

Advaita Vedanta – A Bird’s Eye View

Outline of Advaita Vedanta

D. KRISHNA AYYAR

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Table of Contents

Section 1 - Nature Of Self. Changing And Unchanging Consciousness Distinguished.....	3
Section 2 - Brahman, The Ultimate Reality	9
Section 3 - Identity Of The Individual Self And Brahman	11
Section 4 - Knower - Consciousness – Reflected Consciousness (Cidaabhaasa)	12
Section 5 - Transmigration and Karma.....	14
Section 6 - Free Will	17
Section 7 - Status of the World - Orders of Reality	18
Section 8 - Creation	20
Section 9 - The Concept of Maya.....	24
Section 10 - The meaning of Liberation	25
Section 11 - The Significance of Liberation	26
Section 12 – Knowledge: The Sole Means of Liberation	33
Section 13 - Kramamukti.....	34

Section 1 - Nature Of Self. Changing And Unchanging Consciousness Distinguished

1. Let us start with finding answers to the questions raised in Part I. Whatever you perceive or know as an object cannot be yourself. It is not difficult to understand that I am not the physical body. I can see the body. So, no thinking man will deny the fact, “I am not the body.” “Am I the ‘*praana*’ (divided into *prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *udana* and *samana*), I. e., the life forces that are responsible for the respiratory, circulatory, assimilative functions etc.? I am aware that I am breathing. I am aware that I am hungry etc. So, I am not the *prana*. . Am I the ‘*karmendriyas*’, the sense organs of action, i.e., the faculties of speaking, lifting, walking etc? I am aware that I am speaking, walking etc. So, I am not the *karmendriyas*. Am I the ‘*jnanendriyas*,’ i.e., the sense organs of perception, i.e., the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch? I am aware that I see, hear etc. So, I am not the *jnanendriyas* (A single name for the *jnanendriyas* and *karmendriyas* put together is ‘*indriyas*’ – sense organs, in English).
2. Next, we have to find out about the mind. In Sanskrit, the mind is called ‘*antahkarana*’. Along with the *antahkarana*, there is reflected consciousness called *cidaabhaasa*; for the two together, the name is *ahamkara*. *Ahamkara* comprises *manah* (the faculty which receives stimuli from the outer world and is the seat of emotions and feeling), *buddhi* (the faculty of reasoning, decision, speculation and imagination), *citta* (the faculty of memory) and the *ahampratyaaya* or *ahamārtha* (ego) (the ‘I’ thought, the sense of ‘I am the knower, doer’ etc.). (In what follows, for the sake of simplicity, in many places, the word, mind, is used as a synonym for *ahamkara*. Where the word, ‘mind’ is used for *antahkarana* alone, it will be obvious in the context). (The physical body is called, *sthoola sarira*. The *prana*, the *indriyas* and the *ahamkara* are called

“*sukshma sarira*”. The prana that continues to function during deep sleep and the *indriyas* and ahamkara that lie dormant in the deep sleep state are, together, called “*karana sarira*.”) (In Sastra, the word, “ahamkara” is used not only for the combination of antahkarana and cidabhasa, but, in some places, for the ‘I’ notion alone. To avoid confusion, in this paper, following Sureswaracarya, the word, *ahamartha*, is used for the ‘I’ notion and the word, ahamkara is reserved for the combination of antahkarana and cidabhasa.)

3. The existence of oneself as a conscious entity is self evident. The question is “is the mind itself the conscious self or is there a conscious principle other than the mind? Am I the mind or am I the other conscious principle?” To find out whether I am the mind, I should apply the same test as applied earlier in regard to the body etc. That is, do I experience my mind? The mind is an entity that expresses as thoughts in the form of cognition of external objects, emotion, reasoning, decision, speculation, imagination recollection and conceptualization. “I know the pot is a thought” (Thought is called ‘*vrutti*’ in Sanskrit.) “I am angry at my son” is a thought. “I had ice cream yesterday” is a thought. “Black hole is a mystery” is a thought. Am I aware of my thoughts? The answer is “yes; I am aware of my thoughts”. Not only that, I am aware of the I that is engaged in the thoughts in the form of cognitions of objects, emotions, reasoning, decision-making and conceptualization. When I perceive a tree, I am aware that I perceive the tree. When I entertain a desire for, say, ice cream, I am aware that I desire to have ice cream. When I get angry, I am aware that I am angry. When I have an idea for designing a new computer soft ware product, I am aware that I have that idea. When solving a mathematical equation, I am aware that I am solving it. If I have learnt Chinese, I am aware that I know Chinese. When I recall anything I am aware that I am recollecting it. Knowledge or cognition produced by ahamkara (whether it is cognition of external objects or internal conceptualization) involves the cognizer (*pramaata*), the cognizing instrument and process (*pramaanam*) and the cognized object or conceived idea (*prameyam*). This set is called *triputi* .

In the case of action, the agent of action is called *karta*. In the case of enjoyment, the one who enjoys is called *bhokta* and so on. For example, in “I know the pot” or in “I have an idea of what black hole is”, the I is the *pramata*. In “I am repairing this clock” the “I” is the doer - *karta*). In “I am enjoying the music”, or “I am sad about what happened in Kashmir.” or “I am sad at what my son is doing”, the “I” is the enjoyer or sufferer - *bhokta*. In “I am a father”, the I is a related individual – *sambandhi*. In “I have a house”, the “I” is a possessor - *dhaarin*. Not only am I aware of the *premeyam* and the *pramanam* of the *triputi* but the *pramata* etc., the I’s that are *pramata*, *karta*, *bhokta*, *sambandhi*, *dharin* etc. as well of the objects which these I’s perceive, the acts that they do, the things that they enjoy or suffer from, emotions that they have and the ideas that they conceive. Our thoughts, including these I’s are changing from moment to moment. One thought arises, stays for a while and disappears and another thought arises and so on. Thoughts arise in the mind. We do talk of the mind as the entity that survives and travels after death or the mind in a dormant state in deep sleep state. When we do so, we look upon the mind as a continuing entity. But this is only flowing continuity (*pravaaha nityatvam*). Thoughts and the mind are closely connected. Like a photographic plate which gets altered by the light and shade patterns reflected by the object being photographed, the thoughts occurring during the course of our experience of the external world and thoughts occurring inside in the mind independently leave impressions in the mind (*vaasanas*). The *vasanas* alter the character of the mind. Just as tissues are replaced and the body of old age is not the body of youth, the emotional and intellectual personality undergoes change. For example, a person who acquires wealth becomes a proud man. A person who becomes angry for everything we characterize as a person with a short temperament. A dullard in school turns out to be an inventor in later life. In other words, the personality undergoes change. So, it is clear that the mind undergoes change. The question is, “Is there an awareness of these changes of the mind and if so how does that awareness take

place?” That which changes cannot itself be aware of the changes. It follows that, besides the changing mind, there must be a changeless conscious principle. The question is, “what is the proof?” The proof lies in the fact that, in spite of the changes of the mind, I regard myself as the same conscious entity. Yesterday I was angry. Today I am calm. The angry mind and the angry I disappeared yesterday. The calm mind and the calm I have come only today. But I regard myself as the same person while saying “I was angry yesterday; I am calm today”. Yesterday I was struggling with a mathematical problem. Today I have happily solved it. The struggling mind and the struggling I disappeared yesterday. The happy mind and the happy I have come only today. Still, I regard myself as the same entity while saying, “I struggled with the mathematical problem yesterday; today I have solved it.” This will be clearer when we compare the personality-change over a period of time. When you meet a school-mate whom you knew as an aggressive, selfish boy after a period of thirty years in Sabarmati Asram, you may find a social worker with a calm temperament, but he regards himself as the same person. That means that there is a changing I and an unchanging I. The unchanging I, the constant I that I invoke while making such statements as mentioned above is an unchanging conscious principle. This unchanging conscious principle is the immutable atma. It is also called *saakshi* since, when it is invoked as the constant I, it looks as though it was the witness of the changing mind. It is also called *pratyagaatmaa*, since it is recognized by us without the mediation of any knowing instrument. Whereas the mind is experienced, the atma is not experienced; it is only invoked as the constant I. The invocation is done by the mind; the invoked is the sakshi.

