

VIVEKA CHÛDÂMANI

‘The Crest-jewel of Wisdom’

By Śhrī Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya (c. 500 CE)

Translated by Swāmī Mādhavānanda

Foreword

Scarcely any introduction is needed for a book that professes to be, as its title - “Crest-Jewel of Discrimination”- shows, a masterpiece on Advaita –‘non-dualistic’ Vedānta, the cardinal tenet of which is: "Brahman, the Universal Soul, alone is real, the universe is unreal, and the individual soul is no other than the Universal Soul."

Being an original production of Śhaṅkara’s genius, the book combines with a searching analysis of our experience, an authoritativeness and a depth of sincerity that at once curry conviction into the heart of its readers. The whole book is instinct with the prophetic vision of a Seer, a man of Realization, and the expression is so lucid and poetical that quite a new life has been breathed into the dry bones of philosophical discussion, and that, too, on the most abstruse subject ever known.

In preparing this edition, the translator gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the admirable Sanskrit commentary of Swami Keshavāchārya of the Munimandal, Kankhal. It is hoped that this edition will be useful to all students of Advaita Philosophy.

Swāmī Mādhavānanda - 1921

Viveka-chūḍāmaṇi and Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya

by the RiSY editor:

Viveka means ‘judgment, discriminative wisdom’ – knowing the real from the unreal, the true from the false. Chūḍā is the ‘crest, top-knot’ – the highest point, and Maṇi is a ‘jewel, gem’. *See p.6 for more details.*

Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya¹ is said by scholars to have lived around 800 CE (780 -812), but Shri Mataji says ‘sixth century’ and mentions that he employed Romans to run the four Dharamśhalas –‘monasteries’ he established. She often mentions him with Gnyāneshwara (1300 CE), Kabīr (1400 CE) and Guru Nānak (1500 CE) as one of the great ‘modern’ saints. He is called Ādi –‘first’ as the heads of the monasteries he founded have all been titled Śhaṅkarāchārya since.

He was from Kerala (*South India*) and is said to have lived only to the age of thirty-two. However his achievements in revitalizing Hinduism were astounding. He wrote commentaries on all the great Hindu books [*Brahma Sutra, Upaniṣhads, etc.*] and praises of many Deities, as well as travelling India extensively, engaging sages in debate and winning them over to his point of view.

He proposed Advaita –‘non-dualistic’ Vedānta², the idea that God and this Creation are one; and that the individual Jīvātmā is identical to the All-pervading Brahman.

In this edition we have added some headings to the various sections of the discourse which were not present in the original translation.

¹ **Śhaṅkar** –‘creating well-being’, a name of **Śhiva**. **Āchārya** –‘teacher, guru’.

² **Vedānta** –‘final knowledge’ [**Veda** –‘sacred knowledge’, **anta** –‘end, final’] Hindu philosophy based on the Vedas and Upaniṣhads.

H.S.H. Shri Mataji's Comments

“In the sixth century we had the advent of a great person, Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya, who tried to re-establish Hinduism. He said that, “Without getting Realization, what’s this life?” ‘Na Yogena na Sāṅkhyena’ -‘neither by Yoga or Sañkhya’ [*Yoga and Sankhya are two branches of Indian philosophy. Line 1 of Viveka-chūḍāmaṇi v.56.*], “By all this talking, blah-blah-blahs, where are you going to lie? You have to get the Grace of the Mother to get your Realization.”

The first book he wrote was a beautiful treatise called as Viveka-chūḍāmaṇi, in which he describes this fourth dimension and explains why we should try to attain this fourth dimension. He described what is God, this, that; and ‘viveka’ means the conscience and consciousness and all that he described. About Advaita He said that God is everything, Brahma is everything. A beautiful treatise he wrote.

In the end He wrote a beautiful book called Saundarya-laharī in which He has only praised the Goddess and every stanza is a mantra which awakens one’s Kuṇḍalinī. He came to establish that it is the Mother who can awaken the Kuṇḍalinī and that the Kuṇḍalinī is your own mother, She’s the Holy Ghost within you, the Ādi Śhakti, and She Herself achieves your transformation. “

Edited from the following talks by H.S.H. Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi: 23-10-80, 03-04-81, 29-09-83, 08-07-84, 17-02-86, 16-02-91, Meta Modern Era, Ch. 7,

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Abbreviations:

Bṛi.U.	Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣhad
Chh.U.	Chhāṇḍogya Upaniṣhad
Kat.U.	Katha Upaniṣhad
Mun.U.	Muṇḍaka Upaniṣhad
Śhv.U.	Śhvetasvatara Upaniṣhad
Tai.U.	Taittiriya Upaniṣhad
Gītā	Bhagavad Gītā
Lit.	Literally
Viz.	In other words, that is to say
Vide	'see'

VIVEKA CHŪDĀMANI

Introduction

1. I bow to Govinda¹, whose nature is Bliss Supreme, who is the Sadguru², who can be known only from the import of all Vedānta³, and who is beyond the reach of speech and mind.

Viveka means ‘discrimination, wisdom, judgment, knowledge’, *chūdā* is ‘crest, top-knot’, *maṇi* - ‘jewel, gem’. Hence the title means ‘Crest-jewel of discrimination’. Just as the jewel on the crest of a diadem is the most conspicuous ornament on a person's body, so the present treatise is a masterpiece among works treating of discrimination between the Real and the unreal.

Ed: If we consider there to be three ‘secrets’ hidden within the human being; viz. the **Kuṇḍalinī** – ‘pure desire’ in the Sacrum, the **Ātmā** – ‘Spirit’ in the heart and the **Paramātmā** – ‘Supreme Spirit’ (**Brahman**) above the head in the **Sahasrāra**, then the ‘jewel in the top-knot (ie. ‘the treasure above the head’)’ is the Formless Consciousness, the Supreme Spirit **Brahman**. The title ‘**Viveka Chūdāmaṇi**’ could then mean ‘The Knowledge of the Jewel in the Top-knot (ie. the Knowledge of **Brahman**)’. This is in fact the subject of the treatise.

¹ In this opening verse salutation is made to God (**Govinda** – ‘Rescuer of the World’), or to the **Guru** in his absolute aspect. It may be interesting to note that the name of **Śhaṅkara’s Guru** was **Govindapāda** and the **śhloka** is ingeniously composed so as to fulfil both interpretations.

² **Sadguru** – may refer either to **Śhaṅkara’s own Guru** or to God Himself who is the **Guru of Gurus**. [**sad** = **sat** – ‘true’, **Guru** – ‘teacher’]

³ **Vedānta** – ‘final knowledge’ - The basis of Hindu philosophy, derived from the **Vedas** and **Upaniṣhads**. [**Veda** – ‘sacred knowledge’, **anta** – ‘end, final’]

2. For all beings a human birth is difficult to obtain, more so is a male body; rarer than that is Brāhmaṇa-hood; rarer still is the attachment to the part of Vedic religion; higher than this is erudition in the scriptures, discrimination between the Self and not-Self, Realization, and continuing in a state of identity with Brahman, these come next in order. *(This kind of) Mukti (liberation)* is not to be attained except through the well-earned merits of a hundred crore of births.

3. These are three things which are rare indeed and are due to the grace of God, namely a human birth, the longing for liberation, and the protecting care of a perfected sage.

4. The man who, having by some means obtained a human birth, with a male body¹ and mastery of the Vedas to boot, is foolish enough not to exert himself for self-liberation, verily commits suicide; for he kills himself by clinging to things unreal.

¹ *A male body - Because men, in addition to their physical advantages, have always enjoyed certain social advantages and freedom over women*

5. What greater fool is there than the man who having obtained a rare human body, and a masculine body too, neglects to achieve the real end¹ of this life?

¹ *The real end – viz. Liberation.*

6. Let people quote the scriptures and sacrifice to the gods, let them perform rituals and worship the deities, but there is no liberation without the realization of one's identity with the Ātman, no, not even in the lifetime¹ of a hundred Brahmans put together.

¹ *Lifetime, etc. –This is an indefinite length of time. One day of Brahmā (the Creator) is equivalent to 432 million years of human computation, which is supposed to be the duration of the world.*

7. There is no hope of immortality by means of riches - such indeed is the declaration of the Vedas¹. Hence it is clear that works cannot be the cause of liberation.

¹ *The reference is to Yājñavalkya's words to his wife Maitreyi, Bṛi.U.II iv 2. Cf. the Vedic dictum - 'Neither by rituals, nor by progeny, nor by riches, but by renunciation alone some attained immortality'.*

8. Therefore the man of learning should strive his best for liberation, having renounced his desire for pleasures from external objects, duly¹ approaching a good and generous preceptor, and fixing his mind on the truth inculcated by him.

¹ *Duly, etc. –That is, according to the prescribed mode (vide Muṇ. U. I ii 12) The characteristics of a qualified Guru are given later on in śhloka (verse) 33.*

9. Having attained the Yogāruḍha state¹, one should recover oneself, immersed in the sea of birth and death, by means of devotion to right discrimination.

¹ *Yogāruḍha state – Described in Gītā vi.4 'When one is attached neither to sense objects nor to actions, and has given up all desires, then he is said to be Yogāruḍha or to have ascended to the Yoga path'.*

10. Let the wise and erudite man, having commenced the practice of the realization of the Ātman, give up all works¹ and try to cut loose the bonds of birth and death.

¹ *All works - All works done with motive, including the good ones prescribed in the scriptures and those that are evil, which men do, prompted by their own nature.*

11. Work¹ leads to purification of the mind, not to perception of the Reality. The realization of Truth is brought about by discrimination and not in the least by ten millions of acts.

¹ *The idea is that works prescribed by the scriptures, when properly done, cleanse the mind of its impurities. Then the truth flashes of itself.*

12. By adequate reasoning the conviction of the reality¹ about the rope is gained, which puts an end to the great fear and misery caused by the snake worked up in the deluded mind.

¹ *Reality, etc. - That is, that it is a rope and not a snake, for which it was mistaken.*

13. The conviction of the Truth is seen to proceed from reasoning upon the salutary counsel of the wise¹, and not by bathing in the sacred waters, nor by gifts, nor by a hundred Prāṇayāmas (control of the vital force).

¹ *The wise - Men of realization.*

14. Success depends essentially on a qualified¹ aspirant; time, place and other such means are but auxiliaries in this regard.

¹ *The qualifications will be enumerated in stanzas 16 and 17.*

15. Hence the seeker after the Reality of the Ātman should take to reasoning, after duly approaching the Guru, who should be the best of the knowers of Brahman and an ocean of mercy.

The Necessary Qualities to Attain Liberation

16. An intelligent and knowledgeable man who can not be taken in by clever arguments - one with these characteristics is fit to receive the knowledge of the Ātman and attain liberation.

17. The man who discriminates between the Real and the unreal, whose mind is turned away from the unreal, who possesses calmness and the allied virtues, and who is longing for liberation, is alone considered qualified to inquire after Brahman.

18. Regarding this, sages have spoken of four means of attainment, which alone being present, the devotion to Brahman succeeds, and in the absence of which, it fails.

19. First is enumerated discrimination between the Real and the unreal, next comes aversion to the enjoyment of fruits of one's actions¹ here and hereafter; (next is) the group of six attributes, viz. calmness and the rest; and (last) is clearly the yearning for liberation.

20. A firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman is real and the universe unreal, is designated as discrimination (viveka) between the Real and the unreal.

21. Vairāgya or renunciation is the desire to give up all transitory enjoyments (ranging) from those¹ of an (animate) body to those of Brahmahood (having² already known their defects) from observation, instruction and so forth.

¹ *From those, etc. - Brahmā is the highest being in the scale of relative existence. The seeker after Freedom has to transcend this scale undetained by enjoyments implying subject-object relation and realise his Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.*

² *Having, etc - may also be rendered as. '(the giving up being effected) through all the enjoying organs and faculties'*

22. The resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal (viz. Brahman) after having detached itself from manifold sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called Śhama or calmness.

23. Turning both kinds¹ of sense-organs away from sense-objects and placing' them in their respective centres, is called Dama or self-control. The best Uparati or self-withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to be affected by external objects.

¹ *Both kinds, etc.-viz. the organs of knowledge and those of action.*

24. The bearing of all afflictions without caring to redress them, being free (at the same time) from anxiety or lament on their score, is called Titikṣha or forbearance.

25. Acceptance¹ by firm judgment as true of what the scriptures and the Guru instruct, is called by sages Śhraddhā or faith, by means of which the Reality is perceived.

¹ *Acceptance, etc. - Not to be confused with what is generally called blind acceptance. The whole mind must attain to that perfect state of assured reliance on the truth of instructions received, without which a whole-hearted, one-pointed practice of those instructions is not possible.*

26. Not¹ the mere indulgence of thought (in curiosity) but the constant concentration of the intellect (or the affirming faculty) on the ever-pure Brahman, is what is called Samādhāna or self-settledness.

¹ *Not the mere - That is, not the mere intellectual or philosophical satisfaction in thinking of or studying the Truth. The intellect must be sought to be resolved into the higher activity of concentration on the Truth.*

27. Mumukṣhutā or Yearning for Freedom is the desire to free oneself, by realizing one's true nature from all bondages; from that of egoism to that of the body bondages superimposed by ignorance.

28. Even though torpid or mediocre, this yearning for Freedom, through the grace of the Guru, may bear fruit (being developed) by means of Vairāgya (renunciation), Śhama (calmness), and so on.

29. In his case, verily, whose renunciation and yearning for Freedom are intense, calmness and the other practices have (really) their meaning and bear fruit.

30. Where (however) this renunciation and yearning for Freedom are torpid, there calmness and the other practices are as mere appearances,¹ like water in a desert.

¹ *Mere appearances, etc. –That is, they are without any stability and may vanish like the mirage any time. For without burning renunciation and desire for Freedom, the other practices may be swept off by a strong impulse of infatuation or some strong blind attachment.*

31. Among things conducive to liberation. devotion (Bhakti) alone holds the supreme place. The seeking¹ after one's real nature is designated as devotion.

¹ *The seeking, etc. - This definition is from the Advaita standpoint; Dualists, who substitute Īśhwara, the Supreme Lord, for the Ātman or Supreme Self immanent in being, of course define Bhakti otherwise. For example, Nārada defines it as 'of the nature of extreme love to some Being," and Śhāndilya another authority on the subject, puts it as 'extreme attachment to Īśhwara, the Lord". On reflection it will appear that there is not much difference between the definition of the two schools.*

Approaching a Guru

32. Others maintain that the enquiry into the truth¹ of one's own Self is devotion. The inquirer about the truth of the Ātman who is possessed of the above-mentioned means of attainment should approach a wise preceptor, who confers emancipation from bondage.

¹ *Truth, etc. – This is merely putting the statement of the previous stanza another way, for we are the Ātman in reality, though ignorance has veiled the truth from us.*

33. Who is versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire and a knower of Brahman par excellence, who has withdrawn himself into Brahman; who is calm, like fire¹ that has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy that knows no reason, and a friend of all good people who prostrate themselves before him.

¹ *Fire, etc - The state of mergence in Brahman and the perfect cessation of all activity of the relative plane is meant. This śhloka is an adaptation of the Śhruti.*

34. Worshipping that Guru with devotion, and approaching him, when he is pleased with prostration, humility and service, (he) should ask him what he has got to know.

35. O Master, O friend of those that bow to thee, thou ocean of mercy, I bow to thee; save me, fallen as I am into this sea of birth and death, with a straight-forward glance of thine eye, which sheds nectar-like grace supreme.

The expression, abounding in hyperbole, is characteristically Oriental. The meaning is quite plain

36. Save me from death, afflicted as I am by the unquenchable fire¹ of this world-forest, and shaken violently by the winds of an untoward lot,² terrified and (so) seeking refuge in thee, for I do not know of any other man with whom to seek shelter.

¹ *Fire etc. - The world (Samsāra) is commonly compared to a wilderness on fire. The physical and mental torments are referred to.*

² *Untoward lot; - the aggregate of bad deeds done in one's past lives, which bring on the evils of the present life.*

37. There are good souls, calm and magnanimous, who do good¹ to others as does the spring, and who, having themselves crossed this dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever.

¹ *Do good, etc. - This is, unasked, out of their heart's bounty, as the spring infuses new life into animate and inanimate nature, unobserved and unsought. The next śhloka follows up the idea.*

38. It is the very nature of the magnanimous to move of their own accord towards removing other's troubles. Here, for instance, is the moon who, as everybody knows, voluntarily saves the earth from the parching rays of the sun.

39. O Lord, with thy nectar-like speech, sweetened by the enjoyment of the elixir-like bliss of Brahman, pure, cooling to a degree, issuing in streams from thy lips as from a pitcher, and delightful to the ear do thou sprinkle me who am tormented by worldly afflictions as by the tongues of a forest-fire. Blessed are those on whom even a passing glance of thy eye lights, accepting them as thine own.

¹ *Stripped of metaphor the śhloka would mean 'Take pity on me and teach me the way out of this world and its afflictions'.*

40. How to cross this ocean of phenomenal existence, what is to be my fate, and which¹ of the means should I adopt - as to these I know nothing. Condescend to save me, O Lord, and describe at length how to put an end to the misery of this relative existence.

¹ *Which, etc. - Among the various and often conflicting means described in the Śhastras, which am I to adopt?*

The Guru Responds

41. As he speaks thus, tormented by the afflictions of the world which is like a forest on fire - and seeking his protection, the saint eyes him with a glance softened with pity and spontaneously bids him give up all fear.

42. To him who¹ has sought his protection, thirsting for liberation, who duly obeys the injunctions of the scriptures, who is of a serene mind, and endowed with calmness- (to such a one) the sage proceeds to inculcate the truth out of sheer grace.

This verse is an adaptation of Mun.U. I ii 13.

¹ *Who. etc. - The adjectives imply that he is a qualified aspirant.*

43. Fear not, O learned one, there is no death for thee; there is a means of crossing this sea of relative existence; that very way by which sages have gone beyond it, I shall inculcate to thee.

44. There is a sovereign means which puts an end to the fear of relative existence; through that thou wilt cross the sea of Samsāra and attain the supreme bliss.

45. Reasoning on the meaning of the Vedānta leads to efficient knowledge¹, which is immediately followed by the total annihilation of the misery born of relative existence.

¹ *Efficient knowledge - The higher knowledge, which consists in the realization of the identity of the individual soul with Brahman.*

46 Faith, devotion, and the yoga of meditation - these are mentioned by the Śhruti as the immediate factors of liberation in the ease of a seeker; whoever abides in these gets liberation from the bondage² of the body, which is the conjuring of ignorance.

The reference is to Kaivalya Upaniṣhad, l. 2

¹ *Faith, devotion – Bhakti. These have been described in śhlokas 25, 31, and 32.*

² *Bondage, etc. - That is, identification of the Self with the body, which is solely due to Avidyā –‘ignorance’.*

47. It is verily through the touch of ignorance that thou who art the Supreme Self findest thyself under the bondage of the non-Self, whence alone proceeds the round of births and deaths. The fire of knowledge, kindled by the discrimination between these two, burns up the effects of ignorance together with their root.

The disciple said:

48. Condescend to listen, O Master, to the question I am putting (to thee). I shall be grateful to hear a reply to the same from thy lips.

49. What is bondage, forsooth? How has it come (upon the Self)? How does it continue to exist? How is one freed from it? What is this non-Self? And who is the Supreme Self? And how can one discriminate between them? –Do tell me about all these.

The Guru replied:

50. Blessed art thou! Thou hast achieved thy life's end and hast sanctified thy family, that thou wishest to attain Brahmanhood by getting free from the bondage of ignorance!

51. A father has got his sons and others to free him from his debts, but he has got none but himself to remove his bondage.

In this and the next few śhlokas the necessity of direct realization is emphasised as the only means of removing ignorance.

52. Trouble such as that caused by a load on the head can be removed by others, but none but one's own self can put a stop to the pain which is caused by hunger and the like.

53. The patient who takes (the proper) diet and medicine is alone seen to recover completely - not through work done by others.

54. The true nature of things is to be known personally, through the eye of clear illumination and not through a sage; what the moon exactly is, is to be known with one's own eyes; can others make him know it?

55. Who but one's own self can get rid of the bondage caused by the fetters of ignorance, desire, action and the like, aye, even in a hundred crore of cycles?

¹ *Ignorance, etc. - ignorance of our real nature as the blissful Self leads to desire which in its turn impels us to action, entailing countless sufferings.*

² *Cycles, - Kalpa, the entire duration of the evolved universe. See note on śhloka 6.*

56. Neither¹ by Yoga² nor by Sāṅkhya³, nor by work⁴ nor by learning, but by the realization of one's identity with Brahman is liberation possible, and by no other means.

¹ *Neither, etc. - None of these, if practised mechanically, will bring on the highest knowledge. The absolute identity of the Jīva and Brahman, which alone, according to Advaita Vedānta is the supreme way to liberation.*

² *Yoga – Patanjali's Yoga is one of the six philosophical schools of Indian thought, with Sāṅkhya, Mimamsa, etc.*

³ *Sāṅkhya - According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, liberation is achieved through discrimination between the Puruṣha (Soul) and the Prakṛiti (Nature). The Puruṣha is sentient but inactive, and all activity belongs to the Prakṛiti, which is non-sentient, yet independent of the Puruṣha. The Sāṅkhyas also believe in a plurality of souls. These are the main differences between the Sāṅkhya and Vedānta philosophies.*

⁴ *Work - Work for material ends, such as getting to heaven and so forth is meant. Compare Śhv.U. III 8 - "Seeing Him alone one transcends death, there is no other way "*

57. The beauty of a guitar's form and the skill of playing on its chords serve merely to please a few persons; they do not suffice to confer sovereignty.

58. Loud speech¹ consisting of a shower of words, the skill in expounding the scriptures, and likewise erudition - these merely bring on a little personal enjoyment to the scholar, but are no good for liberation.

