is born, or “enters into the consciousness” and dies or “disappears from the consciousness,” according to the cognitive powers of the mind. When therefore the mind is destroyed, the world

too is destroyed and one is free, one is liberated; one attains Moksha.

Whoever succeeds in controlling the *Chitta* or the Consciousness can have a vision of the Atman. Consciousness is the grownup tree, the seed is the “ego”, the feeling of “I”. When the seed “I” is cast aside, all the activities of the consciousness also vanish automatically.

The Sadhaka, who is earnest for these results, has to be ever vigilant. The senses might, any moment, regain their lost mastery and enslave the individual. He might lose much of the ground already gained. That is the reason why Sadhakas are warned off from the attachments of the world.

Be ever and always immersed in the search for Truth. Do not waste time in the multiplication and satisfaction of wants and desires. One source of pleasure craves as a corollary to another source. Thus the mind seeks again and again to acquire the objects it has given up. So, do not yield to the vagaries of the mind. Turn back, even forcibly, from sensory attachment. Why, even prayer cannot be done, according to the mind’s vagaries. One has to stick to the same place and time! The Atma itself will sustain such Sadhakas and give them strength and steadiness.

He who has subdued his mind will be the same, in good times and in bad. Grief and joy are but aberrations of the mind. It is only when the mind is associated with

the senses and the body that it is affected and agitated and modified. When one takes in an intoxicant, one is not aware of pain, is it not? How does this happen? The mind is then detached from the body and so, it is not bothered by physical pain or discomfort. Similarly, the Jnani too has immersed his mind in the Atma. He can establish mental peace and quiet, by disciplining the mind.

The Jnani gets full Bliss from his own Atma. He does not seek it anywhere outside himself. In fact, he will have no desire or plan to find joy in anything external. He is satisfied with the inner joy he gets. The greatness of a Jnani is beyond description, even beyond your imagination! The Sruthis proclaim, “*Brahmavith Brahmaiva bhavathi, Brahmavith param aapnothi,*” that is to say, “he who has known Brahman becomes Brahman Itself, He who has attained the Brahman Principle has become the Highest.”

All bubbles are but the same water; so also, all the multiplicity of name and form, all this created world, are but the same Brahman. This is the fixed conviction of the Jnani, nay, his genuine experience. As all rivers flow into the sea, and get lost, so also all desires get lost in the effulgent consciousness of the Realised soul. That is what is termed the *Atmasaakshaathkaara*, the Vision of the Atma. The Atma has no death, isn't it? It is not born and it is unaffected by the sixfold process of Change. It is *Aja* (birthless), *Ajara* (without old age), *Amara* (without

death) and *Avinasi* (without decline and extinction). These processes are for the evanescent body; they are “*Shad Bhaava Vikaras.*” They mean being born, existing, growing, changing, getting old, declining and lastly dying. The Atma has no such modification. It is stable, unshakeable, fixed, the witness of all change in space and time, unaffected by the transformations, like the water drop on the lotus-leaf.

Liberation from the tentacles of the mind can be got by the acquisition of *Brahma Jnana*, the knowledge of the Absolute. This type of liberation is the genuine *Swarajya*, self-rule. This is the genuine Moksha. Whoever grasps the reality behind all this passing show, he will be untroubled by instinct or impulse or any other urge. He will be the master of the real wisdom.

The robber who has robbed us of the precious gem of Atma is no other than the mind; so, if the robber is caught and threatened and punished, the gem can be regained. The possessor of that gem is immediately honoured by being installed as Brahman.

The Sadhaka must seek the personages who have attained this Knowledge and learn from them their experience, and honour them for it and share with them their joy. Indeed, such Sadhakas are blessed, for they are on the road to *Swarajya*, self-rule. This is the mystery of Brahman, the understanding that there is no other. This is the Atma Jnana.

There are four types of Jnanis: *Brahmavid*, *Brahmavidvara*, *Brahmavid-Vareeyaan*, *Brahmavid-varishta*. These types are differentiated, according to the development of the *Sathwic* quality in the Jnani. The first, the *Brahmavid* has reached the fourth stage called *Pathyapaththi*. The second, the *Brahmavidvara* has attained the fifth, the *A-samsakthi* stage. The third has gained the sixth stage, the *Padaarthabhavana*. The fourth, the *Brahmavidvarishta* is in the seventh grade, the *Thuriya*, the stage of perpetual *Samadhi*.

The *Brahmavid-varishta* is “liberated” though he is in the body. He has to be forcibly persuaded to partake of food and drink. He will not engage himself in any work relating to the world. He will be unconscious of the body and its demands. But the other three will be aware of it, in varying intensities, and they will engage themselves in worldly work, to the extent appropriate to their spiritual status. Those three have to acquire the destruction of the *Manas*, the Mind. This itself is of two grades: *Swarupanaasa*, the destruction of the agitations and even their shapes and forms; and *Arupanaasa*, the destruction of the agitations only.

Readers might be troubled by a doubt, while on this point. They might ask, who are these who have conquered and wiped out the Mind? Those who have neither attachment nor hatred, pride nor jealousy nor greed. Those who are free from bondage of the senses, those

really are the heroes who have won the battle against the mind. That is the test. Such heroic persons will be free from all agitations.

He who has achieved Swarupanaasa would have eliminated the two Gunas, Thamas and Rajas and he will shine with the splendour of pure Sathwa. Through the influence of that pure Guna, he will radiate Love and Beneficence and Mercy, wherever he moves. (In the Brahmaavid-varishta, the already “liberated” individual, even this Sathwa Guna will be absent). The Sathwa Guna will have as its unmistakable concomitants, splendour, wisdom, bliss, peace, brotherliness, sense of sameness, self-confidence, holiness, purity and similar qualities. Only he who is saturated in Sathwic Guna can witness the image of the Atma within. It is when the Sathwa is mixed with the Thamasic and Rajasic, that it is rendered impure and becomes the cause of Ignorance and Illusion. This is the reason for the bondage of man. The Rajasic quality produces the illusion of something non-existent being existent! It broadens and deepens the contact of the senses with the external world. It creates affection and attachment and so, by means of the dual pulls of happiness and sorrow (the one to gain and the other to avoid) it plunges man deeper and deeper into activity. These activities breed the evil of passion, fury, greed, conceit, hatred, pride, meanness and trickery. And, the Thamasic quality? Well, it blinds the vision, and lowers the intellect,

multiplying sloth, sleep and dullness, leading man along the wrong path, away from the goal. It will make even the seen, the “unseen”! One will fail to benefit even from one’s actual experience, if he is immersed in Thamas. It will mislead even big scholars, for scholarship does not necessarily confer moral stamina. Caught in these tentacles of Thamas, the pundits cannot arrive at correct conclusions.

Even the wise, if they are bound down by Thamas, will be affected by many doubts and misgivings and be drawn towards sensory pleasures, to the detriment of the wisdom they have gained. They will begin to identify themselves with their property, their wives and children, and such other worldly temporals. They will even confuse untruth with truth and truth with untruth! Note, how great a trickster this Thamas is!

This power of superimposition that *Maya* has, hides from the Jivi (or the Individual) the Universal which he is, the *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss) which is his Nature. All this Jagath, with its manifoldness, is born out of the ascription of multiplicity where there is only One. When all this evolution is subsumed by the process of involution (*Pralaya*), the three Gunas are in perfect equilibrium or balance. This is the stage called *Gunasaamyavastha*. Then, through the Will of the Super-Will or Ishwara, the balance is disturbed and activity starts, leading to consequences which breed

further activities. In other words, the World originates and develops and unfolds. This is the stage called Unbalanced, or *Vaishamyā*. Thus, from the subtle Inner unconscious and subconscious to the gross outer physical body, everything is due to Maya or the power of superimposition of the Particular over the Universal. That is the reason why these are referred to as *An-atma*, *Non-atma*. They are like the mirage, which superimposes water over desert sand. It can be destroyed only by the vision of Brahman or Atma.

The affection one has towards one's relations, the satisfaction one gets when one secures the things craved for, the happiness one gets when one utilises such things, all these are bondages which the consciousness imposes on itself. Even sleep and dreams are such "agitations" which have to be overcome, before the Atma can be well visualised and realised. In sleep, the element of Ignorance persists. The "I" and the "Mine" feelings produce an endless series of activities and agitations in the various levels of Consciousness. But, as a single soldier in a vantage position can successfully tackle hundreds of enemy personnel who come in single file through a narrow gap, one has to tackle each agitation as and when it emerges in the Consciousness and overwhelms it. The courage to do this can be got through the training derived by practice.

All agitations will cease the moment one enters on the inquiry, “Who am I?” This was the Sadhana that Ramana Maharshi achieved and taught to his disciples. That is also the easiest of all the disciplines. First, there must be the *Subhechcha*, the desire to procure one’s own welfare. This will lead to the study of books about Brahman and its principles, the search for the company of the good, the withdrawal from sensory pleasures, and the thirst for liberation. Even the *Mahavakya* (profound spiritual truth), “*Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman),” has a trace of ignorance sticking on to it, the Aham, considered as separate but identical. This Aham (Jiva, I) is so persistent that it will disappear only through ceaseless meditation on the implications of “*Thath Thwam Asi*” (That thou art) and the all-inclusive Atma or Brahman. This is the *Vicharana* stage or Bhumika; the Bhumika, subsequent to the Subhechcha stage. By these means, the Mind can be fixed very soon on the contemplation of Brahman. Each stage is a step in the ladder for the progressive rise of the Mind, from the concrete to the subtle and the subtle to the non-existent. This is the *Thanumanasi* or the last stage.