4. This process of connecting a past condition of the mind and the present condition is called “*pratyabhinja*”. We can observe *pratyabhinja* in situations connecting the dream state (called “*swapna avastha*”) and deep sleep state (called “*sushupti avastha*”) on the one hand and the waking state (called “*jaagrat avastha*”) on the other. In the dream state, the mind projects its vasanas to form a dream world

which it cognizes as objects existing outside it. When one wakes up, one realizes that what he saw as a world perceived world existing outside one's mind were merely thoughts in one's mind. Thus, one says, for example, "last night I dreamt that I got a lottery of one million rupees but now I know that I don't have a paisa". Again, this constant I that is invoked by this thought as having existed during the dream and as existing now is the sakshi.

5. Similarly when one in a state of dreamless sleep (*sushupti*), the mind is bereft of any kind of cognition, emotion and conception. The ahamkara is dormant. But when one wakes up, one says, "I slept happily; I did not know anything" (*"sukham aham aswaapsam; na kincit aveditam"*). Suppose you ask that person, "When you were sleeping were you conscious of yourself?", he will say "I did not know that I was there". The non-knowingness and the happiness are recollected when one wakes up. But the "I" that he is referring to, while saying "I slept happily; I did not know anything" cannot be the dormant ahamartha. The "I" that he is invoking must be an "I" that was present even when ahamartha as a part of ahamkara was dormant. This is the sakshi I, the changeless consciousness. Thus, when we analyse sushupti, we can recognize the changeless consciousness, the sakshi, the atma, distinguished intellectually from the changing consciousness, the ahamnkara. The invocation of the changeless consciousness, when one wakes up, as the "I" that was present during sushupti, is done by the changing ahamkara, but the invoked 'I' is the changeless consciousness, the sakshi I.
6. Sakshi is not the knower-consciousness. So, it is not the entity cognising the state of non-experience in sushupti. Ahamkara, the knower-consciousness is dormant. But on waking up, there is recollection of the state of on-experience. So, what is the explanation? Though, in sushupti, the ahamkara is resolved and is non-functional as a cognise or conceiver, it retains the capacity to register its own non-knowing and non-thinking condition. It also registers the *sukham*

(happiness) occurring as a reflection of the *anantatva* aspect of atma in the state of calmness in which the ahamkara is in sushupti, though it is not aware of it at that time. It is on the basis of such registration by the resolved ahamkara that the ahamkara is able to say, when the person wakes up from sleep, “I slept happily; I did not know anything – *sukham aham asvaapsam, na kincit avedisham*”. Even so, the I that is referred as having existed during sushupti is, as explained above, not the ahamartha, the ahamkara I, but the sakshi I. The further point to note is that the source of happiness registered by the ahamkara in sushupti is neither an external object nor internal recollection; there is no contact with external objects and the memory is also non-functional. The only entity continuing to function is the atma. For the happiness that is registered in the resolved ahamkara, the source can only be the atma. The infinitude of the atma is reflected as *poornatvam* translating into happiness in the resolved antahkarana and this is what is registered in the resolved ahamkara.

1. Pratyabhinja invoking a constant I is also observed when we connect different stages in our life. Our body and mind are changing entities. When one is young, one is strong and healthy and can win a cross country race. When one becomes old one needs a stick even to walk. In early age, one can recite the entire Bhagawadgita and Upanishads from memory. When one becomes old, one doesn't remember even the name of his dearest friend. In one's youth one is arrogant. When one has become old, one has become humble. In spite of these differences, one is regarding oneself as the same I. The I that is invoked here is the unchanging I, the unchanging consciousness, the sakshi.
7. Recognition of the unchanging consciousness can also take place without a vritti. Suppose you are listening to Swamiji's talk in the class. In your mind the modifications of the mind registering the sound (*sabda vrittis*) and understanding the meaning corresponding to the words of Swamiji's talk are

taking place. At that time you are not entertaining the thought “I am sitting here and listening to Swamiji's talk.” The mind can have only one *vritti* at a time. Next day, if somebody asked you “did you attend Swamiji's class yesterday”, you would say “yes”. That means that you were aware of the fact that you were sitting and listening to Swamiji's talk without entertaining a *vritti* that you were sitting and listening. This shows that to be aware of your own continued existence as a conscious being does not, necessarily, require a *vritti*. Recognition of a continuous I without a *vritti* is possible only if there is a constant consciousness other than the momentary consciousness of the mind, a constant I that exists even when the mind is absorbed in thoughts relating to an external occurrence and is, therefore, not in a position to entertain an *ahamartha vritti*. When Swetasvatara Upanishad 3.19 and Kaivalya Upanishad 21 say, “It sees without eyes, It hears without ears”, they are referring to this sakshi.

Section 2 - Brahman, The Ultimate Reality

1. The central theme of the Upanishads is Brahman, called also *Paramaatma*. It is a conscious principle. The word for conscious principle in Sanskrit is “*caitanyam*”. The consciousness that is Brahman is called “*brahma caitanyam*”. The seminal sentence defining Brahman which occurs in *Taittiriya Upanishad* (II.i.1) is “*satyam jnanam anantam Brahma.*” In English, this is translated as “existence-consciousness-infinity”. The words ‘Existence’, ‘Consciousness’ and ‘Infinity’ are not three separate entities; they are three words denoting the nature of the same entity. The word, ‘satyam’ is synonymous with the word, *sat*, used in Chandogya Upanishad VI.ii.1 – *bhooma vidya* – in the sentence “In the beginning (i.e., before creation) existence alone was there, one only without a second. (*Sadeva soumya idam agra aasiid ekam eva advidiiyam*)” The words, “satyam” and “sat” are defined as that which is eternal and has independent existence. Juxtaposed with the word “*anantam*” (which means “the infinite”), the word (“sat”) distinguishes it from localized existence and denotes all pervasiveness. In the sentence, “The

word, “jnanam” in this context, means the undifferentiated changeless consciousness as distinguished from ahamkara which functions as the differentiated knower-consciousness, (“*pramaata*”), for the words “in this context”, substitute “juxtaposed with the word, (“*anantam*”).

The word, “jnanam” is juxtaposed to show that it is not an insentient entity but is Consciousness. The word, “jnanam”, in this context, means the undifferentiated, changeless consciousness as distinguished from ahamkara which functions as the differentiated knower-consciousness (*pramaata*). (In Sanskrit, ‘jnanam’ denoting Brahman is called ‘*swaropa jnaanam*’; the knowledge obtained by the pramata is called ‘*vritti jnanam*’.) The word, anantam is juxtaposed to show that It is a not a limited entity. The word, “anantam” means infinity. ‘Infinity’ denotes what is infinite not only in terms of space but in terms of time and entity. Infinity, space wise indicates that It is all pervading (“*sarvagatam*”). Infinity time wise indicates that It is eternal (“*nityam*”). Infinity entity wise indicates that It is non-dual (“*advayam*”), i.e., besides It, there is no other real entity. Since it is all pervading, it is formless (“*niraakara*”), divisionless (i.e, without division) (“*nirvikalpa*”), devoid of movement (“*acala*”) and devoid of parts (“*niravayava*”). Since it is eternal, it is changeless (“*nirvikara*”). Since it is non-dual, it is relationless (i.e., without any kind of relation) (“*asanga*”). In some places, Brahman is also defined as *saccidaananda*.; it is a compound word consisting of “*sat*” which is the equivalent of “*satyam*”, “*cit*” which is the equivalent of “*jnanam*” and “*aananda*” which is the equivalent of “*anantam*”.