¹ *Book-learning, to the exclusion of realization, is deprecated in this and the following śhlokas.*

² *Loud speech, etc. - Speech is divided into four kinds according to its degree of subtlety. Vaikhari is the lowest class and represents articulate speech. Hence, dabbling in mere words is meant.*

59. The study of the scriptures is useless so long as the highest Truth is unknown, and it is equally useless when the highest Truth has already been known.

¹ *Prior to realization, mere book-learning without discrimination and renunciation is useless, since it cannot give us freedom, and to the man of realization it is all the more so, inasmuch as he has already achieved his life's end.*

60. The scriptures consisting of many words are at deñkhyanse forest which merely causes the mind to rumble. Hence men of wisdom should earnestly set about knowing the true nature of the Self.

61. For one who has been bitten by the serpent of ignorance, the only remedy is the knowledge of Brahman. Of what avail are the Vedas and (other) scriptures, mantras (sacred formulae) and medicines to such a one?

62. A disease does not leave off if one simply utters the name of the medicine, without taking it; (similarly) without direct realization one cannot be liberated by the mere utterance of the word Brahman.

63. Without¹ causing the objective universe to vanish and without knowing the truth of the Self, how is one to achieve liberation by the mere utterance of the word Brahman?-it would result merely in an effort of speech.

¹ *Without cause. - By realising one's identity with Brahman, the One without a second, in Samādhi, one becomes the pure Chit (Consciousness Absolute), and the duality of subject and object vanish altogether. Short of this, ignorance, which is the cause of all evil, is not destroyed.*

64. Without killing one's enemies, and possessing oneself of the splendour of the entire surrounding region, one cannot claim to be an emperor by merely saying, 'I am an emperor'.

65. As a treasure¹ hidden underground requires (for its extraction) competent instruction, excavation, the removal of stones and other such thing lying above it and (finally) grasping, but never comes out by being (merely) called out by name, so the transparent Truth of the Self, which is hidden by Māyā and its effects, is to be attained through the instructions of a knower of Brahman, followed by reflection, meditation and so forth, but not through perverted arguments.

¹ *Treasure, etc. - Nikṣhepa. The idea is one must undergo the necessary practice.*

66. Therefore the wise should, as in the case of disease and the like, personally strive by all the means in their power to be free from the bondage of repeated births and deaths.

67. The question that thou hast asked today is excellent, approved by those versed in the scriptures, aphoristic¹, pregnant with meaning and fit to be known by the seekers after liberation.

¹ *Aphoristic - Terse and pithy.*

68. Listen attentively, O learned one, to what I am going to say. By listening to it thou shalt be instantly free from the bondage of Samsāra.

69. The first step to liberation is the extreme aversion¹ to all perishable things, then follow calmness, self-control, forbearance, and the utter relinquishment of all work² enjoined in the scriptures.

¹ *Aversion, etc. - These four have been defined in śhlokas 20-24. Cf. Bṛi. U., IV iv 23.*

² *Work- See note on verse 10.*

70. Then come hearing¹, reflection on that, and long, constant and unbroken meditation² on the Truth for the Muni³. After that the learned seeker attains the supreme Nirvikalpa state⁴ and realizes the bliss of Nirvāṇa even in this life.

Compare Bṛi.U. II iv 5.

¹ *Hearing - Of the Truth from the lips of the Guru.*

² *Meditation - The flowing of the mind in one unbroken stream towards an object.*

³ *Muni - The man of reflection.*

⁴ *Nirvikalpa state - That state of the mind in which there is no distinction between subject and object, all the mental activities are held in suspension, and the aspirant is one with his Ātman. It is a super-conscious state, beyond all relativity, which can be felt by the fortunate seeker, but cannot be described in words. The utmost that can be said of it is that it is inexpressible Bliss, and Pure Consciousness. Nirvāṇa, which literally means "blown out", is another name for this.*

Self and Non-Self

71. Now I am going to tell thee fully about what thou oughtst to know - the discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Listen to it and decide about it in thy mind.

72. Composed of the seven ingredients, viz. marrow, bones, fat, flesh, blood, skin, and cuticle, and consisting of the following limbs and their parts - legs, thighs, the chest, arms, the back, and the head:

73. This body, reputed to be the abode of the delusion of 'I and mine', is designated by sages as the gross body. The sky,¹ air, fire, water, and earth are subtle elements. They -

¹ *The sky etc.-These are the materials out of which the gross body has been formed. They have got two states - one subtle and the other gross.*

74. Being united¹ with parts of one another and becoming gross, (they) form the gross body and their subtle essences² form³ sense-objects - the group of five⁴ such as sound, which conduce to the happiness⁵ of the experiencer, the individual soul.

¹ *Being united, etc.-The process is as follows; Each of the five elements is divided into two parts. One of the two halves is further divided into four parts. Then each gross element is formed by the union of one-half of itself with one-eighth of each of the other four.*

² *Subtle essences-Tanmātras*

³ *Form etc. - by being received by the sense-organs.*

⁴ *Five, etc. - sound, touch, smell, taste, and sight.*

⁵ *Happiness: here happiness includes its opposite, misery.*

75. Those fools who are tied to these sense-objects by the stout cord of attachment, so very difficult to snap, come¹ and depart, up and down, carried amain by the powerful emissary² of their past action.

¹ *Come, etc.* - Become subject to birth and death and assume various bodies from those of angels to those of brutes, according to the merits of their work.

² *Emissary, etc.* - Just as a culprit seizing thing not belonging to him is put in fetters and sentenced by the state officer in various ways, so the Jīva, oblivious of his real nature, through his attachment to sense-objects is subjected to various kinds of misery

76. The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish, and the black bee, these five have died, being tied to one or other of the five senses, viz. sound, etc., through their own attachment¹. What then is in store for man who is attached to all these five!

¹ *Own attachment* - The word *Guṇa* in the text means both 'a rope' and 'a tendency'

77. Sense objects are even more virulent in their evil effects than the poison of the cobra. Poison kills one who takes it, but those others kill one who even looks¹ at them through the eyes.

¹ *Looks, etc.* - The mention of the eyes here is only typical, and implies the other sense-organs also; contact with the external world by any means is meant.

78. He who is free from the terrible snare of the hankering after sense-objects, so very difficult to get rid of, is alone fit for liberation, and none else-even though he be versed in all the six Śhastras¹.

¹ *Six Śhastras - The six schools of Indian philosophy. Mere book-learning without the heart's yearning for emancipation does not produce any effect.*

79. The shark of hankering catches by the throat those seekers after liberation who have got only an apparent dispassion (vairāgya) and are trying to cross the ocean of Samsāra (relative existence), and violently snatching¹ them away, drowns them half-way.

¹ *Snatching etc. - From the pursuit of the knowledge of Brahman.*

80. He who has killed the shark known as sense-object with the sword of mature dispassion, crosses the ocean of Samsāra, free from all obstacles.

81. Know that death quickly overtakes the stupid man who walks along the dreadful ways of sense-pleasure; whereas one who walks in accordance with the instructions of a well-wishing and worthy Guru, as also with his own reasoning, achieves his end - know this to be true.

82. If indeed thou hast a craving for liberation, shun sense-objects from a good distance as thou wouldst do poison, and always cultivate carefully the nectar-like virtues of contentment, compassion, forgiveness, straight-forward-ness, calmness, and self-control.

83. Whoever leaves aside what should always be attempted, viz. emancipation from the bondage of ignorance without beginning, and passionately seeks to nourish this body, which is an object for others¹ to enjoy, commits suicide thereby.

¹ *For others, etc. - To be eaten perchance by dogs and vultures after death.*

84. Whoever seeks to realise the Self by devoting himself to the nourishment of the body, proceeds to cross a river by catching hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log.

85. So for a seeker after liberation the infatuation¹ over things like the body is a dire death. He who has thoroughly conquered this deserves the state of freedom.

¹ *Infatuation - That he is the body, etc. or that the body, etc are his.*

86. Conquer the dire death of infatuation over thy body, wife, children, etc.- conquering which the sages reach that Supreme State¹ of Viṣṇu.

¹ *Supreme State, etc. - From Ṛig Veda, 1, xxii. 20-21.]*

87. This gross body is to be deprecated for it consists of the skin, flesh, blood, arteries and veins, fat, marrow and bones, and is full of other offensive things.

88. The gross body is produced by one's past actions out of the gross elements formed by the union¹ of the subtle elements with each other, and is the medium of experience for the soul; that is its waking state in which it perceives gross objects.

¹ *The union, etc. – Pañcha-karaṇa. See note 1 on śhloka 74*

89. Identifying itself with this form, the individual soul, though separate, enjoys gross objects, such as garlands and sandal-paste, by

means of the external organs. Hence this body has its fullest play in the waking state.

90. Know this gross body to be like a house to the householder, on which rests man's entire dealing with the external world.

91. Birth, decay and death are the various characteristics of the gross body, as also stoutness, etc.; childhood, etc., are its different conditions; it has got various restrictions regarding castes¹ and orders of life²; it is subject to various diseases, and meets with different kinds of treatment, such as worship, insult and high honours.

¹ *Castes - Brāhmana, etc.*

² *Orders of life - The student life, married life, etc*

92. The ears, skin, eyes, nose, and tongue are organs of knowledge, for they help us to cognise objects; the vocal organs, hands, legs, etc. are organs of action, owing to their tendency to work.

93-94. The inner organ (antah-karaṇa) is called Manas, Buddhi, ego or Chitta, according to their respective functions: Manas, from its considering the pros and cons of a thing; Buddhi, from its property of determining the truth of objects; the ego, from its identification with this body as one's own self; and Chitta, from its function of remembering things it is interested in.

95. One and the same Prāṇa (vital force) becomes Prāṇa, Apāna, Vyāna, Udāna, and Samāna according to their diversity of functions and modifications, like gold,¹ water, etc.

¹ *Like gold, etc. - Just as the same gold is fashioned into various ornaments, and as water takes the form of foam, waves., etc.*

96. The five organs of action such as speech, the five organs of knowledge such as the ear, the group of five Prāṇas, the five elements ending with the ether, together with Buddhi and the rest and also nescience,¹ desire and action - these eight “cities” make up what is called the subtle body.

¹ *Nescience, etc. - See note on śhloka 55.*

97. Listen - this subtle body, called also the Linga body, is produced out of the elements before their sub-dividing and combining with each other, is possessed of latent impressions and causes¹ the soul to experience the fruits of its past actions² It is a beginningless superimposition on the soul brought on by its own ignorance.

¹ *Causes, etc - This explains the word Linga revealer of what is latent.*

² *Past actions - That are latent in the subtle body.*

98-99. Dream is a state of the soul distinct from the waking state, where it shines by itself. In dreams Buddhi¹ by itself² takes on³ the role of the agent and the like, owing to various latent impressions of the waking state, while the supreme Ātman shines in its own glory - with Buddhi as its only superimposition, the witness of everything, and is not touched by the least work that Buddhi does. As it is wholly unattached, it is not touched by any work that its superimpositions may perform.

¹ *Buddhi - Here stands for the antar-karaṇa, the "inner organ" or mind.*

² *By self - Independently of the objective world.*

³ *Takes on, etc. - The Ātman is the one intelligent principle, and whatever Buddhi does, it does borrowing the light of the Ātman.*

100. This subtle body is the instrument for all activities of the Ātman, who is Consciousness Absolute, like the adze and other tools of a carpenter. Therefore this Ātman is perfectly unattached.

101. Blindness, weakness, and sharpness are conditions of the eye, due merely to its fitness or defectiveness; so are deafness, dumbness, etc. of the ear and so forth-but never of the Ātman, the Knower.

102. Inhalation and exhalation, yawning, sneezing, secretion, leaving this body, etc. are called by experts functions of Prāṇa and the rest, while hunger and thirst are characteristics of Prāṇa proper.

103. The inner organ (mind) has its seat in the organs such as the eye, as well as in the body, identifying with them and endued with a reflection of the Ātman.

104. Know that it is egoism which, identifying itself with the body, becomes the doer or experiencer, and in conjunction with the Guṇas¹ such as the Sattva, assumes the three different states¹.

¹ *Guṇas - The three component factors of Prakṛiti.*

² *Different state.etc. - Those of waking, etc.*

105. When sense-objects are favourable it becomes happy, and it becomes miserable when the case is contrary. So happiness and misery are characteristics of egoism, and not of the ever-blissful Ātman.

106. Sense-objects are pleasurable only as dependent on the Ātman manifesting through them, and not independently, because the Ātman is by its very nature the most beloved of all. Therefore the Ātman is ever blissful, and never suffers misery.

Vide Bṛi. U, II iv. - Yājñavalkya's teaching to his wife Maitreyi.

107. That in profound sleep we experience the bliss of the Ātman independent of sense-objects, is clearly attested¹ by the Śhruti,² direct perception, tradition, and inference.

¹ *Clearly attested - Jāgrati, which is a plural verb.*

² *Śhruti - Chhāndogya, Bṛihadāranyaka, Kausītaki, and other Upaniṣhads.*

The Three Guṇas – 'Attributes'

108. Avidyā (Nescience) or Māyā, called also the Undifferentiated¹, is the power² of the Lord. She is without beginning, is made up of the three Guṇas and is superior to the effects (as their cause). She is to be inferred by one of clear intellect only from the effects She produces. It is She who brings forth this whole universe.

¹ *Undifferentiated - The perfectly balanced state of the three Guṇas, where there is no manifested universe. When this balance is disturbed, then evolution begins.*

² *Power, etc - This distinguishes the Vedāntic conception of Māyā from the Sāṅkhya view of Prakṛiti, which they call insentient and at the same time independent.*

109. She is neither existent nor non-existent not partaking of both characters; neither same nor different not both; neither composed of

parts nor an indivisible whole nor both. She is most wonderful and cannot be described in words.

110. Māyā can be destroyed by the realization of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope. She has her Guṇas as Rajas, Tamas and Sattva, named after their respective functions.

111. Rajas has its Vikṣhepa-Śhakti¹ or projecting power, which is of the nature of an activity, and from which this primeval flow² of activity has emanated. From this also, mental modifications such as attachment and grief are continually produced.

¹ *Vikṣhepa-Śhakti* - That power which at once projects a new form when once the real nature of a thing has been veiled by the Āvarana-Śhakti mentioned later in śhloka 113.

² *Flow, etc.* - That is, the phenomenal world, alternately evolving and going back into an involved state. Cf. Gītā, XV. 4.

112. Lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, spite¹, egoism, envy, jealousy, etc.- these are the dire attributes of Rajas, from which the worldly tendency of man is produced. Therefore Rajas is a cause of bondage.

113. Āvṛiti or the veiling power is the power of Tamas which makes things appear other than what they are, it is this that causes man's repeated transmigration; and starts the action of the projecting power (Vikṣhepa).

114. Even wise and learned men and men who are clever and adept in the vision of the exceedingly subtle are overpowered by Tamas and do not understand the Ātman, even though clearly explained in various ways. What is simply superimposed by delusion, they consider as true, and attach themselves to its effects. Alas! How powerful is the great Āvṛiti-śhakti of dreadful Tamas¹.

115. Absence of the right judgment, or contrary judgment, want of definite belief¹ and doubt-these certainly never desert one who has any connection with this veiling power, and then the projecting power gives ceaseless trouble.

¹ *Definite belief, etc. - the existence of a thing, even though there may be a vague notion of it.*

116. Ignorance, lassitude, dullness, sleep, inadvertence, stupidity, etc. are attributes of Tamas. One tied to these does not comprehend anything, but remains like one asleep or like a stock or stone¹.

¹ *Stock or stone - Lit. pillar.*

117. Pure Sattva is (clear) like water, yet in conjunction with Rajas and Tamas it makes for transmigration. The reality of the Ātman becomes reflected in Sattva and like the sun reveals the entire world of matter.

118. The traits of mixed Sattva are an utter absence¹ of pride, etc., and Niyama,² Yama³, etc., as well as faith, devotion, yearning for liberation, the divine tendencies⁴ and turning away from the unreal.

¹ *Absence, etc. - The reference us to the higher attributes enumerated in the Bhagavad Gītā, XIII 8-12.*

² *Niyama - Purity, contentment, etc*

³ *Yama - Non-killing, truthfulness, etc. Vide Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms, III, 30 and 32.*

⁴ *Divine tendencies - The reference as to the opening śhlokas of Gītā.*

119. The traits of pure Sattva¹ are cheerfulness, the realization of one's own Self, supreme peace, contentment, bliss, and steady devotion to the Ātman, by which the aspirant enjoys bliss everlasting.

¹ *Pure Sattva - Sattva unmixed with Rajas and Tamas.*

120. This Undifferentiated¹ spoken of as the compound of the three Guṇas, is the causal body of the soul.² Profound sleep is its special state, in which the functions of the mind and all its organs are suspended³.

¹ *Undifferentiated - Mentioned in śhlokas 108 and following.*

² *Soul - identifying itself through ignorance with this or the other two bodies*

³ *Suspended - Not in perfect knowledge, as in Samādhi, but in ignorance. This is the difference between these two states.*

121. Profound sleep is the cessation of all kinds¹ of perception, in which the mind remains in a subtle, seed-like form. The test of this is the universal verdict² "I did not know anything then".

¹ *All kinds, etc. - Including remembrance and delusion.*

² *Universal verdict etc. - This negative remembrance proves the continuity of the mind even in the Suṣhupti state.*

122. The body, organs, Prāṇas, Manas, egoism, etc., all modifications, the sense-objects, pleasure, and the rest, the gross elements such as

the ether, in fact, the whole universe, up to the Undifferentiated-all this is the non- Self.

This and the next śhloka set forth what we are to avoid identifying ourselves with. We are the Pure Self, eternally free from all duality.

123. From Mahat¹ down to the gross body everything is the effect of Māyā². These and Māyā itself know thou to be the non-Self, and therefore unreal like the mirage in a desert.

¹ *Mahat - Cosmic intelligence. It is the first to proceed from the Prakṛiti or Māyā. For the hierarchy vide Kat.U. 1 iii 10-11*

124. Now I am going to tell thee of the real nature of the Supreme Self, realizing which man is freed from bondage and attains liberation.¹

¹ *Liberation - Kaivalya literally means extreme aloofness.*

125. There is some Absolute Entity, the eternal sub-stratum of the consciousness of egoism, the witness of the three states, and distinct from the five sheaths¹ or coverings.

¹ *Five sheaths, etc - Consisting respectively of Anna (matter), Prāṇa (force), Manas (mind), Vijñāna (knowledge) and Ānanda (Bliss). The first comprises this body of ours (Sthūla Śharīra), the next three make up the subtle body (Sūkṣhma Śharīra), and the last the causal body (Kāraṇa Śharīra) The Ātman referred to in this śhloka is beyond them all. These Kośhas will be dealt with later on.*

126 Which knows everything that happens in the waking state, in dream, and in profound sleep; which is aware of the presence or absence of the mind and its functions, and which is the background of the notion of egoism. - This is that.

This śhloka fills the purport of such Śhruti passages as Kena U. I 6 and Bṛi.U. III iv 2

127. Which itself sees all, but which no one beholds, which illumines the intellect, etc., but which they cannot illumine.-This is that.

123. By which¹ this universe is pervaded, but which nothing pervades, which shining² all this (universe) shines as its reflection - this is That.

¹ *By which, etc. - Compare Chh.U.III VI 6, and Gītā, X 42.*

² *Which shining, etc. - A reproduction of the sense of the celebrated verse occurring in Kat.U.II. v 15, Mun.U.II. ii 10, and Śhv.U. I 14.*

129. By whose very presence the body, the organs, mind and intellect keep to their respective spheres of action, like servants!

130. By which everything from egoism down to the body, the sense-objects, and pleasure, etc., is known as palpably as a jar - for it is the essence of Eternal Consciousness!

131. This is the innermost Self¹ the primeval Puruṣha (Being), whose essence is the constant realization of infinite Bliss, which is ever the same, yet reflecting² through the different mental modifications, and commanded³ by which the organs and Prāṇas perform their functions.

¹ *innermost Self - Vide Bṛi. U, III iv and elsewhere.*

² *Reflecting etc. - Compare Kena, II. 12*

³ *Commanded, etc. - See the opening śhloka of the same Upaniṣhad and the reply given to it later on.*

132. In this very body, in the mind full of Sattva, in the secret chamber of the intellect, in the Ākāśha known as the Unmanifested, the Ātman, of charming splendour, shines like the sun aloft, manifesting this universe through its own effulgence.

This śhloka gives a hint as to where to look for the Ātman. First of all there is the gross body; within this there is the mind or "inner organ", of which Buddhi or intelligence, characterised by determination, is the most developed form; within Buddhi again and pervading it, is the causal body known as the Unmanifested. We must seek the Ātman within this. The idea is that the Ātman transcends all the three bodies, in fact the whole sphere of duality and mentality. The word "Ākāśha" often occurs in the Śhruti in the sense of the Ātman or Brahman. The Vedānta Sūtras (I i 22) discusses the question and decides in favour of this meaning.

133. The Knower of the modifications of mind and egoism, and of the activities of the body, the organs and Prāṇas, apparently taking their forms, like the fire¹ in a ball of iron; it neither acts nor is subject to change in the least.

¹ *Like the fire, etc. - Just as fire has no form of its own, but seems to take on the form of the iron ball which it turns red-hot, so the Ātman, though without form, seems to appear as Buddhi and so forth. Compare Katha, II ii. 9.1*

134. It is neither born nor dies, it neither grows nor decays, nor does it undergo any change, being eternal. It does not cease to exist even when this body is destroyed, like the sky in a jar (after it is broken), for it is independent.

This śhloka refers to the states, enumerated by Yāksha. which overtake every being. viz. birth, existence, development, maturity, decay and death. The Ātman is above all change.

135. The Supreme Self, different from the Prakṛiti¹ and its modifications, of the essence of Pure Consciousness and Absolute, directly manifests this entire gross and subtle universe² in the waking and other states, as the substratum of the persistent sense of egoism, and manifests itself as the Witness of the Buddhi,³ the determinative faculty.