The three stages referred to above and the disciplines they involve will destroy all desires and cravings and illumine knowledge of the Reality. The Mind is rendered fully holy and saturated with Truth. This is called *A-samasakthi*, or the stage of No-attachment or

No-contact. That is to say, all contact with the exterior world or even with one's own past is wiped out. No attention is paid to the internal and the external. The Sadhaka reaches *Abhaavapratheethi*, as it is called. He has no *Padaarthabhaavana* of his own. That is to say, no object can create any sensation in his consciousness. He, the perfect Jnani, will be ever immersed in the Bliss of the Atma. He has no awareness of the seer, the seen and the sight, the triple thread. This is the *Thuriya*, the Fourth, the Beyond Stage.

Some are Wakeful-dreamy, or *Jaagrath-swapna*. They build castles in the air, planning with the known and the unknown, the seen and the unseen. Others are Extra-wakeful, *Mahaajaagrath*. Their "I" and "mine" have become too deep-rooted, through many births. These are all but agitations of the Consciousness, *Vrittis*. Wisdom can dawn only when these are destroyed. Until then, however much one may know of names and forms, one cannot grasp the Reality. The ceasing of all *Vrittis*, or agitations is the sign of the person who really knows the Reality.

Look at the clouds that wander across the sky; note that they have no intimate lasting relationship with the sky, which they hide but for a few minutes.

Such is the relationship between your body and You, that is to say, You, who are of the nature of

Paramatma. The body is but a temporary passing phase, hiding and clouding the truth.

How can the body's behaviour—wakefulness, dream and sleep—affect in any way the Eternal Consciousness, the Paramatma?

What of your shadow? Is it not something separate from you? Does its length or clarity or career affect you in any way? Understand that the same is the relationship between the body and Yourself. If you take this bundle of flesh and bone as yourself, consider what happens to it, and how long you can call it “mine.” Pondering over this problem is the beginning of Jnana.

This physical frame, built out of earth, fire, water, wind and ether break up into its components, as all built up things do! Only ignorance will take it as Real. Only the uneducated will attach value to it, as permanent and eternal. Did this body exist before birth? Does it persist after death? No. It appears and disappears, with an interval of existence! Therefore, it has no absolute value. It is to be treated only as the cloud or the shadow.

As a matter of fact, this physical world is like the mango tree raised by the magician's wand, the product of the trickster known as Mind. Just as clay took the form of pot and pan and plate and after an interval becomes once again clay, shapeless clay, so too, all this is the formless Sath-Chith-Ananda; the *Niraakaara*

(formless infinite) appearing with *Aakaara* (one with form) for some time, on account of the delusion and ignorance of the Mind. Some things are useful, some are not, all because of this Name and Form.

All Forms are He; all are He. You too are He, above and beyond the past, present and future. You are not this body which is tied up with time, and which is caught in the toils of Was, Is and Will be. Be ever fixed in this attitude, dwell constantly in the thought that You are of the nature of Parabrahma; thus, you grow into a Jnani.

That mind is in bondage, which craves for objects, for the company of men, and prefers this location or that. Attachment is bondage. Non-attachment is liberation, Moksha, Mukthi. To crave is to be imprisoned, to die. To withdraw the mind from all attachment is to be free, to live forever.

*“Mana eva manushyaanaam Kaaranam bandha mokshayoh”*: for men, the mind it is that causes bondage and grants liberation. The mind runs after an object, gets attached. The senses are alerted. An action results. The mind is rendered happy or unhappy; feeling ensues; fear enters; anger grows; affection develops. Thus, the bonds are tightened.

Fear, anger and affection are the closest comrades of Attachment, the comrades dearest to its heart! They are, all four, inseparable companions, moving always

together. That is why even Pathanjali was forced to assert, "Attachment runs after happiness." And what is it that grants happiness? The fulfilment of desire, is it not? Desire leads to hatred of those who thwart it, fondness for those who feed it, and the inevitable wheel of opposites of likes and dislikes. There is no escape from this for the Ignorant.

Impure gold is melted in the crucible and it emerges shining and bright. The mind rendered impure by Rajas and Thamas, by anger and conceit, by the impressions of a thousand attachments and desires, can be made bright and resplendent if it is put into the crucible of Inquiry and heated on the coals of Discrimination. That brightness is the light of realisation, of the knowledge that You are the Atma.

Like the loo that covers everything with dust, the desires, attachments, thirsts and cravings all blacken the mind. They have to be kept away, in order that the splendour of the Self might merge in the splendour of the Overself, the Paramatma.

Whatever the crisis, however deep the misery, do not allow your grip over the mind to get loose: tighten it further, fixing your eyes on the higher values. Do not allow the mind to stray away from the holy tabernacle of the heart. Make it bow before the Atma, within.

Thus, one can proceed from the Samadhi of Savikalpa to the Samadhi of Nirvikalpa, that is to say,

the Merging with the Differentiated to the Merging with the Undifferentiated. Delusion must disappear without even a trace. Then only can one merge with the Undifferentiated. There is no duality there. It is Brahman, and Brahman alone. All bonds of Avidya, Kaama, etc. fall away and one is genuinely, fully Free.

The snake shoves off its coil and has nothing more to do with it. Develop that attitude of non-attachment. Escape from the body-delusion. The weak can never grasp this fact. By constant meditation on the Atman and its Glory, one can come out of the tangles of the world and worldly affairs. The Sadhaka, who is earnest, must divert all his attention and effort from the sensory world and fix them on the Eternal Brahman.

Man did not arise merely to wallow in casual joy and fleeting happiness. It is insane to believe so. Identifying oneself with the “I” and getting attached to “Mine”—that is the root cause of sorrow and ignorance. Where there is no egoism, there will be no cognisance of the external world. When the external world is not cognised, the ego cannot exist. The wise one, therefore, will disidentify himself from the world and behave ever as the Agent of the Lord, being in it but not of it.

Once in the midst of conversation, Vasishtha spoke thus to Rama; “Listen, O, Rama, the Valiant! The Jiva is a bull reclining in the shade (*Moha*) of a vastly spread-

ing tree in the forest, Samsara. It is bound by the rope of Desire and so, it is infected by the fleas and insects of unrest and worry and disease. It rolls in the mire of wrong, while struggling in the dark night of ignorance to slake the thirst of the senses. Then, some good men who are wise untie it and take it out of the dark recesses of the forest. Through Viveka (discrimination) and Vichara (inquiry), one achieves Vijnana (higher wisdom) and through Vijnana, one is able to grasp the Truth, to realise the Atma, to know the Atma. That is the ultimate goal of all Life, the stage that is beyond the Past, Present and Future.”

But one point has to be clearly noted and remembered always: mere giving up external activities connected with the satisfaction of sensory desires is not enough. The internal cravings have to be uprooted. The word *Thrishna* covers both these, the internal promptings and the external proceedings. When all promptings cease, it is called *Muktha-thrishna*. Knowledge of the Atma and faith in the Atma—these alone can destroy the irrelevant thirsts.

When the Jnani declares, “I am Brahman” he is uttering the truth from the sincerity of his experience. When the gross and the subtle are transcended, when the Manas, the Buddhi and the Prana are sublimated, that is to say, when the Self is no longer bound by the feelings, thoughts, impulses and instincts, what remains is Sath

only, Existence – pure and unalloyed, Parabrahmam. Hence, the Jnani feels one with the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent. While uneducated, the uninitiated, the person who has not taught himself the first steps of Sadhana feels he is one with his physical frame.

Sath Chith Ananda—the expression indicates the Eternal. Niraakaara, means without Aakaara or Form. What form can we posit of the All-pervasive, the All-inclusive? “*Para*” or “*Param*” means super, beyond, above, more glorious than all. Parabrahmam indicates the One beyond and behind everything, grander than anything in the three worlds. It is non-dual, unique, the eternal and infinite. “Two” means difference, dissension, inevitable discord. Since Brahmam is all-pervasive, It is One and only One. It is Indivisible and Indestructible.

Realising this is “Jnanam,” the “Highest Wisdom.”

The word Brahmam is derived from the root, *Brh*, meaning to expand, to increase, to enlarge, etc. *Brhath* means big, enlarge, gross, high, etc. Purusha has its root, *Pri* meaning to fill to complete. Pur means a town “full” of inhabitants, that is to say, the body, in a figurative manner of speaking. He who completes or is immanent in or who fills it, is the Purusha.

The word Atma has, as its root, *Aap* meaning to acquire, to earn, to conquer, to overcome, etc. He who knows the Atma can earn all knowledge, has acquired

everything, has earned the knowledge of everything because the Atma is omnipresent. He is then fixed in Sath-Chith-Ananda; that is, in the embodiment of Brahman. Sath is the essence of Santham (equanimity), Chith is the essence of Jnanam (wisdom); these and Ananda (bliss) together form the Swarupa of Brahman, or the embodiment of Brahman.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* has declared, “Through Ananda, all this is born. Through Ananda all this is living. In Ananda alone all this is merged. In Ananda all this rests.” Like the category Brahman, the category Anthar-Atma also is possessed of the same attributes. It is also Ananda-born, Ananda-full and Ananda-merged. The more the Jnana, the more the awareness of the Ananda. The Jnani has Joy as his right hand, helpful in all emergencies and always willing and able to come to his rescue.

