

"Visistaadvaita"

Shree Vaishnava Philosophy and Practice

Tutorial

Welcome to learning **Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practice** by web tutorial. This course does not require the reader to have knowledge in Sanskrit or Tamil or in philosophy. Sanskrit / Tamil terms used will be translated and explained at all places in lucid English in these lessons. Each lesson will be for 4 to 6 pages only. Therefore the reader can easily read it and understand it just like reading a story. The reader is most welcome to present his questions, comments, suggestions, and doubts to me. It will be a pleasure for me to answer them. I conduct this course only as a Bhagavat-Bhaagavata Kainkaryam (service) and as requested by few interested people. Therefore I expect from you only your dedication and devotion towards Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. I request the readers to circulate the lessons to those interested in learning our Shree Sampradayam. Also I would request the readers to make those who are interested to learn about our sampradayam to join this course. I again assure you that the lessons will be simple. Your suggestion, comments, questions, and doubts are always welcome. Always feel free to write to me at mshari@usa.net

Lesson One

Prelude

From the time immemorial, man's curiosity to find out the cause of the universe seems to be an ever-burning torch of knowledge. Various part of the world has come out with various schools of thoughts of philosophy and practice. Few claim that their philosophy is "pure philosophy" staying away from any religion/theology while few claim that their philosophy is "philosophy of a religion/theology". Beliefs and prejudices have had a hand on many such out comes. History attempts to trace the political and social circumstances for these while science tries to rationalize them. India is also not an exemption from the list of countries that have given to the world their schools of thoughts. In fact India is recognized to have produced certain philosophies for which the date of origin is not traceable. India's culture and heritage are still regarded very ancient. The Veda of India has been a strong base for numerous schools of philosophical thoughts.

A popular saying is "A research begins as science, develops and ends as philosophy". This does not imply that philosophy is a subject that is having no culminating point of rational comprehension but only implies that philosophy covers certain concepts that cannot be analyzed and explained by science. Science does analyze physical cosmos but philosophy does extend it to metaphysical and transcendental concepts. Science is an analytical research whereas philosophy has synthesis in its approach. To explain this, a concept is examined by science by analytically "breaking" it into sub-concepts and like this it hierarchically proceeds to micro-levels. On the other hand, philosophy examines a concept by synthesis – it groups or sums up and examines. It does not "break" the concept into hierarchical levels but builds after classification. Any concept can be thought to be composed of four components. "Pramanam" is "Authority – premises – domain –

using which one gets knowledge. “Premeyam” is that which is the object of knowledge, that which is known. “Pramatha” is he who uses Pramanam and gets knowledge thus know the Premeyam and “Prama” is the valid knowledge got by Pramatha regarding Premeyam by the use of Pramanam. Many schools of philosophical thoughts have flooded this world trying to enlighten mankind from time immemorial. A Philosophy when proved to be rational and in strict accordance to a flawless domain, answers all questions which are not answered by science. Amongst manifold philosophies, the philosophy of the Veda prevailing in India from very ancient time, restructured by Bhagavat Ramanuja Yatiraja, named “Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam” claims to be such a proven philosophy. Let us start learning it step by step from basics.

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Pramaana:

“Authority” is known as *Pramaanam* in Sanskrit. There are three authorities accepted. They are three.. .

- ***Sabdam*** (The Vedas - Sruti)
- ***Pratyaksham*** (That which is observed & understood through our sense organs)
- ***Anumaanam*** (Inference based on observation)

Anumaanam is given least importance because it is susceptible to error. It is inference based on observation(s). For example, If I observe smoke coming from behind a mountain, I infer based on this observation that there is fire behind the mountain. I may be right or wrong. It can be even a mist or cloud passing behind the mountain. So anumaanam is not fool-proof but is accepted if it is substantiated with proper valid logic.

Pratyaksham is of certain importance but still it is also susceptible to error. This is what is perceived through our sense organs like eyes, ears etc., and understood by us. It is considerable and not to be rejected or accepted without proper & foolproof inquiry.

Sabdam is Vedas or Sruti. You know, Vedas are Appourusheya ie., not authored by any one including the God Almighty. It is of infinite volume. Baadaraayana (Veda Vyasa) only bifurcated the Veda into four (Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atarvanam) and compiled them that is why he is called Vyasa (In Sanskrit, Vyasa means compiler). No one thus composed vedas. In fact it is the expansion of the sacred Pranavam OM as the divine breath of Lord Vishnu. It is natural, pure, the only authority by itself, accepted and free from all errors as it has got no author. It condenses in Pranavam. It is remembered by Vishnu and revealed/taught to Brahmaa-Chatu Muka during the beginning of every creation. Vishnu himself protects the vedas as Hayagreeva & Madhusudana. From him it is preached to other Praja Patis who are Gotra Pravartakas (ancient ancestors) who in turn preach it to men. Veda has got six accessories (Angas) guarding it. They are

1. Sisksha (The sounds, pronunciations, swaram-pitch/frequency)
2. Chandas (The meter of Veda verses like anushtub chandas, gaayatri chandas etc.,)
3. Vyakaranam (The grammatical part of Veda verses)
4. Niruktam (The methods adopted to derive the meaning)
5. Jyothisham (Rules regarding finding out the proper time to do the duties prescribed in Veda based on planetary movements)
6. Kalpam (Rules regarding the performance of rituals and duties prescribed in vedas).

The vedas are also called nigama, aapta sruti, sruti, aamnaayam and parama saastram. The term Veda means knowledge & wisdom. It is called sruti because it is taught by the Guru vocally and heard by the student, repeated and memorised to remember. It is the storehouse of all knowledge nigamam. It is called aapta sruti because it is always the only reliable source & authority of knowledge that can be depended upon. Thus it is the only supreme knowledge base which enlightens - parama saastram. It is called aamnaayam when collectively its portions like mantram, aaranyakam etc., are taken. Sage Saayana has given a commentary for the full of vedas and it is called veda bhasyam. The vedas has two parts. They are

- **Karma Kaandam**
- **Brahma Kaandam** (otherwise called as Igyaana Kaandam)

The Karma kaandam deals with the rituals like Yagyaas, Homam, Yaagas and such sacrifices and ceremonies that are part of all walks of life like birth, upanayanam, marriage, death etc.,. It is the elaborate treatment of all materialistic knowledges. It is also called **Poorva Mimaamsa**. **Shree Jaimini Maha Muni** (A sage who knows Veda Vyasa and lived in his period as Vyasa's disciple) has written sutras (aphoristic formulas) regarding this called **Dharma (Karma) Sutras**. It has 12 chapters divided into two sections. Sage Kasakrutna appended another four chapters named "Devata Kaandam" to it.

The **Brahma kaandam** (Igyaana kaandam) **Vedaantam** (Meaning Conclusion/end of Vedas) deals with the knowledge regarding the absolute root cause of the universe, the ultimate truth of Brahman-Shreeman Naaraayana Paramatman. It is also called **Upanishad** (Upanishad is the one which is close to Brahman and talks about the reality of Brahman) It is very vast, deep and requires highest intelligence, Bhagavat Krupaa & Aacharya Kataksham to comprehend and realize the concepts as explained in it. It is called **Uttara Mimaamsam**. **Baadaraayana Shree Veda Vyasa** himself has written sutras (aphoristic formulas) regarding this called **Brahma Sutras**. It is also called Saareeraka Saastram. The brahma sutra has four chapters. Each chapter has sections

called paadas and each paada has sub-sections called the aadhikaranas. Each aadhikarana has one to many sutras. The first chapter is samanvaya that deals with establishing Shreeman Narayana as Brahman who is the only cause of universe (all living and non-living things), having the universe as his body and he being the soul of the universe. The second chapter is avirodha, which establishes that the Brahman thus established in the first chapter, cannot be refuted, or rejected by any system. The third chapter is saadana, which deals with the means to attain the brahman's lotus feet. The fourth chapter is phala, which deals with the goal, which is eternal bliss and service to the lotus feet of Lord Shreeman Narayana who is the Brahman in the Paramapada Vaikunta, which is the transcendental eternal & ultimate place.

Apart from the sruti as briefly explained above, Few **Smruties** like Manu Smruti are accepted as authorities. Smruti as the name indicates are different from Sruti. Smruti means memory - remembrance. Sages like Manu Maharishi learnt vedas (sruti) and practiced it for several years and out of their knowledge and experience, they remembered the sruti and explained it through their works called smruti. Thus **Smruti has author** but **Sruti has no author**.

Puraanas like Vishnu Purana composed by Shree Paraasara (Father of Veda Vyasa), Bhaagavata Maha Purana are also accepted. All 18 puraanas of Vyasa are not accepted. Only 6 of them called **Saatvika Puraanas** are accepted. The other 12 puraanas (Raajasa & Taamasa) are rejected as Brahmaa (Chatur Muka) who actually revealed all puranaas to rishis like Vyasa himself is only a Jeeva Aatman bound to all three characteristics (Satva, Rajas & Tamas) of samsaara. His (Chatur Muka's) words are reliable only during his saatvika period and not during his rajasa or tamasa periods.

Itihaasas – Shree Raamaayana of Shreemat Valmiki & Shree Maha Bharata of Veda Vyasa are also accepted in their original form as composed. As far as Maha Bharata is considered, it is like an ocean of knowledge with Vishnu Sahasranama and Bhagavat Gita as to divine precious gems.

Aagamas: Aagamas are authored scriptures considered as authority only when they do not contradict vedas. The aagamas are found to deal with temple worship, consecration of idols in temples, temple festivals, knowledge regarding tatvas, karma and dharma. Paancharaatra and Vaikanasa are two Vaishnava Aagamas.

Pancharaatra Agama

The aagamas are authored works. They have divisions called samhitas. There are number of such aagamas found to be existent based on which religions have evolved. All such aagamas are not to be accepted as authoritative because it has to be analytically studied whether the aagama supports the Veda or not. In case of an aagama contradicting the veda, it has to be appropriately synchronized in accordance with veda or if such aagama if found to deviate from veda, it has to be rejected. Veda Vyasa who composed the brahma sutra has dealt with regarding accepting or rejecting all schools of thoughts that were prevalent. Brahma Sutra's second chapter's first and second pada are important in the context of Pancharaatra Agama. Here in these Padas, Veda Vyasa deals with almost all schools of thought & philosophy and rejects all of them except the Pancharaatra aagama based system. It is to be noted that many philosophers including Shree Sankara Bhagavat Pada have commented on Brahma sutra and has accepted pancharaatra alone to be authoritative - of course there is deviation of thoughts among them but still the truth is accepted.

Pancharaatra aagama has numerous samhitas of which saatvata, jayaakya and pouskara samhitas are considered as gems. Shreeaman Narayanan himself authors Pancharaatra aagama. Maha Bharata says that the author of Pancharaatra is Shreeaman Narayanan himself. Paancharaatra aagama deals with the tatva (reality), hita (means) and the purushaartha (goal). It also talks about temple constructions, worshiping of the Lord in temples, the temple festivals and consecration of aarcha form of Vishnu. It also talks about yoga, mantra, yantra, dharma and code of conduct for people. It is in strict agreement with the Veda. Paancharaatra specifically deals with a class of forms of Vishnu called the Vyuhaa Roopas. I also talks about the mighty discus (Sudarsana Chakra) of Shreeaman Naaraayana. The eternal abode of the Lord namely Shree Vaikunta Paramapada is also described by it. In short Paancharaatra covers every aspect of the Vedic philosophy and practice which is Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. Its origin can be traced to a Vedic branch called Ekaayana Veda.

Vaikaanasa Agama

Sage Vikanasa authors this aagama. Other sages like Atri, Marichi, Brugu have contributed to this aagama.

Any authority can be accepted as authority only if it supports Vedas. If it contradicts Vedas, it has to be appropriately understood such that there is no contradiction to the Vedic authority or it should be rejected. One has to necessarily understand that Vedas (Sruti) alone is the base authority or the only final authority.

In philosophy, Logic is an important tool. Nyaya, Tarka etc, are such concepts. **Unless and until a concept is established in philosophy in a rational manner and within the limits of the premises (domain of philosophy), it cannot be accepted. Science also does the same way. Science stops with material world – but philosophy extends it to transcendental also.**

The Prastaana Trayam & Its Significance In Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam.. .

The three authoritative scriptures as proof taken collectively is popularly referred to as Prastaana Trayam. They are

1. The **Vedas (Sruti)** - Poorva & Uttara Mimaamsa together.
2. The **Brahma Sutras** - Saareeraka Saastra Of Veda Vyasa Bhagavan.
3. The **Bhagavat Geeta** - Told by Lord Kannan Himself & recorded by Vyasa.

I have explained the nature of vedas earlier. Paarthasaarati Kannan has preached Himself the Bhagavat Geeta Himself to Arjuna in the battlefield of Maha Bharata. It is the essence of all Vedas and it is of greatest significance as it is a saastra that came as the divine message & order of the Lord Kannan Himself. It has 18 chapters. The brahma sutras are aphorisms (nearly 550 formula like short - precise - clear - error free - small verses) composed by Veda Vyasa Bhagavan to explain the Saareeraka Saastra Of Upanishads. Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam is based on this prastaana trayam. It is the premises – domain.

Authored Scriptures and the Brahma Sutra

The Brahma Sutra in its second chapter categorically rejects and refutes the number of works authored such as authored works by the Saankyaas, Yoga, Chaaruvaakas, Vaiseshikas, the four kinds of Buddhist schools of thoughts (namely Maadyantika, Vaibhashika, Sowntrantika and Yogaachara), the Jainas and the Paasupata-Saiva. The only authored work accepted by the Brahma Sutra as authoritative as Vedas is the Paancharaatra Agama. I have heard few saying that the Brahma Sutra has not mentioned directly the name of Shreeman Naaraayana as the Para Brahman. This is absurd to say so because the Brahma Sutra has clearly established that Paancharaatra Agama as

authoritative as the Vedas and there is no room for any doubt regarding Shreeman Naaraayanan is the Para Brahman. The qualities declared for Para Brahman in the Brahma sutra only identifies with Shereeman Naaraayanan who is declared as the Para Brahman in the Vedas – “Naaraayana param brahma Tatvam Naaraayana Paraha: Naaraayana Paro Jyothihe Aatmaa Naaraayana paraha”.

Divya Prabandam

The [Divya Prabandam](#) are 24 sections of Tamil poems composed by Saints called [Alwars](#). They are outpouring of their experiences that they had with Lord. It is the form of Veda in Tamil applicable for all people in simple form. **Divya Prabandam is a best source of knowledge and has helped us to comprehend the Veda clearly. Our sampradayam is also called as “Ubhaya Vedantam”. The Sanskrit term “Ubhaya” means, “Twin”. The Sanskrit Vedanta (Upanishads) and the Tamil Vedanta (Divya Prabandam) are together referred to as “Ubhaya Vedantam”.**

Lesson Two

Prelude

In this lesson two, I have given an outline of the history regarding our Sampradayam. In the first lesson, we learnt about “Pramaanam” in brief. It will be explained more in detail from lesson three along with the other related concepts namely Prameyam, Pramaatha and Prama. Lesson two is general with an outline of our sampradayam’s basic tenets. This is given because the reader should get an idea first regarding our philosophy and practice. This will be elaborated in detail with proof in future lessons. “Matham” in Sanskrit can be translated in English as View, thought etc. Here in this context, it refers to philosophy and practice collectively. The reader will find in future that only our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matham is having its philosophy and theology components with maximum practical value, rational and universally applicable.

Historical Information About Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matham...

Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matham is an eternal one and has origin in the eternal vedas. No one founded it. [Bhagavat Raamaanuja Yatiraja](#) (who was born as an incarnation of Aadi Sesa at Shree Perum Butur (Maha Buta Puri) nearly 1000 years ago) once again established it that was already & eternally existing. He re-established it after conquering & destroying the falsehood of other sidhdantas like advaita, dvaita, dvaitadvaita, Buddhism, Jainism, Saankya, Saivam, Saaktam, Charvaakam etc.. (All these sidhdantas also will be explained in future for contrast and comparisons) This divine wealth of our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matam has been protected, preserved, and handed over to us by a unbroken succession of our [Shree Vaishnava Guru Parampara](#). It starts with 1. Lakshmi Naatha Naaraayana Paramaatman. The succession of Gurus then is 2. Shree (Lakshmi), 3. The Commander-in-chief Of Vishnu’s army Shree Vishvaksena, 4. Shree Vaishnava Kula Pati - Prapanna Jana Santaana Koutasta Vakulaabharana **Shree Satakopa** (Namaalvaar), **5. Shreeman Naatha Muni**, 6. Uyiakkondaar (Shree Pundareekaakshar) 7. Manakaal Nambi (Shree Raama Misrar), 8. **Yaamunaachaarya Aalavandar**, 9. Periya Nambi (Maha Poornar) 10. **Shreemat Bhagavat Raamaanuja Yateendra**. After Bhagavat Raamaanuja, the Guru Parampara has spread in various branches which each of us gets to know at the time of [Pancha Samskaram / Samaastrayanam](#). After Shree Raamaanuja, notable preceptors (few to name) are Shree Vedanta Maha Desikan, Shree Pillai Lokaacharyar, Shreeman Manavala Ma Munigal, Shreemath Adi Van Satakopa Yatindra Maha Desikan, Ranga Ramajuja Muni.

The history goes like this. From Paramaatma Naaraayana, the parama vaidika Shree Vaishnava matam started to spread. It reached Namaalvar through Vishvaksena as per His wish. After him, due to the kali kalam's evil nature, the succession of gurus was not that prominent - but was present. Other religions started to dominate and our matam was like the sun hidden by clouds. By the divine grace of Lakshmi & Naaraayanan, Shreeman Naatha Muni appeared and once happened to hear a set of 10 pasurams of Namaalvar sung by a group of Vaishnavas at **Kumbakonam** Aaravamutan (Saarngapaani) temple. He was highly impressed and requested the group to let him know all the 1000 pasurams of Alwar as per the information in the last pasuram of the set of pausrams sung by the group. They said they don't know but requested him to proceed to **Alwar Tiru Nagari** the birth place of Namaalvar. He reached the place and from a person belonging to Shree Madhura Kavi Family succession (**Shree Paraangusa Daasa**) obtained the upadesa of the work (Prabandham) of Shree Madura Kavi Aalvar Called "**Kanninun Chiru Tambu**". He recited it several thousand times with devotion and dedication and a divine incident happened. Shree **Satakopa Namaalvar Himself appeared before Shreeman Naatha Muni** in his Yoga and blessed him with all 4000 paasurams of Divya Prabandham. Naatha Muni thus blessed by the Shree Vaishnava Kula Pati himself became to known **Dravida Veda Vyasa**. (Veda Vyasa compiled Vedas and Shree Naatha Muni Compiled Divya Prabandham - Dravida Vedam). **The guru parampara chain thus got established in a divine form from Vishnu through Satakopa and Naatha Munigal though Satakopa's period is different from that of Naatha Muni's period.**

It should also be noted that Bodhaayana (a disciple of Veda Vyasa) has written a commentary on Brahma Sutra explaining our Visistaadvaitam. Similarly Danka, Dramida, Guhadeva, Kapardi, Bhaaruchi, Brahma Nandi and such aacharyas were present in succession before Naatha Muni, preserving our sidhdantam.