¹ *Prakṛiti - The Mother of the entire manifested universe.*

² *Gross and subtle universe - The world of matter and thought.*

³ *Witness of the Buddhi - All actions that we seem to be doing are really done by the Buddhi, while the Self ever stands aloof, the only Absolute Entity.*

Bondage and Liberation

136. By means of a regulated mind and the purified intellect (Buddhi), realize directly thy own Self in the body so as to identify thyself with it, cross the boundless ocean of Saṃsāra whose waves are birth and death, and firmly established² in Brahman as thy own essence, be blessed.

¹ *With it - Instead of with the gross, subtle, and causal bodies.*

² *Established, etc - By our very nature we are ever identified with Brahman, but through ignorance we think we are limited and so forth.*

137. Identifying the Self with this non-Self - this is the bondage of man, which is due to his ignorance, and brings in its train the miseries of birth and death. It is through this that one considers this evanescent body as real, and identifying oneself with it, nourishes, bathes,¹ and preserves it by means of (agreeable) sense-objects² by which he becomes bound as the caterpillar by the threads of its cocoon.

¹ *Bathes - Keeps clean and tidy.*

² *Sense-objects, etc. - He runs after sense-pleasures, thinking that will conduce to the well-being of the body, but these in turn throw him into a terrible bondage, and he has to abjure them wholly to attain his freedom, as the caterpillar has to cut through its cocoon.*

138. One who is overpowered by ignorance mistakes a thing for what it is not: it is the absence of discrimination¹ that causes one to mistake a snake for a rope, and great dangers overtake him when he seizes it through that wrong notion. Hence, listen, my friend, it is the mistaking of transitory things as real that constitutes bondage.

¹ *Discrimination - Between what is real (viz. the Self) and what is not real (viz. the phenomenal world).*

139. This veiling power (Āvṛiti), which preponderates in ignorance, covers the Self, whose glories are infinite and which manifests itself through the power of knowledge, indivisible, eternal, and one without a second - as Rāhu¹ does the orb of the sun.

¹ *Rāhu, etc. - The reference is to the solar eclipse. In Indian mythology the sun is periodically overpowered by a demon named Rāhu.*

140. When his own Self, endowed with the purest splendour, is hidden from view, a man through ignorance falsely identifies himself with this body, which is the non-Self. And then the great power of Rajas called the projecting power¹ sorely afflicts him through the binding fetters of lust, anger, etc.

¹ *Projecting power - See note 1 on śhloka 111.*

141. The man of perverted intellect, having his Self-knowledge swallowed up by the shark of utter ignorance himself imitates¹ the various states of the intellect (Buddhi) as that is its superimposed attribute, and drifts up and down² in this boundless ocean of Samsāra³ which is full the poison of sense-enjoyment, now sinking, now rising - a miserable fate indeed!

¹ *Himself imitates, etc. - The Self is the real nature of every being: but a mistaken identification with the intellect causes him to appeal as if he were active. See note 3 on śhloka 135.*

² *Up and down - Acquiring different bodies such as the angelic, the animal, according to his good or bad deeds, and enjoying or suffering therein.*

³ *Samsāra - The entire relative existence.*

142. As layers of clouds generated by the sun's rays cover the sun and alone appear (in the sky), so egoism generated by the Self, covers the reality of the Self and appears by itself¹.

¹ *By itself - As if there were no Ātman at all but the clouds vanish subsequently, and so does egoism too.*

143. Just as, on a cloudy day, when the sun is swallowed up by dense clouds, violent cold blasts trouble them,¹ so when the Ātman is hidden by intense ignorance, the dreadful Vikṣhepa-śhakti (projecting power) afflicts the foolish man with numerous griefs.

¹ *Blasts trouble them - The root Vyath has also a secondary meaning, namely, to cause to wander, which is also implied here. The verb Kṣhapayati in the last line of this verse has also a similar meaning. The foolish man is made to take sometimes very low bodies - that is the meaning.*

144. It is from these two powers¹ that man's bondage has proceeded-beguiled by which he mistakes the body for the Self and wanders (from body to body).

¹ *Two powers –viz. the veiling and projecting powers - Āvaraṇa and Vikṣhepa.*

145. Of the tree of Samsāra ignorance is the seed, the identification with the body is its sprout, attachment its tender leaves, work its water, the body its trunk, the vital forces its branches, the organs its twig, the sense-objects its flowers, various miseries due to diverse works are its fruits, and the individual soul¹ is the bird on it.

In this stanza Samsāra or relative existence is likened to a tree, and the simile is brought out in complete detail. The appropriateness of the comparisons will be patent on reflection. It is this kind of composition which shows Śhaṅkara not only to be a great philosopher but a true poet also and such śhlokas, as the reader will find for himself, abound in this masterpiece of Vedāntic literature.

¹ *Soul, etc. - Compare the beautiful śhlokas of the Muṇ.U. III i 1-2. With the ripening of knowledge the two birds coalesce into one, the Self alone remains, and life is known to be a dream.*

146. This bondage of the non-Self springs from ignorance, is self-caused¹ and is described as without beginning and end² it subjects one to the long train of miseries such as birth, death, disease, and decrepitude.

¹ *Self-caused - Not depending upon any other cause.*

² *Without end - Relatively speaking. On the realization of the Self it disappears.*

147. This bondage can be destroyed neither by weapons nor by wind, nor by fire, nor by millions of acts¹ - by nothing except the wonderful sword of knowledge that comes of discrimination, sharpened by the grace² of the Lord.

¹ Acts - Enjoined by the scriptures, and done with motives.

² Grace, etc. - An echo of Kaṭha, 1. ii. 20. The Śhruti has also a different reading- - which means, "through the purity of the mind, organs, etc."- This meaning is also suggested here.

148. One who is passionately devoted to the authority of the Śhrutis acquires steadiness in his Svadharma¹ which alone conduces to the purity of his mind. The man of pure mind realizes the Supreme Self, and by this alone Samsāra with its root¹ is destroyed.

¹ Svadharma –Lit. one's own duty, or the duty for which we are fit - which the Gītā enjoins on us all to perform, as the way to perfection.

² Root - Ignorance.

149. Covered by the five sheaths¹ - the material one and the last - which are the products of its own power, the Self ceases to appear, like the water of a tank by its accumulation of sedge.

¹ Sheaths, etc. - See note on śhloka 125. They are called sheaths since they are coverings over the Ātman, which manifests itself through them. From the Anna-maya to the Ānanda-maya the sheaths are gradually finer and finer. Knowledge consists in going beyond them all by means of regulated practice and coming face to face, as it were, with the Ātman.

150. On the removal of that sedge the perfectly pure water that allays the pangs of thirst and gives immediate joy, appears unobstructed before the man.

The water has not to be produced from anywhere else, it is already there; only the obstructions have to be removed. So also in the case of the Ātman.

151. When all the five sheaths have been eliminated,¹ the Self of man appears pure, of the essence of everlasting and unalloyed bliss, indwelling² supreme, and self- effulgent.

¹ *Eliminated - discriminated as being other than the Self*

² *Indwelling - Dwelling within the heart of all*

152. To remove his bondage the wise man should discriminate between the Self and the non-Self. By that alone he comes to know his own Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, and becomes happy.

153. He indeed is free who discriminates between all sense-objects¹ and the indwelling, unattached and inactive² Self - as one separates a stalk³ of grass from its enveloping sheath - and merging⁴ everything in it, remains in a state of identity with That.

¹ *Sense-objects - Especially the body and its organs.*

² *Inactive: - The witness of all activity.*

³ *Stalk, etc. - Compare Katha, II iii 17.*

⁴ *Merging, etc. - Knowing that only the Ātman manifests itself through name and form.*

The Anna-maya Koṣha –‘Sheath of Food’ –Physical Body

154. This body of ours is the product of food¹ and comprises the material sheath; it lives on food and dies without it; it is a mass of skin,

flesh, blood, bones, and filth, and can never be the eternally pure, self-existent Ātman.

¹ *Food - That built up the parent-bodies.*

155. It does not exist prior to inception or posterior to dissolution, but lasts only for a short (intervening) period; its virtues are transient, and it is changeful by nature; it is manifold,¹ inert, and is a sense-object, like a jar; how can it be one's own Self, the Witness of changes in all things?

¹ *Manifold - Not a simple, but subject to constant transformations.*

156. The body, consisting of arms, legs, etc. cannot be the Ātman, for one continues to live even when particular limbs are gone, and the different functions¹ of the organism also remain intact. The body which is subject to another's rule cannot be the Self which is the Ruler of all.

¹ *Functions - Other than those directly interfered with.*

157. That the Ātman as the abiding Reality is different from the body, its characteristics,¹ its activities, its states², etc., of which it is the witness, is self-evident.

¹ *Characteristics - Such as stoutness or leanness.*

² *States - Boyhood, youth, etc.*

158. How can the body, being a pack of bones, covered with flesh, full of filth, and highly impure, be the self-existent Ātman, the Knower, which is ever distinct from it.

159. It is the foolish man who identifies himself with a mass of skin, flesh, fat, bones, and filth, while the man of discrimination knows his own Self, the only Reality that there is, as distinct from the body.

160. The stupid man thinks he is the body, the book-learned man identifies himself with the mixture¹ of body and soul, while the sage possessed of realization due to discrimination looks upon the eternal Ātman as his Self, and thinks, "I am Brahman".

Three classes of people are distinguished in this śhloka, of whom the Advaitist is of course given the highest place.

¹ *Mixture, etc. - The average man thinks he is both body and soul acting in unison.*

161. O foolish person, cease to identify thyself with this bundle of skin, flesh, fat, bones, and filth, and identify thyself instead with the Absolute Brahman, the Self of all, and thus attain to supreme Peace.

162. As long as the book-learned man does not give up his mistaken identification with the body¹ organs, etc., which are unreal, there is no talk of emancipation for him, even if he be ever so erudite² in the Vedānta philosophy.

¹ *Body, etc. - In fact, the whole objective world.*

² *Erudite, etc.-Mere book-learning is meant. Unless he has realized the state of oneness, he will be a mere talker, that is all.*

163. Just as thou dost not identify thyself with the shadow-body,¹ the image-body,² the dream-body³ or the body thou hast in the

imaginings of thy heart, cease thou to do likewise with the living body⁴ also.

¹ *Shadow-body - The shadow of thy body.*

² *Image-body - The image or reflection of the body, cast in water, etc.*

³ *Dream body - The body that thou mayest assume in dreams.*

⁴ *Living body - The gross body, with the Prāṇas, etc.*

164. Identification with the body alone is the root that produces the misery of birth, etc. of people who are attached to the unreal; therefore destroy thou this with the utmost care. When this identification caused by the mind is given up, there is no more chance for rebirth.

Compare Chhāṇḍogya, VIII xii. 1.

Prāṇa-maya Koṣha – ‘Sheath of Vital Breath’ (Heart Chakra)

165. The Prāṇa, with which we are all familiar, coupled with the five organs¹ of action, forms the vital sheath, permeated² by which the material sheath³ engages itself in all activities as if it were living.

¹ *Organs etc. - The brain centres which control speech, manual activity, locomotion, excretion, and reproduction. See śhloka 92.*

² *Permeated etc. - This activity, again, is a borrowed one, as will appear from the last line of the next śhloka.*

³ *Material sheath - Described in śhloka 154 and following. For a description of the five Koṣhas (sheaths) the reader is referred to Taittiriya U. second chapter.*

166. Neither is the vital sheath the Self - because it is a modification of Vāyu,¹ and like the air it enters² into and comes out of the body, and

because it never knows in the least either its own weal and woe or those of others, being eternally dependent on the Self.

¹ *Vāyu - The Prāṇa - Vāyu or life-force is meant here. The word commonly means air, which brings in the comparison in the next line.*

² *Enter, etc. - That is, as breath which is its gross manifestation*

Mano-maya Koṣha –‘Sheath of Mind’ (Viśhuddhi Chakra)

167. The organs¹ of knowledge together with the mind form the mental sheath - the cause of the diversity of things such as “I” and “mine”. It is powerful and endued with the faculty of creating differences of name, etc. it manifests itself as permeating the preceding, i.e. the vital sheath.

¹ *Organs, etc.-The brain centres which control sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. See śhloka 92.*

168. The mental sheath is the (sacrificial) fire which, fed with the fuel of numerous desires by the five sense- organs which serve as priests, and set ablaze by the sense- objects which act as the stream of oblations, brings about this phenomenal universe.

The sacrificial fire confers on the Yajamāna, or the man who performs the sacrifice, the enjoyments of the heavenly spheres. So the mind also confers on the Jīva or individual soul the pleasures of the objective world. It is the mind that projects the objective universe - this is the plain meaning. See śhloka 170.

169. There is no ignorance (Avidyā) outside the mind. The mind alone is Avidyā, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When that is destroyed,¹ all else is destroyed, and when it is manifested, everything else is manifested.

According to the Vedānta, there is no actual change in the Self, which is by nature pure and perfect. It is ignorance or Avidyā that has covered its vision, so to say, and it appears as limited and subject to change. Now, this ignorance is imbedded in the mind, and when the mind is thoroughly purified through Sādhanā or discipline, the glory of the Ātman manifests itself. This is said to be liberation.

¹ *Destroyed - In the highest or Nirvikalpa Samādhi.*

170. In dreams, when there is no actual contact with the external world, the mind alone creates the whole universe consisting of the experiencer¹, etc. Similarly, in the waking state also, there is no difference. Therefore all this (phenomenal universe) is the projection of the mind.

¹ *Experiencer, etc. - That is, the experiencer, the experienced, and experience: subject, object, and their coming into relation*

171. In dreamless sleep, when the mind is reduced to its causal state, there exists nothing (for the person asleep), as is evident from universal experience.¹ Hence man's relative existence is simply the creation of his mind, and has no objective reality.

¹ *Universal experience: - The subject has been touched on already. See śhloka 121.*

172. Clouds are brought in by the wind and again driven away by the same agency. Similarly, man's bondage is caused by the mind, and liberation too is caused by that alone.

173. It (first) creates an attachment in man for the body and all other sense-objects, and binds him through that attachment like a beast by

means of ropes. Afterwards, the selfsame mind creates in the individual an utter distaste for these sense-objects as if they were poison and frees him from the bondage.

For the double meaning of the word Guṇa, see note on śhloka 76.

174. Therefore the mind is the only cause that brings about man's bondage or liberation: when tainted by the effects of rajas it leads to bondage, and when pure and divested of the Rajas and Tamas elements it conduces to liberation.

A reminiscence of the second verse of Amṛtabindu Upaniṣhad.

175. Attaining purity through a preponderance of discrimination¹ and renunciation² the mind makes for liberation. Hence the wise seeker after liberation must first strengthen these two.

¹ *Discrimination - Between the Self and the non-Self*

² *Renunciation - Of the non-Self.*

176. In the forest-tract of sense-pleasures there prowls a huge tiger called the mind. Let good people who have a longing for liberation never go there.

177. The mind continually produces for the experiencer all sense-objects without exception, whether perceived as gross or fine,¹ the differences of body, waste, order of life, and tribe, as well as the varieties of qualification, action² means,³ and results.⁴

¹ *Gross or fine- In the waking and dream states respectively*

² *Action - To obtain desired results*

³ *Means - For these actions*

⁴ *Results - Such as enjoyment in heaven, etc*

178. Deluding the Jīva, which is unattached, Pure Intelligence, and binding¹ it by the ties of body, organs, and pleasures, the mind causes it to wander, with ideas of “I” and “mine”, amidst the varied enjoyment of results achieved by itself.

¹ *Binding, etc. - Strictly speaking, it is our attachment to these that binds us.*

179. Man’s transmigration is due to the evil of superimposition¹, and the bondage of superimposition is created by the mind alone. It is this that causes the misery of birth, etc. for the man of non-discrimination who is tainted by Rajas and Tamas.

¹ *Superimposition - This is the favourite theme of the Vedānta philosophy, to explain how the ever-free Self came to be bound at all. The whole thing is a mistaken identity, a self-hypnotism, it says, and the way out of it lies in de-hypnotising ourselves.*

180. Hence sages who have fathomed its secret have designated the mind as Avidyā or ignorance, by which alone the universe is moved to and fro, like masses of clouds by the wind.

181. Therefore the seeker after liberation must carefully purify the mind. When this is purified, liberation is as easy of access as a fruit on the palm of one’s hand.

182. He who by means of one-pointed devotion to liberation roots out the attachment to sense-objects, renounces all actions, and with faith

in the Real Brahman regularly practises hearing, etc.,¹ succeeds in purging the Rajasik nature of the intellect.

¹ *Hearing etc. - That is, hearing (from the lips of the Guru), reflection and meditation of the highest Vedānta truth - the identity of the Jīva and Brahman.*

183. The mental sheath also cannot be the Supreme Self, because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modifications, is characterised by pain and suffering, and is an object¹ whereas the subject can never be identified with the objects of knowledge.

¹ *Object - Cognisable by the Self, which is the eternal subject.*

Vigñyāna-maya Koṣha –‘Sheath of Understanding’ (Āgñyā Chakra)

184. The Buddhi¹ with its modifications¹ and the organs of knowledge, form the Vigñyāna-maya Koṣha or knowledge sheath, of the agent, having³ the characteristics which are the cause of man’s transmigration.

¹ *Buddhi - The determinative faculty*

² *Modifications - such as egoism*

³ *Having etc. - Thinking, “I am the agent”.*

185. This knowledge sheath, which seems to be followed¹ by a reflection of the power of the Chit, is a modification² of the Prakṛiti is endowed with the function of knowledge, and always wholly identifies itself with the body, organs, etc.

¹ *Followed, etc - The knowledge sheath is in reality material and insentient, but a reflection of the Chit or Ātman makes it appear as intelligent.*

² *Modification etc. - And therefore insentient.*

186-187. It is without beginning, characterised by egoism, is called the Jīva, and carries on all the activities on the relative plane. Through previous desires¹ it performs good and evil actions and experiences their results. Being born in various bodies, it comes² and goes, up and down. It is this knowledge sheath that has the waking, dream, and other states, and experiences joy and grief.

¹ *Desires, etc. - Desires of previous births*

² *Comes, etc. - is born and dies, in higher or lower bodies*

188. It always mistakes the duties, functions and attributes of the orders of life¹ which belong to the body, as its own. The knowledge sheath is exceedingly effulgent, owing to its close proximity to the Supreme Self, which identifying itself with it suffers transmigration through delusion. It is therefore a superimposition on the Self.

¹ *Orders of life –The four Āśhramas – celibate student, householder, etc.*

189. The self-effulgent Ātman, which is Pure Consciousness, shines in the midst¹ of the Prāṇa, within the heart². Though immutable, it becomes the agent and experiencer owing to its superimposition, the knowledge sheath.

The first part of this śhloka is a quotation from Bṛi. U., IV xii 7.

¹ *In the midst, etc. - Great nearness is meant. Prāṇa means force, here the physiological and mental forces are referred to.*

² *Within the heart - In the intellect, the seat of which is supposed to be the heart.*

190. Though the Self of everything that exists, this Ātman, itself assuming the limitations of the buddhi¹ and wrongly identifying itself with this totally unreal entity, looks upon itself as something different²-like earthen jars from the clay of which they are made.

¹ *Buddhi - Here stands for the knowledge sheath.*

² *Something different - As conditioned and bound, Just as an ignorant man may consider earthen pots as something distinct from the clay of which they are made The wise man knows that the difference is simply due to name and form, which are creations of the mind.*

191. Owing to its connection with the superimpositions, the Supreme Self, even though naturally perfect¹ and eternally unchanging, assumes the qualities of the superimpositions and appears to act just as they do-like the changeless fire assuming the modifications² of the iron which it turns red-hot.

¹ *Naturally perfect - the phrase 'paraḥ swabhāvāt' may mean 'transcending Nature'.*

² *Modification: - Such as size and shape.*

The disciple questioned:

192. Be it through delusion or otherwise that the Supreme Self has come to consider itself as the Jīva¹, this superimposition is without beginning, and that which has no beginning cannot be supposed to have an end either.

¹ *Jīva - The individual soul, or the Self under self-imposed limitations*

193. Therefore the Jīvahood¹ of the soul also must have no end, and its transmigration must continue for ever. How then can there be liberation for the soul? Kindly enlighten me on this point, O revered Master.

¹ *Jīvahood - The self-hypnotised state of the ever-free Ātman*

The Teacher replied:

194. Thou hast rightly questioned, O learned man! Listen therefore attentively: The imagination which has been conjured up by delusion can never be accepted as a fact.

195. But for delusion there can be no connection of the Self - which is unattached, beyond activity, and formless - with the objective world, as in the case of blueness¹, etc. with reference to the sky.

¹ *Blueness, etc. - The sky has no colour of its own, but we mentally associate blueness with it. The blueness is in our mind, and not in the sky. Similarly, limitation exists not in the Absolute Self, but in our own minds.*

196. The Jīvahood of the Ātman, the Witness, which is beyond qualities and beyond activity, and which is realized within as Consciousness¹ and Bliss Absolute - has been superimposed by the delusion of the Buddhi, and is not real. And because it is by nature an unreality, it ceases to exist when the delusion is gone.

¹ *Consciousness, etc. - These are its essence, and therefore can never depart from It, as heat from fire.)*

197. It exists only so long as the delusion lasts, being caused by indiscrimination due to an illusion. The rope is supposed to be the

snake only so long as the mistake lasts, and there is no more a snake when the illusion has vanished. Similar is the case here.

198-199. Avidyā or nescience and its effects are likewise considered as beginningless. But with the rise of Vidyā or realization, the entire effects of Avidyā, even though beginningless, are destroyed together with their root¹ - like dreams on waking up from sleep. It is clear that the phenomenal universe, even though without beginning, is not eternal - like previous non-existence².

¹ *Root – Avidyā*

² *Previous non-existence – Prāga-bhāva, in terms of Hindu logic. When we say a thing comes into being at a definite point of time, we imply also that there was non-existence of that particular thing prior to that moment and this “non-existence” is obviously beginningless. But it ceases as soon as the thing comes into being. Similarly, Avidyā, even though beginningless, disappears when realization comes.*

200-201. Previous non-existence, even though beginningless, is observed to have an end. So the Jīvahood which is imagined to be in the Ātman through its relation with superimposed attributes¹ such as the Buddhi, is not real; whereas the other (the Ātman) is essentially different from it. The relation between the Ātman and the Buddhi is due to a false knowledge.