2. In his commentary on the Taittiriya Upanishad mantra, Sankaracarya first clarifies that the sentence, “*satyam, jnanam, anantam brahma*” is meant as a definition of Brahman not one that denotes the attributes (“*guna*”) of Brahman.....Satya is a thing which does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own. (To indicate that It is not the insentient material cause) it is said that Brahman is consciousness. (Used along with the words

‘satyam’ and ‘anantam’ - infinitude) – The definition excludes the concept of the agent of knowing. If Brahman be the agent of knowing, satyam and anantam cannot be part of the definition. If it is the agent of knowing, It becomes changeful and as such It cannot be satyam and infinite. That indeed is infinite which is not limited by anything. If It be agent of knowing, It becomes delimited by the knowable and the knowledge. Chandogya VII.xxiv.1 says, “The Infinite is that where one does not know anything”. The words, ‘satyam; ‘jnanam’ and ‘anantam occurring in mutual proximity, and restricting and being restricted in turns by each other, distinguish Brahman from other objects denoted by the words, ‘satyam’ etc. In his commentary on the Chandogya mantra, Sankaracarya explains, “The word ‘sat’ means mere Existence, a thing that is subtle, without distinction, all pervasive, one, taintless, partless (i.e., without parts), consciousness, which is known from all the Upanishads. The word ‘eva’ is used for emphasis. (*Sadeva – sat iti astitvamaatram vastu nirvisesham sarvvagatam, ekam, niranjanam, niravayavam, vijnaanam yat aagamyate sarvavedantebhyah. Ekasabdah avataaranaarthah*)...Before creation, it was not possible to grasp it as possessed of name and form.By the words, ‘One only’, is meant that there was nothing else coming under the category of its product.’without a second’ means that It (Existence) has no second thing different from Itself”.

Section 3 - Identity Of The Individual Self And Brahman

Atma conditioned by the sthoola sarira and the sukshma sarira is called *jivaatma* or *jiva*. There are various Upanishad passages which talk of Brahman, the all pervading consciousness, *Brahma caitanyam*, as being available for recognition as the atma behind the mind in the jivatma.

The Upanishads also expressly state that Brahman is not only non-dual

("advayam") but divisionless (i.e, without division) ("nirvikalpam" "nishkalam"). Further, we have the definition of Brahman in Taittiriya 2.1 as 'satyam, jnanam, anantam' where each word governs and is in turn governed by the others. The words, 'sat (existence)' and 'jnanam (consciousness)' governed by the word, 'infinite' means that Existence-Consciousness is all pervading. This means that both existence and consciousness is the same in all things and beings, though, for recognition of the consciousness, a particular medium may be required. Therefore Advaita Vedanta says that the atma, the unchanging consciousness, in you, in me, in other human beings, in gods (*devas*), in demons (*asuras*), in the animals, the birds, the insects, the plants and, in fact, in all living beings, whether they are denizens of this world or other worlds, is identical with the non-dual, divisionless, infinite Brahma caitanyam. . Brahman and atma are not different. They are just two words for the same entity. There is only one unbroken, undivided, all pervading consciousness ("*akhanda caitanyam*"). When the focus of teaching is on the all pervading aspect, it is generally referred to as Brahman and when the focus is on the same consciousness recognized in the jivatmas, it is generally referred to as atma or pratyagatma. When the focus is on the source of cidabhasa, It is referred to as sakshi. Thus it is none other than the Brahma caitanyam itself that is invoked as the unchanging, constant I by a pratyabhinjavritti.

Section 4 - Knower - Consciousness – Reflected Consciousness (Cidaabhaasa)

1. In the definition of Brahman as 'satyam, jnanam, anantam', as mentioned earlier, since the word 'infinite' governs the word 'satyam' and 'jnanam', the

consciousness aspect as well as the existence aspect is all pervading. But we see that what we call inanimate objects like table, chair etc. are insentient, whereas living beings are sentient and the antahkarana of a living being functions as a knower. What is the speciality of living beings? Being a knower involves limitation, because knowerhood excludes the knowing and the known. The jnanam that is atma recognized as atma (the *atma caitanyam*) in living beings cannot be the knower, because if atma is the knower, atma will become limited; this is not possible because the word, 'jnanam' is governed by the word, 'infinitude'. Moreover Upanishads talk of Brahman as devoid of the instrument of objectifying knowledge (*amanah*). So, we have to conclude that the antahkarana of a living being has a special capacity to become the knower-consciousness. By itself, the antahkaram, evolved as it is from the inert elements, is non-sentient. We have also specific passages to show that mind is a product of food (vide Chandogya 6.5.4, 6.6.2. 6.5.5). So we have to conclude that in the presence of atma caitanyam, mind becomes the knower-consciousness. The atma caitanyam is reflected in the antahkarana and the antahkarana becomes the knower-consciousness. This reflected consciousness is called *cidaabhaasa*. It is cidabhasa, together with antahkarana that functions as the knower-consciousness; the original Brahma caitanyam, just by its presence, enables the antahkarana to acquire cidabhasa. Cidabhasa undergoes modification along with the antahkarana. Without cidabhasa, the antahkarana cannot perceive objects, cannot know, cannot think, cannot react, cannot recall cannot theorize and cannot imagine. The mind, in turn, lends the cidabhasa to the sense organs and the body; that is how the mind, the sense organs and the body become sentient. As mentioned earlier, the combination of antahkarana and cidabhasa is called ahamkara. Since antahkaranas are many, ahamkaras are many. Each one of us has a separate ahamkara, functioning as separate pramatas, kartas, bhoktas, etc. The reflected consciousness (*pratibimba caitanyam*) of abhasa vada is different from atma caitanyam and is of a lower order of reality than the atma caitanyam.

2. The ahamkara perceives the external perceived world through the sense organs and cognizes one object after another and entertains one thought after another. While the recognition of the existence of oneself as a constant conscious entity, as the same person, in spite of the changes which the body and ahamkara undergo cannot be explained without the atma, the perception of particular objects or entertainment of particular thoughts, one after another, cannot be explained without ahamkara. And it is the ahamkara that cognizes differentiated objects of the external at one time and differentiated of objects of a dream world at another time and becomes dormant at a third time. Atma is there all the time, without undergoing any of these changes. If the mind was not there and the changeless atma alone was there and the changeless atma were a knower, there would be permanent, simultaneous perception of everything together (which will be utter confusion). If the changeless atma (which is apramata, i.e., which is the non-objectifying consciousness) was alone there, without ahamkara, there would be no cognition or conception at all.