Bhoomaa means “limitless.” The *Chandogya Upanishad* declares that Ananda inheres only in the Bhooma, the Eternal, the Brahman. Again another word used by Jnanis to describe their experience of Brahman is *Jyothiswarupa*, meaning, “whose nature is splendour, glory or effulgence, who is Illumination itself.” Ten million suns cannot equal the Splendour of the Paramatma. The word *Santhiswarupa* indicates that It is Santhi Itself. In Sruthi texts like *Ayam Aatma Saantho*, etc., it is proclaimed that Paramatma is Prasanthi Itself.

This is the reason why Paramatma is characterised as Eternally Pure, eternally intelligent, eternally liberated, eternally illumined, eternally content, eternally conscious, etc. It is Wisdom Itself and so, it is the embodiment of all teaching. It is not attached to anything and so, it is ever free. When the Brahman is tasted, that very moment all hunger ceases, all desires come to an end and so it grants content. Vijnana is the name given to the actual experience of the Brahman. It is a special type of Jnana, unlike the common fund of information got from the study of books. The net result of the study of any branch of learning, the fruit of all that study is also sometimes referred to as Vijnana. The unique Jnana of the Brahman is known by a variety of names, like Jnana, Vijnana, *Prajnana* (supreme wisdom), Chith (full knowledge), *Chaithanya*, etc. *Chaithanya* means Pure Consciousness. Its opposite is the Unconscious or the *Jada*, the Inert. The Atma Jnana makes everything Conscious, Active. Brahman is Eternally Conscious, Nithya *Chaithanya*.

A Jnani will feel that the Atma immanent in everyone is his own Atma. He will be happy that he is himself all this. He will see no distinction between man and man, for he can experience only unity, not diversity, the physical differences of colour, caste, and creed, which adhere only to the body. These are but the marks of the external body. The Atma is *Nishkala*, that is to say, it has no parts. It is *Nirmala*, blemishless, unaffected by desire,

anger, greed, affection, pride and envy. It is *Nishkriya*, activity-less. It is *Prakrithi* (sensory world) that undergoes all these modifications or at least gives the impression that it is so modified. The Purusha is but the eternal Witness, the Ever-inactive, the Modification-less.

Of what can you say, “This is Truth?” Only of this—which persists in the past, the present and the future, which has neither beginning nor end, which does not move or change, which has uniform Form, unified experience-giving property. Well, let us consider the body, the senses, the mind, the life-force and all such. They move and change. They begin and end. They are inert, Jada. They have three gunas, Thamas, Rajas and Sathwa. They are without basic Reality. They cause the delusion of reality. They have only relative value. They have no absolute value. They shine out of borrowed light only.

Absolute Truth is beyond the reach of Time and Space, it is *A-parichchinna*, that is, indivisible. It does not begin, it is always and ever existent: it is the basis, the fundamental, the self-revealing. Knowing it, experiencing it, is Jnanam. It is *A-nirdesyam*, that is, it cannot be marked out as such and such, and explained by some characteristics. How can something that is above and beyond the intellect and the mind be described through mere words?

It is also termed *Adrisya*, invisible to the eye, the optical apparatus that undergoes change and that is very

limited in its capacity. Brahman can never be grasped by anything elemental and physical; through Brahman, the eye is able to see, so, how can the eye perceive Brahman itself? The mind is bound by the limitations of time, space and causation. How can the Paramatman who is superior to these and unaffected by them, be limited by them?

The terms, *Amala*, *Vimala*, *Nirmala* applied to Paramatma connote the same meaning, A-mala implying absence of impurity, Nirmala, “without impurity” and Vi-mala, “having all impurity destroyed.” So too, *A-chintha* (incapable of being conceived) *A-vyavaaharya*, (without any activity, for activity or work implies the existence of another or others, whereas It is unique and so unaware of any move towards or away from another) are words applied to Brahman.

Know that the Jagath is the Swarupa of the *Viratpurusha*, the Form imposed by Maya on the Super-soul. Brahman is that which has become or appears to have become all this, the *Antharyami*, the Inner Motive Force. In the *Nirguna* aspect it is the Primal Cause, the *Hiranya Garbha*, of which Creation is the manifestation. Grasping this secret of the universe and its origin and existence—that is Jnana.

Many people argue that Jnana is one of the attributes of Brahman, that it is of the nature of Brahman, a characteristic of Brahman, etc. But such opinions arise only in the absence of actual experience, of actual attainment of Jnana. Arguments

and discussions multiply, when there is no firsthand experience, for the realisation of Reality is individual, based on revelation to oneself.

I declare that Jnanam is Brahman, not a mere characteristic or attribute or quality. The Vedas and Sastras announce that Brahman is Sathyam, Jnanam and Anandam, not that Brahman has these and other attributes. When Brahman is known, the knower, the known and the knowledge all become One.

Indeed, Brahman cannot be described as such and such; that is why it is referred to as just, “Sath,” “It is.” Jnana too is just Sath, no more, no less. The Sruthis use the word, Vijnanaghana, to indicate Brahman, is it not? That word means, the sum and substance of Vijnana, knowledge with a capital K. Only those who are unaware of the Sruthis and the Sastras will aver that Jnana and Brahman are distinct. Jnanam is Brahman; distinction is impossible. It is a sign of ignorance to posit a difference.

All knowledge that is limited by the three Gunas, is *Ajnana* (false knowledge), not the Jnana of the Transcendental, which is above and beyond the Tamasic, Rajasic and even the Sathwic motives, impulses and qualities. How can such limited knowledge be Jnana? Knowledge of the Transcendental has to be transcendental too, in an equal measure and to the same degree.

It might be said that Brahman has Form while Jnana is Formless; but, both are Formless in the real sense of the word. The apparent Form of Brahman is the result of Avidya or Ignorance. Form is attributed to Brahman only to serve the needs of the Embodied Soul, during the period of the embodiment. The Absolute is reduced to the level of the Conditioned, because the Soul too is conditioned in the body. Not to know that this human interlude is but the conditioned state of the Atma is to be reduced to the dullness of the beast.

“Jnana is the panacea for all ills, troubles and travails.” This is how the Vedas describe it. To acquire this Jnana, there are many paths, and the chief is the path of *Bhakthi* (love directed towards God), the Path adopted by Vasistha, Narada, Vyasa, Jayadeva, Gouranga and other great persons. As the oil is to the flame in the lamp, Bhakthi is to the Flame of Jnana. The Heavenly Tree of the Joy of Jnana thrives on the refreshing waters of Bhakthi. Understand this well.

It is for this reason that Krishna, who is the Personification of Prema (universal love), and who is saturated with the quality of Mercy, declared in the Githa: “I am known by means of Bhakthi,” “*Bhakthyaa maam abhijaanaathi.*”

Why was this declaration made? Because, in the path of Bhakthi there are no hurdles. Young and old, high

and low, man and woman, all are entitled to tread it. Who among men are in urgent need of medical treatment? Those who are badly ill, is it not? So too, those who are groping in Ajnana are first entitled to the teaching and the training leading to the acquisition of Jnana. Why feed those who have no hunger? Why drug those who are not sick? Brahman or Jnana, is the drug for the de-realisation of the falsely realised, the removal of the fog of misunderstanding, or Ajnana. It will burn off the dirt that hides the Truth.

Everyone, whatever the status, class or sex, can win that Jnana. If it is stated that women are not entitled to it, why is it mentioned that Siva taught Vedantha to Parvathi? Or, how did Kapilacharya, the great Yogi, teach the Sankhya system to his mother, Devahoothi? Or, Yajnavalkya the great Rishi impart the essential principles of Vedanthic philosophy to his wife, Maithreyi, as mentioned in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*? The Upanishad cannot be false. The Scriptures where these facts are mentioned speak only the truth.

There is no doubt that sage Mathanga is a great ascetic. Does not the *Ramayana* declare that he taught the woman Sabari, the secret of the sacred doctrine of Brahman? Is that statement false? Coming to this age itself, who does not know that the scholarly wife of Sureswaracharya contended with Shankaracharya himself in philosophic discussion of Brahman? So, the chief

qualification for the Path leading to Jnana is only Sadhana, the Tapas one is engaged in, not the irrelevant consideration of caste, creed or sex. Leaving all other matters aside, one should concentrate on that Sadhana and that Tapas.

The Lord is accessible and available to all. He is All Mercy. No one except the Lord has the authority to declare any one unfit for the discipline of Jnana. If you reflect a little deeper, you will realise that the Lord would not deny anyone the chance to reach Him. To sparks of the same fire, or drops of the same sea, how can the flame or the sea deny refuge? The Lord will not refuse or reject.

A father with four sons cannot state that one of them has no right to a share in his property. It won't be just or proper. Then what shall be said of the Lord, who is devoid of the slightest tinge of partiality or prejudice and who is full of mercy? To attribute favouritism to Him is to commit sacrilege.