¹ *Superimposed attributes - Just as a crystal placed near a red flower appears to be red; or as when, looking at a thing behind a curtain through an aperture of increasing size, we see more and more of the thing behind, but we erroneously think that the thing is growing, whereas, in reality, all the change takes place in the curtain only. Similarly, we see the Ātman through the covering of the Prakṛiti or*

Nature, of which the Buddhi, etc. are manifestations, and Nature, which is continually changing, leads us to think that the Ātman back of it is changing too, which is a mistake.

202. The cessation of that superimposition takes place through perfect knowledge, and by no other means. Perfect knowledge, according to the Śhrutis, consists in the realization of the identity of the individual soul and Brahman.

203. This realization is attained by a perfect discrimination between the Self and the non-Self. Therefore one must strive for the discrimination between the individual soul and the eternal Self.

204. Just as the water which is very muddy again appears as transparent water when the mud is removed, so the Ātman also manifest-s its undimmed lustre when the taint has been removed.

¹ *Water is naturally pure, but it is polluted by foreign substances mixing with it. These impurities can be removed by filtration, distillation, etc. So the apparent impurity of the soul can be removed by discrimination-which shows that it is nescience that hides the real nature of the Self.*

205. When the unreal ceases to exist, this very individual soul is definitely realized as the eternal Self. Therefore one must make it a point completely to remove things¹ like egoism from the eternal Self.

¹ *Things - Which are in reality superimpositions.*

206. This knowledge sheath (Vijñāna-maya Kośha) that we have been speaking of, cannot be the Supreme Self for the following reasons - because it is subject to change,¹ is insentient, is a limited thing, an

object of the senses, and is not constantly present: An unreal thing cannot indeed be taken for the real Ātman.

¹ *Subject to change - Whereas the Ātman is changeless, Consciousness Absolute, unlimited, the eternal subject, and the universal substratum of all things. Just as the rope is the only reality with regard to the mistaken snake-idea, etc.*

Ānanda-maya Kośha –‘Sheath of Bliss’ (Sahasrāra Chakra)

207. The blissful sheath (Ānanda-maya Kośha) is that modification¹ of nescience which manifests itself catching a reflection of the Ātman which is Bliss Absolute; whose attributes are pleasure² and the rest; and which appears in view when some object agreeable to oneself presents itself. It makes itself spontaneously felt by the fortunate during the fruition of their virtuous deeds: from which every corporeal being derives great joy without the least effort.

¹ *Modification, etc. - The experience of the Suṣhupti state will be spoken of in the next śhloka as the typical enjoyment of the Ānanda-maya Kośha and deep sleep is always a state of intense ignorance; Hence this sheath must be a modification of nescience.*

² *Pleasure, etc - The reference is to Tai.U. II 5, where Priya, Moda and Pramoda (various degrees of enjoyment) are said to be attributes of the Ānanda-maya Kośha.*

207. The blissful sheath has its fullest play during profound sleep, while in the dreaming and wakeful states it has only a partial manifestation, occasioned by the sight¹ of agreeable objects and so forth.

¹ *Sight, etc. - Actual sense-perception (in the waking state) or memory-impressions (in dream)*

209. Nor is the blissful sheath the Supreme Self, because it is endowed with changeful attributes, is a modification of the Prakṛiti, is the effect of past good deeds, and imbedded¹ in the other sheaths which are modifications.

¹ *Imbedded, etc - The reference is again to Tai.U. ch.2, where the five Kośhas are spoken of as being similar in shape and one inside the other, the Anna-maya or material sheath being the outermost and Ānanda-maya the innermost.*

210. When all the five sheaths have been eliminated by the reasoning on Śhruti passages¹ what remains as the culminating point of the process, is the Witness, the Consciousness Absolute - the Ātman.

¹ *Śhruti passages - Those that describe the Ātman negatively by the N'eti N'eti - 'not this, not this' method*

² *Culminating point - Beyond which the process of reasoning or analysis cannot go. What takes place then is termed Aparokṣhānubhuti, Realization, and the mind is then said to be in the Samādhi state.*

211. This self-effulgent Ātman which is distinct from the five sheaths, the Witness of the three states, the Real, the Changeless, the Untainted¹, the everlasting Bliss - is to be realized by the wise man as his own Self.

¹ *Untainted - By nescience, hence Absolute.*

The True Self

The disciple questions:

212. After these five sheaths have been eliminated as unreal, I find nothing, O Master, in this universe but a Void, the absence of

everything. What entity is there left forsooth with which the wise knower of the Self should realize his identity?

The position of the Buddhist Śhūnya-vādins or Nihilists who deny that there remains anything positive after the ultimate analysis, is here set forth as a prima facie view, and the refutation is given in the next few śhlokas.

The Guru answered:

213-214. Thou hast rightly said, O learned man! Thou art clever indeed in discrimination. That by which all those modifications such as egoism as well as their subsequent absence (during deep sleep) are perceived, but which itself is not perceived, know thou that Ātman - the Knower – through¹ the sharpest intellect.

The argument is this: The Ātman as the eternal subject must always remain. Otherwise knowledge itself would be impossible. Even in the Suṣhupti –‘deep sleep’ state there must be the eternal subject behind to record the blissful memory of that state. To take a familiar example in a cinema there must be the screen to allow the moving pictures to coalesce and form a connected whole. Motion presupposes rest; so the ever-changing Prakṛiti must have behind it the immutable Ātman.

¹ Through, etc. - An echo of Kat.U. I iii l2

215. That which is perceived by something else has for its witness the latter. When there is no agent to perceive a thing, we cannot speak of it as having been perceived at all

216. This Ātman is a self-cognised entity because it is cognised by itself. Hence the individual soul is itself and directly the Supreme Brahman, and nothing else.

217. That which clearly manifests itself in the states of wakefulness, dream, and profound sleep; which is inwardly perceived in the mind in various forms as an unbroken series of egoistic impressions, which witnesses the egoism, the Buddhi, etc., which are of diverse forms and modifications; and which makes itself felt as the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, know thou this Ātman, thy own Self, within thy heart.

According to the Sāṅkhya philosophy, the whole universe, as it appears to us, is a mixture of the Puruṣha and the Prakṛiti - of something which impinges on or gives the suggestion to our minds and the mind which reacts and covers it, as it were, with a coating of its own. In other words, everything we perceive is this unknown something plus the mind, or to put it briefly, X + mind. The Vedānta substitutes Brahman for the Puruṣha, and postulates nescience as the inscrutable power of Brahman, which covers the real nature of Brahman and makes it think as if it were subject to all sorts of change and limitation. Ātman is only another name for Brahman. So whenever we perceive a thing, form any mental impression, it must be the Ātman and nothing else that we perceive. Only in our ignorance we fail to grasp the real nature of the thing experienced (the Ātman) and call it by various names. So our egoism, our intellect, and all mental states are manifestations of the Ātman alone.

218. Seeing the reflection of the sun mirrored in the water of a jar, the fool thinks it is the sun itself. Similarly the stupid man, through delusion, identifies himself with the reflection of the Chit¹ caught in the Buddhi, which is its superimposition.

¹ Chit - The Ātman which is Consciousness Absolute.

219. Just as the wise man leaves aside the jar, the water and the reflection of the sun in it, and sees the self-luminous sun which illumines these three and is independent¹ of them.

¹ *Independent, etc. - These being merely its reflections, which serve to suggest the real sun.*

220-222. Similarly, discarding the body, the Buddhi and the reflection of the Chit in it, and realizing the Witness, the Self, the Consciousness Absolute, the cause of the manifestation of everything, which is hidden¹ in the recesses of the Buddhi, is distinct from the gross and subtle, eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading and extremely subtle, and which has neither interior nor exterior and is identical with oneself-fully realizing this true nature of oneself, one becomes free from sin, taint, death, and grief, and becomes the embodiment of Bliss. Illumined himself, he is afraid of none. For a seeker after liberation there is no other way to the breaking of the bonds of transmigration than the realization of the truth of one's own Self.

¹ *Hidden etc. - it is the purified Buddhi which catches a glimpse of the Ātman. The sense of various Śhruti passages of Advaitic import is reproduced in these śhlokas. The reader is specially referred to Bri.U. III viii 8. Tai.U. II 2, and Śhv.U. III. 8.*

223. The realization of one's identity with Brahman is the cause of liberation from the bonds of Samsāra, by means of which the wise man attains Brahman, the One without a second, the Bliss Absolute.

224. Once having realized Brahman, one no longer returns to the realm of transmigration. Therefore one must fully realize one's identity with Brahman.

225. Brahman is Existence, Consciousness, Infinity, pure, supreme, self-existent, eternal, and indivisible Bliss, not different (in reality) from the individual soul, and devoid of interior or exterior. It is (ever) triumphant.

226. It is this Supreme Oneness which alone is real, since there is nothing¹ else but the Self. Verily, there remains no other independent entity in the state of realization of the highest Truth.

¹ *Nothing, etc. - Everything but the Self is an appearance merely*

227. All this universe which through ignorance appears as of diverse forms, is nothing else but Brahman which is absolutely free¹ from all the limitations of human thought.

¹ *Free etc. - We imagine all sorts of things through ignorance, but Brahman is ever beyond them, and is the only Reality.*

228. A jar, though a modification of clay, is not different from it; everywhere the jar is essentially the same as the clay. Why then call it a jar? It is fictitious,¹ a fancied name merely.

¹ *Fictitious, etc. - Quoted in sense from Chh.U. VI i 4.*

229. None can demonstrate that the essence of a jar is something other than the clay (of which it is made) Hence the jar is merely

imagined (as separate) through delusion, and the component clay alone is the abiding reality in respect of it.

230. Similarly, the whole universe, being the effect of the real Brahman, is in reality nothing but Brahman. Its essence is That, and it does not exist apart from it. He who says it does is still under delusion - he babbles like¹ one asleep.

¹ *Like, etc. - That is, incoherently.*

231. This universe is verily Brahman - such is the august pronouncement of the Atharva Veda. Therefore this universe is nothing but Brahman, for that which is superimposed (on something) has no separate existence from its substratum.

¹ *The reference is to Mun.U. II ii 11. It is one of the Upaniṣhads belonging to the Atharva Veda.*

232. If the universe, as it is, be real there would be no cessation¹ of the dualistic element, the scriptures² would be falsified, and the Lord³ Himself would be guilty of an untruth. None of these three is considered either desirable or wholesome by the noble-minded.

¹ *No cessation, etc. - The world in that case could never be eliminated Hence duality with all its ugly features will persist.*

² *Scriptures, etc. - According to staunch Advaitins, the numerous Advaitic texts of the Śhrutis, comprising the highest philosophic thought, are alone considered 'as bearing out their true import, to which the rest of the Vedas must be subordinated*

³ *The Lord, etc. - Being the Revealer of the truths of the Śhrutis; Or the allusion may be to Śhrī Kṛiṣhṇa's words in the Gītā quoted In the next verse.*

233. The Lord, who knows¹ the secret of all things has supported this view in the words: "But² I am not in them"... "nor are the beings in Me."

¹ *Knows, etc. - Because He is Omniscient.*

² *But, etc - The reference is to the 4th and 5th verses of the 9th chapter of the Gītā, which declare that all existence owes its being to Brahman, which is its substratum, yet Absolute.*

234. If the universe be true, let it then be perceived in the state of deep sleep also. As it is not at all perceived, it must be unreal and false, like dreams.

235. Therefore the universe does not exist apart from the Supreme Self; and the perception of its separateness is false like the qualities¹ (of blueness, etc. in the sky). Has a superimposed attribute any meaning apart from its substratum? It is the substratum² which appears like that through delusion.

¹ *Qualities, etc.- See śhloka 195.*

² *Substratum, etc. - A rope appears as a snake. This idea is made clear in the next few śhlokas.*

236. Whatever a deluded man perceives through mistake is Brahman and Brahman alone. The silver is nothing but the mother-of-pearl. It is Brahman which is always considered as this universe, whereas that which is superimposed on Brahman, viz. the universe, is merely a name.

237-238. Hence whatever is manifested, viz. this universe, is the Supreme Brahman itself, the Real, the One without a second. pure, the

Essence of Consciousness, taintless, serene, devoid of beginning and end, beyond activity, the Essence of Bliss Absolute-transcending all the diversities created by Māyā or nescience, eternal, ever beyond the reach of pain, indivisible, immeasurable, formless, undifferentiated, nameless, immutable, self-luminous.

239. Sages realize the Supreme Truth, Brahman, in which there is no differentiation of knower, knowledge, and known, which is infinite, transcendent, and the Essence of Consciousness Absolute.

240. Which can be neither¹ thrown away nor taken up, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech, immeasurable, without beginning and end, the Whole, one's very Self, and of surpassing glory.

¹ *Neither, etc. - Because it is not a material thing, but one's very Self.*

Tat-tvam-asi –‘That Thou art’

241-242. If thus¹ the Śhruti, in the dictum “Thou art That” (Tat-Tvam-Asi), repeatedly establishes the absolute identity of Brahman (or Īśhvara) and Jīva, denoted by the terms That (Tat) and Thou (Tvam) respectively, divesting these terms of their relative associations, then it is the identity of their implied, not literal, meanings which is sought to be inculcated² for they are of attributes contradictory to each other - like the sun and a glow-worm, the king and a servant, the ocean and a well; or Mount Meru and an atom.

¹ *If thus - The reference is to the sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upaniṣhad, where Uddālaka Āruṇi tries to impress on his son, Śhvetaketu the identity of Jīva and Brahman in various ways.*

243. This contradiction between them is created by superimposition, and is not something real. This superimposition, in the case of Īśhvara (the Lord), is Māyā or nescience. which is the cause of Mahat¹ and the rest,² and in the case of the Jīva (the individual soul) - listen- consists of the five sheaths³ which are the effects of Māyā.

¹ *Mahat - See note on śhloka 123.*

² *The rest - The grosser manifestations that proceed from Māyā.*

³ *Five sheaths - See note on śhloka 125.*

244. These two are the superimpositions of Īśhvara and the Jīva respectively, and when these are perfectly eliminated, there is neither Īśhvara nor Jīva. A kingdom is the symbol of a king, and a shield of the soldier, and when these are taken away, there is neither¹ king nor soldier.

¹ *Neither, etc. - He is only a man then. Similarly, if we take away omniscience, omnipotence, etc. from Īśhvara and the deficiencies of knowledge, power, etc. from the Jīva, only Brahman remains as the substance of both.*

245. The Vedas¹ themselves in the words "Now then is the injunction", etc., repudiate the duality imagined in the Brahman. One must needs eliminate those two superimpositions by means of realization supported by the authority of the Vedas.

¹ *Veda, etc. - The reference is to Bṛi.U. II iii 6.*

246. Neither this gross nor this subtle universe (is the Ātman). Being imagined, they are not real-like the snake seen in the rope, and like dreams. Perfectly eliminating the objective world in this way by means

of reasoning, one should next realize the oneness that underlies Īśhvara and the Jīva.

247. Hence those two terms (Īśhwara and Jīva) must be carefully considered through their implied meanings, so that their absolute identity may be established. Neither the method of total rejection nor that of complete retention will do. One must reason it out through the process which combines the two.

¹ *There are three kinds of Lakṣhaṇā or implied meaning - the Jahati, the Ajahati and the Bhāga Lakṣhaṇā. The first is that in which one of the terms has to give up its primary meaning. For example, the phrase 'Gang'āyanām ghoṣham' does not mean that a village of cowherds is in the Gaṅgā but on the Gaṅgā. The second kind is that in which the primary meaning is retained, but something is supplied to make it clear; as the sentence 'śhveto ghavati' means "A white (horse) is running". In the third kind of Lakṣhaṇā each of the terms has to give up a part of its connotation. See the next śhloka.*

248-249. Just as in the sentence, "This is that Deva-datta," the identity is spoken of, eliminating the contradictory portions,¹ so in the sentence "Thou art That," the wise man must give up the contradictory elements on both sides and recognise the identity of Īśhwara and Jīva, noticing carefully the essence of both, which is Chit, Consciousness Absolute. Thus hundreds of scriptural texts inculcate the oneness and identity of Brahman and Jīva.

¹ *Contradictory portions - Such as the differences of time and place, etc*

250. Eliminating the not-Self, in the light of such passages as "It is not gross"¹, etc., (one realizes the Ātman), which is self-established,

unattached like the sky, and beyond the range of thought. Therefore dismiss this mere phantom of a body which thou perceivest and hast accepted as thy own self. By means of the purified understanding that thou art Brahman, realise thy own Self, the Consciousness Absolute.

¹ *Not gross, etc - The reference is to Bṛi.U. III. viii. 8-14*

251. All modifications of clay, such as a jar, which are always accepted by the mind as real, are (in reality) nothing but clay. Similarly, this entire universe which is produced from the real Brahman, is Brahman itself and nothing but That. Because there is nothing else whatever but Brahman, and That is the only self-existent Reality, our very Self, therefore art thou that serene, pure, Supreme Brahman, the One without a second.

252. As the place, time, objects, knower, etc. called up in dream are all unreal, so also is the world experienced herein the waking state, for it is all an effect of one's own ignorance. Because this body, the organs, the Prāṇas, egoism, etc. are also thus unreal, therefore art thou that serene, pure, Supreme Brahman, the One without a second.

253. (What is) erroneously supposed to exist in something, is, when the truth about it has been known, nothing but that substratum, and not at all different from it: The diversified dream universe (appears and) passes away in the dream itself. Does it appear on waking as something distinct from one's own Self?

254. That which is beyond caste and creed, family and lineage; devoid of name and form, merit and demerit; transcending space, time, and sense-objects - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

255. That Supreme Brahman which is beyond the range of all speech, but accessible to the eye of pure illumination; which is pure, the embodiment of Consciousness, the beginningless entity - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

256. That which is untouched by the six-fold wave', meditated upon by the Yogi's heart, but not grasped by the sense-organs, which the Buddhi cannot know, and which is unimpeachable - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

¹ *Six-fold wave - Viz. decay, death, hunger, thirst, grief and delusion which overtake the body and mind.*

257. That which is the substratum of the universe with its various subdivisions, which are all creations of delusion; which itself has no other support; which is distinct from the gross and subtle; which has no parts, and has verily no exemplar - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

258 That which is free from birth. growth, development, waste, disease, and death. which is indestructible; which is the cause of the projection, maintenance, and dissolution of the universe - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

259. That which is free from differentiation; whose essence is never non-existent; which is unmoved like the ocean without waves; the ever-free; of indivisible Form - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

260. That which, though One only, is the cause of the many; which refutes all other causes, but is itself without cause; distinct from Māyā and its effect, the universe; and independent - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

261. That which is free from duality; which is infinite and indestructible; distinct from the universe and Māyā, supreme, eternal; which is undying Bliss; taintless - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

262. That Reality which (though One) appears variously owing to delusion, taking on names and forms, attributes and changes, itself always unchanged, like gold in its modifications - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

263. That beyond which there is nothing; which shines even above Māyā, which again is superior to its effect, the universe; the inmost Self of all, free from differentiation; the Real Self, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute; infinite and immutable - that Brahman art thou, meditate on this in thy mind.

264. On the Truth inculcated above¹, one must oneself meditate in one's mind, through the intellect, by means of the recognized

arguments². By that means one will realise the Truth free from doubt etc. like water in the palm of one's hand.

¹ *Above - In the ten preceding śhlokas.*

² *Recognised argument: - That are in harmony with the Vedas.*

265. Realising in this body the Consciousness Absolute free from nescience and its effects - like the king in an army - and being ever established in thy own Self by resting on that Consciousness, merge the universe in Brahman.

266. In the cave¹ of the Buddhi there is the Brahman, distinct from the gross and subtle, the Existence Absolute, Supreme, the One without a second. For one² who lives in this cave as Brahman, O beloved, there is no more entrance into the mother's womb.

¹ *Cave - The intellect is often spoken of thus.*

² *For one, etc. - One who always identifies himself with Brahman has no more rebirth.*

Ridding Oneself of Attachments and Mis-identifications

267. Even after the Truth has been realized, there remains that strong, beginningless, obstinate impression that one is the agent and experiencer, which is the cause of one's transmigration. It has to be carefully removed by living in a state of constant identification with the Supreme Self. Sages call that liberation which is the attenuation¹ of Vāsanās (impressions) here and now.

¹ *Attenuation, etc. - Because the man who has no selfish desires easily attains Mukti.*

268. The idea of “me and mine” in the body, organs, etc., which are the non-Self - this superimposition the wise man must put a stop to, by identifying himself with the Ātman.

269. Realizing thy own Inmost Self, the Witness of the Buddhi and its modifications, and constantly revolving the positive thought, “I am That”, conquer this identification with the non-Self.

270. Relinquishing the observance of social formalities. giving up all ideas of trimming up the body, and avoiding too much engrossment with the scriptures, do away with the superimposition that has come upon thyself.

271. Owing to the desire to run after society, the passion for too much study of the scriptures and the desire to keep the body in good trim, people cannot attain to proper realization.

272. For one who seeks deliverance from the prison of this world (Saṃsāra), those three desires have been designated by the wise as strong iron fetters to shackle one’s feet. He who is free from them truly attains to liberation.

273. The lovely odour of the Agaru (agalochum) which is hidden by a powerful stench due to its contact with water, etc., manifests itself as soon as the foreign smell has been fully removed by rubbing.

274. Like the fragrance of the sandal-wood,¹ the perfume of the Supreme Self, which is covered with the dust of endless, violent

impressions² imbedded in the mind, when purified by the constant friction of Consciousness, is (again) clearly perceived.

¹ *Sandal-wood - The Agarū of the previous śhloka is meant.*

² *Impressions - Vāsanā in Sanskrit means both odour and impression or desire.*

275. The desire for Self-realization is obscured by innumerable desires for things other than the Self. When they have been destroyed by constant attachment to the Self, the Ātman clearly manifests itself of its own accord.