Section 5 - Transmigration and Karma

1. Another fundamental tenet of Advaita Vedanta – indeed of all schools of philosophy in Hinduism – is that the sukshma sarira with cidabhasa in it survives the death of the sthoola sarira and is involved in transmigration from one world to another among the fourteen worlds (*lokas*) mentioned in Sastra and entry into different sthoola sariras in successive births (*janmas*). Associated with this tenet, there is the theory of karma. According to this, for the actions and thoughts of jivatmas they incur what are called “*punya*” and “*papa*” (merit and demerit) and have to undergo, and the punya and papa have to be discharged as *karmaphalam* in the form of enjoyment or suffering in future janmas and, sometimes, some part of it in this janma itself. The punya papa account is a running account to which additions are made by actions and thoughts and subtractions take place on account of enjoyment and suffering. The accumulated

punya papa account is called “*sancita karma*”, the punya papa incurred in the current janma is called “*aagami karma*” which is added to the sancita karma and the quota of punya papa which has fructified in the sancita karma and assigned to be exhausted in a particular janma is called “*praarabhda karma*”. In accordance with praarabhda karma, the jivatma’s next janma may be as a celestial or a god in one of the lokas superior than the earth or as an asura or some other denizen in an inferior loka, with different kinds of sthoola sariras, or again, on earth, as a human being or as a plant or an animal or insect or microbe. Jivatmas and karma are beginningless (i.e., without a beginning, without a prior non-existence) (Svetasvatara Upanishad IV.5 refers to jiva as *aja*, i.e., birthless). Therefore, questions such as “what is the cause of the first janma?” i.e., “how can there be a first janma with different people being different in various respects unless there was a preceding karma?”, “how can there be karma without a previous janma?” do not arise. Only a theory of karma and rebirth can explain the phenomenon of prodigies or morons or babies afflicted with congenital diseases unconnected with heredity and the wide disparity in physical and mental equipment, health, wealth, joy and suffering of living beings and, in the case of human beings, we find that there is no correlation to the virtues and vices and actions and thoughts of the current janma. Moreover, if you say that a person is born and dies once for all, and that there is no rebirth, when a person undergoes enjoyment or suffering, you cannot explain it, because there is no punya or papa for which the enjoyment or suffering is undergone. The other way, for the actions and thoughts of a person, the punya papa will hang in the air without reward or retribution, if there is no rebirth. Last but not least, if you say that the Lord created persons with varying patterns of physical and mental equipment and comforts, enjoyment and suffering, then that would make that Lord partial and cruel. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.iii.9 talks of a man having two abodes, this and the next world and the dream state as the junction staying in which he surveys the two abodes, this and the next world. We do get strange dreams, dreams of things we have never

experienced in this janma. They must be arising out of *vaasanas*, (i.e., impressions formed by the experiences) of the previous janmas. Similarly, on the eve of death, it is said, that a man has a glimpse of his next janma. Even a baby has dreams. Where are the previous experiences for it to have formed *vasanas*, unless it had previous janmas? Another argument for the karma theory is the well known fact that the mind, though conscious of consequences wills evil; and though dissuaded by reason, it does engage in deeds of intensely sorrowful consequences. Since everybody wants only happiness, if there was no *vasana* of evil pertaining to previous janmas, evil will not exist in the world at all.

2. The cycle of action and thought, *punya* and *papa* and births and deaths is beginningless. This cycle is called, "*samsara*". (A single word for *punya* and *papa* is "*karma*"). It is one's own *punya* *papa* alone that determines the enjoyment and suffering (*karmaphalam*) in our lives. Iswara only arranges the environment, events and situations required for the working out of the karma of the multitude of *jivatmas*. He is only the administrator (called "*karmphalahdaata*").
3. *Samsara* is related to *ahamkara*. When we identify ourselves with the body mind complex and, in the ignorance of our real nature as the relationless *atma*, regard ourselves as *karta* and *bhokta* we are involved in the *samsara*. When we disidentify with the body mind complex and identify with the *atma* that is non-different from *Brahman*, *karma* is destroyed. And there is an end of *samsara*.
4. The concept of rebirth and *karma* is available in *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, *Katopanishad* and *Prasnopanishad*. *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* IV.IV.vi and IV.iv.ii – "The *jiva* who has attachment goes along with his *karma* to the world to which his *sukshma sarira* is attached. After exhausting the *karmaphalam* for whatever he has done in this world, he returns to this world for further *karma*. Thus does the man with craving (transmigrate)". 'When it departs.....it is followed by the *karma* and *upasana* done by him and the *vasanas* he has

acquired:” . Kathopanishad II.ii.7 – “ Some embodied ones enter (after death) into (another) womb for assuming bodies. The extremely inferior ones, after death attain the state of motionless things like trees etc., in accordance with each one’s actions and thoughts”. *Prasnopanishad* III.7 – “ Uadana, in its upward journey (i.e., the sub-division of prana that carries the sukshma sarira, travelling after the death of the sthoola sarira),leads (the jiva) to a virtuous world as a result of virtue, to a sinful world as a result of sin, and to the human world as a result of both.” (“*punyena punyam lokam nayati papena papam ubhayam eva manushyalokam*). (When a person dies, the presiding deities of the indriyas withdraw from the sense organs. So, when he travels to the next world, after death, the physical sense organs are non-functional. So, until he takes rebirth in one of the worlds and the presiding deities return to the sense organs there is no memory or enjoyment - vide Brahadaranyaka 4.4.1 and 2.). Kaivalya Upanishad 14 says, after enjoying the ‘ignorance-cum bliss state of sushupti, the jivatma returns to the dream and waking states, as a result of its association with the karma of previous janmas.

(b) According to tradition, to know what is good and what is bad, we have to go by what is prescribed in the Sastra. In Sanskrit, good and bad are referred to by the terms, "*dharma*" and "*adharma*", respectively. What is enjoined as duty is called "*vihita*" and what is prohibited is called "*nishiddha*". In so far as the religious rituals are concerned, we have to go solely by what is said in the sastra, but in regard to the secular duties and values, like truth, nonviolence, austerity, restraint of greed, love of fellow beings, elimination of hatred, respect for and care of the animal and plant kingdoms, living in harmony with nature, regard for ecology and service to society, the commands and prohibitions of sastra are in line with what is generally recognized as do's and don'ts by humanity in general.)

Section 6 - Free Will

1. It is not karma alone that governs human life. There is scope for free will (called “*purushaartha*”) in human lives. Good action and good thought can mitigate the papa and enhance the punya content of the prarabdha. Whether free will or prarabdha will be more powerful, i.e., to what extent free will can mitigate the suffering or enhance the enjoyment to be undergone as prarabdha depends on the relative strength of prarabdha and free will. Since there is no way of knowing what one’s prarabdha is, wisdom lies in doing good actions and entertaining good thoughts. One should not lose faith in the efficacy of good actions and good thoughts; good actions and good thoughts are bound to bring about a better balance of punya papa in prarabdha. What physical and mental equipment one is born with, in which set up one is born, what situations one has to face and what opportunities are available are determined by one’s prarabdha. But, in any janma, how one develops one’s potential, how one reacts to situations, and how one makes use of opportunities depends on one’s free will.