Referring to this question of who is entitled and who is not entitled to Brahmavidya, Krishna said in the Githa, "I have no favourite, nor do I dislike anyone. Whatever might be the caste, whether the person is man or woman, whoever worships Me with faith and devotion, will reach Me; nothing can stand in their way. I too will manifest in the hearts of such." Is the Githa, therefore, meaningless? No, the Githa speaks profound Truth.

There is another wrong belief current today. It is said that in order to be entitled to the practice of the Sadhana for the realisation of Brahman, like Japa and Dhyana, one must adhere strictly to certain modes of daily conduct laid down in tradition and thus attain purity. I do not agree. For, medicines are essential only for the bedridden. How can they become hale and healthy without first taking a course of the medicine? To say that a person must be pure and good and following certain codes of conduct before he could tread the path of God is to say that he must be free from disease in order to deserve medical treatment! This is absurd. Purity, goodness, etc., are all the *consequences* of the journey towards God. They cannot be insisted upon, as essential for even starting upon it. The taking in of the drug will gradually induce health and cheer. Health and cheer should not be insisted upon before the drug is even prescribed or supplied! This obvious fact is ignored by many. That is a serious malady indeed!

All those suffering from the malady of Ajnana or Ignorance must read and ponder over the books dealing with the treatment of that disease, namely, the experiences of the great elders in the field of spiritual endeavour. It is only then that they can understand the real state of things.

There is also one other secret of success; this too has to be borne in mind. Every course of medical treat-

ment involves some regulation and restriction of diet, movements, habits and conduct. These should not be neglected or taken lightly. In fact, if the doctor's advice on these matters is not strictly followed, even the costliest or latest or most efficacious medicine will be ineffective.

Consider the persons who underwent the treatment, drugs, restrictions, limitations and all, and successfully emerged from the sickroom hale and happy! They are of all castes and ages and of both sexes. Vasistha was born of a public woman. Narada's mother was a washerwoman. Valmiki belonged to the hunter caste. Viswamithra was a Kshatriya. Mathanga was a member of the Depressed Classes. The inference is, that what is important enough is constant meditation on the Lord, not the labels of caste or creed. Jnana is the attainment of the feeling of Oneness, the realisation that there is nothing high or low. That is the true Divine Principle, the Brahman.

A sugar doll has head, neck, arms and limbs, but each part is as sweet as the other. From head to foot, it is one uniform sweetness. There cannot be two types of sweetness. That is why it is said to be, not dual but non-dual, not Dwaitha but Adwaitha. Those who emanate from the Lord's Face and those who emanate from His Feet are both His Children. The realisation of this Truth is the sign of Jnana.

There are trees like the jack tree which bear fruit from the root up to the topmost branch! Does the fruit near the ground differ from the fruit on the tallest branch? They are all the same, is it not? Or do they taste differently like distinct fruits? Of course, among the fruits some may be tender, some unripe, some a little ripe and some fully ripe and these may differ in taste too as is only natural. But never can you find bitterness in the bottom and sweetness in the top or sourness in the middle. Tender, green and ripe are three stages, or three characteristics.

So too, the four castes are four characteristics, Gunas. According to their nature and their activities, the four castes have been ordained. Like the fruits on the same tree, some tender, some green and some ripe, men too are considered as of four groups, according to their stage of development which is judged from their actions and character. Those in whose thoughts and behaviour, the Sathwa Guna predominates are grouped as *Brahmins* (masters of Vedic lore, priests), who are progressing along the path towards Brahman. Those in whom Rajo Guna is dominant are referred to as *Kshatriyas* (warrior caste), thus, the Sastras have spoken of ingrained qualities as the basis of caste, not otherwise. Why? The Githa itself proclaims that the four castes have been established by the Lord taking into consideration (1) the

dominance of either of the three gunas and (2) the practice of *Karmas* like *Japam*, *Dhyanam* and other disciplinary duties!

Though born as a *Sudra* (the worker caste), a person does attain Brahminhood, through Brahmamward struggle and Sadhana. Though born as a Brahmin, if that ideal and the effort to attain it are not found, the person becomes *Sudra*.

*Anushtana* and *Nishta*, conduct and discipline—these two are the criteria, the deciding factors. The Inner Atmic Principle is the same in all. It knows no caste or class or conflict. To realise that the Self is beyond all these subordinate categories, Bhakthi is the first requisite. Bhakthi merges in Jnana and becomes identified with it. Bhakthi ripens into Jnana; so do not speak of them as different. At one stage it is called Bhakthi, at a later stage we refer to it as Jnana. Once it is cane, later it is sugar.

Through Bhakthi, the Jiva is transformed into Siva or rather, it knows it is Siva and the Jiva idea disappears. To posit oneself as Jiva, that is Ajnana. To know oneself as Siva, that is Jnana.

A white cloth that has become dirty is dipped in water, soaked in soap, warmed and beaten on a slab, in order that it may be restored to its colour and condition. So too, to remove the dirt of Ajnana that has attached itself to the pure Sath-Chith-Ananda Atma, the water of

unblemished conduct and behaviour, the soap of Brahman – reflection, the warming of Japam and Dhyanam and the slab of Renunciation are all necessary. Then only can the fundamental Brahmanhood of the Atma shine forth.

It does not help if the soap is good when the water is soiled. All that soap and all that bother of heating and beating are sheer waste, for the cloth continues as dirty as ever. This explains why many aspirants fail. Though they have meditated on Brahman for many years and studied about it for long, their modes of behaviour and conduct are all wrong. The fault lies in the water, not in the soap! The daily habits, acts and activities are mean and low; the Dhyana on Brahman is all a waste.

People in their ignorance hesitate to accept the rigours of spiritual discipline, considering them as so many fetters to free living. They decry the Divine Command and denounce the Grace of Divine. That Command is not understood and appreciated. It is disobeyed and even fought against. But the wise man who plants wheat will be blessed by a harvest of wheat. The fool plants tears and weeps because wheat does not grow. For everyone in the world, whether we believe it or not, two plus two make four; the result does not depend on your likes and dislikes. The fact that in every being there is the Supreme is a similar inescapable reality. God will not give up, if denied or enter if invited. It is there, it is the being's very Being. This is the Truth and if you want to know it and

experience it, develop the vision of the Jnani. Without that, you can never see it. As the telescope alone enables you to see things that are far away, so the “Jnanascope” or *Jnanadrishthi* (vision through the eye of wisdom) is essential to see Brahman immanent in every being.

As the child refuses to believe in things beyond its circle of vision, the weakling afraid of the travail of winning that *Drishti* (sight, attitude) refuses to believe in the All-pervasive, All-inclusive Brahman!

A set of persons with curious ideas have cropped up recently and they strut about with great pride, for they have no yearning for God, even no use of God; they are *Sevaks* (servants, helpers) and they are satisfied with Service! But the essence of *Seva* (service) is selflessness and abnegation of the fruit thereof. The *Sevaks* have no right to look down upon the Godly and the Spiritual aspirants as inferior. For that is but reaching for the fruit while neglecting the tree! Selfless service is the final fruit of the Godward Discipline. That is the attitude of *Nishkama Karma* (renunciation of the fruits of action). How can the fruit be gained, without the long and laborious nurture of the tree? The very foundation of *Nishkama Karma* is the *Prema* towards all beings, *Prema* that seeks no reward. Without spiritual experience of this higher Love, selfless service is impossible.

At present, the world is full of persons who clamour for good profit for themselves but are unwilling

to give good value for the things they receive. They want God, but are engaged in the cultivation of some other crop! They do not seek it and strive for it day and night. They have, on the other hand, installed the god of wealth in their hearts and spend all their time and energy worshipping it and praying for its favour.

How pure is the heart full of Bhakthi to God and Prema towards all things! Selfless Service is possible only by such. The rest only prattle about it and pretend to be impelled by it. Only those who are well-established in the faith that all are children of God, that He is the Inner Motive Force of every being, can include themselves in that class of Social Servants.

For those who say they have no use for God or for Bhakthi, egoism is the core of personality, exhibition its outer rind. However much is written and read, that egoism will not wither away. Ego consciousness leads to self-aggrandisement; and when self holds sway over the heart, no deed worthy to be styled Service can emanate from him. It is sheer selfish greed that makes him label his deed as Service.

Ignorance will never vanish, until this discrimination dawns. "This world is but God and nothing else. Everything, every being is but His Manifestation, bearing withal a new name and a new form". Love this Truth, believe in it, and then you have the right to speak of Seva,

Bhakthi and Dharma and the authority to preach those paths. Knowledge of the Reality will show you that Bhakthi, Seva, and Dharma are all one and indivisible. Without that knowledge, selfless service, etc., become mere exercises in hypocrisy.

Every act done with the consciousness of the body is bound to be egoistic. Selfless Seva can never be accomplished, while immersed in the body-consciousness. But consciousness of Deva instead of Deha, of God instead of the Body, will bring forth the splendour of Prema. With that as inspiration and guide, man can achieve much good, without even knowing or proclaiming that he is selfless in outlook. For him, it is all God's will, His *Leela* (Divine sport), His Work.

Light is wisdom; without Light, all is Darkness. If you have not secured the lamp of Jnana to illumine your path, you stumble along in the gloom, with Fear as your companion. There is no falsehood greater than Fear, no Ignorance mightier than that. Decide therefore to travel in the daylight of Jnana and be worthy of this human birth. Through your success, you can even make the lives of others worthwhile.