276 As the mind becomes gradually established in the inmost Self, it proportionately gives up the desires for external objects. And when all such desires have been eliminated, there takes place the unobstructed realization of the Ātman.

277. The Yogi's mind dies, being constantly fixed on his own Self. Thence follows the cessation of desires. Therefore do away with thy superimposition.

278. Tamas is destroyed by both Sattva and Rajas, Rajas by Sattva, and Sattva by the Pure (Brahman). Therefore do away with thy superimposition through the help of Sattva.

279. Knowing for certain that the Prārabdha¹ work will maintain this body, remain quiet and do away with thy superimposition carefully and with patience.

¹ *Prārabdha* - The resultant of past work that has led to the present birth. When this is worked out, the body fails, and *Videha-mukti* –‘liberation beyond the body’ is the result.

280. “I am not the individual soul, but the Supreme Brahman” - eliminating thus all that is not-Self, do away with thy superimposition, which has come through the momentum of (past) impressions.

221. Realizing thyself as the Self of all by means of scripture, reasoning, and thy own realization, do away with thy superimposition, even though a trace of it seems to remain.

282. The sage has no connection whatever with action, since he has no idea of accepting or giving up. Therefore, through constant engrossment on the Brahman, do away with thy superimposition.

283. Through the realization of the identity of Brahman and the soul, resulting from such great dicta as “Thou art That”, do away with thy superimposition with a view to strengthening thy identification with Brahman.

284. Until the identification with this body is completely rooted out, do away with thy superimposition with watchfulness and a concentrated mind.

285. So long as even a dream-like perception of the universe and souls¹ persists, do away with thy superimposition, O learned man, without the least break.

¹ *Universe and souls - That is, plurality.*

286. Without giving the slightest chance to oblivion on account of sleep, concern in secular matters, or the sense objects, reflect on the Self in thy mind.

287. Shunning¹ from a safe distance the body which has come from impurities of the parents and itself consists of flesh and impurities - as one does an outcast- be thou Brahman and realize the consummation of thy life.

¹ *Shunning - That is, giving up all identification with the body which is very impure.*

288. Merging the finite soul in the Supreme Self, like the space enclosed by a jar in the infinite space, by means of meditation on their identity, always keep quiet, O sage.

289. Becoming thyself the self-effulgent Brahman, the substratum of all phenomena-as that Reality, give up¹ both the macrocosm and the microcosm, like two filthy receptacles.

¹ *Give up, etc - Cease to care for the whole universe, which is other than the Self, before whose majesty it pales into insignificance.*

290. Transferring the identification now rooted in the body to the Ātman, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, and discarding¹ the subtle body, be thou ever alone, independent.

¹ *Discarding- Ceasing to identify thyself with.*

291. That in which there is this reflection of the universe, as of a city in a mirror - that Brahman art thou; knowing this thou wilt attain the consummation of thy life.

292. That which is real and one's own primeval Essence, that Consciousness and Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, which is beyond form and activity-attaining That, one should cease to identify oneself with one's false bodies,¹ like² an actor giving up his assumed mask.

¹ *False bodies - The gross, subtle, and causal bodies, which are superimpositions upon the Ātman.*

² *Like, etc - when the actor has played his part, he is simply a man as the man of realization is one with Brahman, his real Essence.*

293. This objective universe is absolutely unreal; neither is egoism a reality, for it is observed to be momentary. How can the perception,¹ "I know all," be true of egoism, etc., which are momentary?

¹ *Perception, etc.- Man's inherent belief in the omniscience of the Ātman is meant.*

294. But the real "I" is that which witnesses the ego and the rest. It exists¹ always, even in the state of profound sleep. The Śhruti² itself says, "It is birthless, eternal", etc. Therefore the Paramātmān is different from the gross and subtle bodies.

¹ *Exists, etc. - As the witness of all experience.*

² *Śhruti, etc. - The reference is to the Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, I ii. 18.*

295. The knower of all changes in things subject no change should necessarily be eternal and changeless. The unreality¹ of the gross and subtle bodies is again and again clearly observed in imagination, dream, and profound sleep.

¹ *The unreality, etc. - Because the subtle body is not perceived in the Suṣhṭi state, and the gross body in the dream and Suṣhṭi state.*

296. Therefore give up the identification with this lump of flesh, the gross body, as well as with the ego or the subtle body, which are both imagined¹ by the Buddhi. Realizing thy own Self, which is Consciousness Absolute and not to be denied² in the past, present or future, attain to Peace.

¹ *Imagined, etc. - Because they are not in the Ātman and our ignorance conjures them up through the Buddhi or determinative faculty.*

² *Denied, etc. - Because the Ātman transcends time.*

297. Cease to identify thyself with family, lineage, name, form, and order of life, which pertain to the body that is like a rotten corpse¹ (to a man of realization). Similarly, giving up ideas of agency and so forth, which are attributes² of the subtle body, be the Essence of Bliss Absolute.

¹ *Rotten corpse - We assume the limitations of the body only through an erroneous identification, and when that ceases on realization, the body is useless like a corpse, fit to be shunned.*

² *Attributes, etc. - The Jīva must realize his identity with the Ātman alone.*

Egoism, Sense-objects and the Unreal

298. Other obstacles¹ are also observed to exist for men, which lead to transmigration. The root of them, for the above reasons, is the first modification of nescience called egoism.

¹ *Obstacles - Such as desires.*

² *For, etc. - Because but for egoism, which is a product of nescience, there would not be any false identification, and therefore no serious trouble.*

299. So long as one has any relation to this wicked ego, there should not be the least talk about liberation, which is unique.

300. Freed from the clutches¹ of egoism, as the moon from those of Rāhu, man attains to his real nature, and becomes pure, infinite, ever blissful, and self-luminous.

¹ *Clutches - Graha in Sanskrit means both planet and seizing. The eclipse of the sun and moon are popularly ascribed by Hindu mythology to the periodical attacks of their enemy Rāhu, a demon whom they prevented from drinking the nectar.*

301. That which has been created by the Buddhi extremely deluded by nescience, and which is perceived in this body as "I am¹ such and such"-when that egoism is totally destroyed, one attains an unobstructed identity with Brahman.

¹ *I am, etc - I am strong or weak, learned or ignorant, happy or miserable, and so forth.*

302. The treasure of the Bliss of Brahman is coiled round by the mighty and dreadful serpent of egoism, and guarded for its own use by means of its three fierce hoods consisting of the three Guṇas. Only the wise

man, destroying it by severing its three hoods with the great sword of realization in accordance with the teachings of the Śhrutis, can enjoy this treasure which confers bliss.

In this śhloka egoism is compared to a three-headed snake Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas - balance, activity, and inertia - are spoken of as its three hoods. The way to destroy it is through realization. When egoism is gone, one is conscious of his real nature as Brahman. The appropriateness of the metaphors is obvious.

303. As long as there is a trace of poisoning left in the body, how can one hope for recovery? Similar is the effect of egoism on the Yogi's liberation.

304. Through the complete cessation of egoism, through the stoppage of the diverse mental waves' due to it, and through the discrimination of the inner Reality, one realizes that Reality as "I am This".

¹ *Mental waves - Such as doubt and wrong notion.*

305. Give up immediately thy identification with egoism, the agent, which is by its nature a modification,¹ is endued² with a reflection of the Self, and diverts one from being established in the Self-identifying thyself with which thou hast come by this relative existence³ full of the miseries of birth, decay, and death, though thou art the Witness, the Essence of Consciousness and Bliss Absolute.

¹ *Modification - Of nescience, and therefore non-permanent*

² *Endued, etc. - This makes it look intelligent.*

³ *Relative existence - Samsāra or transmigration*

306. But for thy identification with that egoism there can never be any transmigration for thee who art immutable and eternally the same, the Consciousness Absolute, omnipresent, the Bliss Absolute, and of untarnished glory.¹

¹ *Untarnished glory - Compare Śhv.U. VI 19.*

307. Therefore destroying this egoism, thy enemy - which appears like a thorn sticking in the throat of a man taking his meal - with the great sword¹ of realization, enjoy directly and freely the bliss of thy own empire, the majesty of the Ātman.

¹ *Great sword - The phrase, as it is, is applicable to only one side of the comparison, namely, "the enemy" but not to "the thorn", for which it should be interpreted to mean "a sharp knife".*

308. Checking the activities of egoism¹, etc., and giving up all attachment through the realization of the Supreme Reality, be free from all duality through the enjoyment of the Bliss of Self, and remain quiet in Brahman, for thou hast attained thy infinite nature.

¹ *Egoism, etc. - Egoism with its two forms, "I" and "mine".*

309. Even though completely rooted out, this terrible egoism, if revolved in the mind even for a moment, returns to life and creates hundreds of troubles, like a cloud ushered in by the wind during the rainy season.

310. Overpowering this enemy, egoism, not a moment's respite should be given to it by thinking on the sense objects. That is verily the cause

of its coming back to life, like water to a citron tree that has almost dried up.

311. He alone who has identified himself with the body is greedy after sense-pleasures. How can one, devoid of the body-idea, be greedy (like him)? Hence the tendency to think of the sense-objects is verily the cause of the bondage of transmigration, giving rise to an idea of distinction or duality

312. When the effects¹ are developed, the seed² also is observed to be such, and when the effects are destroyed, the seed also is seen to be destroyed. Therefore one must subdue the effects.

¹ *Effects - actions done with selfish motives*

² *Seed - Desire for sense-pleasures The next śhloka explains this.*

313. Through the increase of desires selfish work increases, and when there is an increase of selfish work, there is an increase of desire also; and man's transmigration is never at an end.

314. For the sake of breaking the chain of transmigration, the Sannyāsin should burn to ashes those two; for thinking of the sense-objects and doing selfish acts lead to an increase of desires.

315-316. Augmented by these two, desires produce one's transmigration. The way to destroy these three,¹ however, lies in looking upon everything, under all circumstances, always, everywhere, and in all respects, as Brahman and Brahman alone. Through the

strengthening of the longing to be one with Brahman, those three are annihilated.

¹ *Those three - Selfish work, dwelling on the sense-objects, and the hankering after them. The next śhloka gives the steps to realization*

317. With the cessation of selfish action the brooding on the sense-objects is stopped, which is followed by the destruction of desires. The destruction of desires is liberation, and this is considered to be Liberation-in-life.

318. When the desire for realizing Brahman has a marked manifestation, the egoistic desires readily vanish, as the most intense darkness completely vanishes before the glow of the rising sun.

319. Darkness and the numerous evils that attend on it are not noticed when the sun rises. Similarly, on the realization of the Bliss Absolute, there is neither bondage nor the least trace of misery.

320. Causing the external¹ and internal universes, which are now perceived, to vanish,² and meditating on the Reality, the Bliss embodied, one should pass one's time watchfully, if there be any residue of Prārabdha work left.

¹ *External, etc. - The worlds of matter and thought. The former exists outside man, whereas the latter he himself creates by the power of thought.*

² *Vanish - Through the eliminating process, N'eti, N'eti - Brahman is not this, not this, etc*

321. One should never be careless in one's steadfastness to Brahman. Bhagavān Sanatkumāra¹, who is Brahmā's son², has called inadvertence death itself.

¹ *Sanatkumāra, etc. - In the celebrated Sanatsujāta-Samvāda (the conversation between Sanatkumāra and King Dhṛitarāṣhtra comprising chapters 40-45 of the Udyoga Parvan, Mahābhārata, there occur words like the following; "I call inadvertence death itself," etc.*

² *Brahmā's son - And therefore a high authority on spiritual matters.*

322. There is no greater danger for the Jñānin –'sage' than carelessness about his own real nature. From this comes delusion, thence egoism; this is followed by bondage, and then comes misery.

323. Finding even a wise man hankering after the sense-objects, oblivion torments him through the evil propensities of the Buddhi, as a woman does her doting paramour.

The memory of his sweetheart haunts the man, and he is miserable.

324. As sedge, even if removed, does not stay away for a moment, but covers the water again, so Māyā or nescience also covers even a wise man, if he is averse to meditation on the Self.

The sedge has to be prevented from closing in by means of a bamboo or some other thing. Meditation also is necessary to keep nescience away.

325. If the mind ever so slightly strays from the Ideal¹ and becomes outgoing, then it goes down and down, just as a play-ball inadvertently dropped on the staircase bounces down from one step to another.

¹ *Ideal - Brahman. Cf. Mun.U. ii 3-4. What a terrible and graphic warning to happy-go-lucky aspirants!*

326. The mind that is attached to the sense-objects reflects on their qualities; from mature reflection arises desire, and after desiring, a man sets about having that thing.

An echo of Gītā, II 62-63.

327. Hence to the discriminating knower of Brahman there is no worse death than inadvertence with regard to concentration. But the man who is concentrated attains complete success. (Therefore) carefully concentrate thy mind (on Brahman).

328. Through inadvertence a man deviates from his real nature, and the man who has thus deviated falls. The fallen man comes to ruin, and is scarcely seen to rise again.

329. Therefore one should give up reflecting on the sense-objects, which is the root of all mischief. He who is completely aloof even while living, is alone aloof after the dissolution of the body. The Yajur Veda¹ declares that there is fear for one who sees the least bit of distinction.

¹ *Yajur Veda, etc - The Taittiriya Upaniṣhad (II vii.) which belongs to the Yajur Veda.*

330. Whenever the wise man sees the least difference in the infinite Brahman, at once that which he sees as different through mistake, becomes a source of terror to him.

331. He who identifies himself with the objective universe which has been denied by hundreds of Śhṛutis, Smṛitis and reasonings,

experiences¹ misery after misery like a thief, for he does something forbidden.

¹ *Experiences, etc. - The thief is punished for stealing with imprisonment, etc., and the man who identifies himself with the not-Self suffers infinite miseries.*

332. He who has devoted himself to meditation on the Reality (Brahman) and is free from nescience, attains to the eternal glory of the Ātman. But he who dwells on the unreal (the universe) is destroyed. That this is so is evidenced in the case of one¹ who is not a thief and one who is a thief.

¹ *One, etc. - The allusion is to the hot-axe test applied in ancient times to persons charged with theft, etc. An axe would be made red-hot and the accused person would be asked to hold it in his hand. If the hand was not burnt, it was a proof that he was innocent, but if it was burnt, he would be convicted and subjected to the usual punishments. The Chh.U. VI xvi. makes use of such a parable, to which the present śhloka refers.*

333. The Sannyāsin should give up dwelling on the unreal, which causes bondage, and should always fix his thoughts on the Ātman as “I myself am This”. For steadfastness in Brahman through the realization of one’s identity with it gives rise to bliss and thoroughly removes the misery born of nescience, which one experiences (in the ignorant state).

334. The dwelling on external objects will only intensify its fruits, viz. furthering evil propensities, which grow worse and worse. Knowing this through discrimination, one should avoid external objects and constantly apply oneself to meditation on the Ātman.

335. When the external world is shut out, the mind is cheerful, and cheerfulness of the mind brings on the vision of the Paramātman. When it is perfectly realized, the chain of birth and death is broken. Hence the shutting out of the external world is the stepping-stone to liberation.

336. Where is the man who being learned, able to discriminate the real from the unreal, believing the Vedas as authority, fixing his gaze on the Ātman, the Supreme Reality, and being a seeker after liberation, will, like¹ a Child, consciously have recourse to the unreal (the universe) which will cause his fall ‘?

¹ *Like, etc. - That is, foolishly.*

337. There is no liberation for one who has attachment to the body, etc., and the liberated man has no identification with the body, etc. The sleeping man is not awake, nor is the waking man asleep, for these two states are contradictory in nature.

338. He is free who, knowing through his mind the Self in moving and unmoving objects and observing it as their substratum, gives up all superimpositions and remains as the Absolute and the infinite Self.

339. To realize the whole universe as the Self is the means of getting rid of bondage. There is nothing higher than identifying the universe with the Self. One realizes this state by excluding the objective world through steadfastness in the eternal Ātman.

340. How is the exclusion of the objective world possible for one who lives identified with the body, whose mind is attached to the perception of external objects, and who performs various acts for that end? This exclusion should be carefully practised by sages who have renounced all kinds of duties¹ and actions² and objects³ who are passionately devoted to the eternal Ātman, and who wish to possess an undying bliss.

¹ *Duties - Belonging to various stations in life.*

² *Actions - Those that are enjoined and forbidden by the scriptures as also actions undertaken for selfish ends.*

³ *Objects –Sense-objects*

341. To the Sannyāsin who has gone through the act of hearing,¹ the Śhruti passage, “Calm,² self-controlled,” etc. prescribes Samādhi for realizing the identity of the universe with the Self.

¹ *Hearing - The truth from the lips of the Guru, after the prescribed manner.*

² *Calm, etc. - The reference is In Bṛi.U. IV. iv. 23.*

342. Even wise men cannot suddenly destroy egoism after it has once become strong, barring those who are perfectly calm through the Nirvikalpa Samādhi¹. Desires are verily the effect of innumerable births.

¹ *Nirvikalpa Samādhi - The highest kind of Samādhi in which all relative ideas are transcended, and the Ātman is realized as it is. The term has been already explained.*

343. The projecting power, through the aid of the veiling power, connects a man with the siren of an egoistic idea, and distracts him through the attributes¹ of that.

The veiling and projecting powers of the Prakṛiti or Māyā have already been dealt with. See verses 111 and 113.

¹ *Attributes, etc. - Such ideas as, "I am the doer".*

344. It is extremely difficult to conquer the projecting power unless the veiling power is perfectly rooted out. And that covering over the Ātman naturally vanishes when the subject is perfectly distinguished from the objects, like milk from water. But the victory is undoubtedly (complete and) free from obstacles when there is no oscillation of the mind due to the unreal sense-objects.

345. Perfect discrimination brought on by direct realization distinguishes the true nature of the subject from that of the object, and breaks the bond of delusion created by Māyā; and there is no more transmigration for one who has been freed from this.

346. The knowledge of the identity of the Jīva and Brahman entirely consumes the impenetrable forest of Avidyā or nescience. For one who has realized the state of Oneness, is there any seed left for future transmigration?

347. The veil that hides Truth vanishes only when the Reality is fully realized. (Thence follow) the destruction of false knowledge and the cessation of misery brought about by its distracting influence.

348. These three are observed in the case of a rope when its real nature is fully known. Therefore the wise man should know the real nature of things for the breaking of his bonds.

349-350. Like iron¹ manifesting as sparks through contact with fire; the Buddhi manifests itself as knower and known through the inherence of Brahman. As these two (knower and known), the effects of the Buddhi, are observed to be unreal in the case of delusion dream and fancy, similarly, the modifications of the Prakṛiti, from egoism down to the body and all sense-objects are also unreal.² Their unreality is verily due to their being subject to change every moment. But the Ātman never changes.

¹ *Like iron, etc - Iron itself is never incandescent, it is fire that makes it appear so. Similarly, the intelligence of Brahman is imparted to the Intellect. The word mātrādi can be disjoined in two ways- as mātra + Ādi or as Māṭṛu + Ādi; the first gives the meaning of sparks, and the second that of knower and known, ie. subject and object*

² *Unreal - Because they, too, are effects and derivatives of the Prakṛiti and depend on their perception by the Buddhi.*

351. The Supreme Self is ever of the nature of eternal, indivisible knowledge, one without a second, the Witness of the Buddhi and the rest, distinct from the gross and subtle, the implied meaning¹ of the term and idea “I”, the embodiment of inward, eternal bliss.

¹ *implied meaning - Divesting it of its accidental conditions of time and circumstances. See note on śhloka 241.*

352. The wise man, discriminating thus the real and the unreal, ascertaining the Truth¹ through his illuminative insight, and realizing his

own Self which is Consciousness Absolute, gets rid of the obstructions¹ and directly attains Peace.

¹ *Truth - The identity of the Jīva and Brahman.*

² *Obstructions - mentioned in śhloka 347*

353. When the Ātman, the One without a second, is realized by means of the Nirvikalpa Samādhi, then the heart's knot of ignorance is totally destroyed.

354. Such imaginations as "thou", "I" or "this" take place through the defects of the Buddhi. But when the Paramātman, the Absolute, the One without a second, manifests itself in Samādhi all such imaginations are dissolved for the aspirant, through the realization of the truth of Brahman.

The Power of Nirvikalpa Samādhi

355. The Sannyāsin, calm, self-controlled, perfectly retiring from the sense-world, forbearing,¹ and devoting himself to the practice of Samādhi, always reflects on his own self being the Self of the whole universe. Destroying completely by this means the imaginations which are due to the gloom of ignorance, he lives blissfully as Brahman, free from action and the oscillations of the mind.

¹ *Forbearing - Having forbearance or fortitude*

356. Those alone are free from the bondage of transmigration who, attaining Samādhi, have merged the objective world, the sense-organs,

the mind, nay, the very ego, in the Ātman, the Consciousness Absolute- and none else, who but dabble¹ in second-hand talks.

¹ *Dabble, etc - Reading them from books, etc.*

357. Through the diversity of the supervening conditions (Upādhis), a man is apt to think of himself as also full of diversity; but with the removal¹ of these he is again his own Self, the immutable. Therefore the wise man should ever devote himself to the practice of Nirvikalpa Samādhi for the dissolution of the Upādhis.

¹ *Removal, etc. - Before a rose the crystal also looks red, but when the rose is removed, it is again transparent*

358. The man who is attached to the Real becomes Real, through his one-pointed devotion. Just as the cockroach¹ thinking intently on the Bhramara is transformed into a Bhramara.

¹ *Cockroach, etc.-The reference is to the popular belief that the cockroach, through fright, does actually turn green when caught by the worm known as Bhramara-kīta*

359. Just as the cockroach, giving up the attachment to all other actions, thinks intently on the Bhramara and becomes transformed into that worm, exactly in the same manner the Yogī, meditating on the truth of the Paramātman, attains it through his one-pointed devotion to That.

360. The truth of the Paramātman is extremely subtle, and cannot be reached by the gross outgoing tendency of the mind. It is only

accessible to noble souls with perfectly pure minds, by means of Samādhi brought on by an extraordinary fineness of the mental state.