Section 7 - Status of the World - Orders of Reality

1. Now, let us consider the nature of the world. From what we see around us, information obtained from others, inference and scientific investigation and scientific theories, we know that the universe that we experience is a vast, complex entity; the human body itself is a miraculous mechanism; the vegetable and animal kingdoms, the planets, the stars, the galaxies, the black holes, the particles, the waves, matter, antimatter and what not – are all miracles. There is no effect without a cause. So, we cannot but postulate an omniscient and omnipotent creator.
2. Upanishads state expressly in various passages that Brahman is non-dual (“*advayam*” “*advaitam*” “*advidiyam*”, “*ekam*”), eternal (“*nityam*”), all-pervading (“*sarvagatam*”) divisionless (“*nirvikalpam*”) “*nishkalam*”) and

changeless (*nirvikaaram*). A non-dual, changeless entity cannot be the cause of any product. But we do experience a world. The all-pervading Brahman, the Existence, has to be there in the world that we experience. But since it is not objectifiable (*aprameyam*), we do not perceive It. We can explain the presence of the all pervading Brahman and It not being the cause of the world only if we say that the part we perceive in the world belongs to a lower order of reality. (Hereafter the term 'perceived world' or 'perceived universe') should be taken to refer to the part of the world that we perceive, though the universe consists of not only what we actually perceive but the unperceived sub-stratum, Brahman, the Existence. So, a cardinal doctrine of Advaita Vedanta is the scheme of three descending orders of reality, – “*paramarthika satyam*” (absolute reality), “*vyaavahaarika satyam*” (empirical reality) and “*praatibhaasika satyam*” (subjective reality). Brahman is paramarthika satyam. It is the sub-stratum (*adhishtaanam*) of the universe. The part of the universe including our bodies and minds that we perceive is *vyaavahaarika satyam*. It is of a lower order of reality than Brahman. Why? When Brahman is said to be non-dual as in Chandogya, Brhadaranyaka, Mandukya etc. (cited above) or said to be infinite as in Taittiriya (21), Kathaopanishad (1.3.15), and Swesvatara (1.9, 5.1,5,13) there cannot be a second entity of the same order of reality. Therefore, apart from Brahman as Existence, that part of the world that we perceive has to be accorded a lower order of reality. When we talk of the perceived world as *vyavaharika satyam*, it includes the bodies and minds of living beings. Orders of reality lower than Brahman are covered by the technical term, “*mithya*”. For the absolute reality of Brahman and the *mithya* status of the perceived world the Sanskrit expression is “*Brahmasatyam jaganmithya*”. Things like snake seen on the rope, silver seen on the shell, the dream perceived world etc, are *pratibhasika satyam*. The experienced dream world is also *pratibhasika satyam*. Objects that are erroneously perceived even while one is awake, such as serpent perceived on rope in semi-darkness, silver perceived on the shell, mirage perceived on the sandy terrain of the desert are also

“pratibhasika satyam”. Mithya can be either vyavaharika satyam or pratibhasika satyam (Mithya common to all is vyavaharika. Mithya perceived by a particular person and not by others is pratibhasika.) Mithya is defined as that which is cognised but which has no independent existence and is subject to change. The perceived world, which is mithya, is a superimposition on Brahman, the substratum (adhistaanam) viewed in its aspect of Existence. Mithya cannot appear without an adhishtaanam. Erroneously perceived snake cannot appear if there is no rope. The dream cannot appear unless there is a waker. (‘Waker’ is a technical term used for a person who is dreaming and takes the dream world to be real but realizes that it is unreal when he wakes up from sleep.) If there were no substratum of Existence, we would not experience a world. If there is no superimposition of the perceptible part of the world on the sub-stratum, then also we would not experience a world. Another definition of mithya is that which can neither be said to be existent nor said to be non-existent. (The technical word in Sanskrit is “*anivacaniya*”). The dream world is experienced by the waker while he is dreaming but the world perceived in the dream is negated when the waker wakes up from sleep. The snake is perceived on the rope in semi-darkness but it is negated when light is flashed on the rope. The mirage is negated when we go to the spot in the desert where we perceived it. We do perceive a world; so we cannot say that it is non-existent. When the adhishtaanam, Brahman is known, the perceived world is negated, i.e., regarded as mithya and at the paramarthika level, there is no experience at all of a world. so, we cannot say the perceived world is existent. (When the word, “satyam” or “real” is used without any adjective, hereafter, it should be taken to refer to paramarthika satyam and when the word, “mithya” or “unreal” is used without any adjective, it should be taken to refer to “vyaavaharika satyam” or “pratibhasika satyam”, depending on the context.).

Section 8 - Creation

1. According to Advaita Vedanta – indeed all schools of Hindu philosophy – there is a beginningless and endless cycle of creation, maintenance and dissolution or resolution, called “*srishti*”, “*sthithi*”, “*laya*.” Cf. Swesvatara Upanishad I.9, where the omniscient (referring to Iswara), the one with limited knowledge (referring to jiva) and Maya (which transforms into the perceived world) are said to be birthless. In each srishti, the variety and pattern of objects, the attributes of the bodies and minds and the events and situations have to be fashioned to suit the karmas of the myriad of sentient beings that have to undergo their karmaphalam in the course of their janmas during that srishti. This requires conscious planning and skilful action on the part of the creator. According to Sastra, Brahman is eternal and changeless. In various passages, Upanishads state that Brahman is eternal (“*nityam*”); “*nityam*” implies changelessness. In Muktikopanishad and in the *Bhagavadgita* (*Gita*, for short), Brahman is specifically said to be changeless. In Brahma Sutra bhashyam II.i.14, Sankaracarya says that Brahman is changeless and eternal and it has been denied that Brahman can undergo any modification whatsoever. Upanishads also say that Brahman is devoid of instruments of action and thinking (*karta amanah*). There are also statements in the Upanishads to the effect that Brahman is neither cause nor effect. A changeless Brahman, a Brahman that is akarta, cannot be the transforming material cause (*parinaami upaadaana kaaranam*) of the perceived world. Since Brahman is amanah, It cannot be the intelligent cause (“*nimitta kaaranam*.”) of the perceived world, either. So, the question arises, how does creation come? The universe is a combination of Existence-Consciousness and matter. Existence-Consciousness, which is Brahman, is the eternal unchanging sub-stratum. Matter in its various and divergent forms and functions arising from the permutation-combination of attributes is called *naama roopa* (name and form or names and forms). Advaita Vedanta says that in Brahman, there is, as a lower order of reality, a mithya, *anivacaniya* entity, called “*Maya*”. The Nama roopa is contained in Maya in seed form. Brahma

caitanya gets reflected in Maya, to constitute an entity called “*Iswara*”. Thus *Iswara* has the caitanya aspect and the matter aspect. In this combination, *Iswara* is omniscient (*sarvajnah*), omnipotent (*sarvasaktimaan*) and all pervading (*sarvagatah*). Therefore *Iswara* has in himself the capacity to think, visualize and plan creation and the raw material for creation. Creation is the unfolding or differentiation of the nama roopa existing in seed form (*avyakta* or *avyakrta* nama roopa becoming *vyakta* or *vyakrta nama roopa*) and their superimposition on the changeless sub-stratum. The sub-stratum is real The nama roopa are unreal. The differentiation and superimposition is done by Maya under *Iswara*’s guidance. When the differentiated Nama roopa are superimposed on Brahman, the Existence-Consciousness, the universe is manifested. The sub-stratum is real; the superimposed nama roopa is unreal. The substance, the essence, is the sub-stratum. The superimposed nama roopa are attributes. A rough comparison is the clay which is substance and the pot shape which is an attribute. But there is a difference between the comparison and the compared in other aspects. One of them is this - whereas clay, the substance is tangible and the pot shape, the attribute is intangible, Brahman, the substance is imperceptible and the nama roopa are perceptible. Nama roopa superimposed on Existence-Consciousness consist not only of the attributes contributing to the manifestation of what we regard as inanimate objects like shape, color, smell, taste, texture, weight, mass etc. but the attributes which contribute to the manifestation of bodies and minds of living beings, like shape, mass, weight, color, smell, taste and texture are the attributes contributing to the manifestation of the experienced universe as inanimate outside objects but the attributes of our bodies and minds, like the biological structure and functions and the mental faculties of cognition, emotions and thinking. Thus, the universe, the various worlds and the objects therein, like stars, planets, mountains, rivers etc. and bodies and minds of human beings, plants, animals, insects, gods and asuras are all the manifestation of the combination of Existence-Consciousness, the real and nama roopa, the