Vairagya or Non-attachment also depends upon Jnana as well as Bhakthi. Deprive Vairagya of that basis, and you will find it crumbling fast. Why, this is the prime cause for the want of spiritual progress at present. All

these three have to be emphasised in Sadhana. They are not to be separated and striven for individually.

Bhakthi includes Jnana; Vairagya isolated from Bhakthi and Jnana, Jnana isolated from Bhakthi and Vairagya and Bhakthi isolated from Vairagya and Jnana, each is ineffective. The best that each isolated path is capable of is to give some training in purity. Never therefore develop conceit and declare that you are Bhakthas or Jnanis and Viragis (Recluses). Sadhakas must dip in the Triveni or Bhakthi-Jnana-Vairagya. There is no other way to salvation.

Before everything, be pure and holy. Of aspirants and sadhakas, there are plenty; but, of those who are pure in heart, the number is few. For example, observe this one fact; there are many who religiously read the Githa over and over again. There are many who expatiate on its meaning for hours and hours, but persons who practise the essence of the Githa are rare. They are now like gramophone records, reproducing someone else's song, incapable of singing themselves, ignorant of the joy of song. They are not sadhakas at all. Their sadhana does not deserve the name.

Life must be seen as but the manifestation of the three Gunas, as a play of temperaments pulling the strings of the dolls. This awareness must saturate every thought, word and deed. That is the Jnana you need. All else is Ajnana.

The Jnani will have no trace of hatred in him, he will love all beings. He will not be contaminated by the ego. He will act as he speaks. The Ajnani will identify himself with the gross body, senses and mind, things which are but tools and instruments. The eternal pure Atma is behind the mind, and so, this mistake of the Ajnani plunges him into trouble, loss and misery.

All the names and forms that fill up this universe and constitute its nature are but creations of Mind. Therefore the mind has to be controlled and its wayward fancies calmed, in order to perceive the Truth. The ever-moving waves of the lake have to be stilled so that you can see the bottom clearly. So too, the waves of ignorance that ruffle the mind have to be stilled.

Keep the mind away from low desires that run after fleeting pleasures. Turn your thoughts away from these and direct them towards the permanent Bliss derivable from the knowledge of the Immanent Divinity. Keep before the mind's eye the faults and failures of sensory pleasures and worldly happiness. Thus, you are helped to grow in discrimination, non-attachment and spiritual progress.

As gold melted in the crucible gets rid of dross and shines in its pristine glory, so man too has to be melted in the crucible of Yoga by the fire of Vairagya (non-attachment). Being possessed of this Jnana is the sign of Samadhi as explained by some.

For those capable of self-control along these lines, the native power will gradually assert itself and the Reality that is now misunderstood will be rid of that fog. Patiently cultivate the habit of meditating on your Atmahood and see the Particular as the Universal. Through Samadhi, progress is guaranteed, and Liberation is won.

The springs of egoism, etc. arise from Ignorance of the Basic Truth. When the knowledge of the Atma arises, ignorance with its brood of worry and misery will vanish. The mark of the Jnani is the absence of egoism, the extinction of desire, the feeling of equal Love for all, without any distinction. These are the fundamentals of Atma Jnana.

You can see without eyes; hear without ears; speak without the tongue; smell without the nose; touch without the body; walk without legs; yes, ever experience without the mind. For, you are the Pure Essence Itself. You are the Supreme Self.

You have no understanding of this Truth; so, you are drowned in Ignorance. You feel you are the senses only and therefore, you experience misery. The five senses are all bound up with the mind. The mind it is that separately activates the senses and is affected by their reactions. Man reads through the mind-associated eye and so, he fails. But, the Jnani has the *Divyachakshus*, the Divine eye, for he has the Divine vision. He can hear and see without the aid of the senses.

As said in the Githa, the Lord's feet are everywhere, the Lord's hands are everywhere. His eyes, His ears are everywhere. So He sees all, He does all. Devoid of senses, He makes all senses function. To grasp this mystery, the Path of Jnana has to be trodden; that Path is very helpful. When a person develops into a full Jnani, he becomes himself It, and It is merged in him and both become indistinguishable. Then he realises that he is the inscrutable, the indefinable Brahman, not limited by the illusory superimposition of name and form.

When fire burns, its light can be discerned from a distance; but those who are far cannot hope to feel its warmth. So too, it is easy to describe the splendour of Jnana for persons who are far from acquiring it. Only those who have actually neared it and felt it and are immersed in it can experience the warmth, the joy, the melting away of the illusion.

For this, continuous Thapas, continuous meditation on God, these are needed. The Pure Essence can be known by the Sadhana of Bhakthi. The goal of Bhakthi is indeed Jnana. When an author writes a play, the entire play will already be in his mind, before he sets pen on paper. Act after act, scene after scene, if he has no picture of the entire drama in his mind, he will never entertain the idea of writing it at all, is it not? But, take the case of the audience. They grasp the story only after the drama is fully over. It unfolds itself scene by scene. Once

they have understood the theme, they too can confidently describe to others the purport of the play. Similarly for the Lord, this Drama of Time with its three Acts, the Past, the Present and the Future are clear as crystal. In the twinkling of an eye, He grasps all the three. For, He is Omniscient; it is His Plan that is being worked out, His Drama that is being enacted on the stage of Creation. Both the actors and the spectators are lost in confusion, unable to surmise its meaning and its development. For, how can one Scene or one Act reveal its meaning? The entire play has to be gone through for the story to reveal itself.

Without a clear understanding of the play in which they are acting their roles, people cling the error that they are Jivis or Sadhakas and waste away their lives, buffeted by the waves of joy and sorrow.

When the mystery is cleared, and the play is discovered as mere play, the conviction dawns that you are He and He is you. Therefore, try to know the Truth behind Life, search for the Fundamental, bravely pursue the underlying Reality. Seekers of Jnana must always be conscious of this.

The Lord is in every heart, in the subtle as well as the gross forms. So the Jnani, who has had a vision of the Atma presiding over the Inner Stage will never be affected by sorrow. It can never hold sway over him. The Atma is in the ant and elephant, in the atom as well

as the atmosphere. Everything is saturated with Brahman. The seeker must divert his attention inwards from the exterior world. He must find out the origins of the agitations of the mind. This process will diminish and destroy the activities of the mind which make you doubt, discuss and decide. From that stage onwards, the exhilaration of being Brahman oneself will be constant. This will stabilise the Sath-Chith-Ananda, arising from that experience.

Such a Jnani can never be affected by joy or sorrow, however big; he will be immersed in the ocean of Atmananda, blissfully unaware of the world around him, far above and beyond its coils.

This is the discipline called *Brahmabhyasa*, that is to say, the ever-present exercise of remembering the basic Brahman of the Universe, praying to the Form-ful Aspect of that Brahman, speaking of His Glory, being in His Company and living always in His Presence. That is why the *Panchadasi* says, “*Thath chinthanam, thath kathanam, anyonyam thath prabodhanam, ethath eka param thwam cha, Jnanabhyasam vidur budhaah.*” “Thoughts dedicated to Him alone, speech devoted to Him alone, conversation centred on Him alone,” this one-pointed existence is referred to by the wise as the Discipline of Jnana. This is the lesson taught in the Githa by Krishna. “*Math chinththaa mathgatha praanaa bodhayanthah parasparam, kathayanthi cha maam nithyam thushyanthi cha ramanthi cha.*”

“They fix the mind on Me, they survive only because they breathe me, they inform each other about Me, they talk only of Me, they are happy and content with these only.” This ceaseless thought of the Lord is also referred to as *Brahmachintha* or *Jnanabhyasa* or *Atmabhyasa*.

The mind pursues exterior objects only, either because of the pull of the senses or because of the delusion caused by superimposing on the external world the characteristics of permanence, etc. So, it has to be again and again brought back to travel to the correct goal.

At first the job is hard. Still, by proper training the agitations can all be calmed by the Japam of Om. The training consists of sama, dama, uparathi, thithiksha, sraddha and samadhana. That is to say, the mind is controlled by good counsel, superior attractions, withdrawal from sensory objects, ability to bear the ups and downs of fortune, steadfastness, and poise. The recalcitrant mind can be slowly turned towards Brahmadyana, if at first it is shown the sweetness of Bhajan, the efficacy of prayer and the calming effects of meditation. It must also be led on by the cultivation of good habits, good company and good deeds. Dhyanam will, as it proceeds further and further, give rise to greater and greater keenness. Thus, the mind has to be caged in the cave of the heart. The final result of this discipline is no less than Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the Equanimity that is undisturbed.

This Samadhi is really speaking Brahma Jnana itself, the Jnana that grants release, or Moksha. The discipline for this consists of three exercises: the giving up of craving, the elimination of mind and the understanding of the Reality. These three have to be cultivated uniformly and with equal ardour. Otherwise, success cannot be ensured; no one of them is enough. The instincts and impulses or vasanas are too strong to yield easily. They make the senses active and greedy and bind the person tighter and tighter. Attention has therefore to be paid to the sublimation and subjugation of the senses and the promptings behind them, to the development of self-abnegation, the relentless pursuit of reason and discrimination, in order that the mind may not get mastery over man. When the mind is won, the dawn of Jnana is heralded.