361. As gold purified by thorough heating on the fire gives up its impurities and attains to its own lustre, so the mind, through meditation, gives up its impurities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and attains to the reality of Brahman.

362. When the mind, thus purified by constant practice, is merged in Brahman, then Samādhi passes on from the Savikalpa –‘conceptual’ to the Nirvikalpa –‘non-conceptual’ stage, and leads directly to the realization of the Bliss of Brahman, the One without a second.

363. By this Samādhi are destroyed all desires which are like knots, all work is at an end, and inside and out there takes place everywhere and always the spontaneous manifestation of one’s real nature.

364. Reflection should be considered a hundred times superior to hearing, and meditation a hundred thousand times superior even to reflection, but the Nirvikalpa Samādhi is infinite in its results.

365. By the Nirvikalpa Samādhi the truth of Brahman is clearly and definitely realised, but not otherwise, for then the mind, being unstable by nature, is apt to be mixed up with other perceptions.

366. Hence with the mind calm and the senses controlled always drown the mind in the Supreme Self that is within, and through the

realization of thy identity with that Reality destroy the darkness created by Nescience, which is without beginning.

Vairāgya – ‘Dispassion’

367. The first steps to Yoga are control of speech, non-receiving of gifts, entertaining of no expectations, freedom from activity, and always living in a retired place.

368. Living in a retired place serves to control the sense-organs, control of the senses helps to control the mind, through control of the mind egoism is destroyed; and this again gives the Yogi an unbroken realization of the Bliss of Brahman. Therefore the man of reflection should always strive only to control the mind.

369. Restrain speech¹ in the Manas, and restrain Manas in the Buddhi; this again restrain in the Witness² of Buddhi, and merging that also in the Infinite Absolute Self, attain to supreme Peace.

¹ *Speech – this implies all the sense-organs.*

² *That is, the Jīvātman or individual aspect of the Self.*

In this śhloka, which reproduces in part Kat.U. I iii 13, one is asked to ascend higher and higher, restraining successively the sense-activities and mental activities, from the gross to the fine, till at last one is lost in Samādhi.

370. The body, Prāṇas, organs, Manas, Buddhi and the rest — with whichever of these supervening adjuncts the mind is associated, the Yogi is transformed, as it were, into that.

371. When this is stopped, the man of reflection is found to be easily detached from everything, and to get the experience of an abundance of everlasting Bliss.

372. It is the man of dispassion (Vairāgya) who is fit for this internal as well as external renunciation; for the dispassionate man, out of the desire to be free, relinquishes both internal and external attachment.

373. It is only the dispassionate man who, being thoroughly grounded in Brahman, can give up the external attachment to the sense-objects and the internal attachment for egoism¹, etc.

¹ *Egoism, etc. – That is, all modifications of the mind.*

374. Know, O wise man, dispassion and discrimination to be like the two wings of a bird in the case of an aspirant. Unless both are there, none can, with the help of either one, reach the creeper of Liberation that grows, as it were, on the top of an edifice.

Mukti has been compared to a creeper growing on the top of a tall building, a temple for instance, since it is inaccessible to the ordinary man.

375. The extremely dispassionate man alone has Samādhi, and the man of Samādhi alone gets steady realization; the man who has realised the Truth is alone free from bondage, and the free soul only experiences eternal Bliss.

376. For the man of self-control I do not find any better instrument of happiness than dispassion, and if that is coupled with a highly pure

realization of the Self, it conduces to the suzerainty¹ of absolute Independence; and since this is the gateway to the damsel of everlasting liberation, therefore for thy welfare, be dispassionate both internally and externally, and always fix thy mind on the eternal Self.

¹ *Suzerainty, etc. – Because the realization of the Self, the One without a second, is the real independence, for it is everlasting bliss, which there is nobody to dispute.*

377. Sever thy craving for the sense-objects, which are like poison, for it is the very image of death, and giving up thy pride of caste, family and order of life, fling actions to a distance. Give up thy identification with such unreal things as the body, and fix thy mind on the Ātman. For thou art really the Witness, Brahman, unshackled by the mind, the One without a second, and Supreme.

378. Fixing the mind firmly on the Ideal, Brahman, and restraining¹ the external organs in their respective centres; with the body held steady and taking no thought for its maintenance; attaining identity with Brahman and being one with It — always drink joyfully of the Bliss of Brahman in thy own Self, without a break. What is the use of other things which are entirely hollow?

¹ *Restraining, etc. – That is, not allowing them to go outward.*

² *Other things – Pursued as a means of happiness.*

The True Nature of the Self

379. Giving up the thought of the non-Self which is evil and productive of misery, think of the Self, the Bliss Absolute, which conduces to Liberation.

380. Here shines eternally the Ātman, the Self-effulgent Witness of everything, which has the Buddhi for Its seat. Making this Ātman which is distinct from the unreal, the goal, meditate on It as thy own Self, excluding all other thought.

381. Reflecting on this Ātman continuously and without any foreign thought intervening, one must distinctly realise It to be one's real Self.

382. Strengthening one's identification with This, and giving up that with egoism and the rest, one must live without any concern for them, as if they were trifling things, like a cracked jar or the like.

383. Fixing the purified mind in the Self, the Witness, the Consciousness Absolute, and slowly making it still, one must then realise one's own infinite Self.

384. One should behold the Ātman, the Indivisible and Infinite, free from all limiting adjuncts such as the body, organs, Prāṇas, Manas and egoism, which are creations of one's own ignorance— like the infinite sky¹.

¹ *Infinite sky – Which is one and indivisible, despite the jars and other things which apparently enclose it. See the next śhloka.*

385. The sky, divested of the hundreds of limiting adjuncts such as a jar, a pitcher, a receptacle for grains or a needle, is one, and not diverse; exactly in a similar way the pure Brahman, when divested of egoism etc., is verily One.

386. The limiting adjuncts from Brahmā¹ down to a clump of grass are all wholly unreal. Therefore one should realise one's own Infinite Self as the only Principle.

¹ *From Brahmā, etc. – Even the position of Creator is a passing phase of the Self, which is greater than all Its conditions.*

387. That in which something is imagined to exist through error, is, when rightly discriminated, that thing itself, and not distinct from it. When the error is gone, the reality about the snake falsely perceived becomes the rope. Similarly¹ the universe is in reality the Ātman.

¹ *Similarly, etc. – The rope is always the rope and never actually turns into a snake; similarly the universe is always Brahman.*

388. The Self is¹ Brahma, the Self is Vishnu, the Self is Indra, the Self is Shiva; the Self is all this universe. Nothing exists except the Self.

¹ *Is – That is, appears as...*

389. The Self is within, and the Self is without; the Self is before and the Self is behind; the Self is in the south, and the Self is in the north; the Self likewise is above as also below.

An echo of Mun.U. II ii 11

390. As the wave, the foam, the whirlpool, the bubble, etc., are all in essence but water, similarly the Chit (Consciousness Absolute) is all this, from¹ the body up to egoism. Everything is verily the Chit, homogeneous and pure.

¹ *From, etc. – See śhloka 384*

391. All this universe known through speech and mind is nothing but Brahman; there is nothing besides Brahman, which exists beyond the utmost range of the Prakṛiti. Are the pitcher¹, jug, jar, etc., known to be distinct from the clay of which they are composed? It is the deluded man who talks of "thou" and "I", as an effect of the wine of Māyā.

¹ *Pitcher, etc. – The difference, if any, is only in name and form.*

392. The Śhruti, in the passage, "Where¹ one sees nothing else", etc., declares by an accumulation of verbs the absence of duality, in order to remove the false superimpositions².

¹ *Where, etc. – The reference is to Chh.U. VII xxiv 1 – 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else, that is the Infinite'. That is, Brahman is the only Reality.*

² *False superimpositions – That is, considering the knower, knowledge and known to be distinct entities.*

393. The Supreme Brahman is, like the sky, pure, absolute, infinite, motionless and changeless, devoid of interior or exterior, the One Existence, without a second, and is One's own Self. Is there any other¹ object of knowledge?

¹ *Any other – In other words, Brahman is both subject and object.*

394. What is the use of dilating on this subject? The Jīva is no other than Brahman; this whole extended universe is Brahman Itself; the Śhruti inculcates the Brahman without a second; and it is an indubitable fact that people of enlightened minds who know their identity with Brahman and have given up their connection with the

objective world, live palpably unified with Brahman as Eternal Consciousness and Bliss.

395. (First) destroy¹ the hopes raised by egoism in this filthy gross body, then do the same forcibly with the air-like subtle body; and realising Brahman, the embodiment of eternal Bliss — whose glories the Scriptures proclaim — as thy own Self, live as Brahman.

¹ *Destroy, etc. – Both the gross and subtle bodies are coverings over the Ātman, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute and freedom consists in going beyond them.*

396. So long as man has any regard for this corpse-like body, he is impure, and suffers¹ from his enemies as also from birth, death and disease; but when he thinks of himself as pure, as the essence of good and immovable, he assuredly becomes free from them; the Śhrutis² also say this.

¹ *Suffers from his enemies, etc. – Compare Bṛi.U. II iv 6 – ‘The Brāhmanas oust him who sees them as different from himself’ etc, and Bṛi.U. I iv 2 – ‘So long as there is a second, there is fear’.*

² *Śhrutis, etc. – For example Chh.U. VIII xii 1 – ‘This body is unmortal, O Indra’, etc.*

397. By the elimination of all apparent existences¹ superimposed on the soul, the supreme Brahman, Infinite, the One without a second and beyond action, remains as Itself².

¹ *Apparent existences – Such as egoism.*

² *As Itself – In Its own essence.*

398. When the mind-functions are merged¹ in the Paramātman, the Brahman, the Absolute, none of this phenomenal world² is seen, whence it is reduced to mere talk³.

¹ *Merged – Through the Nirvikalpa Samādhi*

² *Phenomenal world – Created by name and form, hence unreal.*

³ *Mere talk – On the lips of others, who are ignorant. Compare Chh.U. VI i 4 – ‘All modifications are mere names and efforts of speech’, etc.*

399. In the One Entity (Brahman) the conception of the universe is a mere phantom. Whence can there be any diversity in That which is changeless, formless and Absolute?

400. In the One Entity devoid of the concepts of seer¹, seeing and seen — which is changeless, formless and Absolute — whence can there be any diversity?

¹ *Seer, etc. – Of which the phenomenal world consists.*

401. In the One Entity which is changeless, formless and Absolute, and which is perfectly all-pervading and motionless like the ocean after the dissolution of the universe, whence can there be any diversity?

402. Where the root of delusion¹ is dissolved like darkness in light — in the supreme Reality, the One without a second, the Absolute — whence can there be any diversity?

¹ *Root of delusion – Ignorance.*

403. How can the talk of diversity apply to the Supreme Reality which is one and homogeneous? Who has ever observed diversity in the unmixed bliss of the state of profound sleep?

404. Even before the realization of the highest Truth, the universe does not exist in the Absolute Brahman, the Essence of Existence. In none of the three states of time¹ is the snake ever observed in the rope, nor a drop of water in the mirage.

¹ *Three states of time – Past, present and future.*

405. The Śhrutis¹ themselves declare that this dualistic universe is but a delusion from the standpoint of Absolute Truth. This is also experienced in the state of dreamless sleep.

¹ *Śhrutis – Kat.U. II ii 11, Bri.U. II iv 14, Muṇ.U. II ii, Chh.U. VI xiv, etc.*

406. That which is superimposed upon something else is observed by the wise to be identical with the substratum, as in the case of the rope appearing as the snake. The apparent difference¹ depends² solely on error.

¹ *Apparent difference – Noticed by the ignorant.*

² *Depends, etc. – That is, lasts only so long as the error persists.*

407. This apparent universe has its root in the mind, and never persists after the mind is annihilated. Therefore dissolve the mind by concentrating it on the Supreme Self, which is thy inmost Essence.

408. The wise man realises in his heart¹, through Samādhi, the Infinite Brahman, which is something² of the nature of eternal Consciousness

and absolute Bliss, which has no exemplar, which transcends all limitations, is ever free and without activity, and which is like the limitless sky, indivisible and absolute.

¹ *Heart – Stands for the Buddhi.*

² *Something – Which is inexpressible in terms of speech or thought.*

409. The wise man realises in his heart, through Samādhi, the Infinite Brahman, which is devoid of the ideas of cause and effect, which is the Reality beyond all imaginations, homogeneous, matchless, beyond the range of proofs¹, established² by the pronouncements of the Vedas, and ever familiar³ to us as the sense of the ego.

¹ *Proofs – Other than revelation, viz. direct perception and inference. Revelation also merely hints at it.*

² *Established, etc. – We cannot deny the Self, for the Vedas speak of it.*

³ *Ever familiar, etc. - Nobody can ever conceive that he is not. For a discussion on the subject, refer to the Śhārīraka Bhāṣya on the Brahma Sutras, 1 & 2.*

410. The wise man realises in his heart, through Samādhi, the Infinite Brahman, which is undecaying and immortal, the positive Entity¹ which precludes all negations, which resembles the placid ocean and is without a name, in which there are neither merits nor demerits, and which is eternal, pacified and One.

¹ *Entity, etc. – Being the Absolute Reality, there is no room in It for any kind of Abhāva, such as Prāgabhāva (previous non-existence, as of a jar before it was made) or Pradhvamsābhāva (cessation by destruction, as when the jar is broken to pieces).*

411. With the mind restrained in Samādhi, behold in thy self the Ātman, of infinite glory, cut off thy bondage strengthened by the impressions of previous births, and carefully attain the consummation¹ of thy birth as a human being.

¹ *Consummation, etc. – That is Mokṣha, which is pre-eminently possible in a human birth.*

412. Meditate on the Ātman, which resides in thee¹, which is devoid of all limiting adjuncts, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, and thou shalt no more come under the round of births and deaths.

¹ *Resides in thee – As thy own Being.*

The Perfectly Wise Man

413. After the body has once been cast off to a distance like a corpse, the sage never more¹ attaches himself to it, though it is visible² as an appearance, like the shadow of a man, owing to the experience of the effects of past deeds.

¹ *Never more, etc. – Not even on return to the normal plane after Samādhi.*

² *Visible, etc. – It would not be perceived at all but for the effects of Prārabdha work, which are experienced through the body. As it is, it is just an appearance.*

414. Realising the Ātman, the eternal, pure Consciousness and Bliss, throw far away this limitation of a body, which is inert and filthy by nature. Then remember it no more, for something that has been vomited excites but disgust When called in memory.

415. Burning all this¹, with its very root², in the fire of Brahman, the Eternal and Absolute Self, the truly wise man thereafter remains alone, as the Ātman, the eternal, pure Consciousness and Bliss.

¹ *All this – The objective universe – the non-Self.*

² *Root – Nescience.*

416. The knower of Truth does no more care whether this body, spun out by the threads of Prārabdha work, falls or remains — like the garland¹ on a cow — for his mind-functions are at rest in the Brahman, the Essence of Bliss.

¹ *Garland, etc. – As a cow is supremely unconcerned about the garland put on her neck by somebody, so the man of realization has got nothing to do with the body.*

417. Realising the Ātman, the Infinite Bliss, as his very Self, with what¹ object, or for whom, should the knower of Truth cherish² the body?

¹ *With what, etc. – A reproduction of the sense of Bṛi.U. IV iv 12. He never thinks of himself as the Bhoktṛ, the experiencer or Jīva.*

² *Cherish – Like men of the world.*

418. The Yogi who has attained perfection and is liberated-in-life gets this as result— he enjoys eternal Bliss in his mind, internally as well as externally.

419. The result of dispassion is knowledge, that of Consciousness is withdrawal from sense-pleasures, which leads to the experience of the Bliss of the Self, whence follows Peace.

420. If there is an absence of the succeeding stages, the preceding ones are futile. (When the series is perfect) the cessation of the objective world, extreme satisfaction, and matchless bliss follow as a matter of course.

421. Being unruffled by earthly¹ troubles is the result in question of knowledge. How can a man who did various loathsome deeds during the state of delusion, commit the same afterwards, possessed of discrimination?

¹ *Earthly – Lit. visible, ie. those experienced in this life, as opposed to the invisible ones, ie. those which are to be experienced hereafter.*

422. The result of knowledge should be the turning away from unreal things, while attachment to these is the result of ignorance. This is observed in the case of one who¹ knows a mirage and things of that sort, and one who does not. Otherwise, what other tangible result do the knowers of Brahman obtain?

¹ *One who, etc. – The man who knows the mirage laughs at the illusion and passes by, but the ignorant man runs after it, mistaking it for water. To the sage the world appears no doubt, but he knows it to be unreal and is not lured by it. Not so the man of the world.*

423. If the heart's knot of ignorance is totally destroyed, what natural cause can there be for inducing such a man to selfish action, for he is averse to sense-pleasures?

424. When the sense-objects excite no more desire, then is the culmination of dispassion. The extreme perfection of knowledge is the

absence of any impulsion of the egoistic idea. And the limit of self-withdrawal is reached when the mind-functions that have been merged, appear no more.

Compare the Pañchadaśhi, Chapter VI, vv 285-86: 'The acme of dispassion is setting naught even the joys of the Brahmaloaka, the highest heaven; realization is at its highest when one identifies oneself with the supreme Ātman as firmly as the ordinary man identifies himself with the body, and the perfection of self-withdrawal is reached when one forgets the dualistic universe as completely as in dreamless sleep'.

425. Freed from all sense of reality of the external sense-objects on account of his always remaining merged in Brahman; only seeming¹ to enjoy such sense-objects as are offered by others, like one sleepy, or like a child; beholding this world as one seen in dreams, and having cognition of it at chance moments — rare indeed is such a man, the enjoyer² of the fruits of endless merit, and he alone is blessed and esteemed on earth.

¹ *Only seeming, etc. – When his attendants or friends offer him food etc, he takes it but half-consciously, his mind being deeply absorbed in Brahman.*

² *The enjoyer, etc. – That is, a most fortunate man.*

426. That Sannyāsin has got a steady illumination who, having his soul wholly merged in Brahman, enjoys eternal bliss, is changeless and free from activity.

The characteristics of a man of realization are set forth in this and the next few śhlokas. Compare Gītā, II 55-68.

427. That kind of mental function which cognises only the identity of the Self and Brahman, purified¹ of all adjuncts, which is free from duality, and which concerns itself only with Pure Intelligence, is called illumination. He who has this perfectly steady is called a man of steady illumination.

¹ *Purified, etc. – Eliminating the accidental adjuncts and meditating on the common substratum, Brahman the Absolute. See śhloka 241.*

Liberated in Life

428. He whose illumination is steady, who has constant bliss, and who has almost forgotten the phenomenal universe, is accepted as a man liberated in this very life.

429. He who, even having his mind merged in Brahman, is¹ nevertheless quite alert, but free at the same time from the characteristics² of the waking state, and whose realization is free from desires, is accepted as a man liberated-in-life.

¹ *Is, etc. – That is, never deviates from the ideal life of a Jñānin.*

² *Characteristics, etc. – That is, cognizing the objective world through the senses and being attached to it, like the ignorant man.*

430. He whose cares¹ about the phenomenal state have been appeased, who, though possessed of a body consisting of parts², is yet devoid of parts, and whose mind is free from anxiety, is accepted as a man liberated-in-life.

¹ *Cares, etc. – That is, how his bondage will cease and so o n.*

² *Devoid of parts – As Brahman.*

431. The absence of the ideas of "I" and "mine"¹ even in this existing body which follows as a shadow², is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

¹ *I and mine – That one is fair or stout, etc. or that this body belongs to one.*

² *Shadow – see śhloka 413.*

432. Not dwelling on enjoyments of the past, taking no thought for the future and looking with indifference upon the present, are characteristics of one liberated-in-life.

433. Looking¹ everywhere with an eye of equality in this world, full of elements possessing merits and demerits, and distinct by nature from one another, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

¹ *Looking, etc. – The world is so full of diversity, yet the man of realization looks deeper and sees the one Brahman in everything.*

434. When things pleasant or painful present themselves, to remain unruffled in mind in both cases, through the sameness of attitude, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

435. The absence of all ideas of interior¹ or exterior in the case of a Sannyāsin, owing to his mind being engrossed in tasting the bliss of Brahman, is a characteristic of one liberated-in-life.

¹ *Interior, etc. – Since there is but one Existence, Brahman.*

436. He who lives unconcerned, devoid of all ideas of "I" and "mine" with regard to the body, organs, etc., as well as to his duties, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

The Jñānin is free from egoism or Abhimāna though he may be intensely active. This state is hinted at in this śhloka.

437. He who has realised his Brahmanhood aided¹ by the Scriptures, and is free from the bondage of transmigration, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

¹ *Aided, etc. – By discriminating the Truth inculcated by the scriptures.*

438. He who never has the idea of "I" with regard to the body, organs, etc., nor that of "it" in respect of things other than these, is accepted as one liberated-in-life.

439. He who through his illumination never differentiates the Jīva and Brahman, nor the universe and Brahman, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

440. He who feels just the same when his body is either worshipped by the good or tormented by the wicked, is known as a man liberated-in-life.

441. The Sannyāsin in whom the sense-objects directed by others¹ are engulfed like flowing rivers in the sea and produce no change, owing to his identity with the Existence Absolute, is indeed liberated.

¹ *Directed by others, etc. – That is which others thrust on him. Whatever comes within his knowledge only strengthens his identity with Brahman.*

442. For one who has realised the Truth of Brahman, there is no more attachment to the sense-objects as before: If there is, that man has not realised his identity with Brahman, but is one¹ whose senses are outgoing in their tendency.

¹ *Is one, etc. – Is an ordinary sense-bound man.*

443. If it be urged that he is still attached to the sense-objects through the momentum of his old desires, the reply is — no, for desires get weakened through the realization of one's identity with Brahman.

444. The propensities of even a confirmed libertine are checked in the presence of his mother; just so, when Brahman, the Bliss Absolute, has been realised, the man of realization has no longer any worldly tendency.