unreal.. All the time what we encounter is this combination of the real and the unreal; what we perceive is the unreal part; we do not perceive the real part. In our state of ignorance we take the unreal part to be real. What lends existence to the unreal nama roopa is the real, the Brahman. But for Brahman providing the sub-stratum of Existence, the nama roopa cannot appear. Conversely without nama roopa, there will be no world for us to experience. Brahman, the sub-stratum, being *avyavahaaryam* (not accessible to transaction), transaction requires nama roopa. A combination of existence and nama roopa is required for experience and transaction. But for this combination, there will be no samsara or atma vicara or liberation from samsara. Iswara visualizes and plans the creation, keeping in mind the requirements of the karmas of the jivas and impels Maya to unfold the nama roopa accordingly. Creation (*srshti*) is a cycle of projection and resolution of nama roopa. After the karma of the jivas pertaining to the janmas of jivas in a particular srshti is exhausted through enjoyment and suffering, Iswara makes Maya withdraw the projected nama roopa unto Himself in his aspect as Maya, there to remain, for a period, called "*pralaya*", in potential form, until karmas of jivas fructify for the next srshti. The *srshti*, sthiti laya (creation, maintenance, resolution) cycle is without a beginning or end. The Advaita concept of creation is called "*vivarta vaada*" indicating that creation is not real. The perceived world is mithya. Maya is mithya. Iswara is mithya. Maya is *parinaami upaadaana kaaranam* (transforming material cause) and Iswara is *nimitta kaaranam* (intelligent cause). Brahman does not undergo change when creation takes place, Remaining as the all pervading Existence, Brahman, by Its mere presence, serves as the sub-stratum for the superimposition of nama roopa. And by its mere presence, it enables the antahkarana of living beings to acquire cidabhasa. When Sastra talks Brahman as the cause of the universe, we have to understand that Brahman's role in the manifestation of the world is confined to these two aspects.

Section 9 - The Concept of Maya

(Avidya, Prakriti, Pradhaana, Avyaktam, Avyaakrtam, Ajnaanam And Tamas Are Synonyms.)

1. Maya has two powers – *aavarana sakti* and *vikshepa sakti*. Through its avarana sakti Maya engenders jiva's ignorance of his true nature as Brahman. To distinguish this function of the avarana sakti, Maya is called "*moola avidya*". To denote the other function of the avarana sakti, obscuring the objects of the world, the word used is "*toola avidya*". Avidya (Maya) is a positive entity; a negative entity cannot have powers. Maya is matter, constituted of three factors, satva, rajas and tamas. Iswara, being the master of Maya, is not affected by the avarana sakti of Maya and is therefore ever aware of his true nature being Brahman. At the *vyashti* (microcosmic) level, in so far as jivas are concerned, both the avarana sakti and the *vikshepa sakti* of Maya come into play. The avarana sakti makes jivas ignorant of their true nature as Brahman and, as a consequence, *adhyaasa* is engendered. Adhyaasa consists in our having the notion that nama roopa, the perceived objects outside and our own bodies and minds are real with that mistaken notion of reality, in our identifying ourselves with our body mind complex. Consequently, we regard ourselves as limited individuals, different from Brahman and other beings, transact with other beings and things and, in this process, take on ourselves the problems, the joy, suffering, fear, sense of insecurity etc. belonging to the body and the mind . Identifying with the body mind complex which does action, thinks, enjoys and suffers and forgetting that we are the relationless (*asanga*) atma which is neither a doer nor enjoyer, we regard ourselves as the doer (*karta*) and the enjoyer (*bhokta*). Our transactions in the , with the sense of being the doer (*kartrtvam*), result in our incurring the liability to get rewards for good thoughts and deeds (called *punya*) and punishments for bad thoughts and deeds (called *papa*) and, we have to discharge the *punya* and *papa* debt in future births, in the form of enjoyment and suffering

(*karmaphalam*). In the future births, we engage ourselves in further transactions and incur further punya and papa. Thus, we are caught up in the cycle of births and deaths and enjoyment and suffering. This is what is called samsara. Whereas, the macrocosmic cycle of creation (*srishti*), maintenance (*sthiti*) and resolution (*laya*) _is endless as well as beginningless, individual samsara is not endless. When we understand that we are not the body mind complex but we are the infinite Brahman, we get liberated from samsara.

2. Though avidya is the root cause of adhyasa, the primary link in the mechanism of adhyasa is ahamartha. There is mutual superimposition of ahamartha and atma. The consciousness of atma is superimposed on ahamartha and ahamartha assumes the status of a knower owing to the reflection of consciousness. Conversely, through the superimposition of ahamartha on atma, atma appears to be a localised I. Thus we say, “I know”. When atma is conditioned by ahamartha, we say, “I know”. With the addition of the mind to this mixture, we say, “I am happy”, “I am miserable” etc.. With the addition of the body, we say “I am a man”. “I am a father” etc. (Vide Sureswacarya in Naishkarmyasiddhi II.53 and Taittiriya Upanishad Bhashya Vartikam II. 655).

Section 10 - The meaning of Liberation

1. Thus, the correct goal of human life, according to Advaita Vedanta is one’s identification with Brahman, i.e., displacing the “I” from the body and ahamkara and fixing the “I” on Brahman, the existence-consciousness-infinity. Then, when I say “I”, the “I” will no longer be the body and the ahamkara; it will be Brahman. This identification with Brahman is called “*aatma-jnaanam*” or “*jivabrahmaaikya-jnaanam*”. Sentences in the sastra that reveal jivabrahmaikyam (the essential identity of jivatma and paramatma) are called *mahaavaakyas*. There are innumerable mahavakyas in the Upanishads. Four of them are famous, one in each Veda, namely, “*Tat tvam asi*” (Chandogya Upanishad – Sama Veda),

“aham *brahma asmi*” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad – Yajur Veda), “ayam *atma brahma*” (Mandukya Upanishad – Atharva Veda) and “prajnaanam *brahma*”, (Aitereya Upanishad – Rg. Veda). Translated in English, the four mahavakyas are “Thou art That” “I am Brahman” “This atma is Brahman” and “Consciousness is Brahman”).

3. In the process of the teaching, we also understand, as explained above, that the only reality is Brahman, the Existence and all else, i.e., the perceived world of objects and our own body mind complexes is mithya. This understanding, together with the understanding of “jivabrahmaikyam” is expressed by the famous sentence, “*Brahmasatyam jaganmithya, jivobrhmaiva naapara.*” (“Brahman is the reality; the perceived world is mithya; jiva is Brahman, naught else.”). The moment this knowledge is gained effectively, one is liberated from the bondage of samsara in this very life. This liberation from the bondage of samsara, is called “*jivanmukti*”. The one who has gained the knowledge in this very life, is called, “*jivanmukta*” or “*jnaani*”.
4. It is not essential that one should renounce worldly life (become a *sanyaasi*) to gain the knowledge. If one can go through the practices (called *saadhanas*) prescribed for attaining mental purity, calmness and concentration of mind, which are prerequisites for gaining effective knowledge and devoting sufficient time regularly and systematically under the guidance of a competent teacher to the study of sastra, one can become a jnani even while one continues to be engaged in the duties of one’s secular life.