The Sadhaka has to be ever-vigilant. For, the senses might recoil any moment; especially when the Yogi mixes with the world and worldly. The basic Truth must be kept constantly before the mind's eye. Wants should not be multiplied. Time should not be frittered away, no, not even a minute; the craving for one pleasant thing will give rise to another, for a still more pleasant thing. Cut at the very root of desire itself and become master of yourself. The renouncing of desire will take you fast to the pinnacle of Jnana.

The Jnani or the Liberated person will be unaffected by joy or sorrow, for how can any event

produce reactions in him who has wiped out his mind? It is the mind that makes you “feel”; when one has taken a drug that deadens the consciousness, he feels no pain or even joy, for the body is then separated from the mind. So too, wisdom when it dawns separates the mind and keeps it aloof from all contact.

By special discipline, the turbulence of the mind can be calmed. As a result of this, it becomes possible to taste the bliss of the Atma, free from its pulls; the mind attracts him outwards and offers only external objective joy. But the wise man knows them to be fleeting. The Atma is enough for him to fulfil all his desire for happiness; complete and permanent. So, he will have no need for the external world.

The Jnani will acquire some special powers too, through his beneficent resolutions, his beneficent promptings and purposes. Through these, he can attain whatever he wishes. The greatness of the status of a Jnani is indeed indescribable, beyond your imagination. It is of the same nature as the splendour and magnificence of the Lord Himself. Why, he becomes the Brahman that he has always been. That is why it is declared, *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi, Brahavid Aapnothi Param.*

That is to say, he who has known Brahman becomes himself Brahman; he attains Brahman-hood. The fact that this world is unreal and Brahman alone is real,

must become patent; then, all impulses are destroyed; ignorance is demolished. The gem of Jnana has been stolen by the Mind; so, if it is caught, the gem can be regained. The gem entitles you to the status and dignity of Brahman, which you assume immediately.

The great souls who have won this Atma Jnana deserve worship. They are holy, for they have attained Brahman, the right of everyone in the world, however great or whatever the Tapas. That is the Kingdom they seek, the honour they aspire for. This is the great mystery, the mystery elucidated in the Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras. The solving of this mystery makes life worthwhile. It is the key to liberation.

Truth and untruth must be cut apart by means of the sharp sword of Jnana. It keeps the world afar and brings the Residence of the Lord within reach. That Residence is *Nithyananda*, eternal Bliss, *Paramananda*, the highest Bliss; *Brahmananda*, the Bliss of Brahman Itself.

Maya, by means of its power of (1) hiding the real nature and (2) imposing the unreal over the real, makes the one-and-only Brahman appear as Jiva, Easwara and Jagath, three entities where there is only one! The Maya faculty is latent but when it becomes patent, it takes the form of the Mind. It is then that the seedling of the huge tree (which is the Jagath) starts sprouting, putting forth

the leaves of mental impulses or vasanās, and mental conclusions or sankalpas. So, all this objective world is but the proliferation or *vilāsa* of the mind.

Jiva and Easwara are caught up in this proliferation and they are inseparably intertwined in the Jagath and so, they too, are creations of mental processes like the things appearing in the dream-world.

Imagine Jiva, Easwara and Jagath as having been painted. The pictorial Jagath has both Jiva and Easwara incorporated in it and all three appear as different entities though, created by the same paint. So also the same mental process creates the appearance of Jiva and Easwara as pervading and immanent, in the background of Jagath.

It is Maya that produces the illusion of Jiva and Easwara and Jagath: this is declared by the Sruthis. Has not the *Vasishtasmrithi* made clear that mental processes are responsible for the magic dance of He and I, This and That, and Mine and His? The expression “*Sohamidam*” found in that text indicates Jiva, Easwara and Jagath. “Sah” means He, the Unmanifested, the Super-soul, the Power beyond and Above, the Easwara. “Aham” means “I,” the entity enveloped by the consciousness of doer, etc., “Idam” means this objective world, the perceivable sense-world. So, it is clear that these three are the products of mental processes only

and they do not have any absolute value. Their value is only relative.

In the waking stage and during dream, these three appear as real; but, during deep sleep or while unconscious (as during a fainting fit) the mind is not working and so, the three do not exist! This fact is within the experience of all. Therefore, it is easy now for you to realise that all these three will disappear for good when, through Jnana, the mental processes are destroyed. Then one gets release from bondage to all these three, and knows the One and Only Entity. In fact, he gets established in Adwaita Jnana.

The Jnana won by the analysis of the mental processes can alone end Maya. Maya flourishes on ignorance and absence of discrimination. So, Vidya spells the doom of Maya.

Fevers originate because of your actions. They flourish on wrong methods of life and diet. They grow with the growth of such wrong conduct. The idea of the snake which is Maya, flourishes on the ignorance of the real nature of the rope. It grows and becomes deeper, the more one forgets the rope which is the base. The ignorance which prevents and postpones the inquiry into the nature of the Atman makes Maya flourish. Maya fostered by this attitude becomes as thick as darkness. When the flame of Jnana illumines, the darkness is

dispelled along with the illusion of Jiva and Jagath and Easwara.

Inquiry makes the snake disappear; the rope alone remains thereafter. So too, Maya and the blossoming of that Maya through the mind as Jiva, Jagath, etc. will all disappear as soon as Vichara (inquiry) is done about the reality of Appearance. One knows that there is nothing other than Brahman. Brahman alone subsists.

To the question, how can one thing appear as two, the reply may be given that, prior to inquiry, Brahman appears as Jagath, though its real nature has not undergone any change at all, just as the pot was understood as pot, before inquiry revealed that it is basically clay only. Crown, earring, necklace all appear as different until inquiry reveals that they are all basically, fundamentally, gold. So also, the one Brahman is apparent in many forms and under various names and so gives the impression of multiplicity. Brahman alone is, was and will be. The conviction that this Jagath is but a superimposition is the real Vidya. This Vidya is the end of all ignorance.

The hare's horn is non-existent. It is a description of something superimposed. Knowledge of the reality alone will destroy the idea forever. Then, the false idea will melt away. Only the ignorant will stick to Maya as Truth. The wise will at best designate it as "Indescribable" or "Beyond explanation," for it is difficult to

explain how Maya originated. We know only that it is there, to delude. The wise refer to it as “hare’s horn.” Thus, it is spoken of in three different ways, according to the point of view of each.

When simple-minded children are told, “Lo! there lurks a ghost there”, they believe it to be true and they get terribly frightened. So too, unthinking, ignorant persons get convinced of the reality of the objects around them through the influence of the Maya. Those endowed with Viveka, however, distinguish between the true Brahman and the false Jagath; others, unable to do so or to find out the real nature of Maya, simply dismiss it as “beyond description,” “*anirvachaneeya*.”

Jnanis who have clearly grasped the truth characterise it as the mother, whose corpse is cremated by the son! It is the experience of Maya that gives rise to Jnana, or “the revealing wisdom.” The child Vidya kills the mother as soon as it is born. The child was delivered for the very purpose of matricide, and its first task is naturally the cremation of the dead mother.

When tree rubs against tree in the forest, fire starts and the fire burns out both. So too, the Vidya or knowledge that arose from Maya destroys the very source of that knowledge. Avidya is reduced to ashes by Vidya.

Like the expression “hare’s horn” which is but a name for a non-existent thing, Maya too is non-existent and one has only to know it to dismiss it from the consciousness. So say the Jnanis.

Nor is this all. You label anything non-existent, as Avidya or Maya. Whatever becomes meaningless, valueless, untrue, baseless, and existenceless when knowledge grows, that, you can take to be Maya's manifestation.

Another interesting point is this: It may be argued that since Maya produces Vidya, Maya is right and proper and deserving of respect; but the Vidya that arises out of it is also not permanent. As soon as Avidya is destroyed through Vidya, the Vidya too ends. The trees and the fire, all are destroyed, when the fire finishes its work.

The Jnana derived from the mere hearing of Vedantha cannot be termed Direct Knowledge. Since the error of taking one thing as another is not removed by actual experience in such a learning process, how can it be treated as direct or authentic? No, it cannot be. It is indirect only.

Of course, by hearing about the Swarupa of the Brahman (which is Sath, Chith and Ananda only), one may be able to picture it or imagine it; but, one has to actually "see" the Brahman, the Witness of the Five Sheaths of the Individual (the *Annamaya* [Gross-body or food sheath], the *Pranamaya* [Energy or Vital-Air sheath], the *Manomaya* [Mind or Emotional sheath], the *Vijnanamaya* [Wisdom or Intellectual sheath] and the *Anandamaya* [Spiritual or Bliss sheath].)

You may know from the Sastras that He who has four arms and who has the *Sankha* (conch), *Chakra*

(discus), *Gada* (physical strength) and the *Padma* (lotus) in each of them is Vishnu. You may even be picturing Him as such in Dhyana. But yet, unless you have actually “seen” Him by your own vision, the knowledge gained by the study of iconography can never be equated with *Prathyaksha*, or Direct perception.

Since the Form of Vishnu is considered different and outside, when understood through the study of the Sastras, what you get is really indirect Inference, not Direct Experience. Though a person is ignorant of the fact that the Brahman is His own self (not different or outside), can he not realise Himself as Brahman as soon as he hears the exposition of a Mahavakya like “Thath Thwam Asi” (Thou art That) which reveals that basic Truth? But, he does not.