Namaalvar did not only bless Shreeman Naatha Muni who came as an aacharya in such parama vaidika tradition with 4000 divya prabandam but also with yoga rahasyam. Naatha Muni contributed Nyaaya Tatvam and Yoga Rahasyam. From him the divine sampradayam was preached to Uyiakkondar - Pundareekakshar. From him to Manakkal Nambhigal - Raamamisra. From him to Yaamunaacharya Aalavandar. Yaamunaacharya was very bright from his childhood itself. He conquered the royal court vidwan by defeating his three difficult arguments. He was rescued from his materialistic life to our sampradayam by Manakkal Nambhigal as per Naathamunigal's wish.

Aalavandar contributed 8 works to our sampradayam. They are *Aatma Sidhi, Samvit Sidhi, Iswara Sidhi* (Sidhi Trayam), *Aagama Praamaanyam, Purusha Nirnayam, Stotra Ratnam, Chatus Sloki* and *Gitaartha Sangraham*. He by is divine vision selected Shree Raamaanuja as his disciple and instructed his 5 disciples to guide Raamaanuja who was at Kaancheepuram serving Varadaraja and studying under Yadava Prakasa. Raamaanuja was also blessed by

Varadarajan through Acharya Kaanchi Poorna with 6 statements explaining our matam. These six divine statements are going to be explained in this lesson so that the beginners can get an idea about Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. Yaamunacharya expressing his 3 final wishes through his pointed figures left for Parama Padam. Raamanuja who came to Shree Rangam to pay his homage to Yaamunaacharya got an explanation from Yaamuna's 5 disciples including Periya Nambi regarding **Yaamuna's final wishes**. They were.. .

1. Writing the real commentary for Brahma Sutras so that Shree Satakopa and our earlier aacharyas are pleased and our sampradayam is re-established.
2. Commenting On Tiru Vaai Mozhi of Satakopa Namaalvar and as such Vedas, [Bhagavat Geeta](#) and such saastras are explained by it automatically.
3. Making the names of Shree Paraasara & Veda Vyasa to shine for ever in the world.

Bhagavat Raamaanuja promised that he would full fill all the three wishes of his aacharya. As soon as he promised, the pointed figures of Yaamunaacharya's body automatically got unfolded and led everyone to wonder and appreciate the divinity of Shree Bhagavat Raamaanuja. Bhagavat Raamaanuja became the Shree Vaishnava Sidhdanta Nirdharana Saarvabowman and wrote wonderful commentary on Brahma Sutra called **Shree Bhasya** with the association of Shreevatsaanga Misra Shree Korataalwar who gave his eyes as sacrifice to protect our sampradayam. **Thus Yaamuna's first wish was full filled.** By his upadesa and directions, he made Tiru Kurugai Piran Pillan to comment on *TiruvaaiMozhi* and it came to be known as **Bhagavat Vishayam**. **Thus Yaamuna's second wish was full filled.** He **named the sons of Korataalwar as Paraasara Bhatta and Vyasa Bhatta** and preached all sampradaya artha to them and made them to contribute a lot for our sampradayam. **Thus Yaamuna's third wish was also full filled by Raamaanuja.** Bhagavat Raamanuja's 9 works includes

1. Vedartha Sangraham,
2. Shree Bhasyam,
3. Vedanta Deepam,
4. Vedanta Saaram,
5. Shree Bhagavat Geeta Bhasyam,
6. [Saranaagati Gadyam](#),
7. [Shree Ranga Gadyam](#),
8. [Shree Vaikunta Gadyam](#) &
9. Nitya Grantam.

He thus clearly preached through these works, the sidhdantam and anushtanam of Parama Vaidika Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matam and re-established it. After him, our sampradayam became popular as **Shree Raamaanuja Darsanam**.

Outline of Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Matam

The Lord of Kaancheepuram Shree Varadaraja Swamy cleared the doubts of Shree Raamaanuja through Tiru Kachi Nambi who was at his service and with whom the Lord used to talk. The Lord told six statements in a precise manner to explain our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava matam (philosophy and practice). These statements with brief explanation are as follows:

1. **Ahameva Param Tatvam**
2. **Darsanam Bhedam Eva Cha**
3. **Upayeshu Prapatisyaat**
4. **Antima Smruthi Varjanam**
5. **Dehaavasaane Muktisyaat**
6. **Poornaachaaryam Samaasraya**

The first statement means **Shreeman Naaraayanan is the supreme self, who is unparalleled and unsurpassed**

The second statement means **The philosophical system is based on the natural difference between insentient, sentient and the supreme Lord – The Lord has all the insentient and sentient entities as his body, and He is the soul of everything**

The third statement means **The way (means) to get salvation is surrendering to the feet of the Lord;** (Bhakti is impossible as it requires the person to have necessary qualification and ability)

The fourth statement means, **There is no need to adopt contemplation on the Lord during our final breath** (which is a requirement for Bhakti Yogis)”

The fifth statement means, **After the soul departs from the material body, it gets salvation in case he/she has adopted the means of surrender.** (The soul on getting salvation crosses all material worlds and reaches the transcendental world Paramapadam Shree Vaikuntam and eternally serves the Lord with ultimate & infinite bliss)

The sixth statement means, **one should approach a fully qualified Shree Vaishnava preceptor (here, for Shree Raamaanuja, it is Periya Nambi) and get enlightened.**

These statements are only explained in brief. In fact, they are roughly translated. Its purport will be explained in detail in future lessons. These are given here only to make the reader to get an idea about our sampradayam.

In the next lesson, we will get to know about Tatva-Hita-Purushaartha with special reference to explanations regarding “Pramaana-Prameya-Pramaatha-Prama”. The Pradaana-Prati-Tantram will also be dealt with in the next lesson. On hearing these Sanskrit terms, please note that all such terms and terminology will be explained clearly in lucid English with illustrations.

Please get back to me with your comments, suggestions, question, and doubts. I am waiting to answer them and appreciate your comments and suggestions.

End of Lesson Two

Lesson Three

The Pramaana – A lively explanation

In the first lesson, we briefly studied the four categories which philosophy claims to put any concept into such categories and then do a “synthesis” to establish concepts. Those four categories were stated as Pramaana, Premeya, Pramatha & Prama. We also say the various pramaanas accepted in our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam namely Pratyaksham, Anumaanam and Sabdam(Veda). We also saw the “Ubhya Vedanta Tradition” meaning.

In the second lesson, we saw in brief, the historical background of our Shree Sampradayam and also in a very very condensed form, the concepts of our Matham. Those concepts of our Matham were just stated but needs explanations with proof. It will be dealt with in detail in future step by step. The third lesson as given below is the first step towards it.

This lesson further explains the concept of “Pramanam” which is one among the four items mentioned in the first lesson (“Pramaana, Premeya, Pramatha & Prama”). This explanation is given in this lesson because of the need to stress the difference between the validity/limitations of various pramanas and the importance of “Sabda Pramana” which is Veda/Sruti.

This lesson is in the form of logical arguments to bring out the importance of Pramanam. I therefore request the reader to read this lesson in full and then comprehend it.

An atheist met me once and we started discussing. On seeing my God-fearing nature, he started to argue with me as follows:

The atheist said,

“See this my dear friend! Have you ever seen the “God” using your eyes?
Have you ever heard his voice using your ears?
Have you touched him or you have ever sensed his touch?
Have you smelt his odor using your nose?
Have you tasted him using your tongue?
He said, “Similarly have you sensed your “Soul” which you call as “Jeevatman”
in any of these manners?”

I replied

“No” to all these questions raised by him.

The atheist with a big laughter said,

“Then how come you believe that there is a “God”? How come you believe that there is something in each of our bodies called “Jeevatman” (soul)? None have sensed these two using their sense organs.

He further said,

“Stop believing in all these things – they should be only imaginary. Who can prove their presence using the application of sense organs? As far as life is there, one must enjoy it. There is nothing after death. Stop thinking of reward for good deeds and punishment for bad deeds. Do what you like!”

He then continued his laughter in a very loud manner. He thought that he has made me dumb without a counter-argument to refute his arguments and prove something against his ideas of atheism. Anyway I listened to all of his words carefully. After he stopped his laughter, I gently said to him,

“My dear friend, your talk has some truth in it and more falsehood in it”.

The atheist got irritated. He seriously said,

“All I said is truth! You yourself accepted that you have not sensed either the God or the individual soul (Jeevatman) using sense organs. How is that you say that my talk has falsehood?”.

I replied

“ No one can sense and thus know the God or the individual soul using the sense organs. In that manner, your argument is having truth. My answer to your questions regarding “Have you sensed God/individual soul using sense organs?” was “No” in this context of truth only. By saying “No” I never meant that “God and Jeevatman” cannot be known at all. They cannot be known by application of sense organs like eyes, ears etc. but can be known by other authorities.

The atheist on hearing my counter-argument said with a giggle,

“What else could be considered as authority other than the Pratyaksha Pramanam (application of sense organs and thus getting knowledge)? Why cannot we accept that there is no God or no Jeevatman (individual soul) as they are not sensed by sense organs?”

I spoke to the atheist and asked him to commit one thing – which is

“Are you atheist committing that any entity that cannot be sensed by application of sense organs is not existing?”

The atheist repeated that he commits the same and only Pratyaksha pramanam is valid. I said to the atheist –

“Have you not come across ‘Ultrasonic sound’ in science which cannot be heard by our ears but still proved by science as existing entity? Have you not come across ‘Ultra Violet light’ which cannot be seen by our eyes but still proved by science as existing entity? Have you ever seen the structure of atom which science has proved to be composed of certain constituents? Have you touched it? Have you tasted it? Have you smelt it? How is that you comprehend the dual nature of light? It is also natural that two individual may get different knowledge about the same object using their sense organs in different ways because of the effectiveness of each individual’s sense organs. Further each sense organs has its own limitations in its applications”.

On hearing my counter-arguments in the form of questions, the atheist was silent for a minute and then the atheist asked me

“See this my friend, you have wonderfully argued and made my commitment to be null and void. But this does not prove the presence of God or individual soul. Science has proved those entities that you mentioned like ultra violet rays, ultrasonic sound etc by experimenting, observation, and inferences. There is scientific scriptural authority for it given by scientists.”

I saw the face of the atheist when he was saying this to me – it was pale and he has totally stopped his laughter and giggle. He has become totally serious. I now addressed the atheist as follows:

“Your own words prove that you accept the reality/presence/existence of certain entities which cannot be comprehended by application of our senses organs”.

The atheist now said,

“Yes”.

I then took him with me to meet another person who called himself as a “Believer” in God.

We both met the “Believer” in God. I questioned him as follows:

“See this my friend who believe in God! I have another friend who is this atheist.

(I then introduced our atheist to the “Believer” in God.)

Both met each other with contempt in their sights. After this introduction, I addressed the “Believer” in God as follows:

“You seem to believe in God. But this atheist is a non-believer. He was initially very rigid with his idea that as God and individual soul are not sensed by sense organs, their reality/existence is imaginary only and not truth. I argued with him and as a result of it the atheist agreed the reality/existence of certain entities which cannot be comprehended by application of sense organs. Still he wants proof for the existence of God. He accepted experimenting, observation and inference. Also he accepts entities proved in the scientific scriptures produced by scientists as a result of their experiments, observation and inferences. How is that you can make him to believe in God or in individual soul?”

The “Believer” in God first said,

“We can see that when one does good gets rewards and if one does bad deeds gets punishments. This fear and belief makes the man to comprehend the presence of God”.

The atheist got irritated. He said

I have seen many culprits enjoying and many kind-hearted people suffering.

The “Believer” in God was silent for a minute and then addressed the atheist,

“Let me prove to you the presence of God in the way you accept. You have accepted that there are certain things, which are beyond the comprehension of our sense organs. You accept their reality by experiments, observation, and inference. Scientific scriptures based on these are valid for you. Let me come to your own way and prove the existence of God”.

I got surprised. The “Believer” in God continued his argument with the atheist as follows:

“See my dear atheist friend! Have you not seen a potter making a pot! On seeing the pot, don’t you think that even for making a small pot, a potter is there present as the cause and therefore why cannot this great universe have a great cause like this! That cause of this universe is God! This is my inference based on observation. Many people have written their ideas about God in this way. You can accept any form/name for him. Therefore the man made scriptural authority is also there in this regard.”

The “Believer” in God was happy thinking that he has proved the existence of God in the way in which the atheist agreed. The atheist looked very confused when the “Believer” in God used the Anumaana pramanam.

I addressed both of them and said,

“I do not agree with both of you!”

On hearing my words, not only the atheist got shocked but also the “Believer” in God got shocked equally. The atheist said

“Why is that you do not agree with the words of the “Believer” in God. He seems to be right as he has inferred on observation! He also says that there is man made scriptures regarding this in this manner”

The “Believer” in God angrily said

“You look like a God-fearing person and argued with the atheist but now why are you not agreeing with my words? If this is not the way to prove the existence of God, then in what way you can prove it? Are you also another atheist?”

I addressed both of them in calm tone

“Be calm first. Though I have regards for Pratyaksam and Anumaanam as Pramaanam, let me explain to you in detail the reason why I am not in agreement with both of you and then prove the existence of God and individual soul (Jeevaatman). First I would like to say that the sense organs cannot comprehend the God or individual soul as the basic nature of God and individual souls is that they cannot be comprehended by our sense organs. Therefore the Pratyaksha pramanam cannot prove the presence of God and individual soul. But I do not mean that the Pratyaksha pramanam itself is invalid. It is surely valid in the context of those entities that can be sensed by it. I stress its limitations here as such. Also both of you agree that there are certain entities which are beyond the comprehension of our sense organs.

The “Believer” in God says why cannot we infer the presence of God and hence prove it based on observation. He is ready to accept the man made scriptures in this regard. The “Believer” in God uses Anumaana Pramanam by this manner. Even the Anumaana pramaanam cannot prove the presence of God. He sees the potter as the cause of the pot. He thinks now “For a small pot itself, there is a cause who is a potter. Why cannot the great universe have a cause like this? That cause which I infer is God. At least there must some super-power (which I call as God)”. This is totally a wrong idea and does not prove the existence of God in any manner.

I will give you the reasons now. In the example/observation given by “Believer” in God, first let us reason out what sort of cause the potter is in making the pot. The potter is just an instrumental cause as he wishes to make the pot and makes it. There is another “cause” involved here and that is the material cause! The mud is the material cause as it undergoes changes in the hands of the instrumental cause (potter) and becomes the pot. One more “cause” is still involved here and that is the accessory cause. The accessories are water, the wheel, a stick, fire etc., which

are accessories in making the pot and without these accessories, the potter (instrumental cause) cannot make the pot from mud (material cause).

If we extend the inference of “Believer” in God, then a list of questions arises which cannot be answered by both of our friends. Those questions are :

- “This inference establishes the God only as the instrumental cause in creation of the entire universe. What is the material cause for the same?
- If the material cause is assumed to be matter, then from what that material cause came into origin?
- If there is a cause for it, why cannot the cause for the matter be called superior to the inferred God?
- If there is something superior to the inferred God, then who is to be called God?
- As the inferred God is only the instrumental cause, what are the accessory causes involved in the creation of the universe and again from where these accessory causes came into existence?
- As the inferred God turns up only to be the instrumental cause, why should he create the universe?
- If he creates it then has he got a body or not?
- If he has a body (as potter needs a body to perform action) to create, then what is the reason for his body? There is no answer for this question. If it is argued that the God creates without taking a body, then are the results of creation bind the God? If it is so, then what is the difference between us who are bound by our actions?
- If God’s actions bind God then God needs liberation first very much than what we need! How can such an inferred God liberate us who are bound in the material world?
- If the actions of the God are assumed not to bind God, then who enjoys it?
- What benefit the inferred God gets by creating the universe?
- Is the same inferred God sustains the universes and destroys it or is there more than one God?
- How is he? Is the God to be called “He or She or It”?
- Why should the God create the universe with lot of differences in it?
- Why one is rich another is poor?
- Why one individual is healthy and another is sick?
- Why few are beautiful and few are ugly?
- Why few are good and many are bad?
- Is the inferred God partial?
- If he has mercy why not he create everything only with goodness?
- Is he himself then good or bad?
- Is the God himself changed as the universe? If so, he should be both good and bad as the universe has both good and bad. If the God himself is having badness, then how is he different or same as matter and some individual soul?

Where are the answers to these questions? Therefore if we infer the God like this then the God thus established does not turn up with omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, purity and divinity".

Both of my friends (atheist and "Believer" in God) were as silent as grave. I added that "Using the same Anumaana pramaana it is also possible to prove that there is no God. Why cannot the same argument be argued in this way – "One observes chemicals reacting and producing new compounds. We are able to observe dynamic and static nature in matter itself. Nuclear reactions (fusion and fission) can produce energy and mass. Why cannot the matter itself gets changed by itself and creates the Universe? Why cannot its continuance be termed as sustaining of universe? Why cannot its anti-reactions be called as destruction of universe? If we need something to control these changes of matter then, why cannot we infer a physical force to control these instead of inferring a sentient God?

My friends (atheist and "Believer" in God) accepted that they do not have answer for any of my questions.

"All the man made scriptures in this regard cannot be taken as authority if they are also based on the same Anumaana pramaana. Further, man made scriptures always cannot be considered authentic – pride and prejudices are characteristics for many men. Also many such man made scriptures contradict among themselves and a question raises "which man made scripture is to accepted?" These questions do not have rational answer(s) as far as Pratyaksham and Anumaanam pramaanams are concerned."

Both of my friends (atheist and "Believer" in God) continued to be as silent as grave. Both of them realized limitation of Anumaana Pramaanam also. Both of them after a deep breath, said

"Have you got any other authority (Pramaanam) using which you can prove the existence of God and that of individual souls without the above mentioned contradictions/unanswered questions?"

I replied to them

"Yes. That pramaanam is called the Sabda Pramanam, which is the Veda/Sruti. But Pratyaksham and Anumanam though are found to be inadequate in this context (establishing God's existence), they are also considered but with their limitations "

They said,

"First you explain the nature of the Sabda Pramanam and then use it to prove the existence of God and that of individual souls". I then started to explain to them in detail as follows.

Lesson Four

The Pramaana – A lively explanation – Continued.. .