The Three Types of Work

445. One who is constantly practising meditation is observed to have external perceptions¹. The Śhrutis² mention Prārabdha work³ in the case of such a man, and we can infer this from results⁴ actually seen.

¹ *External perceptions – such as satisfying the physical needs or teaching enquirers.*

² *Śhrutis, etc. – The reference is to Chhāṇḍogya, VI xiv 2: 'the delay in his (ie. a Jñānin's) case is only so long as his body lasts, after which he becomes one with Brahman'*

³ *Prārabdha work – the strong resulting impression of work done in past lives which has engendered the present body (referred to in śhloka 451). The other two kinds of work are Sañchita or accumulated (mentioned in śhloka 447) and the Āgāmi or yet to come (mentioned in śhloka 449)*

⁴ *Results, etc. – The continuance of the body after realization and its experiences during that period can only be explained by assuming that the Prārabdha continues to work. This is further explained in the next Śhloka.*

446. Prārabdha work is acknowledged to persist so long as there is the perception of happiness and the like. Every result is preceded by an action, and nowhere is it seen to accrue independently of action.

447. Through the realization of one's identity with Brahman, all the accumulated actions of a hundred crore of cycles come to nought, like the actions of dream-state on awakening.

448. Can the good actions or dreadful sins that a man fancies himself doing in the dream-state, lead him to heaven or hell after he has awakened from sleep?

449. Realising the Ātman, which is unattached and indifferent like the sky, the aspirant is never touched in the least by actions yet to be done.

450. The sky is not affected by the smell of liquor merely through its connection with the jar; similarly, the Ātman is not, through its connection with the limitations, affected by the properties thereof.

The Ātman, like the sky, is always unattached, though the ignorant man superimposes connection with external things on it.

451. The work which has fashioned this body prior to the dawning of knowledge, is not destroyed by that knowledge without yielding its fruits, like the arrow shot at an object.

452. The arrow which is shot at an object with the idea that it is a tiger, does not, when that object is perceived to be a cow, check itself, but pierces the object with full force.

453. Prārabdha¹ work is certainly very strong for the man of realization, and is spent only by the actual experience of its fruit; while the actions previously accumulated and those yet to come are destroyed by the fire of perfect knowledge. But none of the three at all affects those who, realising their identity with Brahman, are always living absorbed in that idea. They are verily the transcendent Brahman.

¹ *Prārabdha, etc. – The argument in the Śhrutis in support of Prārabdha work being binding on even the Jñānin(as set forth in the first half of this śhloka as well as in śhlokas 445 and 451-2) is only a tentative recapitulation (Anuvāda) of the popular view. Strictly speaking the Jñānin himself is not even aware of its existence. The truth about it is given in the last half of this Śhloka and in Śhloka 463 and reasons for this view are set forth in Śhlokas 454 and following. We may add in passing that we have here the boldest pronouncement on the exalted state of a man of realization, who is affected by nothing whatsoever in creation.*

454. For the sage who lives in his own Self as Brahman, the One without a second, devoid of identification with the limiting adjuncts, the question of the existence of Prārabdha work is meaningless, like the question of a man who has awakened from sleep having any connection with the objects seen in the dream-state.

455. The man who has awakened from sleep never has any idea of "I" or "mine" with regard to his dream-body and the dream-objects that ministered to that body, but lives quite awake, as his own Self.

456. He has no desire to substantiate the unreal objects, nor is he seen to maintain that dream-world. If he still clings to those unreal objects, he is emphatically declared to be not yet free from sleep.

457. Similarly, he who is absorbed in Brahman lives identified with that eternal Reality and beholds nothing else. As one has a memory of the objects seen in a dream, so the man of realization has a memory of the everyday actions such as eating.

458. The body has been fashioned by Karma, so one may imagine Prārabdha work with reference to it. But it is not reasonable to attribute the same to the Ātman, for the Ātman is never the outcome of work.

459. The Śhrutis, whose words are infallible, declare the Ātman to be "birthless¹, eternal and undecaying". So, the man who lives identified with That, how can Prārabdha work be attributed?

¹ *Birthless, etc. – The reference is to Katha, I ii 18: 'The Ātman is birthless, eternal, undecaying and ever new (ancient) and is not destroyed when the body is destroyed'.*

460. Prārabdha work can be maintained only so long as one lives identified with the body. But no one admits that the man of realization

ever identifies himself with the body. Hence Prārabdha work should be rejected in his case.

461. The attributing of Prārabdha work to the body even is certainly an error. How can something that is superimposed (on another) have any existence, and how can that which is unreal have a birth? And how can that which has not been born at all, die? So how can Prārabdha work exist for something that is unreal?

The body, being an effect of Māyā is unreal and it is absurd to speak of Prārabdha work as affecting this unreal body.

462-463. "If the effects of ignorance are destroyed with their root by knowledge, then how does the body live?" — it is to convince those fools who entertain a doubt like this, that the Śhrutis, from a relative standpoint, hypothesise Prārabdha work, but not for proving the reality of the body etc., of the man of realization.

There is No Duality in Brahman

464. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, infinite, without beginning or end, transcendent and changeless; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

465. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, the Essence of Existence, Consciousness and Eternal Bliss, and devoid of activity; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

466. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, which is within all, homogeneous¹, infinite, endless, and all-pervading; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

¹ *Homogeneous – Admitting of no variance.*

467. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, which is neither to be shunned¹ nor taken up nor accepted, and which is without² any support, there is no duality whatsoever in It.

¹ *Shunned, etc. – Because it is the Self of all.*

² *Without, etc. – Self-existent, being Itself the support of everything else.*

468. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, beyond attributes, without parts, subtle, absolute and taintless; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

469. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, whose real nature is incomprehensible, and which is beyond the range of mind and speech; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

470. There is only Brahman, the One without a second, the Reality, the One without a second, the Reality, effulgent, self-existent, pure, intelligent¹, and unlike² anything finite; there is no duality whatsoever in It.

¹ *Intelligent – Strictly speaking, Intelligence Absolute.*

² *Unlike, etc. – It has got no exemplar*

The repetition is for emphasising the absolute, unconditioned aspect of Brahman.

471. High-souled Sannyāsins¹ who have got rid of all attachment and discarded all sense-enjoyments, and who are serene² and perfectly restrained³, realise this Supreme Truth and at the end⁴ attain the Supreme Bliss through their Self-realization.

¹ *Sannyāsins – Lit. Those who struggle after realization.*

² *Serene – Refers to control of the mind.*

³ *Restrained – Refers to control of the senses.*

⁴ *End, etc. – They attain Videha-mukti or disembodied absolute freedom after the fall of their body.*

472. Thou¹, too, discriminate this Supreme Truth, the real nature of the Self, which is Bliss undiluted², and shaking off thy delusion created by thy own mind, be free and illumined³, and attain the consummation of thy life.

¹ *Thou, etc. – The Guru is addressing the disciple.*

² *Undiluted – Unmixed, that is absolute.*

³ *Illumined – Lit. Awakened, that is, from this unreal dream of duality.*

473. Through the Samādhi¹ in which the mind has been perfectly stilled, visualise the Truth of the Self with the eye of clear realization. If the meaning of the (Scriptural) words² heard from the Guru is perfectly and indubitably discerned³, then it can lead to no more doubt.

¹ *Samādhi, etc. – Nirvikalpa Samādhi*

² *Words – Such as ‘Thou art That’ (Tat-tvam-asi)*

³ *Discerned – Realized in Samādhi*

474. In the realization of the Ātman, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, through the breaking of one’s connection with the bondage

of Avidyā or ignorance, the Scriptures¹, reasoning² and the words³ of the Guru are the proofs, while one's own experience⁴ earned by concentrating⁵ the mind is another proof.

¹ *Scriptures – Which tell of one's eternal identity with Brahman and declare all duality to be unreal.*

² *Reasoning – Upon those scriptural statements so as to be convinced of their truth. For instance, one can infer that bondage, being a creation of one's mind, must be unreal and that knowledge of Brahman dispels it.*

³ *Words, etc. – The Guru is a man of realization, perfectly unselfish and full of love. He is therefore an Āpta and as such his words are authority.*

⁴ *Experience, etc. – This is the ultimate proof. For otherwise one is not perfectly satisfied.*

⁵ *Concentrating, etc. – In Samādhi.*

475. Bondage, liberation, satisfaction, anxiety, recovery from illness, hunger and other such things are known only to the man concerned, and knowledge of these to others is a mere inference¹.

¹ *Inference – Others merely guess at them through signs.*

476. The Gurus¹ as well as the Śhrutis instruct the disciple, standing aloof; while the man of realization crosses (Avidyā) through Illumination alone, backed by the grace of God.

¹ *Gurus, etc. – This instruction is Paroksha or indirect. The former is means to the latter.*

477. Himself knowing his indivisible Self through his own realization and thus becoming perfect, a man should stand face to face¹ with the Ātman, with his mind free from dualistic ideas.

¹ *Stand face-to-face – Live identified with the Ātman.*

478. The verdict of all discussions on the Vedānta is that the Jīva and the whole universe are nothing but Brahman, and that liberation means abiding¹ in Brahman, the indivisible Entity. While the Smṛitis themselves are authority (for the statement) that Brahman is One without a second.

¹ *Abiding, etc. – As opposed to dualistic ideas.*

The teacher's address begun in Śhloka 213 ends here.

The Disciple Attains Nirvāṇa

479. Realising, at a blessed moment, the Supreme Truth through the above instructions of the Guru, the authority of the Scriptures and his own reasoning, with his senses quieted and the mind concentrated, (the disciple) became immovable in form and perfectly established in the Ātman.

480. Concentrating the mind for some time on the Supreme Brahman, he rose¹, and out of supreme bliss spoke as follows.

¹ *Rose – Came down to the ordinary sense-plane.*

481. My mind has vanished, and all its activities have melted, by realising the identity of the Self and Brahman; I do not know either this or not-this¹; nor what or how much² the boundless Bliss (of Samādhi) is!

¹ *This or not-this – That is, all relative ideas.*

² *What or how much, etc. – The Bliss experienced in Samādhi is inexpressible and immeasurable.*

482. The majesty of the ocean of Supreme Brahman, replete with the swell of the nectar-like Bliss of the Self, is verily impossible to express in speech, nor can it be conceived by the mind — in an infinitesimal fraction¹ of which my mind melted like a hailstone² getting merged in the ocean, and is now³ satisfied with that Essence of Bliss.

¹ *Infinitesimal fraction – Lit. a particle of the part of whose part the Avyakta or Unmanifest is, as it were, a part of Brahman (through the Upādhi or superimposed limitation) the Sūtrātman or the Cosmic Mind is, again, part of that; while the Virāj or the Being who considers the whole extended universe, as his body, is a fraction of this last. Even the bliss of this Virāj is enough to dissolve the finite mind. Compare Shri Ramakrishna's parable of a ship that came near a magnetic rock and had all its bolts drawn out, so that it was reduced to pristine condition.*

² *Hailstone, etc. – The hailstones that accompany a shower of rain on the ocean quickly melt and become one with it.*

³ *Now – After return to the normal plane of consciousness.*

483. Where is the universe gone, by whom is it removed, and where is it merged? It was just now seen by me, and has it ceased to exist? It is passing strange!

484. In the ocean of Brahman filled with the nectar of Absolute Bliss, what is to be shunned¹ and what accepted, what is other (than oneself) and what different?

¹ *What ... shunned, etc. – There is nothing besides the one Ātman, and the aspirant is identified with that.*

485. I neither see¹ nor hear nor know anything in this². I simply exist as the Self, the eternal Bliss, distinct³ from everything else.

¹ *See, etc. – All finite ideas have ceased.*

² *This – State of Realization.*

³ *Distinct, etc. – Being the eternal Subject, whereas all else are objects.*

486. Repeated salutations to thee, O noble Teacher, who art devoid of attachment, the best among the good souls and the embodiment of the essence of Eternal Bliss, the One without a second — who art infinite and ever the boundless ocean of mercy.

487. Whose glance, like the shower of concentrated moonbeams, has removed my exhaustion brought on by the afflictions¹ of the World, and in a moment admitted me to the undecaying status of the Ātman, the Bliss of infinite majesty!

¹ *Afflictions, etc. – Those arising from the body, from other creatures and from physical phenomena.*

488. Blessed am I; I have attained the consummation of my life, and am free from the clutches of transmigration; I am the Essence of Eternal Bliss, I am infinite — all through thy mercy I

489. I am unattached, I am disembodied¹, I am free from the subtle body, and undecaying, I am serene, I am infinite, I am taintless and eternal.

¹ *Disembodied, etc. – I have realised my identity with the Ātman and no longer consider myself as a body or mind.*

490. I am not the doer¹, I am not the experiencer, I am changeless and beyond activity; I am the essence of Pure Consciousness; I am Absolute and identified with Eternal Good.

¹ *Not the doer, etc. – It is the man under delusion who thinks himself as these. But I am illumined.*

491. I am indeed different¹ from the seer, listener, speaker, doer and experiencer; I am the essence of Consciousness, eternal, without any break, beyond activity, limitless, unattached and infinite.

¹ *Different, etc. – I never identify myself with any activity of the organs or the mind, for I am no longer finite.*

492. I am neither¹ this nor that, but the Supreme, the illuminer of both; I am indeed Brahman, the One without a second, pure, devoid of interior or exterior and infinite.

¹ *Neither, etc. – Things that come under direct or indirect perception. It is the body which makes ideas such as that of nearness or remoteness possible.*

493. I am indeed Brahman, the One without a second, matchless, the Reality that has no beginning, beyond such imagination as thou or I, or this or that, the Essence of Eternal Bliss, the Truth.

494. I am Nārāyaṇa, the slayer of Naraka¹; I am the destroyer of Tripura², the Supreme Being, the Ruler; I am knowledge Absolute, the Witness of everything; I have no other Ruler but myself, I am devoid of the ideas of "I" and "mine".

¹ *Naraka – A powerful demon, son of Earth, killed by Vishnu.*

² *Tripura – the demon of the invulnerable ‘three cities’ destroyed by Śhiva.*

495. I alone reside as knowledge in all beings, being their internal and external support¹. I myself am the experiencer and all that is experienced — whatever I looked upon as "this" or the not-Self previously².

¹ *Support – Being the substratum of all superimposition.*

² *Previously – Before realization.*

496. In me, the ocean of Infinite Bliss, the waves of the universe are created and destroyed by the playing of the wind of Māyā.

497. Such ideas as gross (or subtle) are erroneously imagined in me by people through the manifestation of things superimposed — just as in the indivisible and absolute time, cycles¹, years, half-years, seasons, etc., are imagined.

¹ *Cycles – The period of duration of the universe.*

498. That which is superimposed by the grossly ignorant fools can never taint the substratum: The great rush of waters observed in a mirage never wets the desert tracts.

499. I am beyond contamination like the sky; I am distinct from things illumined, like the sun; I am always motionless like the mountain; I am limitless like the ocean.

500. I have no connection with the body, as the sky with clouds; so how can the states of wakefulness, dream and profound sleep, which are attributes of the body, affect me?

501. It is the Upādhi (superimposed attribute) that comes, and it is that alone which goes; that, again, performs actions and experiences (their fruits), that alone decays and dies, whereas I ever remain firm like the Kula mountain¹.

¹ *Kula mountain – Mentioned in the Purāṇas as being wonderfully stable.*

502. For me who am always the same and devoid of parts, there is neither engaging in Work nor cessation from it. How can that which is One, concentrated¹, without break and infinite like the sky, ever strive?

¹ *Concentrated – Like a lump of salt which consists of nothing but salt.*

503. How can there be merits and demerits for me, who am without organs, without mind, changeless, and formless — who am the realization of Bliss Absolute? The Śhruti¹ also mentions this in the passage "Not touched", etc.

¹ *Śhruti, etc. - Bṛi.U. IV iii 22 – (In the state of profound sleep a man becomes) ‘Untouched by merit and untouched by demerits, for he is then beyond all afflictions of the heart’. It may be added here that the experience of the Suṣhupti state is cited in the Śhruti merely as an illustration of the liberated state which is the real state of the Ātman beyond all misery. Vide Shaṅkara’s commentary on the chapter.*

504. If heat or cold, or good or evil, happens to touch the shadow of a man’s body, it affects not in the least the man himself, who is distinct from the shadow.

505. The properties of things observed do not affect the Witness, which is distinct from the changeless and indifferent — as the properties of a room (do not affect) the lamp (that illumines it).

506. As the sun¹ is a mere witness of men's actions, as fire burns everything without distinction, and as the rope² is related to a thing superimposed on it, so³ am I, the unchangeable Self, the Intelligence Absolute.

¹ *Sun, etc. – People do good or bad deeds with the help of sunlight but the sun is unaffected by their results.*

² *Rope, etc. – The relation of the rope to the snake is wholly fictitious.*

³ *So, etc. – Unconcerned with the activities of the Buddhi.*

507. I neither¹ do nor make others do any action; I neither enjoy nor make others enjoy; I neither see nor make others see; I am that Self-effulgent, Transcendent² Ātman.

¹ *I neither, etc. – I am free from all activity, direct or indirect.*

² *Transcendent – Beyond the range of sense.*

508. When the supervening adjunct¹ (Upādhi) is moving, the resulting movement of the reflection is ascribed by fools to the object reflected, such as the sun, which is free from activity — (and they think) "I am² the doer", "I am the experiencer", "I am killed, oh, alas!"

¹ *Supervening adjunct – For example, water, in which the sun is reflected. It is the water that moves and with it the reflection, but not the sun, though ignorant people may think that it is moving. Similarly all activity which belongs to the intellect under the reflection of the Ātman, is, erroneously attributed to the latter.*

² *I am, etc. – This is how the ignorant man thinks and wails.*

509. Let this inert body drop down in water or on land. I am not touched¹ by its properties, like the sky by the properties of the jar.

¹ *Not touched, etc. - Just as the sky seemingly enclosed in a jar is one with the infinite sky and is always the same, whether the jar is broken or not, similarly is the Ātman always the same despite its apparent relation to the body*

510. The passing states of the Buddhi, such as agency, experience, cunning, drunkenness, dullness, bondage and freedom, are never in reality in the Self, the Supreme Brahman, the Absolute, the one without a second.

The Ātman is Consciousness Absolute, which admits of no change, while the Buddhi or intellect, being inert, is subject to change. So the confusion of the characteristics of the Self with those of Buddhi is solely due to superimposition.

511. Let there be changes in the Prakṛiti¹ in ten, a hundred, or a thousand ways, what have I, the unattached Consciousness Absolute, got to do with them? Never do the clouds touch the sky!

¹ *Prakṛiti – The Undifferentiated described in śhlokas 108 and following.*

512. I am verily that Brahman, the One without a second, which is like the sky, subtle, without beginning or end, in which the whole universe from the Undifferentiated down to the gross body, appears¹ merely as a shadow.

¹ *Appears, etc. – To the ignorant.*

513. I am verily that Brahman, the One without a second, which is the support of all¹, which illumines all things, which has infinite forms, is omnipresent, devoid of multiplicity, eternal, pure, unmoved and absolute.

¹ *Support of all – Being the one substratum of all phenomena.*

514. I am verily that Brahman, the One without a second, which transcends the endless differentiations of Māyā¹, which is the inmost essence of all, is beyond the range of consciousness, and which is Truth², Consciousness, Infinity and Bliss Absolute.

¹ *Māyā – Same as Prakṛiti or Avyakta.*

² *Truth – may be translated as Existence. This line sets forth the Swarūpa Lakshana or essential characteristics of Brahman, as distinct from Its Tatastha Lakshana or indirect attributes, viz. The projection, maintenance and dissolution of the universe.*

515. I am without activity, changeless, without parts, formless, absolute, eternal, without¹ any other support, the One without a second.

¹ *Without, etc. – Brahman is Itself Its own support.*

516. I am the Universal, I am the All, I am transcendent, the One without a second. I am Absolute and Infinite Consciousness, I am Bliss and indivisible¹.

¹ *Indivisible – Without break.*

517. This splendour of the sovereignty of Self-effulgence¹ I have received by virtue of the supreme majesty of thy grace. Salutations to thee, O glorious, noble-minded Teacher, salutations again and again!

¹ *Self-effulgence – Hence, absolute independence. The disciple is beside himself with joy and hence the highly rhetorical language.*

518. O Master, thou hast out of sheer grace awakened me from sleep¹ and completely saved me, who was wandering, in an interminable dream, in a forest² of birth, decay and death created by illusion, being tormented day after day³ by countless afflictions, and sorely troubled by the tiger of egoism.

¹ *Sleep – Of nescience which also creates the ‘dream’ mentioned in the next line.*

² *Forest – That is, difficult to get through.*

³ *Day after day – It is a well-known fact that even a short dream may, to the dreamer’s mind, extend over years.*

519. Salutations to thee, O Prince of Teachers, thou unnamable Greatness¹, that art ever the same and dost manifest thyself as this universe — thee I salute.

¹ *Greatness, etc. – The Guru is addressed as Brahman Itself by the grateful disciple. Hence the use of epithets applicable to Brahman. Compare the salutation mantra of the Guru-Gītā: ‘The Guru is Brahmā, the Guru is Viṣṇu, the Guru is Śhiva, the God of Gods. The Guru is verily the Supreme Brahman. Salutations to the adorable Guru!’*

The Teacher Responds

520. Seeing the worthy disciple, who had attained the Bliss of the self, realised the Truth and was glad at heart, thus prostrating himself, that noble, ideal Teacher again addressed the following excellent words:

521. The universe is an unbroken series¹ of perceptions of Brahman; hence it is in all respects nothing but Brahman. See this with the eye of illumination and a serene mind, under all circumstances. Is one who² has eyes ever found to see all around anything else but forms? Similarly, what is there except Brahman to engage the intellect of a man of realization?