You may doubt whether the knowledge got from the Sastras about things different from you, like Heaven, etc. has any value; but, you should not declare so! For, the same Sastras have said that you are the Brahman Itself, that You are fundamentally Brahman and nothing else, by means of Mahavakyas or Great Announcements. And they also warn you that Direct Experience is not got by the mere hearing of these Mahavakyas!

The progress of the aspirant is of this nature: He reasons out with Faith and Care what he heard until he understands the characteristics of the Atma in an indirect

way. Then, to bring that knowledge into the field of actual experience, he takes up the process of *Manana*, i.e., revolving it in the Manas (mind).

The Atma is present everywhere and is in everything, it is unaffected, it is omnipresent like *Akasa* or Ether. It is even beyond the Akasa, it is the Akasa in the Chith or the Universal Consciousness; so, it is referred to as “Param” or Beyond. It is described in the Sruthis as “*Asango-ayam purushah*,” “This Purusha is unattached.”

The Atma is unaffected and untouched by anything. It is beyond everything and devoid of agitation or activity. You should not doubt whether it is unlimited or not. It is beyond the three Limitations of Space, Time and Causation. You cannot state that the Atma is only in one place and not in another. It is not limited by space. You cannot state that it exists at one time and that at another time, it does not exist. It is not limited by time. Atma is everything. There is nothing which is not Atma. Atma is All; so, it has no limitation of *Vastus*, or Name or Form. Atma is Full and Free. Knowing this is the Fullest Jnana, the Highest Truth.

A doubt may be raised here: If the Atma is immanent in everything, like the Akasa, is it not a transformation, a Vikara, a change? No, existing, emanating, growing, changing, declining, dying—these are the six transformations or vikaras; but the Atma is

the universal, eternal witness, cognising Akasa and the other elements and hence, it has no modifications at all. It is *Nirvikara*.

When it is said that the Atma is Nirvikara, it means, some other things have vikara or modifications; so, the question may be asked how then can the word, Adwaita be used? Now some things have vikara and some have not. But when there is nothing besides Atma, it is wrong to speak of a twofold entity. It is not two. It is One! There can be no doubt about this; it cannot arise. How can it be said that there is nothing outside the Atma? For this reason; that the Atma is the Cause of all this, and there can be no distinction between the Cause and the Effect. The Cause cannot be, without the Effect and the Effect cannot be, without the Cause.

Some might be suffering under the doubt: How can the Atma be the Universal Cause? The Atma is the Universal Cause, because it is the Universal See-er. The see-er is the cause of all the delusion of this world. The see-er creates silver in the mother of pearl. The varied scenes of the dream world are the creations of the see-er. So, too, for the multiplicity of things experienced during the waking stage, the Atma, who is the see-er is the instrument.

The World is an illusion, which on account of the play of Maya seems to be subject to evolution of names and forms and involution of the same until the whole is melted in Pralaya (involution) or Universal Fires, an

Illusion disappearing with the Illumination of Jnana, as Light dispels the delusion of the snake with which the rope was covered! Then, the knowledge that the Atma is All, fills and fulfils; one is Atma through and through! That is what the Sruthi too declares.

The Atma is always content and blissful. To you, one thing appears more attractive than another and so, this sensual attachment and affection are the results of delusion and greed. It is like a dog that gnaws a bone and, when blood oozes out of its tongue and gets mixed with the bone, it relishes the bone the more for that additional taste. When it gets another bone, it drops the first one and runs after the second. What the Atma does is to superimpose upon the external, evanescent object its inherent bliss and thus envelop that object with a certain attractiveness.

Objects are taken to be pleasure-giving but they are not really so. They only add to the grief. It is ever changing, this affection towards things seen through the deluded eye. It is limited, not unlimited.

The attachment to the Atma will not undergo any modifications. Even when the senses and the body fall, the Atma will remain and infuse bliss. It is unlimited, and indestructible. Everyone has attachment to the Self, or Atma. It is of the nature of Paramananda. For this reason, it is also described as of the nature of Sath, Chith and Ananda.

Are these three the characteristics or qualities of the Atma? Or, are they its essence, its nature? A doubt of this type may arise. Redness, heat and splendour are the nature of Fire, not its attributes. Atma, too, in the same manner has Sath, Chith and Ananda as its very nature. Agni is one and Atma too is one, though both may appear as different. Liquidity, coldness and taste are of the very nature of Water; yet, water everywhere is the same, no diverse.

Atma is one; it subsumes all, and by knowing It, all is known. The Atma is the witness of the five kosas of the individual, the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and the Anandamaya. How can It be all-knowing, it may be asked? Atma is Chith and all else is Jada. Atma alone can know, nothing else is capable of knowing; and Atma knows that all else is Atma. Can the pot know the Akasa inside it? Though it does not know, the Akasa is there all the same. But, the Atma in man knows even the inert that is of the senses. Thus, the body, the house, the field, the village, the country, are all “known”; so too the unseen items like heaven, etc. are “understood.”

Though the multiplicity of body, country, etc. is non-existent, they *appear* so, because, they are formed by the tendencies of the mind. They simply appear on the screen as different and varied. In the dream though one experiences a multiplicity, one knows that they are unreal creations of one’s own mind. This is clear to the

witness of the dream. Similarly, the experience of the waking stage also is a mental picture, at the most. People talk also of heaven, etc., though they have no experience. Investigation of the Truth and Unity behind all this is the duty of the Jnani, his real characteristic.

Some people declare that they have had Realisation! How can it be taken as true? When according to the statement, “Aham Brahmasmi,” one understands that “I am Brahman,” the Jivi who is the “I” is a mutable entity, a *Vikari*. How can he possibly grasp it? A destitute cannot realise that he is a monarch; so too, a mutable entity like man cannot grasp the immutable Brahman, or posit that he is Brahman.

Who is this Jivi calling himself “I”? Reflecting on this problem, he will see that the “I” is the Immutable Ever-witness, the Atma, which forgetful of its real nature considers itself affected by change, through sheer ignorance. When he deliberately spends thought on his identity, he will know, “I am not a Vikari, I am the witness of the ego, the ego that suffers continuous modification” and then, from this step, he will proceed to identify the Immutable See-er or Witness or *Sakshi* with himself. After this stage, there is no difficulty in realising “Aham Brahmasmi.”

How can it be said that it is the Sakshi (witness) who realises Aham Brahmasmi? Who is it really that realises it? Is it the Sakshi, or the Jivi, who calls himself

“I” and undergoes modification? If we say that the Sakshi so understands, the difficulty is that it is the witness of the “I” and it has no egoism, or Aham idea. If it is said that it is the Aham, then how can it be the Witness also? It will have to be subject to modifications, if it has Aham. The Sakshi too then becomes a Vikari! It can have no idea like, “I am Brahman”; so, it can never understand, “I have become Brahman.” Therefore there is no meaning in saying that the Sakshi realises, “Aham Brahmasmi.”

Then, who is it that so realises this Truth? It becomes necessary to say that it is the Jivi, the “I” that does so. For, the practice of the meditation on identity with Brahman is done by the Ajnani for his liberation from the shackles of that illusion. The Sakshi has no Ajnana and so, has no need to get rid of it! The ignorant alone need take steps to remove it. Qualities like ignorance or knowledge attach themselves only to the Jivi not to the Sakshi. This is proven by actual experience. Because, the Sakshi which is the apparent basis for Jnana and Ajnana is devoid of both, while the Jivi is actively bound up with these two.

Some may doubt, how this distinction came to be. “Does the Sakshi know the Jivi, the I, which changes and gets modified and agitated? And who is this Witness? We are not aware of it,” they may ask. But undergoing the sorrows of Ajnana and seeking solace in

the study of Vedantha, one *infers* that there must be a Witness, unaffected by the passing clouds. Later, the Sakshi or Atma, which one knew by reasoning is *realised* in actual experience, when the superimposition of the illusion of the world is removed by Sadhana.

The experience of Jnana is available only for the Jivi for, it alone has Ajnana. So it is the Jivi, not the Sakshi, that knows “Aham Brahmasmi.” After the dawn of that knowledge, “I-ness” will disappear. He becomes Brahman. Now, who is it that saw? What is it that was seen? What is the sight? In the statement, “I saw” all these are latent isn’t it? But thereafter, to say, “I saw” is meaningless. It is not correct. To say, “I have known” is also wrong. By merely seeing the immutable once, the mutable Jivi cannot be transformed into Sakshi! Seeing the king once, can a beggar be transformed into a monarch? So too, the Jivi who has once seen the Sakshi cannot immediately become the Sakshi. The mutable Jivi cannot realise “Aham Brahmasmi,” without first getting transfused into the Sakshi.

If it is said that the Jivi who has no idea of its basic substratum, can by reasoning realise that it is Brahman, how then can it “declare” so, in so many words? When one has become king, the kingship is recognised by others not declared by the king himself, isn’t it? That is a sign of foolishness or want of intelligence.

Caught up in the coils of change, it is very hard, well nigh impossible, to realise one is just the witness of all this passing show. So the Jivi must first try to practise the attitude of a witness, so that he can succeed in knowing his essential Brahman nature. Getting a glimpse of the king inside the fort does not help the beggar to acquire wealth or power; so too, the Jivi must not only *know* the Sakshi (the Sakshi, more ethereal than the sky, beyond the threefold category of knower, known, and knowledge, eternal, pure, conscious, free, blissful) but must *become* the Sakshi. Till then, the Jivi continues as Jivi, it cannot become Brahman.