I now proceed to continue with my explanation regarding Sabda Pramaanam that is Veda/Sruti. I addressed both the atheist and the believer in God and said that Sabda Pramaanam which, is Veda alone establishes the existence of God and that of individual souls and many other transcendental entities which, cannot be established using the Pratyaksha pramaanam and Anumaana pramaanam. Both had agreed the inadequate nature of Pratyaksham and Anumaanam in this regard. They started to listen very carefully when I started to explain the nature of Sabda pramaanam (Veda) as follows:

"The Veda is totally different from pratyaksham and anumaanam as far as its nature is concerned but surely we recognize pratyaksham and anumaanam as pramaanams with their limitations. While studying the Veda, if certain knowledge imparted by it appears to be contradictory to it or pratyaksham or well framed logical anumaanam, we need to reconcile it by doing a synthesis. Let us now get to know about the nature of Sabda pramaanam (Veda).

The nature of Veda (otherwise called as Sruti) is listed down as points:

1. Veda is Apourusheyam – Not authored by anybody.
2. Veda is eternal, has no date of origin and end.
3. Veda is the only flawless ultimate authority and authority by itself.
4. Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this regard.
5. Veda is infinite and universal.

Let me explain to you each of the above point in detail.

Suppose we consider any work like Ramayanam, Mahabharatam or even certain ancient works of western or any part of the world, it is always remembered with its author name say Valmiki or Vyasa or anyone etc respectively. But as far as the Veda is concerned, no such author name is possible to be remembered and this is as such right from ancient time. One may now object that "It is possible that the name of author(s) might have been forgotten and that is why the case is there for Veda. There are certain works whose author(s) names are not known but still regarded as man-made. If the author name is forgotten then is it possible to consider the work as not authored by anyone?" This objection does not hold good and can be refuted from the very words of the objection itself. In the objection, those author names of works are forgotten but from ancient time, they are

regarded only as man-made. Even though the objection raised here stress that the author name is forgotten, it has regard regarding the work as man-made only.

Further just because of absence of author name, one can not recognize a work as not authored by any one. As per the objection, the author name may be absent because it is forgotten long ago. But in the case of Veda, “forgetting of author(s) name” is not acceptable because right from ancient time, there is no author name associated with Veda. From the historical records, right from ancient time, we do not find author name for Veda. It is not forgotten but the author name is not there for Veda because it is not authored by any one or by a group.

Few questions in this context are – “Why are the Seer’s names (Rishis) mentioned in the Veda as if they have authored it? Who are the Gotra-Pravartakaas? Has not the Chaturmuka Brahmaa authored the Veda? Why is Vyaasa called Veda Vyaasa? Is he an author? If not these individuals, had the supreme self authored it?” Another question in this context is “If no one is the author then how the Veda came into existence?”

These questions are answered now one by one. The seer’s names are surely mentioned in the Veda as if they are the composers of the Vedic hymns and sections of Veda. But they are not called as “Authors” of the Veda/portions of Veda but are called “Drasht” meaning “He who revealed it” as against the meaning “He who authored it”. The Seers by their divine knowledge grasped the eternal Veda and revealed to the world. The Gotra-Pravartakaas are again Rishis (seers) and Prajaapatis who preached portions of Veda and made their generations to spread in world. Therefore they are also not authors of Veda. Even Chaturmuka Brahmaa is not the author of Veda. He is again a preacher who got the eternal Veda from his father who is Vishnu (Shreeman Naaraayan).

The Supreme Sprit according to the Veda is Vishnu who is denoted also by the word “Brahman”. Even this Supreme Sprit is not the author of Veda. During the grand destruction of universe, the Veda condenses in subtle form as the syllable OM with the supreme sprit. When the supreme sprit creates the universe again, he remembers the Veda and expands it and preaches it to the first created sentient being named Chaturmuka Brahmaa. Therefore the Veda is not composed even by the supreme sprit and is eternal as eternal as the supreme sprit (Iswara), the sentient souls (Jeevaatmans) and the insentient (matter). Vyaasa, is incarnation of supreme sprit who was born in the world as son of Sage Paraasara. His name is Krishnaadvaipaayana (a) Baadaraayana. He is called Veda Vyaasa because he divided the Veda in four namely **Rik, Yajur, Saama** and **Aatarvana**. Therefore he is also not the author of Veda. Up to this, the nature of Veda being not authored by any one and its eternal nature was explained. Therefore the Veda neither has an author nor a date of origin. It is eternal.

Veda is the only flawless ultimate authority and authority by itself. As no one authors the Veda, there is no chance for the presence of any individual’s idea.

Therefore it is free from pride and prejudice. It is therefore the flawless ultimate authority and authority by itself. There is no error in it. It is absolute and all portions of it are authority.

Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this regard".

When I said this, both the atheist and believer in God asked me to chant a verse from Veda. I chanted a verse from Veda and they said that they are not able to understand it and get knowledge from it. They questioned me

“How do you say that Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this regard?”

I answered them as follows. I asked them to consider the eyes.

"It has power to see by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this regard. But it cannot see an object and impart knowledge about it if the object is not illuminated by light. Note that darkness here does not rule out this natural nature of eyes that is to see but does not enable its power. This is the fact. Similarly, though the Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue, it is not enabled to a person who does not know the relation between the words of Veda denoting entities/actions and the entities/actions denoted by it.

Now an objection arises. Is this said relation between “the words of Veda denoting entities/actions and the entities/actions denoted by it” created by some one or by a group or is it natural and eternal? The objection here is “We see a person understanding certain known gestures made by another person known to him and gets knowledge about entities and actions denoted by those gestures. Why cannot this above said relation (in case of Veda) also be considered like this?”

The refutation of this objection is as follows: In the objection, the knowledge about persons involved in making gestures and regarding understanding those gestures is available amongst the persons involved in the example quoted in the objection. Otherwise, the meaning of gestures may not make sense to outsiders. In this objection, the group of persons involved has set meanings to the gestures. On the other hand, right from ancient time, there is no knowledge available regarding the individual or group of person who set the relation between the words of Veda and the entities/actions denoted by them. The fact is no one set such relation between Veda and the objects/actions denoted by it. The creation is done in the same way as it was in existence before destruction as ascertained by Veda. Therefore relation between the words of Veda and the entities/actions denoted by them are the same right from time immemorial without any change. Therefore the example cited in objection is not at all comparable with Veda words imparting meaning. The objection thus gets refuted. Therefore the Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this

regard. This power is natural and eternal for Veda. But for newly coined terms, a group sets such relation. Such terms come under the example cited in the objection.

The Veda is infinite and universal. It is infinite voluminous with manifold divisions, sub-divisions. It is governed by six accessories namely ***Seeksha, Chandas, Vyaakaranam, Niruktam, Jyothisham & Kalpam***. *Seeksha* deals with proper pronunciation and pitch of the Veda alphabets, verses. *Chandas* deals with the meter of the Veda verses. *Vyaakaranam* deals with the grammatical aspect of Veda. *Niruktam* deals with interpretation of Veda verses. *Jyothisham* deals with finding out the appropriate time to do the actions prescribed in the Veda. *Kalpam* deals with elaborateness regarding performance of such actions.

The prescribed portion of Veda has to be studied for several years under a qualified teacher by a student. The teacher will loudly chant the Veda. The student has to hear it and repeat it several times and memorize it along with the six accessories. The Veda is therefore called “Sruti”. The Veda is inseparable with its six accessories in all time. The other names of Veda are “*Aamnaayam, Nigamam, Aapta Sruti, Apourusheyam, Trayvidhya*”. It is universal. It talks about everything. Nothing is left by it. It is applicable to all as per individual’s eligibility and qualifications. It talks about the Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha as the four goals in an individual’s life. *Dharma* is the righteous means prescribed in Veda to attain expected results. *Artha* is monetary results and comforts. *Kaama* means gratifying the desires of various sense organs. These three are grouped as material benefits that are limited and transitory. The fourth one namely ***Moksha*** is liberation from the material worlds which is unlimited and permanent transcendental benefit.

Now another objection raises in this context of the Veda telling everything. If the Veda is to be called as ultimate authority why should it talk on these material-benefits, which are limited and transitory? Why not it talk only on Moksha which is unlimited and permanent transcendental benefit?

The answer to this as follows: The Veda talks about everything because it is universal and applicable to all sorts of individuals. An individual who does not have any belief in Veda has to be first attracted towards it. That is why it prescribes the means for the material benefits that he can see and relish by practicing those prescribed means. He starts to develop interest afterwards on Veda. Then he sees those portions of Veda, which prescribe the means for final liberation – ***Moksha***. The individual then realizes the limited and transitory nature of material benefits and then develops interest for attaining Moksha that is unlimited and permanent transcendental benefit. Had the Veda only talked about Moksha, then all individuals may not turn towards it. That is why Veda talks about everything.

The Veda is also called *nigama*, *aapta sruti*, *sruti*, *aamnaayam* and *parama saastram*. **The term Veda means knowledge & wisdom**. It is called *sruti* because it is taught by the Guru vocally and heard by the student, repeated and memorised to remember. It is the storehouse of all knowledge *nigamam*. It is called *aapta sruti* because it is always the only reliable source & authority of knowledge that can be depended upon. Thus it is the only supreme knowledge base which enlightens - *parama saastram*. It is called *aamnaayam* when collectively its portions like "mantram", "aaranyakam" etc., are taken. Sage Saayana has given a commentary for the full of vedas and it is called *veda bhasyam*. The vedas has two parts. They are

- **Karma Kaandam**
- **Brahma Kaandam** (otherwise called as Igyaana Kaandam)

The Karma kaandam deals with the rituals like *Yagyaas*, *Homam*, *Yaagas* and such sacrifices and ceremonies that are part of all walks of life like birth, "upanayanam", marriage, death etc.,. It is the elaborate treatment of all materialistic knowledges. It is also called **Poorva Mimaamsa**. **Shree Jaimini Maha Muni**(A sage who knows Veda Vyasa and lived in his period) has written *sutras* (aphoristic formulas) regarding this called **Dharma (Karma) Sutras**.

The **Brahma kaandam** (Igyaana kaandam) **Vedaantam** (Meaning Conclusion Of Vedas) deals with the knowledge regarding the absolute root cause of the universe, the ultimate truth of Brahman-Shreeman Naaraayana Paramatman. It is also called **Upanishad** (because it is the one, which is close to Brahman and talks about the reality of Brahman as such the truth). It is very vast, deep and requires highest intelligence, "Bhagavat Krupaa" (Mercy of Lord) & "Aacharya Kataksham" (Grace of preceptor) to comprehend and realise the concepts as explained in it. It is called **Uttara Mimaamsam**. **Baadaraayana Shree Veda Vyasa** himself has written *sutras* (aphoristic formulas) regarding this called **Brahma Sutras**. It is also called Saareeraka Saastram.

The statements in the Veda are broadly classified into three

1. *Vidhi Vaakyams* are those statements of Veda which is in the form of an order "Do this" to execute leading to performance of action.
2. *Nisheda Vidhi Vaakyams* are those statements, which are also in the form of order but in the form "Do not do that" ie., "abstain form doing that".
3. *Artha Vaadams* are those statements, which explain the entities involved in the first two classes of statements.

There is an objection raised by a school of thought based on Veda named "Poorva-Mimaamsaka" as follows:

The poorva-mimaamsaka objects that Veda cannot establish an already existing entity as its nature is only to dictate an order to execute it leading to performance of action (by Vidhi and Nisheda Vidhi). He further states that the "Artha Vaadams" is only to praise the entities involved in the actions and this praise is only to encourage the individual to do the action. He says that as the Brahman and individual soul are already existing entities, the Veda cannot establish them". The refutation of this objection is simple. The Veda has explained Brahman and also placed an order to adopt the means (Upaasana) to attain the feet of Brahman. Therefore the own words of he who objects makes the objection null and void. Otherwise also, words of Veda need not be always in the form of order to execute to impart knowledge.

"Don't we see parents just pointing already existing objects like moon etc to their small children and just say the name of those objects without any order to execute and make the children to get knowledge about it?"

Therefore the Veda can establish already existing entities also and thus the Veda can prove the existence of God (Brahman) and that of individual souls and so many transcendental entities.

Apart from the sruti as briefly explained above, few **Smruties** like *Manu Smruti* are accepted as authorities. "Smruti" as the name indicates are different from "Sruti". "Smruti" means memory - remembrance. Sages like Manu Maharishi learnt vedas (sruti) and practiced it for several years and out of their knowledge and experience, they remembered the sruti and explained it through their works called smruti. Thus **Smruti has author** but **Sruti has no author**. The other works like puranas, itihassas and aagamas were outlined in the lesson one.

Any authority can be accepted as authority only if it supports Vedas. If it contradicts Vedas, it has to be appropriately understood such that there is no contradiction to the Vedic authority or it should be rejected. One has to necessarily understand that Vedas (Sruti) alone is the base authority or the only final authority.

Apart from this *Nyaya, Tarka* and such "darsanas" (systematic tools of philosophy) are considerable in our sidhdantam. Everything has its root in the Vedas. The veda is thus the eternal authority. Many sutras like Vyakarana sutra, Yoga sutra, Brahma Sutra and Saastras are also considered similarly.

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The Prastaana Trayam & Its Significance In Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam...

The three authoritative scriptures as proof taken collectively is popularly referred to as Prastaana Trayam. They are :

4. The **Vedas (Sruti)** - Poorva & Uttara Mimaamsa together.
5. The **Bhagavat Geeta** - Told by Lord Kannan Himself & recorded by Vyasa.
6. The **Brahma Sutras** - Saareeraka Saastra Of Veda Vyasa Bhagavan.

I have explained the nature of vedas earlier. Paarthasaarati Kannan has preached the Bhagavat Geeta Himself to Arjuna in the battlefield of Maha Bharata. It is the essence of all Vedas and it is of greatest significance as it is a saastra, which came as the divine message & order of the Lord Kannan Himself. The brahma sutras are aphorisms (nearly 550 formula like short - precise - clear - error free - small verses) composed by Veda Vyasa Bhagavan to explain the Saareeraka Saastra Of Upanishads. Our Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam is based on this prastaana trayam and the darsanas. After the concept of Pramaanam, let us see in brief Prameyam.

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The Prameyam

Prameyam is the entity known by Pramaatha using Pramaanam. The Pramaanam is Veda, which was explained above. Prama is the valid knowledge got by Pramaatha regarding Prameyam through Pramaanam.

The twenty chapters of Mimaamsa (12 chapters by Sage Jaimini called Karma Kaandam, 4 chapters by Sage Kaasakrutsna called Devata Kaandam and last 4 chapters by Veda Vyasa called Brahma Kaandam) constitute a single saastram. Therefore the poorva and uttara mimaamsam are together treated always. The first 12 chapters declare that Shreeman Naaraayanan (Vishnu) is worshiped by all karma prescribed by the Veda and He is the one who grants the results. The next 4 chapters declare Shreeman Naaraayanan as the “Soul – Antaryaamin – The omnipresent controller” of all divinities. The last 4 chapters conclude that Shreeman Naaraayanan is declared as “Brahman” who is the cause (both material and efficient cause) of the universe, the soul of the universe and He who has the universe as His body and His feet as the means and goal for liberation.

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Contents of Brahma Sutras & thus Vedanta in summary

present to you the contents of the Brahma Sutra in summarized form as told by [Shreeman Nigamaantha Mahaa Desikan](#) in his famous and unparalleled work called "Adhikarana Saaraavali". Shreeman Nigamaantha Maha Desikan is an extraordinary philosopher and poet as far as our Shree Sampradayam is concerned. He lived nearly 800 years ago and has contributed hundreds of works in an unparalleled and unsurpassed manner.

The BrahmaSutras are aphorisms composed by Veda Vyasa to explain the Brahma-Kaanda the upanishads which enlighten us regarding the Brahman's swaropa(reality), roopa(form), guna(Attributes), vibhuthi-ashiwaryam(lordship). [Shree Bhagavat Raamaanuja](#) has written commentry on BrahmaSutras and explained that only Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam's philosophy and practice is the purport of the Veda and the philosophy of Veda Vyasa. Shreeman Nigamaanta Maha Desikan who is an extraordinary Aachaarya in our tradition has composed "Adhikarana Saaraavali" wherein, he has composed a hymn for each Adhikarana explained in Shree Bhaashya in a condensed form.

Aadhikaranam is a sub-section in paada of an aadyaaya in Brahma sutra. Each aadhikaranam has five components. They are *Vishayam* (Subject), *Samsayam* (Doubt), *Poorvapaksham* (Opponent view), *Sidhaantam* (Established truth with proof) and *Prayojanam* (Benefit of establishing the truth with proof).

Each chapter has sections called "paadas" and each paada has sub-sections called the aadhikaranas. Each aadhikarana has one to many sutras. The first chapter is *samanvaya*, which deals with establishing Shreeman Narayana as Brahman who is the only cause of universe (all living and non-living things), having the universe as his body and he being the soul of the universe. The second chapter is *avirodha*, which establishes that the Brahman thus established in the first chapter, cannot be refuted, or rejected by any system. The third chapter is *saadana*, which deals with the means to attain the brahman's lotus feet. The fourth chapter is *phala*, which deals with the goal, which is eternal bliss and service to the lotus feet of Lord Shreeman Narayana in the Paramapada Vaikunta, which is the transcendental eternal & ultimate place.

One sloka from *Swamy Desikan's Adhikarana Saaraavali* (almost in the begining of the work) which explains the meaning of entire Brahma Sutras is going to be presented by me as follows:

**Srashta Dehi Swanishta: Niravadhi Mahimaa Apaasta Baadha:
Sritaapta:
Kaatmaa Dehendriyaadehe Uchita Jananakrut Samsrwtow Tantra
Vaahi**

**Nirdhoshatvaadi Ramyo Bhahu Bhajana Padam Swaarha Karma
Prasaadya:
Paapachid Brahma Naadi Gatikrut Athivahan Saamyadascha Atra
Vedya:"**

Meaning with chapter-paada summary is as follows (in brief):

CHAPTER 1

Paada 1 : "Srashta" - Shreeman Naaraayanan is the Brahman who is the creator (& sustainer, destroyer) of the universe (all the sentient and insentient (chit & achits) entities)

Paada 2 : "Dehi" - Shreeman Naaraayanan has all the sentient and insentient (chit & achits) entities as his body

and He is the soul

Paada 3 : "Swanishta:" Shreeman Naaraayanan is the Supreme Self and is the supporter/controller/sheshi (Lord) of the universe and is unparalled and unsurpassed.

Paada 4 : "Niravadhi Mahimaa" - Shreeman Naaraayanan is infinite with infinite supremacy.