Section 11 - The Significance of Liberation

1. The world perceived world does not disappear for a jnani. But his outlook and attitude to the perceived world become different. He has identified himself with non-dual reality, the infinite Brahman. Since he knows that the perceived world, including the body mind complex is

mithya, he has no sorrow, no anxiety, no fear, no desire, no hatred, no worry and no sense of insecurity. In short, the jnani is not psychologically affected by anything, good or bad, happening in the world. In the dream I win a big prize in a raffle or I become a Bharat Ratna. But when I wake up, I am not elated. In the dream I have lost my only son. But when I wake up, I don't feel sad. The fire in the movie has burnt down the colony where I reside but when I wake up I am sitting comfortably in my house. Similar is the psychological freedom of the jnani who is identified with the paramarthika satyam and is unaffected by the vyavharika satyam. This is the paramarthika drhshti.

2. The freedom from disturbance from the empirical world is a psychological freedom arising from the knowledge of the identification with the Infinite and does not extend to the physiological body. No doubt, the jnani has no sorrow, no anxiety, no fear, no worry, no craving, no attachment and no hatred. However, the body mind complex with which the person who has become a jnani is part of the vyavaharika world and as long as that body lives, there are duties pertaining to it. So, if the jnani is a householder, he does not cease to perform the duties and obligations towards the body, the family and the society. He does his duties with purpose but without any desire or anxiety and he accepts the results of actions, good or bad, favorable or unfavorable with spontaneous equanimity. . If the jnani is ill, he will also go to the doctor, but he will do so without any anxiety. If his wife is ill, the jnani will look after her with compassion but without sadness or anxiety or worry. If the jnani's son has to gain admission in a college, the jnani will also make efforts, but he will not do anything unrighteous for it nor will he be sad if he fails in his efforts. If his son obtains the first rank in his class, the jnani will also be happy, but he will be equally happy if the son of a complete stranger, instead of his son, secures the

first rank. Even while he is transacting with the perceived world, the deep undercurrent of thought that he is the Brahman that is beyond the vyavaharika perceived world will be there. The jnani is like the actor on the stage. Today, the actor plays the role of a beggar; tomorrow, he may play the role of a millionaire. But he knows that he is neither a beggar nor a millionaire. Like that, the jnani plays the role of father, husband, teacher and what not, committed but unattached and never without the undercurrent in the mind that he is really none of these but he is the relationless (asanga) Brahman. Or if we can imagine a person who is dreaming but is aware at that time itself that it is a dream and not real we can know the state of mind of the Jivanmukta This is the paramarthika drshti.. . If the jnani is a sanyasi, whatever work he undertakes, he will undertake, not for himself, but for the welfare of society or humanity or as an example for the common man. Sincerity and commitment will be there but, even here, there will be no psychological reaction to success or failure. His efforts for himself will be confined to the barest minimum requirements of sustenance and, if he is so inclined to teaching Vedanta or establishing institutions for such teaching.

3. The jnani is not dependent on anything except his identification with Brahman for peace of mind and happiness. This does not mean that he ceases to enjoy the good things of life, like good food or music or literature, but he does not have desire for them. That is to say, if it is there and he chooses to spare the time for it, he enjoys it, but if it is not there, he does not miss it. He may have taste, say, for music, but he has no need for it; he is happy with it or without. If he was a poet, he can continue to be a poet. If he was a musician, he can continue to be a musician. When he goes to a temple or church or mosque, he will also do worship but he will do so with the knowledge that he himself is

Brahman and it is the vyavaharika body that is engaged in the worship. The long and short of it is that the “I” of the jnani is Brahman and whatever action is done (by way of duties or utilisation of talents or loka sangraha) is done with the sense that it is not he but one of the myriad body-mind complexes of the vyavaharika creation that is doing it. The awareness, ahambrahmasmi, running as an undercurrent when the jnani’s body is engaged in vyavahara is called ‘*sahaja samaadhi*’.

4. As a vyavaharika drshti, the jnani has the sense that he is all (*sarvaatmabhaava*.”). Sarvatmabhava is without prejudice to the knowledge, “Brahmasatyam jaganmithya” Whereas *asangatvam* (the sense that I am satyam Brahman, the world is mithya, the mithya world cannot affect me, is I paramarthika drshti, sarvatmabhava is a vyavaharika drshti; it is a positive perspective of the all pervading aspect of Brahman. The jnani can say, “The existence part of everything is Brahman and I am Brahman. In this sense everything is myself. Since all cidabhasas are reflections of me, the Brahma caitanyam, I can regard all vyavaharika glories and all vyavaharika happiness as my glory and happiness.’ For the jnani, everything that there is, everybody’s happiness is his happiness, everybody’s knowledge is his knowledge and everybody’s achievement is his achievement. This is not to be taken literally. It is only an intellectual attitude. Even a jnani can actually enjoy only whatever falls within the scope of the body and the antahkarana with which he was born. Regarding enjoyment of others, enjoyment as his is only an attitude born out of the knowledge that all nama roopa exist on Brahman. Having this attitude, the Jnani has no sense of lacking anything; and so, is free of desire and he has a sense of utter fulfillment (*poornatvam*) This is the meaning of Taittiriya Upanishad passage (2.1) where jnana phalam is mentioned – “He who knows Brahman as existing in the intellect which is lodged in the

supreme space in the heart, enjoys simultaneously, in identification with the eternal Brahman (which is omniscient, all-pervasive and the atma of all), all the desirable things. Similarly when the Upanishad, in Chandogya eighth chapter, sections 1 and 2, talks of freedom of movement in all the worlds and obtaining whatever he desires as objects of enjoyment, it is not actual movement by the body or actual enjoyment by the ahamkara, but an intellectual attitude born out of identification with the all pervasive Brahman which is the source of all ananda. (“*Yo veda nihitam guhaayaam parame vyoman; so asnute sarvaan kaamaan saha*”).

5. Sarvatma bhava can be not only this intellectual attitude of happiness and glory but freedom from hatred etc., since for the jnana, the atma of all the vyavaharika jivas are non-different from his own atma and the individual differences of characteristics are only on the mithya nama roopa level. Mithya should not to be taken seriously. This enables the jnani to have an attitude of compassion and freedom from negative reactions like hatred, jealousy, contempt etc. Isavasya Upanishad 6 – “He who sees all beings in the atma and the atma in all beings feels no hatred.” (“*Yastu sarvaani bhootani atmani eva anupasyanti sarvabhooteshu ca aatmaanam tato na vijugupsate*”). ‘Seeing all beings in the atma’ refers to the nama roopa and ‘seeing atma in all beings’ refers to the adhishtanam, Brahman. With this vision, a jnani loves all equally and he has no jealousy or hatred towards anybody.
6. Thus, *jnana phalam*, the benefit of the recognition of jivabrahmaikyam, is twofold - (i) sarvatmabhava and poornatvam (from the standpoint of the vyavaharika plane) (2) *asangatvam* (from the standpoint of the paramarthika plane), dismissing the nama roopa as unreal, the sense that I. the paramarthika alone am , infinite in terms of space, time and entity and nothing on the vyaharika plane can affect me The jnani thus

has the choice of ananda arising out of the attitude, “ I am everything” or the peace of being relationless (asanga) Brahman. the knowledge that I alone am, all else is mithya and nothing can affect me, the satyam.” “*Sarvatmabhava*” (the sense that I am all) is without prejudice to the knowledge, “*Brahmasatyam jaganmithya*” Whereas *asangatvam* (the sense that I am satyam Brahman, the world is mithya; the mithya world cannot affect me is paramarthika drshti, sarvatmabhava is a vyavaharika drshti; it is a positive perspective of the all pervading aspect of Brahman.