As a matter of fact so long as “I” persists, the state of Sakshi is unattainable. The Sakshi is the inner core of everything, the “immanent,” the embodiment of Sath, Chith and Ananda. There is nothing beyond it or outside it. To say that such Fullness is “I” is a meaningless expression. It is wrong also to call it the Vision or the *Sakshathkaara*.

The Sruthis also did not consider *Jiva* and Brahman as of the *same* nature. The more important identity according to the Sruthi is of the Akasa within one pot and the Akasa in another pot. The Akasa in the pot is the same as the Akasa in the pan. The Akasa in the pan is the Akasa that has filled everything everywhere. The Akasa in the pot is the ever-full immanent Akasa. That is the *mukhyasamaanaadhikaaranyaya*. The wind

in one place is the wind in all places, the sunlight in one place is the sunlight everywhere. The God in one image is the God in all images. This type of identity has to be grasped.

So too, the Witness in one body is the same as the Witness in all.

But, the Sruthi does not declare that the Jivi is Brahman; as the statement *Aham Brahmasmi* will indicate. A limited, restricted identity, it allows. That is to say, the I-ness of the Jiva has to be got rid of by reasoning; then, Brahman remains as balance, and knowledge dawns of “*Aham Brahmasmi*”; this is the restricted process of identity. Continuing as Jivi, one cannot grasp the Brahman essence. The beggar has to forget his body to recognise that he is the king, so also, man has to bypass the human body which is the base for his I-personality to realise his nature, which is divine.

The human personality has to be discarded by inner devotion and discipline and the acquisition of the Divine; then, knowledge dawns that one is divine. Limitation of the Jivi has to be overcome before Brahman-hood dawns.

Of course, one can get a glimpse of the Brahman-hood during deep sleep, when one is free from all mental agitations, or *Vikalpas*. The *Taijasa* during dream stage becomes the *Viswa* in the deep sleep stage, and ponders: “Did I all this time travel over various lands,

undergo multitudes of experiences? Was not all this a fantasy? I was never involved in all this; I was happily sleeping, unaffected by everything.” As a man recovering from intoxication, or freed from illness, or as a beggar coming by a fortune and forgetting his indigence, man realises his being Divine and enjoys Divine bliss.

Experiencing identity with the Lord, the Jivi declares, “I am Brahman. Where has all the changing world fled? How deluded I was to be caught in the tangle of Jiva and Jagath! Past, present and future do not really exist at all. I am the Sath-Chith-Ananda Swarupa, devoid of the three types of distinction.” He is immersed in the Bliss of Brahman. This is the fruition of Jnana.

The Jivi can realise itself only by the destruction of all limitations. The mind is the greatest of these. The mind undergoes two stages while being destroyed, *Rupalaya* and *Arupalaya*. The agitations of the mind stuff are the *Rupas*. Then comes the stage of equilibrium where there is the positive Ananda of Sath and Chith, where also the *Arupa* or formless Mind disappears. The annihilation of the mind is of two kinds, namely, the mind pattern and the mind itself. The former applies to sages, liberated while still alive. The latter to *Videha Mukthas*. Now, only the *Rupalaya* is possible. This makes the person enjoy the Bliss derived from the experience of the Identity with Brahman.

So, the mind is a limitation of the Jivi. It has to be conquered. The body-consciousness must disappear. Steady faith has to be cultivated in Jnana; delusion will then fade away. All “I-feeling” will go; every moment, the spring of Sath-chith-ananda will well up in the individual. That is the real *Sakshathkaara* (direct perception of God). The *Acharyas* (gurus) too emphasise this discipline and dwell on this bliss. This verily, is the Truth.

To entitle one for the inquiry into the Atma, one must be endowed with the *Sadhana Chathushtaya* or the Four Qualifications. Scholarship in all the Vedas and Sastras, asceticism, mastery of ritual, dedication to japa, charity, pilgrimage—nothing will help in granting that authority. “*Santho dantha uprathi thithiksha...*,” says Sruthi; so, equanimity, self-control, withdrawal of the senses, steadfastness...these alone confer that title, not caste, colour, or social status. Be it a Pandit versed in all the Sastras, a Vidwan or an illiterate, a child or youth or an old person, a *Brahmachari* (beginner on the Path), *Grihastha* (householder), *Vanaprastha* (retired person) or *Sanyasin* (renunciate), a Brahmin, Kshatriya (warrior), Vaisya (merchant class), or Sudra (working class), or even an outcast, man or woman, the Vedas declare “Everyone is qualified, provided one is equipped with the *Sadhana Chathushtaya*.”

Mere reading of the Sastras does not entitle one. The attainment of *Sadhana Chathushtaya* mentioned

therein is essential. The doubt might then arise: how can a person who has not read the Sastras attain Sadhana Chathushtaya? My answer is, how does the person who reads them, attain them? “Because he knows the Sastras, he does act in a spirit of dedication to the Lord, gets mental purification thereby, and acquires Vairagya or renunciation and other qualifications in increasing measure. Now how can these be cultivated by one who does not know the Sastras?” it is asked. Why can he not cultivate them? By the accumulated fruit of the educative influences and good deeds in the past births, it is possible to get qualified for Atmavichara (inquiry into the nature of Self) in this birth, without Sastric study.

Now the question might arise, how, when efforts in previous births are rewarded and one is endowed as a result of these with the Four Qualifications, study of the Sastras here and now do not help! Some persons also are handicapped by the evil effects of past Karma and they do not get fruit from Sastric Study. But, as far as character and bent of mind are concerned, the lucky ones who have engaged in good deeds in past births are at an advantage. The student whose study is handicapped by past *samskaras* (inborn impulses) is as unlucky as the aspirant who has failed to develop a spiritual bent of mind by his activities in past births.

Well! Even when one has mastered the Sastras, if one has not taken up Sadhana, he cannot grasp the Atmic

basis of existence. Of course, he who has understood the scriptures has greater chances of entering upon a course of Sadhanas and practising them more steadfastly. The merit acquired in past births appears now as a keen thirst for Liberation, as a sincere endeavour to approach a Guru, as a determined struggle to succeed in Sadhana and comes to fruition with the realisation of the Atman. Success comes to those who have sraddha (steady faith) more than anything else. Without Sraddha, the prompting to translate what has been read in the Sastras will be absent and scholarship will hang as a burden on the brain.

Since Vairagya (renunciation), etc., are the qualifications for realising Atma, scholars and the rest are both equally entitled to it. Is it not through Sadhana alone that the Atma can be known? Then, why bother with the mastery of all the Sastras? Well, to know the Self, Sastras are not indispensable; having known it, they are unnecessary. But, all that is inferred from Sastras are only indirect experiences. Direct perception is impossible, by any means other than Sadhana. Direct understanding alone is Jnana.

What exactly is Atmavichara? Not the study of the attributes of Atma, as given in books, but the analysis of the nature of the "I," laying bare the enveloping sheaths, the Panchakoshas, through concentrated discrimination, directed inward. It is not the Vichara of the external world or the outer objective world, or the academic scholarship directed towards the interpretation of texts.

It is the analytical penetration of the secret of the Atma, achieved by the keen edge of intellect.

Is it then impossible to realise the Atma through study of the Sastras, it may be asked. The answer is, it is not possible. The Atma is of the nature of Sath-Chith-Ananda. It transcends the *Sthula* (gross physical body), *Sukshma* (subtle body) and *Karana* (Causal body) Sariras; it is the Witness of the waking, the dream and the deep sleep stages; can a mastery of the meanings of these words give the direct vision of Atma? How then is it to be seen? By unravelling the Five Sheaths that cover up the personality, by negating each of them and experiencing, "Not this," and passing beneath and beyond to the substratum of the Atma, the Brahman, which all the while appeared varied and manifold.

Anything misplaced in the home must be searched for in the home itself. How can it be recovered by a search in the woods? The Brahman hidden by the Five sheaths must be searched for in the Five Sheathed Body, not in the woods of Sastric lore.

Though Brahman cannot be discovered in the Sastras, they tell you of the Pancha Kosas or the Five Sheaths and of their identification marks and characteristic; and so by the exercise of the intellect, it is possible to reach down to the Atmic Truth. Then, how can one not versed in the Sastras master the process of this analysis and this consummation, it may be asked. He can learn it from a Guru, or an elder Sadhaka, is it not?

But one fact has to be emphasised again. The Atma principle is beyond the reach of even the most profound Pandit who has learned the Sastras. It can be understood only by direct experience. That is why it was said, that even a person who has had the Vision has to approach the Guru. Without guidance from such a teacher, the Atma cannot be grasped. Even Narada had Sanathkumara as Guru and Janaka had Suka, and other Saints had other Gurus. When one has the Grace of the Lord, the Guru himself becomes very often superfluous; He makes everything known. Maitreyi the consort of Yajnavalkya and the unlearned Leela and Choodala are examples to show that, without prolonged study of the Sastras, even women in the past learnt the Atmavidya from the Guru and attained success. Of course, whatever else a person may not have, if he is blessed with the Grace of the Lord, he can certainly have a Vision of the Atma, however deficient he may be in the usually accepted qualifications.