CHAPTER 2

Paada 1 : "Apaasta Baadha:" - The supreme self thus established in the first chapter cannot be refuted or rejected by any system like Saankya, Yoga, Charuvaaka, Vaishesika, Bowdha, Jaina, Paasupata and others.

Paada2 : "Sritaapta:" - The supreme self Shreeman Naaraayana is the only dependable for those who surrender to him as He is the author of *Shree Paancharaatra Aagama* which alone is recognised by Brahma Sutra to be in accordance with the Veda and equivalent to Veda.

Paada3 : "Kaatmaa " - Shreeman Naaraayana is the creator of ether & jeevatman

Paada4: "Dehendriyaadehe Uchita Jananakrut" - Shreeman Naaraayana is the creator of the body of Jeevas and the Jeevas sense organs according to the individual Jeeva's anaadi karma.

CHAPTER 3

Paada 1 : "Samsrwtow Tantra Vaahi" - Shreeman Naaraayana is the controler of the entire universe's actions and inactions.

Paada 2 : "Nirdhoshatvaadi Ramyo" - Shreeman Naarayana is identified by ubhaya-lingam - the two identifications namely "Infinite with infinite divine qualities/attributes" and "Untouched by all impurities" though He is present inside and outside of all chit and achit tatvaas always.

Paada 3 : "Bhahu Bhajana Padam" - Shreeman Naaraayana is the goal of all Bhakthi Vidyaas mentioned in the upanishads. He alone is meditated upon by people who wish to get liberation(moksha)

Paada4 : "Swaarha Karma Prasaadya:" - Shreeman Naaraayana alone grants the results to all as per their karma. He alone grants all the four purusharthas namely Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha.

CHAPTER 4

Paada1 : "Paapachid" - Shreeman Naaraayana destroys the obstacles (paapa and punya) of those who practice Bhakti or Prapathi and purifies them and thus makes them to be qualified for getting Moksha.

Paada2 : "Brahma Naadi Gatikrut" - Shreeman Naaraayana makes the jeevaatman (who has done Bhakthi or Prapathi) to leave the material body through the "Brahma Naadi" when the Jeeva's papa and punya are removed.

Paada3 : "Athivahan" - Shreeman Naaraayana leads the Jeevaatman in the Archiraadhi Gathi to Shree Vaikunta Paramapada.

Paada4 : "Saamyadascha Atra Vedy:" - Shreeman Naaraayana grants "Saaloka", "Saaroopiya", "Saameepya", "Saayujya" to the Mukta Jeeva. "Saaloka" - Jeeva reaches the Shree Vaikunta Loka which is trancendental and imperishable. "Saaroopiya" - Jeeva gets divine body of SudhaSatva like that of Shreeman Naaraayana. "Saameepya" - Jeeva goes near Shreeman Naaraayana in the Paramapada. "Saayujya" - Jeeva eternally does service to the Lotus feet of Shreeman Naaraayana along with Nitya soories and other muktas and never returns to the material world.

Thus Shreeman Naaraayana who is the ParaBrahma Butha is known from the "Saareeraka Saastra" which is the Brahma sutra - the purport of entire Vedas. The entire contents of upanishads (Vedanta) are to be understood by

this way. Thus the Brahman who is the Supreme-self Shreeman Naaraayana has all the Chit and Achit entities, as his body/mode is the Prameya.

This discussion regarding Prameya, which is just outlined here, will be continued in the next lesson in detail.

Lesson Five

Prelude

On hearing my words, the atheist and the believer in God accepted their defeat in the argument. I summarized the contents of my arguments for their benefit as follows:

The pratyaksha pramaanam is inadequate to establish the God, individual soul etc., as they are beyond the reach of application of sense organs. I established the existence of certain entities that are beyond the reach of sense organs that the atheist also accepts.

The Anumaana pramaanam is also inadequate to establish the God, individual soul etc., as it gives rise to number of unanswerable questions. To answer them if anumaanam is again used, then it leads to infinite illogical arguments and counter-arguments without an end. Further the same inference can be used to argue that there is no God or there is no need to accept God or to accept more than one God.

The Sabda pramaanam that is Veda alone can establish the God, individual soul etc., as it has the qualities.

Veda is Apourusheyam - Not authored by anybody

Veda is eternal, has no date of origin and end.

Veda is the only flawless ultimate authority and authority by itself.

Veda has power to impart knowledge by itself that is its virtue and does not require any sub-agent in this regard.

Veda is infinite and universal.

The Veda is totally different from pratyaksham and anumaanam as far as its nature is concerned but surely we recognize pratyaksham and anumaanam as pramaanams with their limitations. While studying the Veda, if certain knowledge imparted by it appears to be contradictory to it or pratyaksham or well framed logical anumaanam, we need to reconcile it by doing a synthesis.

Then I proceeded to explain them the God as told by the Veda.

"The God is Shreeman Naaraayanan who is

Lord of Goddess Lakshmi (Shree)

Unchanging, knowledge-self, infinite, blissful, and absolute pure nature

The material cause and instrumental cause of the universe (all sentient souls and insentient matter)

Having the material worlds (universe) and transcendental world as his body and He being the soul

Having divine transcendental body (in five modes)

Untouched by all impurities of the universe

Having infinite divine attributes

Having as his sport, creation, sustenance, and destruction of all material worlds".

The atheist and the believer in God felt really sorry for their arguments and requested me to explain in detail the philosophy and practice that is the purport of Veda. I addressed them and said,

"I am happy that you are accepting your defeat. You do this just because you are perfect rationalist. You seem to accept philosophy as a subject that requires proper foundation and various levels for perfection."

I then started my explanation in detail regarding Premeyam, Pramaatha and Pramaa after this discussion regarding "Pramaanam".

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"Pradhaana PratiTantram" of Visistaadvaita

Every philosophical school of thought has its own unique concept(s) that differentiates it from other schools of thought. Other schools of thought may also contradict such concepts. Such concept(s) is/are called "Pradhaana PratiTantram" in Sanskrit. In this article, the pradhaana pratitantram of Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnam is going to be discussed in brief. The Pradhaana Prathitantram of Visistaadvaita is "**Sareera-Aatma Bhaava**" otherwise called as "Sareera-Sareere Bhava" which is the "Body-Soul" relationship between the universe (all sentient (Chit/Jeeva) and insentient (Achit/non-living matter)) and the Brahman who is Lord Shreeman Naaraayana Paramaataman. The Veda seems to talk about the identity of the universe (all sentient (Chit/Jeeva) and insentient (Achit/non-living matter)) and the Brahman in certain verses called "*Abheda Sruthi*". The same Veda seems to talk about the categorical difference between the universe (all sentient (Chit/Jeeva) and insentient (Achit/non-living matter)) and the Brahman in verses called "*Bheda Sruthi*". There seems to be a contradiction in the premise Veda. When we study the entire Veda carefully we find verses called "**Gataka Sruti**" which synchronizes the "*Abheda Sruthi*" and the "*Bheda Sruti*" and sets it clear that Veda has no contradiction in it and it conveys one idea that is through the "Sareera-Aatma Bhaava".

Let me explain the nature of body and soul in detail. Soul is the one that eternally and inseparably supports (*Aadhaara*) controls (*Niyaamaka*) and owns (*Seshi*) the body for its purpose. Body is the one that is eternally and inseparably supported (*Aadheya*), controlled (*Niyaamyaa*) and owned (*Sesha*) by the soul and exists for the purpose of the soul. This is the definition of soul and body respectively. Generally when I say "body", the picture of it which comes to a person's mind is "that which has head, legs, hands etc.". If you take the body of a snake, it does not possess legs hands etc as it is found in human body. The body's physical form thus varies from species to species. Therefore the definition is not in terms of these physical natures but only of the definition given above holds good as far as the soul-body relationship is concerned.

Bhagavat Raamaanuja in his Shree Bhaasya talks about this as

"Yasya Chetanasya Yat Dravyam Sarvaatmanaa Swarthe Niyantum Dhaarayitum Cha Sakyam Tat Seshatayka Swaroopam Cha Tat Tasya Sareeram".

He further stress the same in his Vedaartha Samgraha as

"Prutak Sidhi Anarha Aadhaara-Aadheya Bhaava: Niyantru Niyaamya Bhaava: Sehshi-Sesha Bhaavanacha".

The Brahman (Shreeman Naaraayanan) supports controls and owns the entire universe eternally and inseparably. The entire universe is supported controlled and owned by the Brahman and exists for the purpose of Brahman eternally and inseparably. Therefore the Brahman is the soul of the universe and the universe is the body of the Brahman. The swaroopam (reality-nature of being as such distinguishing itself from others) and stiti (continuance of existence) of all chit and achit entities are supported by Brahman. The swaroopam (reality-nature of being as such), stiti (continuance of existence) and pravruiti (actions) of all chit and achit entities are controlled by Brahman. The Brahman owns everything for himself for his own purpose.

When the Gataka Sruthi is used to synchronize, the Abheda sruthi verses mean to tell that nothing other than the Brahman qualified by the universe as his body exists. In the same way when the Gataka sruthi verses are used to synchronize, the bheda sruthi verses mean to tell that the Brahman, who is the soul of the universe, is different from the universe, which is his body. Body and soul are different entities but they are inseparably related. The body is therefore called "**Aprutak Sidha Visheshanam**" meaning the body becomes the inseparable attribute of the soul. The term "Aprutak Sidha" rules out independent existence of the body. Without the soul, the body cannot have swaroopam, stiti and pravruiti. Also, the soul has not mode without the body and therefore the body called the mode (Prakaram) of the soul.

This relation is to be eternally and inseparably present between the soul and the body otherwise the concept itself is ruled out. For example, assume that a man is supporting an object say "pot". Though he is the supporter and the pot is supported, the man cannot be the soul of the pot and the pot cannot be called as his body. This is because it is possible that the same pot can be supported by someone else (if he gives it to another person) or by something else say ground (if he keeps it on the ground). The inseparable eternal relation is not present here in this example.

Similarly in an example, a man controls his servant by his order. Though the man is the controller and his servant is controlled, the man cannot be called as the soul of the servant and the servant cannot be called as his body. This is because it is possible that someone else can control the same servant. The inseparable eternal relation is not present in this example also.

Follow another example where a man owns a land and gets benefits from it. Though the man is the owner of the land, enjoys the benefits from his land, and the land is owned and exists for the purpose of the man, the man cannot be called as the soul of the land and the land cannot be called as the body of the man. The inseparable eternal relation is not present in this example also, as another person can own the land if it is sold or seized.

The body-soul relationship between the Universe and the Brahman is eternal and inseparable. The universe cannot exist without the Brahman and the Brahman is not

without the universe as his body. Before creation, the Brahman has the subtle Chit & Achit entities as his body. He creates the universe by giving expanded form, name etc to them. The form, name etc are given to the Chit entities as per their karma, which is without a beginning. The Brahman after creating the universe has the expanded universe as his body. Therefore the Brahman is declared as the material cause and instrumental cause of the universe. The Brahman has infinite divine qualities and is untouched by all impurities of the universe as he is the soul and the universe is his body.

This key concept of Visistaadvaita is declared by many verses in Veda explicitly like

" Ya: Aatmani Thistan Ya: Aatmaanaam Antaro Yamayati
Yam Aatmaa Na Veda Yasya Aatma Sareeram" .

Thus the Pradhaana PratiTantram of Visistaadvaita is to be comprehended.

After giving the brief idea of our pradhaana prati tantram of Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam, I proceed to give in brief the tatva trayam in detail as per the vedic authority.

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Tatva Trayam As It Is In Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava Sidhdantam

Tatvam refers to "Reality" or "Truth". As I have already told you that our sidhdantam is based on [prastaana trayam](#), the concepts in tatva trayam are summarized from the pramaanam as follows. Tatva Trayam deals with eternal three distinct elements. They are :

- **Chit** (Chetana Vastu) - The sentient soul - The Jeevaatman.
- **Achit** (Achetana Vastu) - The insentient material - The non-living things.
- **Iswara** - Para Brahman - The God Shreeman Naaraayanam.

Each entity is described by two concepts. They are

Swaroopa Nirupaka Vishesanam - The basic essential (key) characteristics of the entity without which its nature cannot be identified, understood, and comprehended as distinguished/distinct. For example the thumb impression identifies an individual human being and therefore it is swaroopa nirupakam - the thumb impression is

Nirupita Swaroopa Vishesanam - After identifying the entity by its swroopa nirupaka vishesanam, understanding its other attributes/characteristics, which further makes us to get educated regarding it. After identifying an individual, his skin color, hairstyle etc becomes nirupita swaroopa vishesanam - the skin color, hairstyle etc are common across individuals.

The examples given for swaroopā nirupakā & nirupitā swaroopā viśheṣhanam are only for understanding purpose as parallel ideas.

We will understand about *Chit-Achit & Iswara* as per the above mentioned two concepts laid down in understanding things.

The *Achit* is otherwise called "Achetana Vastu". It is real. It changes with time. It is insentient and thus has no knowledge and knows nothing and it exists for the Jeevaatman. It is the insentient material - the non-living thing. It is also called "prakruti - pradhanam". It is generally the combination of the three gunas - *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* in various proportions.

Actually, *Achit* is classified into the following categories:

Trigunya Maaya (Which is real (maaya is not to be understood as falsehood/unreality - it is real and is the creation of Lord)) It is otherwise called "misra satvam" - satva guna mixed with rajas and tamas in variety of proportions. We live in this "misra satva prakruti". The "leela vibhuti" of Vishnu is composed of this with "samsara badha jeevaas" living in it starting from Chaturmuka Brahma to microorganisms.

Sudha Satva - Pure Satva based achit without the mix of rajas and tamas. It is divine and has "svayam prakasa" even though it is an achit. It is present only in the divine Shree Vaikunta Parama Pada and shines only for nityaas and muktaas as per the wish of Paramaatma Naaraayanān. The "nitya vibhuti" of Vishnu is composed of this with nityaas and muktaas eternally serving the Lord in it.

Satva Soonyam - This is Time - Kaalam. Under its control, trigunya maaya undergoes changes constantly. It has no control in Parama Pada. Time has divisions like *kala*, *nimisham*, *muhurtam*, *ayanam* etc.,. It always runs in forward direction. During final destruction, kaalam is also destroyed.

The *chit* is the "chetana vastu". It is sentient soul - the jeevaatman. Our body is achit. Inside it (in the heart) is located the jeevaatman. It is "igyaana maya" - knowledge self and also has knowledge as its guna - attribute/characteristic. This is called as its *Dharma Bhotha Ignyaanam*. *Chit* has "svyam prakasaatvam" ie., it knows itself as "I" "Myself". It knows other things by using its "dharma bhotha ignyaanam". It is finite - "Anu" (finite) Swaroopā. It has "aananda" (bliss) and "aananda maya". Like this countless souls are present in the universe. The igyaana of each soul varies from that of another because of the individual karma load it has from time immemorial. The soul is immortal and cannot be killed or burnt or soaked or treated by any materialistic manner. Its identity is - The Jeevaatman is the *Sesha* (Owned) & *Daasa* (Servant) of Shreeman Naaraayana. Shreeman Naaraayana is its only *Seshie* (Owner) & *Prabhu* (Lord). As per this real identity of itself, It has to do eternal service to Shreeman Naaraayanān alone.

The jeevaatmaas are further classified as :

Badha Jeevaatmaas - They are in the grips of samsaara (material world) and their eternal time immemorial ("annaadi") karma bandanam. They are under the influence of rajas, tamas and satva (the three qualities of material world) and their condition is full of misery and sorrow in the name of worldly pleasures which are in fact ordeals and agony.

Mukta Jeevaatmaas - They were actually griped by samsaara but by the divine grace of Aacharya and Bhagavat Bhaagavataas, got enlightened by the study of saastraas and upadesaas and had adopted *bhakti* or *prapatti* (saranaagati) as per the saastraas and got liberated by the grace of Shreeman Naaraayana. They reach Paramapada Shree Vaikuntam and eternally serve the lotus feet of Shreeman Naaraayana and never returns to this material world.

Nitya Jeevaatmaas - They are souls who are eternally free from karma and are always present with Shreeman Naaraayana Parabrahman in Shree Vaikunta Paramapada eternally serving His lotus feet. Garuda, Vishvaksena, Ananta Aadi Sesha are Nityaas. They are also referred to as *nitya soories*.

Iswara is the Parabrahman Shreeman Naaraayana Paramaatma. He is called Vaasudeva, Vishnu. All names identify him as he is the soul of everything. He is infinite, unchanging truth, infinite bliss (aananda) self, infinite knowledge self knowing everything. He is the creator, sustaining everything and destroyer of everything. He is pure - untouched by all impurities, has infinite divine qualities unique to himself. He is the Lord Of Shree Lakshmi, Bhoomi and Neela Devi. Vishnu is the Supreme soul of all *chit* and *achit* tatvas, having all chit and achit tatvas as his body, controlling everything, owing nitya and leela vibhoties, immortal and the only material and instrumental cause of the universe, present inside and outside everything. He is beyond the comprehension of all vedas, our mind and senses. He is the only supreme self worshiped by all vedas, saastraas, yagyaas and all karmaas and aaraadhanaas, tapas etc.. He has infinite mercy. He is the *upaaya* (means) and *upeya*(goal). He teaches the vedas to chaturmuka brahma and makes the saastras to be established in the world. He grants moksha to those who adopt bhakti or prapatti (saranaagati). His body is divine sudhda satva maya subhaasraya.

Note: `Refer Iswara tatva points that I explained when I explained Pradhaana Prati Tantram also`.

He exhibits himself in five forms

1. Para Roopam (At Shree Vaikunta Paramapadam)
2. Vyuha Roopam (In the Cosmic Milky Ocean),
3. Vibhava Roopam (Varaaha, Nrusimha, Raama Krishnaadi Avataaras),
4. Antaryaami, Haarda & Viswaroopa (Present inside everything, inside the jeevaatman in the heart with a divine form, and having the universe as his form and outside everything),
5. Archa Roopam - Worshiped in [106 \(of this world\) divya desams](#) as praised by Aalwars and Aacharyas, and in the form of Saaligraama & in the form that we like to worship him in our houses also.

Naaraayanan is always accompanied with Shree Lakshmi and whatever applicable of Himself is also applicable for Lakshmi with a subtle difference. So this divine couple is the Iswara tatva. Lakshmi even though is his wife, is actually inseparable with Him, and participates with him equally in all his divine forms and plays. Her divinity gives glory to Vishnu and Vishnu is the divinity (Shree) of Shree.

NOTE: I think this lesson was bit tough. It has lot of concepts outlined with Sanskrit terms. Please do not worry - all these will be explained in the next lesson with illustrations and elaboration step by step. The aim of this lesson was just to make the reader to get introduced to concepts. Further the terms Bedha sruti, Abedha sruti and Gataka sruti etc., will be explained in detail in the next lesson.