7. A question that arises in the context of sarvatmabhava is that if a jnani can, intellectually claim all happiness to be his happiness, why doesn't he, intellectually, claim all sorrow to be his sorrow. The answer is that happiness is related to a sense of poornatvam and being identified with Satya Brahman, the poornam (infinite), claiming happiness is all right. But sorrow is a result of a sense of limitation arising from ignorance of brahmatvam which is caused by the avarana sakti of Maya. He is free of the avarana sakti of Maya and therefore he cannot claim sorrow. (If sorrow were to belong really to atma, you can never negate sorrow.) Brhadaranyaka 1.5.20 which talks of an upasaka who imagines he to be the atma of all says that he is not affected by the sorrow of others.
8. Since the jnani has disidentified with the body mind complex with which he was born, he becomes free of the sancita karma pertaining to that body mind complex and there is no rebirth for the sukshma sarira with which he was born. Action involves physical and mental movement. Movement is change in space and time. Thought is also a movement, being a modification of the mind. Brahman being all pervading, formless, attributeless (i.e., without any attributes) and changeless is not karta (doer) or bhokta (enjoyer). Since the Jnani is identified with Brahman, he is free from the sense of doership and

enjoyership, (i.e., free from the sense of engaging in action and experiencing objects) (free from *kartrtvam* and *bhoktrtvam*). Cf. Kathopanishad I.2.xix – “He who thinks that he is the killer or the killed does not know atma. Atma neither kills nor is killed.” Action and thought done or entertained with *kartrtvam* and *bhoktrtvam* alone results in the accumulation of punya and papa. So, for the jnani, no agami karma accrues once he gains jnanam. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad IV.xxiv.3 – “Papa does not trouble him by producing the desired result or generating sin, but, he, the knower of Brahman consumes all papa, i.e., burns it to ashes with the fire of the realization of the Self of all.” However, as indicated by Chandogya Upanishad mantra VI.xiv.2 – “...for the man of knowledge, the delay is for so long (as long as he does not become freed of the bodies and merges in Existence”, the prarabdha karma gets exhausted only by through enjoyment, just as an arrow that has gathered momentum after being shot toward a target stops only with the exhaustion of its momentum. But even here, there is a difference. While the physical aspect cannot be avoided, on the psychological plane, the jnani is not disturbed. If something good happens he does not gloat. If something bad happens, he is not depressed. He takes everything that happens on the physical plane as the prarabdha pertaining to the body-mind complex with which he has already dissociated himself and therefore there is no disturbance in his mind. The state in which Jnani continues to live, disidentified with the body and ahamkara, is compared to the snake sloughing off its old skin.

Section 12 – Knowledge: The Sole Means of Liberation

Liberation is possible in this life itself. One Who Is So Liberated, Called Jivanmukta, Attains Videhamukti When The Body Falls.

1. According to Advaita Vedanta, liberation from samsara, which is called *moksha* or *mukti*, is obtained only through knowledge of identity with Brahman and not through any karma or upasana.
2. Liberation is not a new state or an event. Being the infinite Brahman is our eternal nature. The notion of being separate limited individuals subject to the bondage of samsara is only ignorance in the mind. The moment one gains the knowledge, “I am Brahman”, one discovers one’s true eternal nature. The event that happens is only destruction of the ignorance in the mind. Liberation is only owning up one’s true nature. Cf. Sankaracarya’s Brahmasutra Bhashyam – “.....for as Brahman constitutes a person’s Self, It is not something to be attained by that person.” Moksha can be attained by a person in the current life itself. The one who has got moksha in the current life itself is called. *Jivanmukta*.
Jivanmukti is like discovering a diamond one had misplaced and thought that he had lost it.
3. In the case of ordinary people, i.e., those who have not identified themselves with the Infinite Brahman (called *ajnaanis*), at the time of death, the sukshma sarira and karana sarira, along with cidabhasa, *vasanas*, i.e., habit-forming impressions of experiences of thoughts and actions stored in the mind) and the karma (the sancita karma) leave the sthoola sarira and enter another sthoola sarira in another world or in this world. But when the sthoola sarira of a jnani falls, the sthoola sarira decomposes and merges in the *pancabhootas*, (akasa, air, fire, water and earth), the sukshma sarira disintegrates, is dis-individualised and merges in samashti sukshma sarira and the individualized karana sarira gets dis-

individualised and merges in Maya. Since the ahamkara disintegrates, the sancita karma pertaining to that ahamkara is destroyed and the Jivanmukta 'becomes Brahman'. This is called *videhamukti*. 'Becomes Brahman' or 'Merges in Brahman' does not mean any event or transformation. The original consciousness has ever been Brahman. As regards the death of the sthoola sarira and the disintegration of the sukshma sarira, the jivanmukta has already disowned them. For him, it is just one of the myriad bodies superimposed on Brahman. The death and disintegration are of no particular or concern to him. It is an incident only from the point of other jivas only. As Sankaracarya clarifies in his bhashyam on Brahma sutra 4, a jnani is *asariiram* not after death, but in this life itself. Thus, really speaking, there is no further mukti when videhamukti takes place. For Brahman, there is nothing like superimpositions or their removal. The one who has attained videhamukti is actually the Infinite Brahman Itself. Moksha is a term applicable both to jivanmukti and videhamukti.

Section 13 - Kramamukti

1. Sastra also talks of a more difficult route of attaining liberation through knowledge. If one has done certain types of *sakaama upaasana* (upasana with desire for benefits other than spiritual benefits) - in addition to rites, in one's life but has not attained the doubt-free and abiding knowledge that he is Brahman (ahambrhmasmi jnanam) goes to the world of Hiranyagarbha (*Brahmaa*). There he has the opportunity to learn Vedanta from Brahmaa himself as the teacher. If he utilizes that opportunity, he becomes a jivanmukta in Brahmaa's world. At the end of that Brahmaa's life, he also attains videhamukti along with that Brahmaa. This is called "*kramamukti*". (The word, "Brahmaa" should not be confused with Brahman. Brahmaa is an aspect of Iswara, personified as a God, involved in the process of creation and dissolution). Called, also, Hiranyagarbha, He is subordinate to Iswara. From another angle Iswara is the macrocosmic causal body (*samashti*

kaarana sariira which is the same as Maya) and Hiranyagarbha is the macrocosmic subtle body (*samashti sukshma sariira*) and *Viraat* is the macrocosmic physical body (*samashti sthoola sariira*); in all of them Brahma caitanyam is reflected. The types of Upasana required to be done for going to the Hiranyagarbha loka include upasana on Omkara as Brahman or on *Hiranyagarbha*, upasana of Iswara, as Iswara with various attributes, or upasana of any other deity as a representative of Iswara, imagining that deity to be himself (*ahamgraha upaasana*) upasana on the five fires (*pancaagni upasana*) (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad sixth chapter, second Brahmana, upasana on Gayatri mantra (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad fifth chapter, fourteenth Brahmana). Cf. Chandogya Upanishad 1.4.5, 1.9.2, 3.14.2, 3.14.4, 4.15.5, 5.10.10, 5.13.24, 5.18.1; Brhadaranyaka 1.5.20, 5.6.1, 5.7.1, 5.13.4, 5.14.8, 6.2.15, 6.3.6).