¹ *Series, etc. – Existence, Consciousness and Bliss (Sat-chit-ānanda) which are the Essence of Brahman, can be found, on analysis, as underlying every perception of ours. By another way of reasoning, the world is simply Brahman seen through a veil of name and form, which are contributed by the mind. It is X + mind as Swāmī Vivekānanda has put it.*

² *One who, etc. – Suggests a discriminating man whose view of life will be different from that of the ordinary man. Hence he can generalise the objective world as so many forms. Form implies colour, which also is a meaning of the word Rūpa.*

522. What wise man would discard that enjoyment of Supreme Bliss and revel in things unsubstantial? When the exceedingly charming moon is shining, who would wish to look at a painted moon?

523. From the perception of unreal things there is neither satisfaction¹ nor a cessation of misery. Therefore, being satisfied with the realization

of the Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, live happily in a state of identity with that Reality.

¹ *Neither satisfaction, etc. – Compare the celebrated verse: ‘Never is desire appeased by the enjoyment of sense-pleasures’, etc. Bhāgavata IX xix 14.*

524. Beholding the Self alone in all circumstances, thinking of the Self, the One without a second, and enjoying the Bliss of the Self, pass thy time, O noble soul!

525. Dualistic conceptions in the Ātman, the Infinite Consciousness, the Absolute, are like imagining castles in the air. Therefore, always identifying thyself with the Bliss Absolute, the One without a second, and thereby attaining Supreme Peace, remain quiet¹.

¹ *Quiet – As the Witness.*

526. To the sage who has realised Brahman, the mind, which is the cause of unreal fancies, becomes perfectly tranquil. This verily is his state of quietude, in which, identified with Brahman, he has constant enjoyment of the Bliss Absolute, the One without a second.

527. To the man who has realised his own nature, and drinks the undiluted Bliss of the Self, there is nothing more exhilarating than the quietude that comes of a state of desirelessness.

528. The illumined sage, whose only pleasure is in the Self, ever lives¹ at ease, whether going or staying, sitting or lying, or in any other condition.

¹ *Lives, etc. – He is perfectly independent.*

529. The noble soul who has perfectly realised the Truth, and whose mind-functions meet with no obstruction, no more depends upon conditions of place¹, time, posture², direction³, moral disciplines⁴, objects of meditation⁵ and so forth. What regulative conditions can there be in knowing one's own Self?

¹ *Place – Holy places are meant. Similarly with time.*

² *Posture – Which is an important thing with beginners. 'Āsana' also means place of sitting.*

³ *Direction – Facing North or East.*

⁴ *Moral disciplines – The Yama and Niyama observances mentioned in Aṣṭāṅga – 'eight-limbed' Yoga.*

⁵ *Objects of meditation – Gross or fine.*

530. To know that this is a jar, what condition, forsooth, is necessary except that the means of knowledge¹ be free from defect, which alone ensures a cognition of the object?

¹ *Means of knowledge – The eye (helped by light) in the case of vision, and so on.*

531. So this Ātman, which is an eternal verity, manifests Itself as soon as the right means¹ of knowledge is present, and does not depend upon either place or time or (internal) purity.

¹ *Means, etc. – Realization (Aparokṣhānubhūti) to which direct perception, inference, etc. are subordinate aids.*

532. The consciousness, "I am Devadatta", is independent of circumstances; similar is the case with the realization of the knower of Brahman that he is Brahman.

533. What indeed can manifest That whose lustre, like the sun, causes the whole universe — unsubstantial, unreal, insignificant — to appear at all?

An echo of the famous Śhruti passage: 'He shining, everything else shines; through his light all this is manifest'. Śhv.U. VI 14.

534. What, indeed, can illumine that Eternal Subject by which the Vedas and Purāṇas and other Scriptures¹, as well as all beings are endowed with a meaning?

An echo of Bṛi.U. II iv 14.

¹ *Other Scriptures – May mean the Six Systems of philosophy or anything else.*

535. Here is the Self-effulgent Ātman, of infinite power, beyond the range of conditioned knowledge, yet the common experience of all - realising which alone this incomparable¹ knower of Brahman lives his glorious life, freed from bondage.

¹ *Incomparable – Lit. Best among the best.*

536. Satisfied with undiluted¹, constant Bliss, he is neither grieved nor elated by sense- objects, is neither² attached nor averse to them, but always disports with the Self and takes pleasure therein.

¹ *Undiluted – That is Absolute Bliss.*

² *Neither, etc. – Compare Gītā XIV 22-25.*

537. A child plays with its toys forgetting hunger and bodily pains; exactly so does the man of realization take pleasure in the Reality, without ideas of "I" or "mine", and is happy.

538. Men of realization have their food without anxiety or humiliation by begging, and their drink from the water of rivers; they live freely and independently, and sleep without fear¹ in cremation grounds or forests; their clothing may be the quarters² themselves, which need no washing and drying, or any bark³ etc., the earth is their bed; they roam in the avenue of the Vedānta; while their pastime is in the Supreme Brahman.

This is a splendid setting forth of the free life of a true Sannyāsin in ancient India.

¹ *Without fear – Because of their identification with Brahman, the One without a second.*

² *Quarters, etc. – Going nude, that is.*

³ *Any bark, etc. – This is suggested by the word Vā -‘or’ in the text. Bark or cloth or anything may be their dress.*

539. The knower of the Ātman, who wears no outward mark¹ and is unattached to external things, rests on this body without identification, and experiences all sorts of sense-objects² as they come³, through others’ wish⁴, like a child.

¹ *No outward mark – Hence it is so difficult to know them.*

² *Sense-objects – Food, etc.*

³ *As they come – in the working out of Prārabdha work*

⁴ *Through others’ wish – As asked by his devotees or friends.*

540. Established in the ethereal plane of Absolute Consciousness, he wanders in the world, sometimes like a madman, sometimes¹ like a child and at other times like a ghou², having no other clothes on his

person except the quarters, or sometimes wearing clothes, or perhaps skins³ at other times.

¹ *Sometimes, etc. – These are devices to avoid the company of worldly people.*

² *Ghoul – with no sense of cleanliness.*

³ *Skins – the word in the text also means bark. Hermits traditionally wear tree bark or sometimes deer skins.*

541. The sage, living alone, enjoys the sense-objects, being the very embodiment of desirelessness — always satisfied with his own Self, and himself present at the All¹.

¹ *As the All – Knowing the whole universe to be one with himself as the Ātman.*

542. Sometimes a fool, sometimes a sage, sometimes possessed of regal splendour; sometimes wandering, sometimes behaving like a motionless python¹, sometimes wearing a benignant expression; sometimes honoured, sometimes insulted, sometimes unknown — thus lives the man of realization, ever happy with Supreme Bliss.

These are some of the impressions which the phases of a saint's life produce on the outside world. People judge him diversely but he is supremely indifferent to what others think of him or do towards him.

¹ *Python – which seldom moves but waits for the food to come to it.*

543. Though without riches, yet ever content; though helpless, yet very powerful¹, though not enjoying the sense-objects, yet eternally satisfied; though without an exemplar, yet looking upon all with an eye of equality.

¹ *Powerful – The Ātman is his wealth, power and everything.*

544. Though doing, yet inactive; though experiencing fruits of past actions, yet untouched by them; though possessed of a body, yet without identification with it; though limited, yet omnipresent is he.

545. Neither pleasure nor pain, nor good nor evil, ever touches this knower of Brahman, who always lives without the body-idea.

A reproduction of the sense of Chh.U. VIII xii 1.

546. Pleasure or pain, or good or evil, affects only him who has connections with the gross body etc., and identifies himself with these. How can good or evil, or their effects, touch the sage who has identified himself with the Reality and thereby shattered his bondage?

547. The sun which appears to be, but is not actually, swallowed by Rāhu, is said to be swallowed, on account of delusion, by people, not knowing the real nature¹ of the sun.

The reference is to the phenomenon of solar eclipse.

¹ *Nature, etc. – That it is a mass of light.*

548. Similarly, ignorant people look upon the perfect knower of Brahman, who is wholly rid of bondages of the body etc., as possessed of the body, seeing but an appearance of it.

549. In reality, however, he rests discarding¹ the body, like² the snake its slough; and the body is moved hither and thither by the force³ of the Prāṇa, just as it listeth.

¹ *Discarding, etc. – Ceasing to identify himself with the body.*

² *Like, etc. – A reminiscence of Bṛi.U. IV iv 7.*

³ *Force – This is the true rendering of the word Vāyu.*

*There is another reading of the first line which should be rendered thus:
‘But the body of the liberated man remains like the slough of a snake.’*

550. As a piece of wood is borne by the current to a high or low ground, so is his body carried on by the momentum of past actions to the varied experience of their fruits, as these present themselves in due course.

551. The man of realization, bereft of the body-idea, moves amid sense-enjoyments like¹ a man subject to transmigration, through² desires engendered by the Prārabdha work. He himself, however, lives unmoved in the body, like a witness, free from mental oscillations, like the pivot³ of the potter’s wheel.

¹ *Like, etc. – Only apparently.*

² *Through, etc. – So the man in the street thinks. in reality, however, the Prārabdha work has no meaning for him. See Śhlokas 453-63.*

³ *Pivot – Which is fixed, on which the wheel turns.*

552. He neither directs the sense-organs to their objects nor detaches them from these, but stays like an unconcerned spectator. And he has not the least regard for the fruits of actions, his mind being thoroughly inebriated with drinking the undiluted elixir of the Bliss of the Ātman.

553. He who, giving up all considerations of the fitness¹ or otherwise of objects of meditation, lives as the Absolute Ātman, is verily Shiva Himself, and he is the best among the knowers of Brahman.

¹ *Fitness, etc. – A fit object is to be welcomed and an unfit object to be shunned.*

554. Through the destruction of limitations, the perfect knower of Brahman is merged¹ in the One Brahman without a second — which he had been all along— becomes very free even While living, and attains the goal of his life.

¹ *Is merged, etc. – Quotation from the Bri.U. IV iv 6.*

555. As an actor, when he puts on the dress¹ of his role, or when he does not, is always a man, so the perfect knower of Brahman is always Brahman and nothing else.

¹ *It is only the presence or absence of dress that makes the different characters assumed by the actor (the man remains the same always); so this knower of Brahman is always Brahman (not separate from him), no matter in what name or form.*

556. Let the body of the Sannyāsin who has realised his identity with Brahman, wither and fall anywhere like the leaf of a tree, (it is of little consequence to him, for) it has already been burnt¹ by the fire of knowledge.

¹ *Burnt, etc. - Hence he need not even care about the obsequies of the body after death.*

557. The sage who always lives in the Reality — Brahman — as Infinite Bliss, the One without a second, does not depend upon the customary

considerations of place, time, etc., for giving up this mass of skin, flesh and filth.

He may give up the body any time he pleases, for it has served its purpose.

558. For the giving up of the body is not Liberation, nor that of the staff¹ and the water-bowl; but Liberation consists in the destruction of the heart's knot² which is Nescience.

¹ *Staff, etc. – The insignia of a monk. Mere outward giving up is nothing; they must have no place in the mind.*

² *Heart's knot – the bind, as it were, the Chit or Absolute Consciousness to the insentient body.*

559. If a leaf falls in a small stream¹, or a river, or a place consecrated by Shiva, or in a crossing of roads, of what good or evil effect is that to the tree?

¹ *Stream, etc. - Places of varying degrees of purity are meant.*

560. The destruction of the body, organs, Prāṇas¹ and Buddhi² is like that of a leaf or flower or fruit (to a tree). It does not affect the Ātman, the Reality, the Embodiment of Bliss — which is one's true nature. That survives, like the tree.

¹ *Prāṇas – Vital forces.*

² *Buddhi – The determinative faculty, may here stand for the mind itself.*

561. The Śhrutis, by setting forth the real nature of the Ātman in the words, "The Embodiment¹ of Consciousness" etc., which indicate Its Reality, speak of the destruction of the apparent limitations² merely.

¹ *Embodiment, etc. - Bṛi.U. IV v 13: 'As a lump of salt is without interior or exterior, whole, one homogeneous salt mass, so is verily this Ātman, O Maitreyi, the Embodiment of Consciousness which assumes differentiations through contact with the elements and ceases to have them when these elements are destroyed (by Illumination). After this dissolution It has no distinct name.'* It should be noted that the passage in the original is so worded as to confuse an ordinary enquirer as it did Maitreyi actually. Then Yājñavalkya had to explain that he meant only the destruction of the limitations and not that of the Ātman, the Eternal Reality, which ever exists.

² *Apparent limitations – Such as water in which the sun is reflected, or the rose which casts its reflection on the crystal, or the air which produces a bubble on the surface of the water. When these Upādhis are removed, the special differentiations cease to exist, but the principal thing remains as it was.*

562. The Śhruti¹ passage, "Verily is this Ātman immortal, my dear", mentions the immortality of the Ātman in the midst of things perishable and subject to modification.

¹ *Śhruti - Bṛi.U. IV v 14: 'Verily is this Ātman unmortal, my dear, indestructible by its very nature'.*

563. Just as a stone, a tree, grass, paddy, husk, etc., when burnt, are reduced to earth (ashes) only, even so the whole objective universe comprising the body, organs, Prāṇas, Manas and so forth, are, when burnt by the fire of realization, reduced to the Supreme Self.

564. As darkness, which is distinct (from sunshine), vanishes in the sun's radiance, so the whole objective universe dissolves in Brahman.

565. As, when a jar is broken, the space enclosed by it becomes palpably the limitless space, so when the apparent limitations are destroyed, the knower of Brahman verily becomes Brahman Itself.

566. As milk poured into milk, oil into oil, and water into water, becomes united and one with it, so the sage who has realised the Ātman becomes one in the Ātman.

567. Realising thus the extreme isolation that comes of disembodiedness, and becoming eternally identified with the Absolute Reality, Brahman, the sage no longer suffers transmigration.

568. For his bodies¹, consisting of Nescience etc., having been burnt by the realization of the identity of the Jīva and Brahman, he becomes Brahman Itself; and how can Brahman ever have rebirth?

¹ *Bodies, etc. – The three bodies are causal, subtle and gross. These make up the five Koṣhas – ‘sheaths’ from Ānanda-maya down to Anna-maya. The Ātman is beyond them all.*

569. Bondage and Liberation, which are conjured up by Māyā, do not really exist in the Ātman, one’s Reality, as the appearance and exit of the snake do not abide in the rope, which suffers no change.

570. Bondage and Liberation may be talked of when there is the presence or absence of a covering veil. But there can be no covering veil for Brahman, which is always uncovered for want of a second thing besides Itself. If there be, the non-duality of Brahman will be contradicted, and the Śhrutis¹ can never brook duality.

¹ *Śhrutis, etc. – ‘Only one without a second’ Chh.U. VI ii 1. ‘There is no duality in Brahman’ Kat.U. VI 11. And so on.*

571. Bondage and Liberation are attributes of the Buddhi which ignorant people falsely superimpose on the Reality, as the covering of the eyes by a cloud is transferred to the sun. For this Immutable Brahman is Consciousness Absolute, the One without a second and unattached.

572. The idea that bondage exists, and the idea that it does not, are, with reference to the Reality, both attributes of the Buddhi merely, and never belong to the Eternal Reality, Brahman.

573. Hence this bondage and Liberation are created by Māyā, and are not in the Ātman. How can there be any idea of limitation with regard to the Supreme Truth, which is without parts, without activity, calm, unimpeachable, taintless, and One without a second, as there can be none with regard to the infinite sky?

574. There is neither death nor birth, neither a bound nor a struggling soul, neither a seeker after Liberation nor a liberated one — this is the ultimate truth.

This is a verbatim quotation from the Amṛtabindu Upaniṣhad śhloka 10. There is not much difference between Sādhaka –‘seeker of truth’ and Mumukṣhu –‘desire for freedom’. So long as there is the mind, there are all these distinctions; but the mind itself is a creation of Avidyā. Hence the highest truth is that there is no relativity.

575. I have today repeatedly revealed to thee, as to one's own son, this excellent and profound secret¹, which is the inmost purport of all Vedanta, the crest of the Vedas — considering thee an aspirant after Liberation, purged of the taints of this Dark Age, and of a mind free from desires.

¹ *Secret – the discrimination between the Real and the unreal which is hidden from the vulgar man.*

The teacher's address is finished here.

Conclusion

576. Hearing these words of the Guru, the disciple out of reverence prostrated himself before him, and with his permission went his way, freed from bondage.

577. And the Guru, with his mind steeped in the ocean of Existence and Bliss Absolute, roamed, verily purifying the whole world — all differentiating ideas banished from his mind.

578. Thus by way of a dialogue between the Teacher and the disciple, has the nature of the Ātman been ascertained for the easy comprehension of seekers after Liberation.

579. May those Sannyasins¹ who are seekers after Liberation, who have purged themselves of all taints of the mind by the observance of the prescribed methods², who are averse to worldly pleasures, and who are of serene minds, and take a delight in the Śhruti — appreciate this salutary teaching!

- ¹ *Sannyāsins – the word Yati may simply mean one who is struggling for realization.*
- ² *Prescribed methods – Secondary or indirect (such as sacrifices) and primary or direct (such as control of the senses and mind).*

580. For those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain due to the (*scorching*) sunshine of threefold misery¹, and who through delusion wander² about in a desert in search of water — for them here is the triumphant message of Śhaṅkara pointing out, within easy reach³, the soothing ocean of nectar, Brahman, the One without a second — to lead them on to Liberation⁴.

- ¹ *Threefold misery – The Ādhyātmaka (those pertaining to the body and mind, such as pain and anguish), the Ādhidaivika (those coming from divine visitations or scourges of nature, such as cyclones and earthquakes) and the Ādhibhautika (those due to other creatures on earth)*
- ² *Wander, etc. – Are lured by the prospect of happiness from transitory things which, as in the case of a mirage, exhaust them the more.*
- ³ *Easy reach – For this mine of Bliss is their very nature. It is no external thing to be acquired. They have simply to realize that they are already that.*
- ⁴ *On to liberation – by inducing them to take away their self-imposed veil.*

The solemn cadence of the Śhārdūlavikrīḍta metre makes a fitting termination to this prophetic discourse.

Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

Ānanda	Bliss, supreme joy. [Ā –‘full’, nanda –‘joy, pleasure’]
Ātman	Self, soul, Spirit. The individual Spirit whose identity with the Brahman one has to realize.
Avidyā	Ignorance, false knowledge, mistaking the unreal for real. Also translated as ‘nescience’.
Brahman	The Formless, All-pervading Consciousness, God Almighty. The Supreme Spirit. Not to be confused with Brahmā (qv.)
Brahmā	The Creator aspect of God (with Viṣṇu the Sustainer and Śhiva the Destroyer)
Buddhi	Intellect, perception. The Antaḥ-kāraṇa –‘inner organs’ are Manas –‘mind, conditionings’, Ahaṁkāra –‘ego’, Chitta –‘attention’ and Buddhi.
Guṇa	Attribute, quality, mood. The three Guṇas create and pervade all material and mental existence. They are Tamas (<i>darkness – Left Side</i>), Rajas (<i>Passion – Right Side</i>) and Sattva (<i>Reality – Central Channel</i>).
Jīva	‘Living’, the individual soul, also called Jīvātman. A Jīvanmukta is one ‘liberated in life’.
Karma	‘Action’, the belief that one’s present and future situation is the result of past actions.
Koṣha	Sheath, covering. The human being consists of five sheaths – Anna-maya –‘made of Food’ –physical body, Prāṇa-maya –‘made of Breath’, Mano-maya –‘made of Mind’, Vigñyāna-maya –‘made of Understanding’ – these three make up the Subtle Body; and Ānanda-maya –‘made of Bliss’ is the Causal Body (Sahasrāra).

Manas	Mind, psyche (not the intellect). The receiver of sense-impressions and maker of conditionings. The Mano-maya Koṣha –‘Sheath of Mind’ is the third sheath.
Māyā	The creative and illusion-creating energy, Ādi Śhakti.
Muni	Sage, enlightened soul
Nirvikalpa	Doubtless, without conceptual thought. The highest form of Samādhi –‘meditation’. [<i>Nir</i> –‘without’, <i>vikalpa</i> –‘conceptions, doubts’]
Prārabdha	The resultant of past work that has led to the present birth.
Purāṇa	‘Ancient’, sacred texts of the classical period (<i>after the Vedas</i>), Śhiva Purāṇa, Ganesha Purāṇa, etc. Containing stories and names of the Deities, etc.
Rajas	Passion, energy, sky. The Guṇa –‘quality’ of the Right Side.
Samādhi	Deep meditation, complete absorption in the object of meditation.
Samsāra	Illusory Worldly Existence
Sannyāsin	One who has renounced the world. The fourth Āśhrama (stage of life) – complete renunciation.
Sat-chit-ānanda	Existence, Consciousness, Bliss. The three aspects of the Ultimate Reality; what exists when all illusions are removed.
Sattva	Truth, reality, goodness. The Guṇa –‘quality’ of the Central Channel.
Śhiva	The Destroyer aspect of God. The Supreme Spirit.

Śhruti	Sacred text. Mainly meaning the Vedas and Upaniṣhads.
Smṛiti	Secondary sacred texts – commentaries, etc. such as the Brāhmanas which support the Vedas.
Tamas	Darkness, ignorance, sleep, inertia. The Guṇa – ‘quality’ of the Left Side.
Upādhi	Conditionings, unreal identifications, intervening layer between our awareness and reality.
Upaniṣhad	Short treatises containing the essence of Hindu thought. Originally these were extracts from the Vedas but many great writings (including the Ganesha Atharva Sheersha) came to be called Upaniṣhads. In the time of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya there were sixteen, now there are over two hundred.
Veda	The oldest sacred books of Hinduism. The four Vedas - Ṛig, Sāma, Yajur and Atharva - are the source of the Upaniṣhads and most Hindu beliefs. [<i>from vid – ‘know’</i>]
Vedānta	‘Final knowledge’. The philosophical basis of Hinduism from the Vedas and Upanishads which is summarised in the Bhagavad Gītā.
Vidyā	Knowledge, true knowledge – Self-realization.
Viṣṇu	The Preserver and Sustainer who takes incarnation to direct humanity to the ultimate goal (Rāma, Kṛiṣṇa, etc.).