Lesson Six

Prelude

The Lesson 5 had lot of concepts outlined with Sanskrit terms. All these will be explained with illustrations and elaboration step by step. The aim of that lesson was just to make the reader to get introduced to concepts. Further the terms Bedha sruti, Abedha sruti and Gataka sruti etc. will be explained in detail.

The Explanation follows

First, we will understand the Supremacy of Shreeman Naaraayana as declared by the Veda.

Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya & Supremacy of Shreeman Naaraayana

"Nyaaya" is a Sanskrit term almost meaning "Maxim". Numerous such nyaayas are used in philosophical discussions and debates to ascertain the purport of interpretations and arguments. These maxims help us to understand certain elements that are beyond the comprehension of our senses because they are in the form of citing examples which are already known to us. Nyaaya is a component of philosophy system as far as those schools of philosophical thoughts, which are based on Vedas. In this article, I am going to explain a Poorva Meemaamsa nyaaya called Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya to ascertain the Supremacy of Shreeman Naaraayana as declared by the Vedas.

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Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya - explained

The Poorva Meemaamsa Sutras are *aphorisms* composed by Jaimini (to explain the Karma Kaanda of Vedas) who is supposed to be the contemporary / disciple of Veda Vyasa (who composed the aphorisms Brahma Sutras (to explain the Brahma Kaanda of Vedas)). The poorva meemaamsa deals elaborately with 'Karma' - performance of various rituals and sacrifices called Yajnaays, Yaagas, Kratu, Homa etc. In this it is ascertained that such karma is the means for the three fold nature of the materialistic life namely *dharma*, *artha* and *kaama*. On the other hand, Brahma Sutra talks about the fourth goal, which is transcendental, namely the *moksha*.

The maxim that is the subject of this article is a poorva meemaamsa based nyaaya as told already, is used here in this poorva meemaamsa to ascertain a particular sacrifice. The Veda says "**Pasunaa Yajeta**" meaning, "Do the sacrifice (a specific yagnya) by sacrificing animal". Here it is to be noted that the Sanskrit term "Pasu" is a common noun, which means "Animal". The question now arises - "What animal is to be sacrificed?" The common noun "Pasu" is derived in Sanskrit because the animal is tied to the *Yooopa*, which is a post erected near the Yagnya altar ("**pachatey iti pasuhu**"). It can denote any animal.

When the Vedic verses in the same context are further read carefully, we find another verse "**Caagasya Vapaayaaha**" meaning, "Using the organ called "Vapa" of the goat, do the sacrifice". The term "Caaga" meaning "Goat" is a particular noun. The question therefore gets the answer - "The animal is none other than the goat". Therefore it is ascertained that the specific sacrifice is to be done by sacrificing goat. This is "Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya". Therefore, comprehending the meaning of common nouns using the meaning conveyed by the particular noun and identifying the common nouns with the entity that is denoted by the particular noun in the given relevant context is "Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya". "**Vishesha sabdaartha prathipaadita arthe saamaanya sada ganaartha paryavasaanam**"

This nyaaya is now applied in the upanishad texts as follows.

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Analysis of Upanishad Texts - Important Kaarana & Chodaka Vaakyaas

In the following paragraphs, important upanishad texts are going to be analyzed in the context of finding out who is identified as the Supreme self in the Vedas. We will then subject this analysis with respect to the chaaga pasu nyaayam, which is discussed above.

The upanishads otherwise known as Vedanta explains the Brahman's *Swaroopa* (reality), *Roopa* (form), *Guna* (Characteristics/attributes/qualities), *Vibhuthi-Iswaryam* (Lordship). The upanishad texts are broadly classifiable into "Kaarana Vaakya" and "Chodaka Vaakya". Kaarana Vaakyas are those verses of the upanishads which declares the Brahman as the only cause (material and instrumental cause) of the universe. Chodaka Vaakyas are those verses of the upanishads which declares the various infinite divine qualities of the Brahman who is the only cause of the universe.

Let us now consider certain Kaarana Vaakyaas. In the "Sat Vidya" of Chandokya Upanishad, we come across the verse "**Sat Eva Sowmya Edamagre Aasit**". Here the upanishad declares that the cause of the universe by using the term "Sat". "Sat" means the eternal existing supreme soul, which is the cause, unchanging in nature. Is this "Sat" a sentient being or an insentient being? When we analyze the Vedanta further, we read another verse "**Aatma va Edamekam Agre Aasit**". Here the upanishad says that "Sat" is "Aatma".

"Aatma" is derived from "**Aapnothi iti Aatma**" vyputhi. That it, "Aatma is the one which spreads on its body by its knowledge in terms of supporting, controlling and owning its body". This shows that the supreme self is sentient. Is the supreme self different from the Chit(Jeeva) or one amount the Jeevas? Further down in the Vedanta, we find that this supreme self is called by the name "Brahman" -

**"Yato va imani bhutaani jaayente yena jaathani jeevanti
yam prayanthi abhisamvisantithi tat vijgyaasasva tat brahmethi".**

"Brahman" is the term, which is derived from the root "Brah" meaning, greatness - greatness in terms of reality, form, attributes, and lordship. This is not applicable to the Chit (Jeeva) though it is sentient but only finite (Anu swaroopa) as declared in Vedas. Therefore the supreme spirit is different from the Jeeva and is unparalleled and unsurpassed.

Up to this, we comprehend that the supreme self is different from the Jeevas and non-living matter but still we need to know who this supreme self is?

In the Vedanta, we find the verse "**Eko ha vai Naaraayana Aasit? Na brahma nesaanaha**" and "**Apahatapaapma Divyo devaha Eko Naaraayana:**" These verses clearly says that the

supreme self called as "Sat", "Aatma" and "Brahman" is none other than "Naaraayana". Now we apply the chaaga pasu nyaaya. It is to be noted here very clearly that "Sat", "Aatma" and "Brahman" are common nouns but the term "Naaraayana" is a particular noun identifying the Lord of Goddess Lakshmi and Bhoomi "[Hereeshca Te Lakshmischa Patniyow](#)" is the [Purusha Sukta](#) in Veda confirming this.

"Naaraayana" is the term derived from the vyutputhis "[Naaraanaam Ayanam](#)" and "[Yesya Naaraaha Ayanam](#)". "Nara" means Vishnu (Naaraayana) because He is imperishable. "Naara" means the entire universe composed of Chit & Achit entities which originated from "Nara" as "Naara" is the cause of the entire universe having the subtle chit & achit as his body before creation and creates them by giving expanded form and having the expanded chit and achit as his body.

["Naaraanaam Ayanam"](#) means "Naaraayana is the base/support for all chit and achit tatvas". This shows the "Bhahir Vyaapthi" - the manner in which Naaraayana pervades the universe.

["Yesya Naaraaha Ayanam"](#) means "Naaraayana is present inside all chit and achit entities as the ultimate controller (anthar-yaamin, soul) and owner (Seshi-Lord) of everthing. This shows the "Anthar Vyaapthi" - the manner in which Naaraayana is present inside everything.

The "NAakaara" in the end of the term "NaaraayaNA" without doubt says that the term "Naaraayana" is a particular noun denoting the Lord of Goddess Lakshmi who is Vishnu. This is confirmed by the grammatical rule of the Vedas (Vyaakaranam - one among the six accessories of the Veda) and by *Paanini's* grammatical treatise.

Thus the Veda identifies the supreme self (Brahman) as Shreeman Naaraayana. Thus is the application of the Chaaga Pasu Nyaaya. Further the the Brahma Sutra recognizes only the Paancharaatra Agama as authoritative as the Veda and rejects all other authored works like Saankya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Charuvaaka, Bowdha, Jaina and Pasupata Saiva. It further identifies the Supreme self by Ubhya Lingam - Two identifications namely

- "[Ananta Kalyaana Gunaakaravm](#)" (Supreme self has infinite divine qualities) and
- "[Akila Heya Pratyaneekatvam](#)" (Supreme self though is present in all chit and achit entities, is untouched by all impurities).

These two identifications apply only to Shreeman Naaraayana and it does not apply to any other deity. Therefore it is ascertained without doubt from the authority of Veda that Shreeman Naaraayan is the unparalleled and unsurpassed Supreme Self.

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Few more texts from Upanishads - arguments and counter-arguments

There is someone who quotes from the veda a verse "**Siva Eva Kevala:**" meaning "Siva is alone (the cause - therefore Siva is Supreme without a second person). The person who has raised this objection has not studied the Veda and the context where this verse occurs. The context is regarding the cause of the universe, which is Brahman. "**Siva**" is a common noun meaning "Auspicious". It assumes any gender as per its usage as adjective with a noun in Sanskrit as it is a common noun. Further here in this context, "Siva" is associated with all-pervasive nature and by the term "Bhagavan" which are unique only to Shreeman Naaraayana. Therefore the term "Siva" cannot mean "Paarvathy Pati - Rudra" here, but only means "Lakshmi Pati - Vishnu". Vishnu is ever auspicious (Pure by his nature itself on the other hand Paarvathy pati got his sins removed by Vishnu and became pure [siva] and he is not pure by his nature.)

Another objection raises by quoting the vedic verse "**Sambhuhu Aakaasa Madye iDhyeyaha**". The context in which this verse occurs is also regarding the cause of the universe. Here in this context, a question is raised

"Who should be meditated upon (by those who aspire for moksha)?"

The answer is given as

"That person who is the Cause of the universe is to be meditated upon"
(Karaanam tu iDhyeyaha" and it says that the person is called "Sambhu".

Again readers, "Sambhu" is a common noun derived from "**Asmaat Sam Bhavathi iti Sambhu**" meaning, "From him/it, originates bliss". Therefore it is not necessary that it should denote only one particular person. As we see the context of this word "Sambhu", we have to only conclude that Shreeman Naaraayana alone is denoted by the word "Sambhu" as he is the cause of the universe and from him originates the moksha-bliss.

Readers please see the Sahasranaama also where the terms like "Siva", "Sambhu" etc., are used as names of Vishnu only. Even the Advaita scholar Adi Sankara has not deviated from this point while commenting Sahasranama. Further these names in the context of being the cause of the universe etc., cannot be taken to mean Paarvathy pati Rudra or any one other than Shreeman Naaraayana because the Veda itself has clearly stated that "**Na Brahma Neshaanaha Divyo Devaha Eko Naaraayanaha**" meaning, "in the beginning (ie., before creation) only the Divine Supreme Self Naaraayana alone existed. Brahma and Rudra were not existing". Similarly the common nouns like "Hiranyagarbha, Indra, Iswara, Parameswara, Maheswara, Purusha, Mahapurusha, Swarat" etc., used in the Veda in the context of denoting Brahman (the cause of the universe) are to be understood only to mean "Shreeman Naaraayana" and none other than him. All these names are found in Sahasranaama also. Thus is the application of the Chaaga pasu nyaayam in the upanishads to ascertain that Shreeman Naaraayana is the supreme self.

Readers, I think I have clearly explained the supremacy of Shreeman Naaraayana using the Chaaga pasu nyaayam. These points are not written by prejudice but only written in strict accordance with the Veda. There is no deviation from the purport of the Veda. This

understanding that Shreeman Naaraayana is the Supreme self and no one is equal to him or greater than him is very important. The Vedas are in full support for this point. The key concept of Visistaadvaita is Shreeman Naaraayanan who is the Supreme self has all the sentient (Chit/Jeeva) and insentient (Achit/Matter) entities as his body and He is soul of everything. Shreeman Naaraayana is called the soul of everything because he supports controls and owns everything eternally and inseparably. Everything is controlled, supported, and owned by Shreeman Naaraayana. Thus is the Sareera-Aatma Bhaavam or Sareera-Sareeree Bhaavam. I request the readers to get back to me with their valuable comments and suggestion. If you have any doubts or questions also, please do write to me. Further details will be continued in the next lesson.

Lesson 7

In lesson six we studied the Supremacy of Shreeman Naaraayanan which is unparalleled and unsurpassed. We continue that study in this lesson. Few Veda verses are considered and few Smruti are also considered. After this, we will proceed to Bedha, Abedha and Gataka sruties.

General Human Nature

Psychology holds that it is almost impossible to find two individuals having exactly the same frequency in terms of thinking and acting. Further the human nature is to compare

and contrast what he already knows with that of new things which he learns. Also, when a person puts effort and makes out something (it may be right or wrong) he starts to love it and he is generally not open when his idea is refuted or rejected by others - even when it is proved to be wrong in a rational way. Above all the ego many times restricts a person to be open and rational! He develops pride and prejudice. These aspects are not appropriate for a student of philosophy. The reason behind telling this is first of all philosophy deals with metaphysical aspects that cannot be established by application of sense organs or by inference based on observations. The open mindedness allows for growth of knowledge and proper rationalization. A person without pride and prejudice is sure to unravel secrets of science and philosophy. With these general ideas, we proceed with the discussion regarding the unparalleled and unsurpassed supremacy of Shreeman Narayanan.

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Supremacy of Shreeman Narayana - further explained

In the last lesson, we saw the Veda (Sruti) declaring the unparalleled and unsurpassed supremacy of Shreeman Narayanan. It is unshakable and cannot be refuted at all by any other philosophy. Now let us now take up certain things in this context for discussion before we take up Smrutis in this context.

Many of you would have heard the word "Sraaddham". As soon as I mentioned this word, most of the people will understand this to denote the ritual, which is done every year on the thiti-day of the death of ancestors. In fact, the word "Sraaddham" is not to mean that as per its word-derivation! What ever is done with dedication is called "Sraaddham". "Sraddhaa" is a Sanskrit word meaning "Dedication". "Sraaddham" means any work, which is done with "Sraddhaa". If I even recite a prayer with "Sraddhaa" then that recitation can be very well called "Sraaddham". As the ritual, which is done every year on the thiti-day of the death of ancestors is usually done with great dedication, it is also called "Sraaddham". But as the word "Sraaddham" is known to us (may be) from our birth only to mean the ritual, which is done every year on the thiti-day of the death of our ancestors, we think that it can only mean as such. When the actual meaning of this is understood as per the scriptures, we may even get surprised. Similarly the word "Kevalam" is in Sanskrit. It is used in colloquial manner (in Tamil) to mean "inferior or lowest or to show contempt". In fact, the actual meaning of the word is "Only". Thousands of such colloquial and wrong usage of words of Veda can be quoted in this lesson to through light on the aspect that there are mistakes in the understanding various meanings of words and verses of scriptures because of lack of exposure, prejudice and lack of interest.

Now consider a word "Indra". It is derived in Sanskrit Dhaathu (root) "E(Sanskrit vowel) iti paramaaiswarye". The word "Indra" denotes person who is having supreme lordship as per the scripture. In the world, it may be the name of an almsman longing for his daily bread or it may denote a person who put his efforts and then gained some lordship. In the case of the beggar (almsman), the name is just an identification and not as per its

meaning. But in the case of the person, who put his efforts and then gained some lordship, though it is identifying that person with some meaning, it cannot be said that the word can mean only that person! Another person, who put more efforts than this person, has gained more lordship and even he could be the lord of this person! He is also fit to be called by the term "Indra". It is also the name of Paramaatman Vishnu who is in fact having the supreme lordship by his virtue itself. This shows that the term "Indra" is not a noun, which can identify only one individual. It is therefore called as a common noun (Saadhaarana Sabdam in Sanskrit). Now readers I will just give you few words with their meaning (outline) as follows.

- Siva - he who is pure/auspicious
- Prajaapati - he who is the lord of subordinates
- Iswara - he who is the controller
- Hara - he who steals/robs/takes away
- Sambhu - he from who bliss originates
- Swayambu - he who is born by himself
- Purusha - Man, masculine entity (very general meaning)
- Maheswara - he who is the great lord/controller
- Rudra - he who cry or he who makes others to cry
- Aakaasa - that which is spread everywhere - pervading everywhere
- Agni - that which leads one to top
- Hari - he who removes/takes away

In the world, we have understood that these words denote a particular individual as far as our knowledge goes. But when these words are used in certain areas where they cannot be taken to denote that particular individual, then we need to ascertain and understand that someone else is denoted other than that particular individual who I have so long understood to be denoted.

Consider Ramayana where Sugreeva (king of monkeys who accompanied Rama) is addressed as "Hariiswara". As far as our knowledge goes, the term "Hari" denotes Vishnu. But here the same term denotes "Money" and "Hariiswara" here denotes Sugreeva who is the controller/Lord of monkeys. It cannot mean Vishnu here as the context does not allow us to comprehend it so. If someone still comprehends it as "Vishnu's Lord" out of arrogance or prejudice, then God save that person, it cannot fit in the context and it is definitely wrong.

In the Veda, there is a verse "Sambhu: Aakaasa Madhye Idheya:". A person who read this thought that the Veda has declared "Sambhu" as the supreme self. Further that person has so far thinking that the term "Sambhu" denotes only "Paarvathy Pathi" who is with matted hair, snakes all over his body, wearing the ash of burial ground, having ganges on his Jata etc. But when the context of the same verse is considered, it cannot denote that individual who the person is thinking in his mind as denoted. It denotes another individual Shreeman Naaraayan because the context where the verse occurs is in that manner. The verse just means that he, who is the origin of bliss and in center of the sky, has to be meditated upon by those who aspire to get liberation. It definitely said that a

person by name "Sambhu" has to be meditated upon but never said that "Paarvathy Pathi" (who is with matted hair, snakes all over his body, wearing the ash of burial ground, having ganges on his Jata etc) has to be meditated upon. I request the readers to read it very carefully. Please do not understand that out of prejudice or ignorance these things are written. These are written only to bring out the importance ascertaining the purport of Veda and on the question of what is rational and what is irrational. Also one must not understand that something here sectarian is being advocated. The Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practice is not at all sectarian/religious fanatic type. It is universal. The reader will understand it during the course of this correspondence course.

We continue with the discussion. Let us initially assume that "Sambhu" denotes "Paarvathy Pathi" who is with matted hair, snakes all over his body, wearing the ash of burial ground, having ganges on his Jata etc. The context here says, "The cause of the universe is to be meditated upon by those who aspire liberation (Karaanam tu idheyaha)". The cause of the universe is declared as Narayanan (Vishnu) who is Lakshmi Pathi. The term Narayanan is not a common noun but it is a noun, which denotes only Lakshmi Pathi who is the Paramaatman, Parabrahman. The term is derived in Sanskrit as "Naaraanaam Ayanam" (Narayanan is he who is the support of all chit and achit entities) and "Yasya Naaraaha Ayanam" (Narayanan is he who is present as "Antaryaamin" - present inside everything (all chit and achit entities) as atmaa and supreme controller). These two derivations are called "Tat purusha samasam" and "Bahu Vrihi Samasam". The ending "Na" in the word NaaraayaNa as per Paanini's sutra "Poorvavat Sangnyaayaam Aga" declares that this term cannot denote anyone else other than Lakshmi Pathi. In the term "Narayana", the "Nara" and "Ayana" words are coupled together and as there is no "ga" in the word, the ending "na" becomes "Na" and if this is the case, then the term can denote only one Devata who is Lakshmi pathi. Even the scholars like Appaiya Dekshitar (who is a staunch Saivite) also agrees with this grammatical concept. Therefore it has to be only comprehended that the Veda has declared Shreeman Narayana as the Supreme self by his quality (Sambhu) of being the origin of bliss which is Moksha-Aananda. If the reader refers to the commentary on Vishnu Sahasranama by any scholar (not necessarily a Shree Vaishnava scholar), he/she can clearly understand that all such names are used only to denote Narayana (Vishnu - Lakshmi Pathi) establishing only Shreeman Narayana as the supreme self.

It is the same case with such common nouns used in the context of "being the cause of universe", "granting moksha" and "reality, form, qualities, lordship etc., of Brahman"

The Veda clearly ascertains that Shreeman Narayanan is the only Paratatvam - unparalleled and unsurpassed supreme self.

The smrutis like Bhagavat Gita, Vishnu Puruana, Paancharaatra, Manu Smruti and thousands of such authored scriptures which are in strict accordance with the Veda elaborate that Shreeman Narayanan is the only Paratatvam - unparalleled and unsurpassed supreme self. A Shree Vaishanva should in all manner surrender only to Shreeman Narayanan and worship only Shreeman Narayanan in all ways. The continuation of this with explanations will be in the next lesson.

Lesson Eight

Continuation of discussion regarding unparalleled and unsurpassed Supremacy (Paratvam) of Shreeman Narayanan.. .

In the last lesson we saw that the Sruti (Veda) declares the unparalleled and unsurpassed Supremacy (Paratvam) of Shreeman Narayanan (Vishnu). It is further continued in this lesson.

Manu Smruthi

India held the Smruthi of Manu Maharishi as the constitution (law) as far as the reign by Hindu kings was concerned. The Manu Smruthi has clearly declared that the Paramaatma is Narayanan (Vishnu). It has recognized only the Vaidika system of philosophy and practice and categorically rejected and prohibited the other systems.

Valmiki Ramayana & Vyaasa Mahabharatha

The Valmiki Ramayana and Mahabharatha, which are the two Ithihasas, recognize only Shreeman Narayanan as the Paratattvam. Thousands of quotations can be taken from both these epics to explain this aspect. Two slokas from Mahabharatha is taken and translated as follows:

"Aalodyaa sarva saastraani vichaarya cha puna: puna:
Idamekam sunishpannam idheyo Narayana: Hari:"
"Satyam Satyam Puna: Satyam Udhruhabhujamuchathe
Vedaat Saastram Param Naasti Na Daivam Kesavat Param"

Veda Vyasa (who compiled all the four Vedas, Bhagavat Geetha and composed the Brahma Sutra) in his Mahabharatha says, "After consulting all the Saastraas again and again, it is ascertained without any doubt that Narayana (Hari-Vishnu) is the only Supreme self who is to be meditated upon (by those who aspire for liberation as Narayana is the only cause of the universe)". I raise my arm and swear that "It is truth truth and only truth that there is nothing greater than the Veda as Saastra and there is nothing superior to Kesava (Vishnu)".

Bhagavat Geetha

The Bhagavat Geetha has extraordinarily explained this concept without any doubt. Few verses from the "Purushothama Yogam" (15th chapter) are given below with translation.

Shree Bhagavan Uvaacha:

"Dvaamimow purushow loke ksharaakshara eva cha |
kshara: sarvaani bhoothaani kuutastha: akshara uchathey ||
Uththama: purushas tu anya: paramaatmaa iti udaahruta: |
Yo lokatrayamaavishya bibartavyayeswara: ||
Yasmaat ksharamateethoham aksharaadapichoottama: |
Athosmi loke Vede cha prathitha: Purushoththama: ||

Bhagavan Shree Krishnan (Shreeman Narayanan) says "There are two types of Purushaas - first type is that Kshara purusha who is bound (baddha jeevaatman) in the material world in his material body. The second type is the Akshara purusha who is liberated from this material world who is mukta and another type in this itself is nitya who is eternally untouched by the material bindings. But the supreme purusha is different from these

Jeevaatmans and he is called as Paramaatman who pervades the entire universe and controls everything as the unparalleled and unsurpassed infinite Lord. As I (Krishna - Shreeman Narayanan) transcend the Kshara purusha as well as the Akshara purusha, I am celebrated in all the Smruties and the Apourusheya Veda as Purushoththaman - The Supreme Self"

Vishu Puranam

"Puranam" is an ancient record of incidents composed and compiled by seers known as "Maharishis". It talks about manifold subjects like theology, philosophy, moral science, tradition, culture, practice of various codes of conducts, succession and history of royal races and others. It is stated in the scriptures (like Mahabharata) that Chaturmuka Brahmaa revealed eighteen puranas to various seers like Veda Vyasa, who then revealed to the public. All the eighteen puranas are not taken to be authoritative. These 18 puranams are classified into three categories namely, Satvika, Rajasa and Tamasa. Chaturmuka Brahmaa is also a Jeevaatman like us but empowered with position and power by Lord Vishnu. Chaturmuka Brahmaa is present in the material world bound by his karma and subject to enjoyment and sufferings as per his karma, he does undergo the effects due to satva, rajas and tamas gunas. His words are reliable only during his satvika period. Only six such satvika puranas are purport of Veda. The rest of the twelve puranas (six in rajas category and another six in tamas category) contradict the Veda and therefore are rejected.

Vishnu Puranam is the best among the Satvika puranams. It is held as "Purana Ratnam" meaning "Jem of Puranas". Shree Parasara Bhagavan who is the father of Veda Vyasa composed it.

The Shree Vaishnava tradition holds three ratnas. They are the Stotra Ratnam of Shree Bhagavat Yaamunaacharya, Mantra Ratnam, which is the Shreemath Dwaya Mantra, and the Purana Ratnam, which is Vishnu Puranam.

In the Stotra Ratna, Shree Bhagavat Yaamunaacharya has celebrated Shree Parasara Bhagavan for his contribution, which is Shree Vishnu Purana as follows:

"Tatvena Ya: Chitachiteswara Tat Swabhaava
Bhogaapavarga Tadupaaya Gatirudaara:
Sandarsayan Niramimetha Puraana Ratnam
Tasmai Namu Munivaraaya Paraasaraaya"

The meaning of the above verse runs as follows: "The nature (reality) of Chit (sentient - soul - Jeevaatman), Achit (Insentient - Matter) and Iswara Lord Vishnu, the experiences one gets in the material world and the pleasures in self-realization, the ultimate infinite bliss eternally in the transcendental world Shree Vaikunta Paramapada, the means for these and the paths (Dumaadi and Archiraadi Margas) etc have been explained clearly by Shree Parasara. This is done by him as a merciful help to mankind with an intention of

without deviating from the Veda but in strict accordance with the Veda. I salute Shree Parasara Bhagavan for these reason who is the peerless seer among seers.

Shree Vishnu Puranam elaborately and clearly explains the philosophy and practice of the Parama Vaidika Matam which is Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. The puranam is fully in accordance with the Veda. It clearly establishes the Tatva (Chit, Achi & Iswara), Hita (means to attain salvation - Moksha) and the Purushaartha (Goal - Eternal service to the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu in Shree Vaikunta). It is unparalleled and unsurpassed in this context.

Shree Vishnu Puranam is in the form of dialogue between Sage Mytreya and Sage Parasara Bhagavan. Sage Mytreya who became well versed in the Veda Saastras, approached the preceptor Shree Parasara, who was actually blessed by Sage Pulastya to know the reality clearly without doubt or errors. Mytreya inquired regarding the cause of the universe with him. Parasara replied after consulting the Veda that Lord Shree Vishnu is the cause of the universe and explained the Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practices, which is the only purport of the Veda.

The Vishnu Puranam has nearly six thousand verses in Sanskrit language. The chapters are called as "Amsam" and the sub-chapters are called "Adyaayam". The way in which Sage Mytreya questioned Sage Parasara and the manner in which Sage Parasara consulted the Veda and then answered him reveals clearly the "Satvika" nature of the Purana. It does not have personal prejudices and therefore accepted by numerous schools of thoughts also as authority. Bhagavat Raamaanuja, Shreeman Nigamaanta Maha Desika and Bhagavat Yaamunaacharya and many other scholars and Acharyas have extensively quoted from Shree Vishnu Puranam in their works. The quotes from the same are found enormously in the commentaries of Divya Prabandams. Vishnu puranam also deals with the incarnations of the Lord, the nature (reality) of Goddess Lakshmi (Shree) which is equal to that of the Lord and she being considered as Iswara Tatva, the succession of royal races and that of Manu, Dharma etc.

Engalaazvam (a) Vishnu Chitta has written a commentary on Vishnu Puranam. The Brahma Sutra refers to this Smruthi often implicitly to substantiate its establishments through arguments regarding ascertaining the purport of Vedaanta.

Vishnu Puranam is indeed a gem among puranams. It is a treasure house of knowledge. The beauty with which concepts of the Veda are dealt with in this puranam are simply extraordinary. Let us also salute Shree Parasara Bhagavan for this wonderful contribution to the world.

The Brahma Sutra

The Brahma Sutra establishes the supremacy of Shreeman Narayanan who is Brahman in its sections called adhikaranas. This will be dealt with in detail in the future lessons.

The Paancharaatra Agama

The aagamas are authored works. They have divisions called samhitas. There are numbers of such aagamas found to be existing based on which religions have evolved. All such aagamas are not to be accepted as authoritative because it has to be analytically studied whether the aagama supports the Veda or not. In case of an aagama contradicting the veda, it has to be appropriately synchronized in accordance with veda or if such aagama is found to deviate from veda, it has to be rejected. Veda Vyasa who composed the brahma sutra has dealt with regarding accepting or rejecting all schools of thoughts that were prevalent. The brahma sutra has four chapters. Each chapter has sections called paadas and each paada has sub-sections called the aadhikaranas. Each aadhikarana has one to many sutras. The first chapter is samanvaya, which deals with establishing Shreeman Narayana as Brahman who is the only cause of universe (all living and non-living things), having the universe as his body and he being the soul of the universe. The second chapter is avirodha, which establishes that the Brahman thus established in the first chapter, cannot be refuted, or rejected by any system. The third chapter is saadana, which deals with the means to attain the brahman's lotus feet. The fourth chapter is phala, which deals with the goal, which is eternal bliss and service to the lotus feet of Lord Shreeman Narayana in the Paramapada Vaikunta, which is the transcendental eternal & ultimate place. The second chapter's first and second pada are important in the context of Pancharaatra Aagama. Here in these Padas, Veda Vyasa deals with almost all schools of thought & philosophy and rejects all of them except the Pancharaatra aagama based system. It is to be noted that many philosophers including Shree Sankara Bhagavat Pada have commented on Brahma sutra and has accepted pancharaatra alone to be authoritative - of course there is deviation of thoughts among them but still the truth is accepted.

Pancharaatra aagama has numerous samhitas of which saatvata, jayaakya and pouskara samhitas are considered as gems. Shreeman Narayanan himself authors Pancharaatra aagama. Maha Bharata says that the author of Pancharaatra is Shreeman Narayanan himself. Paancharaatra aagama deals with the tatva (reality), hita (means) and the purushaartha (goal). It also talks about temple constructions, worshiping of the Lord in temples, the temple festivals and consecration of aarcha form of Vishnu. It also talks about yoga, mantra, yantra, dharma and code of conduct for people. It is in strict agreement with the Veda. Paancharaatra specifically deals with a class of forms of Vishnu called the Vyuhaa Roopas. It also talks about the mighty discus (Sudarsana Chakra) of Shreeman Naaraayana. The eternal abode of the Lord namely Shree Vaikunta Paramapada is also described by it. In short Paancharaatra covers every aspect of the Vedic philosophy and practice which is Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. Its origin can be traced to a Vedic branch called Ekaayana Veda.

Shreemath Yaamunaachaarya has written a book called "Aagama Praamanyam" establishing the authority of Paancharaatra as fully in accordance with the Veda. Shreeman Nigamanta Maha Desikan has produced a masterpiece called "Paancharaatra Raksha" which clearly sets Paancharaatra as the authority as Veda and refutes all counter-arguments of other schools of thought regarding Paancharaatra. Raamanuja and others have also quoted/elaborated from the Paancharaatra proving that it is as good as the Veda.

The Brahma Sutra in its second chapter categorically rejects and refutes the number of works authored such as authored works by the Saankyaas, Yoga, Chaaruvaakas, Vaiseshikas, the four kinds of Buddhist schools of thoughts (namely Maadyantika, Vaibhashika, Sowntrantika and Yogaachara), the Jainas and the Paasupata-Saiva. The only authored work accepted by the Brahma Sutra as authoritative as Vedas is the Paancharaatra Agama. I have heard few saying that the Brahma Sutra has not mentioned directly the name of Shreeman Naaraayana as the Para Brahman. This is absurd to say so because the Brahma Sutra has clearly established that Paancharaatra Agama as authoritative as the Vedas and there is no room for any doubt regarding Shreeman Naaraayan is the Parabrahman. The qualities declared for Para Brahman in the Brahma sutra only identifies with Shereeman Naaraayanan who is declared as the Para Brahman in the Vedas - "Naaraayana param brahma Tatvam Naaraayana Paraha: Naaraayana Paro Jyothihe Aatmaa Naaraayana paraha". It is in this context, the following paragraphs are written as follows:

Analysis of Brahma Sutras in the Utpatiasambhavaadhikaranam (Briefly)

Utpatiasambhavaadhikaranam is otherwise called as Paancharaatraadhikaranam. This is the last aadhikaranam present in the second paada of second chapter of the Brahma Sutra. Before going into the analysis of the four sutras present in this aadhikarana, may I present to you the meaning of the term Aadhikaranam. Aadhikaranam is a sub-section in paada of an aadyaaya in Brahma sutra. Each aadhikaranam has five components. They are Vishayam (Subject), Samsayam (Doubt), Poorvapaksham (Opponent view), Sidhaantam (Established truth with proof) and Prayojanam (Benefit of establishing the truth with proof).

In this Utpatiasambhavaadhikaranam (otherwise called as Paancharaatraadhikaranam), we find the above five components. The "Subject" is regarding the authenticity/authority of Paancharaatra Agama. The "Doubt" is "whether Paancharaatra is a authentic authority or not". The "Opponent View" is "Paancharaatra is not an authentic authority as it contradicts the Veda". The "Established truth with proof" is "Paancharaatra is an authentic authority as it is not contradicting the Veda and only is in perfect accordance with the Veda". The "Benefit" of establishing this truth is accepting Paancharaatra aagama as authentic authority as that of the Veda and comprehend its philosophy and practice to attain all the four purusharthas. These five components are explained as follows by interpreting the four sutras present in this adhikaranam:

The subject is regarding the authenticity of Paancharaatra Aagam. This is already told and simple.

The "Doubt" is "whether Paancharaatra is a authentic authority or not". Veda Vyasa has categorically rejected many authored scriptures - those authored by Chaturmukabrahma (Yoga) and that of Pasupathi (Paasupata Saivam). Chaturmukabrahma can recite all four vedas. Pasupati(Siva) is called Sarvajnya (he who know everything). When Vyasa has rejected even their smruties, is this Paancharaatra which is authored by Vishu to be accepted or rejected? Thus is the doubt.

First sutra of Utpatiasambhavaadhikaranam (otherwise called as Paancharaatraadhikaranam):

Utpatiasambhavat

This is an opponent view sutra. Here the opponent who objects that Paancharaatra agama cannot be accepted as authentic authority because it contradicts the Veda. He says so because Paancharaatra talks about birth of Jeeva (Chit) which is not accepted in the Veda. Veda has declared all the three tatvaas (Chit, Achit and Iswara) as eternally present. Therefore Utpati (birth of Jeeva) is not possible (Asambhavaat). Paancharaatra says "Vaasudevat Saankarshana Naama Jeeva Jaayate" - meaning, "From Vaasudeva, the Jeeva named Sankarshana was born". Therefore the opponent objects that paancharaatra agama cannot be accepted as a valid authority. Further the second sutra of this adhikarana is also of the opponent view.

Second sutra of Utpatiasambhavaadhikaranam (otherwise called as Paancharaatraadhikaranam):

Na cha kartuhu karanam

Again the opponent objects that Paancharaatra contradicts the Veda by declaring that the Indriyas like Manas (mind) etc., are born from the Jeeva. The Veda has declared that the Indriyas like Manas are born from Iswara who is Shreeman Naaraayana. The doer (Kartuhu-Jeeva) is not the cause (Na ca) for his Indriyas (Karanam). The paancharaatra says "Samkarshanaat Manas Samiyjna Pradyumna Jaayate" meaning - "From Sankarshana, the mind called Pradyumna was born".

Veda Vyasa refutes the above two views of the opponent as invalid. The opponent has not interpreted the Paancharaatra Agama properly or he not read it fully. The establishment (Sidhaantha) with proof is given by the remaining two sutras of this adhikarana by Veda Vyasa.

Third Sutra:

Vignyjanaadi bhaave vaa tataprathishedaha

This is the third sutra of this adhikarana. Here Vyasa declares that Paancharaatra does not speak of the birth of Jeeva, which is contradicted by Veda, but only speak the INCARNATION of the Lord, which is divine. "Vaasudevat Saankarshana Naama Jeeva Jaayate" means that Vaasudeva who is the Brahman Incarnated as Saankarshana with the Jeeva as his body/mode. Therefore it does not speak of the birth of Jeeva. It is the same case with Indriyas told here. Here the vyuha incarnation is declared. The Lord's incarnation in Vyuha and Vibhava are divine and are different from our birth. The difference is declared in Bhagavat Geeta also. The Lord incarnates because of his own will and we are born because of our Karma. The Lord does not have any karma. When he incarnates his divine qualities like full-fledged gnyana (knowledge) does not contract but

when we are born, our knowledge gets contracted as per our karma. The Lord incarnates with his divine body (Sudha Satva) and we are born with the material body (mixture of rajas, tamas and satva) according to our karma. The Lord's birth, which is incarnation, is real. He incarnates during the time when dharma declines and adharma is growing. He destroys adharma and establishes dharma and protects the pious people (Saadhu Jana). Thus is the difference between the Lords birth (incarnation) and our birth. Therefore the Paancharaatra does not speak of the birth of Jeeva but only talks of the incarnation of the Lord. This is what is told by the term "Vignyjanaadi bhaava". By this term the argument that Jeeva is born (which is against the Veda) is set aside or refuted (vaa tataprathishedaha).

Fourth Sutra:

Viprathishedaancha

This fourth sutra that is the last sutra of this adhikarana further establishes the Sidhdaanta. The Paancharaatra itself has clearly stated that the Jeeva(Chit), Achit and Iswara are eternal. It itself has clearly negated the birth of jeeva. This is what is conveyed by the term "Viprathishedaancha". Therefore the Paancharaatra is fully in accordance to the Veda and there is no contradiction with Veda.

Therefore the Paancharaatra has to be alone accepted as authority as authentic as the Vedic authority. This is the benefit of establishing the truth with proof.

Thus it is to be noted that the Brahma sutra has accepted Paancharaatra aagama as authentic authority as the Veda. All the other systems like Paasupata, Yoga etc., are rejected and refuted by it as illogical and contradictory to Vedas. Even Aadi Sankara Bhagavat paada is in agreement with Paancharaatra but he says "the portions of paancharaatra, which do not contradict the Veda, are authentic authority". But as established by the Sutrikaara (Veda Vyasa) and the Bhaashyakaara (Shree Raamanuja), there is no portion in the Paancharaatra aagama, which is contradiction, the Veda. Therefore the entire Paancharaatra Aagama is authentic authority. The paancharaatra aagama is a treasure of knowledge. It stresses that he/she who has undivided faith in Lord Shreeman Naaraayanana alone can reach the eternal abode attaining moksha and doing eternal service to His lotus feet. I will elaborate this more in the future lessons after a detailed study of certain Veda verses.

Lesson Nine

A Brief Analysis of certain verses of Vedaanta

The Vedaanta is composed of declarative statements, which impart knowledge regarding the Brahman's Swaroopa (reality-nature), Roopa (Form), Guna (Attributes/Characteristics), Vibhuthi (Property) and Iswaryam (Lordship). Let us do a brief analysis of certain verses of Vedaanta. The Upanishad (Vedaanta-Sruthi) Verses are of three types.

1. Abheda Sruthi
2. Bheda Sruthi

3. Ghataka Sruthi

The *Abheda Sruthis* seems to state that the universe (all chit and achit entities) and the Brahman are one and the same. They seem to convey the identity of the universe and the Brahman.

The *Bhedha Sruthis* seems to categorically declare the difference between the Brahman and the universe.

The *Ghataka Sruthi* synchronizes the above two types of sruthis and resolves the apparent contradiction in the above mentioned two types of Sruthis. The explanation follows. The following paragraphs are written as simple as possible but still requires lot of concentration to comprehend the meaning of the same. It is requested that the reader should carefully and fully read these paragraphs and then comprehend the same.

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Abheda Sruthi

"Tat Tvam Asi", "Sarvam Kalu Idam Brahma", "Aham Brahmaasmi" are a few verses among the Abhedha Sruthis.

"Tat Tvam Asi" seems to tell that the Jeevaatman (Chit) and the Brahman (Iswara) are one and the same.

"Sarvam Kalu Idam Brahma" seems to tell that the universe and the Brahman are one and the same.

"Aham Brahmaasmi" seems to tell that "I (Jeevaatman) am the Brahman". These verses have declared that the universe and the Brahman are one and the same.

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Bheda Sruthi

On the other hand, the Bheda Srutis

"Prutak Aatmaanam Preritaaram cha mathva jushtasthathastenaamrutavamethi",

"Bhoktha Bhogyam Prerithaaram cha mathva sarvam proktham trividham brahma ethat",

"Nithyo Nithyaanaam chethanas chethanaanaam Eko bhayuaam yo vidadhaathi kaamaan",

"Pradhaana Kshetragjnyapathirgunesha:",

"iGnyaagnyow iDvaavajaaveesaaneesow"

declare that the Chit, Achit and Iswara are different from one another and are well distinguished entities.

"Prutak Aatmaanam Preritaaram cha mathva jushtasthasthasthenaamrutavamethi" means that the Jeevaatman who comprehends and does Bhakthi that he is different from Brahman, who rules him, becomes blessed by the Brahman's grace and by this knowledge of Bhedam (difference between Jeevaatman and Brahman), attains liberation (Moksha). This sruthi not only confirms the difference between the Jeevaatman and the Paramaatman (Brahman) but also stresses that the "Tatva-iGnyaana" (Knowledge about the reality of chit, achit and Iswara that are different from one another) is a means for attaining liberation.

"Bhoktha Bhogyam Prerithaaram cha mathva sarvam proktham trividham brahma ethat" means "Bhotha" is Jeevaatman (Chit) who enjoys the results of his own karma. Bhogyam is Achit that is enjoyed by the Jeevaatman according to his own karma. Preritha denotes Iswara who controls all the Chit and Achit entities. Further "cha mathva sarvam proktham trividham brahma ethat" in this verse confirms that the Brahman has the Chit and Achit as his modes/forms and he is with his own unique reality. Therefore the Veda has clearly ascertained the reality of three different entities namely chit, achit and Iswara.

"Nithyo Nithyaanaam chethanas chethanaanaam Eko bhahuunaam yo vidadhaathi kaamaan" clearly states that among the innumerable eternally existing Aatmans, an Aatman is eternally existing who is distinguished from all the Aatmans as he grants and fulfills the wishes of all the other Aatmans. Among the innumerable Aatmans who have knowledge, there exist an Aatman who is having knowledge who is distinguished from all the Aatmans as he grants and fulfills the wishes of all the other Aatmans. Here the Veda has clearly declared that the Iswara is different from the Jeevaatmans as it says "That One Aatman who is different from all other Aatmans because of his unparalleled and unsurpassed supreme qualities that are unique to him"

"Pradhaana Kshetragjnya pathir guNesha:" means that Iswara is the Lord is of Achit and Chit and Iswara is with divine qualities namely Power, Strength, Lordship, Firmness, Knowledge and Glory which are beyond the reach of all words and sense organs.

"iGnyaagnyow iDvaavajaaveesaaneesow" means that there are two entities which are eternal of which one is the Iswara and the other is Jeevaatman which is different from Iswara. Iswara is omniscient. Jeevaatman is ignorant. Therefore this verse also ascertains the difference between chit, achit and Iswara.

From the above discussion and literal meaning of the verses, the Veda appears to have mutually contradicting statements. We have to accept one type of statment and reject the other otherwise both lose their nature of being source of knowledge. Which type of the sruthi is to be accepted and which is to be rejected? There is no answer for this question

in the Veda. Both (Abheda and Bheda) sruthies are in the same Veda and therefore both need to be accepted as authority. When one studies the Veda very carefully, he finds another type of Sruthis called **Ghataka Sruthis** which reconcile these two (Abheda and Bheda) and does a synthesis and establishes that both these (Abheda and Bheda) sruthies convey the same meaning but in different angles without any contradiction.

What does "Ghataka Sruthi" convey?

The Ghataka Sruthi declares that the Brahman is the inner controler (Antaryaamin - Aatma) Soul present inside all chit and achit entities and all chit and achit entities are the body (Sareeram) of Brahman. This Sareera-atma Bhaavam (body-soul) relationship between the universe and the Brahman is conveyed by the "Ghataka Sruthi" This makes it clear that both the Abheda and Bheda sruthis convey the same meaning without any contradiction. The Veda is therefore consistent in imparting knowledge regarding Brahman. It is explained in detail as follows:

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Ghataka Sruthi

The Ghataka Sruthies are

"Ya: Pruthviyaam tishtan prutviyaa antharo yam pruthvii na veda yasya pruthvii sareeram",

"Ya: Aatmani tishtan aatmano antharo yam aatmaa na veda yasya aatmaa sareeram",

"ya: pruthviimaantharo sancharan yasya prthvii sareeram yam pruthvii na veda, yo aksharamanthare sancharan yasyaaksharam sareeram yamaksharam na veda yo mruthumanthare sancharan yasya mruthussareeram yam mruthyurna veda esha sarvabhootaantaraatmaa apahatha paapmaa divyo deva: eko NaaraayaNa:",

"iDvaa suparNaa sayujaa sakhaayaa samaanam vruksham pareshasvajaathe - tayoranya: pipalam swadvathyanasnan anyoo abhichaakaseethi",

"Antha: pravishta saastha janaanaam sarvaatma",

"Tath Srushtvaa thadevaanupraavisath tadanupravishya sachcha ityaachchaabhavath",

"Satyam chaanrutham cha satyamabhavath",

"Anena jeeveenaanmanaa".

The explanation of Ghataka Sruthis with its usage in synthesis of Bheda-Abheda Sruthis will be continued in the next lesson. Also why the Veda talks uses Bheda and Abheda sruthis in this manner will also be elaborately explained. The personal interpretations of these Sruthi Vaakyaas given by many people like "Adi Sankara", "Madhwaa" will also be discussed for better understanding of Visistaadvaita and to understand that Visistaadvaita is the only purport of Prasthaana Traya, logical, practical and the ultimate philosophy. The readers are requested to devote time more and concentrate more on these lessons as the concepts are going to be explained in detail with intricacies.

Lesson 10

A Brief Analysis of certain verses of Vedaanta - Continued

The "Ghataka Sruthi" explanation continues.. .

"Ya: Pruthviyaam tishtan prutviyaa antharo yam pruthvii na veda yasya pruthvii sareeram" is in the Kaanva Shaaka of Bruhadaraanyaka Upanishad in Veda. It declares that the "Brahman is in the earth, entered inside it, who is not known by the earth and has the earth as his body/mode and controls the earth as Antaryaami" The Brahman is untouched by the impurities of the earth as he is the soul of it.

"Ya: Aatmani tishtan aatmano antharo yam aatmaa na veda yasya aatmaa sareeram" is in the Maadyanthina Shaaka of the same Upanishad in Veda. It declares that the "Brahman is in the Jeevaatman, entered inside it, who is not known by the Jeevaatman and has the Jeevaatman as his body/mode and controls the Jeevaatman as Antaryaami" The Brahman is untouched by the impurities of the Jeevaatman as he is the soul of it.

The above two quotes from Veda are given to explain that the Brahman is the soul of all Achit and Chit entities and all the Achit and Chit entities are the body of the Brahman who is Shreeman Naaraayanan.

"ya: pruthviimaantharo sancharan yasya prthvii sareeram yam pruthvii na veda, yo aksharamanthare sancharan yasyaaksharam sareeram yamaksharam na veda yo mruthumanthare sancharan yasya mruthussareeram yam mruthyurna veda esha sarvabhootaantaraatmaa apahatha paapmaa divyo deva: eko NaaraayaNa:"

is in the Subaalopanishad of Veda. In the same way as told above it declares that the Brahman is the soul of Prutvi (earth), Jeevaatman, Mrutyu (representative god of death) etc., and all these are the body (sareeram) of Brahman. The Brahman is untouched by the impurities of all chit and achit entities and the Brahman is with divine auspicious qualities. Shreeman Narayanan is the only God (Brahman) and He is the Antaryaami-Antaraatma of all the entities"

"iDvaa suparNaa sayujaa sakhaayaa samaanam vruksham pareshasvajaathe - tayoranya: pipalam swaadvathyanasnan anyoo abhichaakaseethi"

This is in MuNdakopanishad of Veda. It says that "Two birds having some attributes similar to each other are friends and are seated in a branch of one tree. Of these two birds, one bird eats the fruits of the tree, which are ripe. On the other hand the other bird does not eat the fruits and as such shines extraordinarily" From this verse, it is made clear by the Veda that both the Jeevaatman and the Paramaatman (Brahman-Vishnu) are present in the same body. The Jeevaatman enjoys and experiences the results of his karma (actions). On the other hand the Brahman just witnesses it and being untouched by such impurities shines with his natural greatness which is immeasurable. The Veda has ascertained that the Jeevaatman and the Paramaatman are always present together inseparably and also categorically ascertained the differences between the Jeevaatman and the Paramaatman.

"Antha: pravishta saastha janaanaam sarvaatma" states that the Paramaatman (Brahman) has entered into all the souls-jeevaatmans. The Brahman having entered into all the jeevaatmans rules them as Antaryaami and is the soul of all souls-jeevaatmans. Therefore the difference between the Brahman and the Jeevaatman is clear. Also, the inseparable relationship between Brahman and the Jeevaatman is also clear and this is what is declared as "the Brahman is everything" meaning, - "the Brahman is the Sarvaatma-the soul of everything - soul of all jeevaatmans and achit tatvas".

"Tath Srushtvaa thadevaanupraavisath tadanupravishya sachcha
ityaachchaabhavath",
"Satyam chaanrutham cha satyamabhavath"

This verse is in the Taitreeya Upanishad of Veda. It says "The Brahman created all the entities (by expanding them (making them as StUla with name, form etc) which were in subtle (Suksha without name, form etc) form. After creating them, the Brahman entered into all the created entities as "Antaryaami - Antaraatma". After being entered as such, he took the unchanging Jeevaatman and the changing Achit as his form (sareeram). This has very clearly told by the Veda that the Brahman himself is not Chit and Achit but the Brahman is the soul of Chit and Achit entities and therefore calls everything as Brahman. The differences between the Brahman's Swaroopa (nature-reality) and the chit and achit entities are very clear.

"Anena jeeveenaanmanaa" is in the Chaandokya Upanishad. The "Sat Vidya" portion of it where this occurs is outlined as follows: The Chandokya Upanishad says - Aruna's son is Uddalaka. Uddalaka's son is Swethaketu. Uddalaka addressed his son

"Swetaketu! Do the prescribed study of Veda under the guidance of qualified preceptor!"

Swetaketu obeyed his father's order and completed the prescribed study of Veda and returned back to his house after years. Swethaketu thought that he has mastered everything. On seeing his son, Uddalaka understood that his son is yet to know the Brahman. Uddalaka therefore wanted him to get knowledge about the Brahman. In order to invoke his interest regarding the Brahman, Uddalaka questioned Swetaketu as follows:

"Utha tamaadesam apraakshya: yenaasrutam srutham bhavathi amatham matham avignyaatham vignyaatham" - "O son! Do you know that "Aadesa", by knowing which all things which were not heard becomes heard (known), all that which were not contemplated becomes contemplated and all unknown becomes known?"

Swethaketu should have got shocked on being questioned like this and doubted the question's logic itself. He did not know the answer any way. He asked his father

"Katham Tu Bhagava: Sa: - How is that revered Sir?"

His father first made it clear to his son that the question is logical and then answered it in detail. He quoted examples -

"Yatha Somya ekena mruth pindena sarvam mrunmayam vignyaatham isyaath" - By knowing the material cause "Clay", things (like pot which are effects) made of clay becomes to be known".

He actually pointed out the oneness of cause (material cause - Upaadaana Kaaranam) and the effect (Kaaryam). To make him understand that Pot and Clay are same (but only different forms), he said

"Vaacha-Aarambhanam Vikaaro Namadheyam mruthikethyeva satyam". Though we think the pot is different from clay, it is in fact the clay itself in a changed mode, which has got a shape which is called as pot".

His father quoted few more examples in this regard. Swethakethu requested his father to kindly teach him that "Aadesa", knowing which everything becomes known! "Aadesa" means Brahman who controls everything by ruling everything. It is derived in Sanskrit as "Aadichyate Anena Ithi Aadesa:".

The upadesam (teaching) was started by his father - "Sat Eva Somya edmagre aaseeth ekameya adveteeyam". "O Somya (who is fit to drink the Soma juice (prepared in Soma yagnya)) the universe which you see now with manifold forms and names was not like this before its creation but was present subtle (difficult to distinguish) form of "Sat". Nothing is its support other than Sat.

The "Sat" wished "Tat Ikshatha Bahusyaam Prayaayethi". That is, the "Sat" wished that "I become the multitudinous (expanded-StUla) chit and achit tatvas ie., the universe". The "Sat" became many, as it wished. This is "Sat's" first Sankalpam (Wish).

The "Sat" wished again - "SOyam Devataykshatha Hanthaaham Imaa: Tisra: Devataa: Anena JevEna Aatmanaa Anupravisya Nama Roope iVyaakaravaaNi" that is the Sat wished "by having the representative divinities of Tejas (fire/light), Ap (Water) and Annam (Prutvi-matter) as Sareeram (body/mode), I enter into them as soul and give manifold names and forms to them". It became as it wished.

The Brahman (Sat) is therefore declared as the "Cause" (Kaaranam) of the universe. By the first sankalpam, the Brahman did the "Samashti Srushti" and by the second sankalpam he did the "Vyashti Srushti". "Samashti Srushti" means creating the universe in its amass form and "Vyashti Srushti" means creating the universe in its clearly diversified form. Further the Sat Vidya continues as follows "Sath Moolaa: Somya Imaa: Prajaa:" meaning the Brahman is the cause for all these chit tatvas (not only achit tatvas) also.

All the chit and achit tatvaas were in the subtle form (sUkshma - without form, name and identifications) as body/mode of Brahman before creation as "Sat" in such a way that it was hard to differentiate them with individual name, form and species identification. All these things (all the chit and achit entities) have no independent nature, existence and its continuance and actions without the support, control and lordship of Brahman. The Brahman controls all these chit and achit entities and their creation is purely dependent on Brahman. They all have the Brahman as "soul" and they all form the body of Brahman. Their continuance and destruction are also dependent on Brahman.

After these teachings, Uddaalaka concluded his sermon "Ithadaatmiyam Idam Sarvam Tat Satyam Sa Aatmaa Tat Tvam Asi Swethaketho" meaning, "The universe composed of innumerable chit and achit entities are pervaded by the "Sat" (Brahman) and has the Brahman as its Aatmaa (soul). The Sat is the universe therefore because of this inseparable body-soul relationship. (Similarly) You (Swethaketu) are also the same Brahman (as you (a Jeevaatman) are also pervaded by the same Brahman and you are having the Brahman as your Soul (aatma) and you are the body/mode of the same Brahman). The verse "Tat Tvam Asi" leads to a debate as the Advaitins tell their own personal idea as its meaning, which is different from the "Sareera-Aatma" bhaavam as discussed above.

The Brahman is the UpAdAna kAraNam and the Nimitha kAraNam for all chit and achit entities. This does NOT mean that his "Swaroopam" gets changed to Chit and Achit. But only his "Roopam" (Sareeram) which was subtle (sUkshma) chit, achits becomes expanded (stUla) chit, achits ie., the chit achits gets form,name etc.,. Therefore, the Brahman is "Satyam-Ignyaanam-Anantam" only, even though the Brahman is the UpAdAna kAraNam. The example for "clay" in this context is for understanding the concept. The changes in his "Roopam" does not in any way contradict "Satyam-Ignyaanam-Anantam". The same is the case with his divine "Roopam" (divya mangala vighram) also which changes as per his wish in various avataaras. The Brahman who had subtle chit and achit as his "Roopam/Sareeram" is the same Brahman who is having expanded chit and achit as his "Roopam/Sareeram". Therefore the Brahman is UpAdAna kAraNam (Visistayoho Advaitam Visistadvaitam). As the Brahman wished and created the universe, the same Brahman is the "Nimitha kAraNam".

The Brahman with all the chit and achit tatvas as his body and who is with infinite divine attributes and untouched by all impurities is unparalleled and unsurpassed (Visistasya Advaitam Visistadvaitam). "Satyam-Ignyaanam-Anantam" states the nature (swaroopam) of Brahman as unchanging, sentient infinite is the nature of Brahman. The "Satyam" term makes it clear that the Brahman is different from Achit. The "Ignyaanam" term makes it clear that the Brahman is different from Baddha Jeevaatmans. The "Ananta" term makes it clear that the Brahman is different from the Muktha and Nitya Jeevaatmans. Therefore the Brahman is "Purushothama:" Shreeman Narayanana. The sruthi "Anena Jeeveenaatmana Anupravisya Naama RUpe Vaakaravaani" confirms the Sareera-Aatma Bhaavam between the universe and the Brahman.

Up to this, the Upanishad has stated the following:

- Knowing one entity, everything becomes known (is the Prathignya (oath)), which is the Brahman who is the material cause (Upaadaana Kaaranam)
- The instrumental (efficient) cause of the universe is also the Brahman as he "Wished" and creates the universe.
- The body-soul relationship (Sareera-Aatma-Bhaavam) between the universe and the Brahman.

- As the Brahman is the soul of the entire universe, the Brahman himself is denoted as the universe. In the very same meaning, the Veda denotes a Jeevaatman (here Swetaketu - "Tvam") as Brahman "Tat" in its verse "Tat Tvam Asi" This is because the Jeevaatman is also the form (saareeram) of Brahman and having the Brahman as his soul. The Brahman is Shreeman Narayana: - Purushoththama: known as Vishnu: Vaasudeva:

Thus the **Ghataka Sruthi** does the synthesis of all the *Bheda* and *Abheda* sruties and establishes that the Brahman is the soul of all chit and achit entities and the entire chit and achit entities are the body of Brahman. When the Gataka Sruthi is used to synchronize, the Abheda sruthi verses mean to tell that nothing other than the Brahman qualified by the universe as his body exists. In the same way when the Gataka sruthi verses are used to synchronize, the bheda sruthi verses mean to tell that the Brahman, who is the soul of the universe, is different from the universe, which is his body. Body and soul are different entities but they are inseparably related. The body is therefore called "Aprutak Siddha Visheshanam" meaning the body becomes the inseparable attribute of the soul. The term "Aprutak Siddha" rules out independent existence of the body. Without the soul, the body cannot have *swaroopam*, *stiti* and *pravruiti*. Also, the soul has no mode without the body and therefore the body is called the mode (*Prakaram*) of the soul. Thus the Veda is consistently explaining only Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnavam without any contradiction.

A Concept called "Saamaanaadhikaranyam" which is a technical grammatical concept, is used to explain the verse "Tat Tvam Asi" clearly. This will be explained in the next lessons along with the personal explanations given in this context by other philosophers of other schools of thought.

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The Meaning of the term "Visistadvaita"

Let us examine the meaning of the term "Visistadvaita". It is derived by two ways - "**Visistasya Advaitam - Visistadvaitam**" and "**Visistayoho Advaitam - Visistadvaitam**".

"Visistasya Advaitam" means - The Brahman qualified by all chit and achit entities as his Saareeram/Prakaaram/Viseshanam (body/mode/attribute) is without a second entity meaning unparalleled and unsurpassed. This brings out the ultimate supremacy of Shreeman Narayana Para Brahman who is Akila Heya Pratyaneeka: and Ananta Kalyaana Gunaakara:

"Visistayoho Advaitam" means - The Brahman having the subtle (sukshma) chit and achit entities as his Saareeram/Prakaaram/Viseshanam (body/mode/attribute) before creation is the same Brahman having the expanded (stUla) chit and achit entities as his Saareeram/Prakaaram/Viseshanam (body/mode/attribute) after creation. This brings out the fact that Shreeman Narayana Para Brahman is the only material cause and efficient cause of the universe.

Shreeman Nigamaantha Maha Desika defines the same as "**Asha Chit-Achit Prakaaram Brahmaikameva Tatvam**". This is the most precise definition of our Siddhaantham.

These concepts will be explained more in the future lessons.

Lesson Eleven

"Saamaanaadhikaranyam" and "Tat Tvam Asi"

A Concept called "Saamaanaadhikaranyam" which is a technical grammatical concept, is used to explain the verse "Tat Tvam Asi" clearly.

"Saamaanaadhikaranyam" means "co-ordinate predication". It means that co-ordinate predicate terms are used to identify the substantive.

The great grammarian of Sanskrit named Patanjali has defined this concept "Saamaanaadhikaranyam" as follows:

"Bhinna Pravruththi Nimiththaanaam Saabdaanaam Ekasmin Arthe Vruththihi - Saamaanaadhikaranyam".

The meaning of this is as follows: An identity of a single entity is signified/denoted by several terms, each term denoting that entity based on each of its various inseparable attributes. That is different words possessing different grounds of meanings denoting a single entity is what is called "Saamaanaadhikaranyam".

The reader may find this bit confusing.

Let me explain it using an example. Please consider in Sanskrit the terms "Neela: Ghata:" meaning "Dark Pot". Here the term "Neela:" is denoting the entity by that entity's inseparable attribute "Darkness/Blackness". The Term "Ghata:" again denotes the same entity by its nature of having narrow neck and broad spherical body. Therefore the "Neela:" term denotes the entity on the ground of meaning "Darkness" "Neela Roopam" which is an attribute/mode of the entity. Similarly the "Ghata:" term denotes the same entity (Pot) on the ground of the entity's mode of being narrow-necked with broad spherical body.

The verse of the Veda "Tat Tvam Asi" is understood clearly using the concept of "Saamaanaadhikaranyam" as follows: The term "Tat" (that) denotes the Brahman on the grounds of its attributes/modes namely "being the only cause of the universe", "having infinite divine characteristics", "untouched by all impurities". The term "Tvam" (you) denotes the same Brahman on the grounds of it having the Jeevaatman (Chit) as his attribute/mode. Therefore the Sareera-Aatma Bhaavam (Body-Soul relationship) between the Universe and the Brahman is clearly told by the verse "Tat Tvam Asi".

As the above mentioned concept is vital, it was thus outlined in simple words as far as possible. Its detailed explanation will follow in future lessons.

Let us now do a contemplation on the "Tatva-Hita-Purushartham" through the divine words of Bhagavath Ramanuja as follows:

**"Asha Chitachit Vastu Seshine Sesa Saayine |
Nirmalaananta Kalyaana Nidhaye Vishnave Namaha ||"**

This is the essence of our Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practice. The Tatva-Hita-Purusharthas are beautifully conveyed by this verse. "*Tatva*" means reality of existing entity. "*Hita*" denotes "means". "*Purushartha*" means "Goal".

"Chit" denotes the sentient soul - jeevaatman. The Jeevaatman is identified as

- finite (*aNu*),
- sentient (*Jgnyaana*),
- unchanging (*Satya*),
- blissful (*Aananda*)
- nature-reality (*Swaroopa*).
- He is thus knowledge-self and also
- has a knowledge (*Dharma Bhootha Jgnyaana*) as his inseparable attribute.
- He is *Swayam-prakasa* meaning knows himself ie., his individuality as he is *Jgnyaana swaroopa*.
- He knows other things using his *Dharma Bhootha Jgnyaana*.
- *Baddha* (bound by karma in material world), *Muktha* (liberated from karma and hence from material world) and *Nitya* (eternally and ever free from karma) are the three types of Chit.

The Chit is eternal and is imperishable.

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"Achit" denotes the insentient matter. Its nature is to change from one form to another. It neither knows itself nor anything. **Trigunya** (matter having Satva, Rajas and Tamas), **Satva Soonya** (Time which is devoid of Satva) and **Sudha Satva** (matter having pure Satva without rajas and tamas) are the three types of Achit.

further explanation of tatva trayam is explained in [lesson 5](#)

"Asesha" denotes that there are innumerable Jeevaatmans. It applies for both Chit and Achit. Upto this, it is clear that chit and achit are different entities. "**Asesha Chitachit Vastu Seshine**" means that the Brahman has all the chit and achit entities as his property. The term "Vastu" brings out the truth that these chit and achit entities are real and not falsehood/illusion. This makes it clear that the Brahman is different from all chit and achit entities and therefore the Brahman is "Purushotthaman" as "Seshe" denotes clearly that Brahman is the lord/owner of all chit and achit entities.

"Sesha Saayine" denotes that the Brahman reclines on the divine bed, which is the coil of Adi Sesha - divine serpent. This further implicitly denotes that the Brahman has divine form, divine abode, divine consort Shree, Bho and Nila and all the divine royal things signifying his unparalleled and unsurpassed supremacy.

Therefore the part of the verse "**Asesha Chitachit Vastu Seshine Sesha Saayine**" brings out the meaning that the Brahman has "*Ubhaya Vibhuthi*" as his property. "Ubhaya" means "Twin" and Vibhuthi means property. They are the *Leela Vibhuthi* (the material worlds (from Chaturmuka Brahma's Satya Loka to microorganisms) which are created sustained and destroyed by Brahman as his sport (leela) and exists for his Leela rasa) and the *Nitya Vibhuthi* which is the transcendental divine world called **Shree Vaikunta Paramapadam**.

This part of the verse therefore implicitly brings out the **Pradhaana Pratitantram** (key point) of Visistadvaita, which is the *sareera-aatma bhaava* relation between the all chit - achit entities and Brahman. As the Brahman supports, controls and owns all chit-achit entities he is the soul of all chit-achit entities. As all the chit-achit entities are supported, controlled and owned by Brahman and exist for the purpose of Brahman as inseparable attribute of Brahman, all the chit-achit entities are Brahman's body.

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"Nirmalaananta Kalyaana Nidhaye" brings out the Ubhyalingam - the two identifications of Brahman. As follows: "Nirmala" brings out "**Akila Heya Pratyaneekatvam**" meaning "the Brahman is pure untouched by all the impurities of the universe though he is present inside and outside everything. He is "Aatma" soul of the universe called "Antaryaami" - meaning "He who controls everything by being present inside everything". "**Ananta Kalyaana Nidhaye**" brings out "**Ananta Kalyaana Gunaakaravvam**" meaning "the Brahman is infinite with infinite divine/auspicious attributes like power, strength, lordship, firmness, knowledge, resplendence which are beyond the reach of our mind, sense organs and words. These attributes bring out his "Paratvam" "ultimate supremacy". His attributes/qualities like divine mercy brings out his "Sowlabhyam" "Easily available" nature.

"Vishnave" clearly points out that the Brahman is Lakshmi Pathi (Lord of Shree Lakshmi) who pervades everything everywhere. Vishnu (Shreeman Narayanan) is the Brahman. His omnipresence is conveyed by this name.

To summarise the **Iswara Tatva** concept, please note the following points:

The Brahman (God - Iswara) is Shreeman Naaraayanan (Vishnu) who is

- Lord of Goddess Lakshmi (Shree)
- Unchanging, knowledge-self, infinite, blissful, and absolute pure nature
- The material cause and instrumental cause of the universe (all sentient souls and insentient matter)
- Having the material worlds (universe) and transcendental world as his body and He being the soul
- Having divine transcendental body (in five modes - Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Anaryaami Haarda Roopa and Archa)
- Untouched by all impurities of the universe
- Having infinite divine attributes
- Having as his sport, creation, sustenance, and destruction of all material worlds.

Up to this Visistadvaita Tatvam (reality) was outlined.

"Namaha" is not in the meaning of just saluting Lord Vishnu. It conveys the "Hitam and Purushartham" implicitly. Hitam is means to attain liberation. The term "namaha"

conveys meaning up to Saranaagathi at the lotus feet of Shree Vishnu, which is total surrender. Similarly Bhakthi is also to be understood to have been conveyed here implicitly.

"Namaha" with the names of Vishnu used here also implicitly conveys the "Purushartham" (goal, result) which is eternal service at the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu and eternally experiencing the Lord in Shree Vaikunta Paramapadam.

The "Hitam" and "Purushartham" will be explained in detail. The reason for presenting here the "Tatva-Hita-Purushartham" in a summarized form is just to stress that these concepts are to be carefully followed and contemplated again and again for comprehension.

As the level of presentation of Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practice in the lessons are gradually getting higher, it is requested that the reader reads these lessons more than once for better comprehension. Also, referring to earlier lessons whenever required is advisable in this context. Please get back to me if you have any sort of doubt/question as the concepts which are being presented and those going to be presented are very important from the point of clear comprehension of Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnavam. Please do not hesitate to write to me.

Lesson Twelve

"Tat Tvam Asi" - Explanation for a verse of Veda

In this lesson, I would like to present the analysis of a statement in the Veda with reference to the interpretation given by two schools of philosophical thoughts based on Veda namely the Advaita and the Visistaadvaita. By this analysis, I hope to bring out the essential concepts of both the schools and validate arguments and counter-arguments with reference to Visistaadvaita Vs Advaita. So readers, with this prelude, I straight away get into the subject.

"Tat Tvam Asi" - "You are That!"

The Vedanta is otherwise called as Upanishad. "Vedanta" means the end of Veda. "Upanishad" is the term given to denote it because it is supposed to be close to the Brahman who is the only cause of the universe and enlightens us by explaining the reality, forms, characteristics, and supreme lordship of Brahman. Of the many Upanishads available, a famous one named "Chandokya Upanishad" has this maxim **"Tat Tvam Asi" meaning "You are That"**. This verse/maxim occurs in a portion of the Upanishad called as "Sat Vidya". Before going into the interpretations given by the two schools of philosophy, let me give the context where this maxim occurs in the Upanishad.

Uddaalaka Aaruni had a son named Swetaketu. It seems that the boy Swetaketu did not concentrate his mind in the study of Veda. Out of compassion he asked his son Swetaketu to undertake the study of Veda under a scholar. Swetaketu then went out of his house to study the Veda under a scholar for several years as prescribed. He returned to his father's house after completing his study. Swetaketu was full of pride. He lacked humbleness. He thought that he has finished studying everything. On seeing this nature of the son, his father called him and thoughtfully asked a question -

"O my son! Have you studied that thing (aadesa) knowing which everything becomes known?"

Swetaketu got shocked and replied

"Father! Your question seems to be illogical. Neither I know such a thing nor I was taught about such a thing. If you know please teach me that!"

On hearing this reply for the son, the father calmly told him with several examples -

"Son! Have you not seen the mud in front of the potter's house! It becomes a pot in the hands of the potter. If the mud is known, the all things made of mud are known! Similarly if you know gold, things made of gold like ornaments are known. If you know iron, all things made of iron are known! Like this, if you know an entity called "Brahman" then everything (entire universe) is known!"

Then his father proceeded with the long Sat Vidya explanation, explaining the Brahman. He said

" (**Sat Eva Sowmya Edamagre Aasit**) in the beginning, which is before creation of the universe, the "Sat" alone existed. It wished to become many - which is the manifold universe. It created three divinities and entered into them. From it, the entire universe composed of all sentient and insentient entities was created. Sat then entered into all such things created by him from him and became the universe."

He continued and concluded

"(**Aatma Tat Tvam Asi Swetaketu**) - O Son! Sat is the Aatma (Soul). You are That!".

Thus ends the teaching present in the Sat Vidya of Chandokya Upanishad. This is the context in the Upanishad wherein the maxim verse that is to be discussed occurs.

Let us now see the interpretations of Advaita and Visistaadvaita and then proceed to arguments and counter-arguments between the two in ascertaining the purport of the verse under discussion.

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Readers! - Let us examine the verse "Tat Tvam Asi" from the standpoint of **Shree Adi Sankara** who is regarded as the greatest preceptor as far as Advaita School of philosophy is concerned. Advaita's key concept is "**Nirvishesha Chin Maatram Brahma**" meaning the Brahman is not qualified by any characteristics (attributes) but only knowledge-self is reality and nothing other than this Brahman is existing. The Brahman is obstructed/covered by *Avidya* (which cannot be expressed in words but is of nature opposite to knowledge-self) and appears as Jeevaatman and thereby creating a false appearance of universe having *bheda* (difference). Once the Jeevatman (who is Brahman covered by Avidya) realizes that he is only the Brahman that is without any attributes and only knowledge-self reality and nothing other than this Brahman is true (merely by studying and getting knowledge from the Abhedha Sruti), then he attains liberation called Jeevan-mukti. He gets out of Avidya thus liberated - He gets his false impression of bheda removed and this is liberation.

Shree Aadi Sankara has classified certain verses of Veda as "Maha Vakyas" (eg., Tat Tvam Asi) and argues that only these are authoritative. He says that the Veda gets significance as authority only when it teaches something which is not known by any other authority. Bheda (difference) is known through sense organs itself (pratyaksha pramaanam). Abhedha (identity) is known only through the Veda. Therefore the Veda's meaning is only Advaita. The Bheda srutis are not important and only talk about the false bheda when Avidya covers the Brahman.

Shree Aadi Sankara interprets this verse "Tat Tvam Asi" to mean "The Jeeva and the Brahman are identical and there is not difference between them and as such is the reality". This is also a literal interpretation. Shree Adi Sankara has accepted "Swaroopo Iykyam" that is absolute identity in reality between Jeevaatman and Paramaatman (Brahman) and has ruled out difference.

The verse "Tat Tvam Asi" has three words in it. They are "Tat", "Tvam" and "Asi".

"Tat" denotes the Brahman that is held as the absolute cause of the universe. It is ascertained in this Sat Vidya that Brahman is the material cause of the universe and the instrumental cause of the universe. Material cause is the one that undergoes change to become the effect. For example, mud is the material cause for the pot. The instrumental cause is the one that brings out the effect by his wish and action. For example, the potter is the instrumental cause in making the pot. Here in this Vedanta, the Brahman is held as both material cause and as the instrumental cause and the universe is the effect. The

comparison of mud, gold, iron etc denotes that the Brahman is the material cause. Brahman's wish to become many and hence his creation denotes that Brahman is the instrumental cause also. Further it is stated that knowing Brahman, everything becomes known. This ascertains the Brahman as material cause for the universe. Therefore the term "Tat" denotes Brahman who is qualified by characteristics like being the cause of the universe, greatest in terms of reality, form attributes and unparalleled - unsurpassed supreme lordship, having the entire universe as its body/mode, having infinite divine qualities, untouched by all impurities etc.

The term "Tvam" denotes the Jeeva (here Swetaketu) who is finite, bound by its own karma and suffering in the material world. These two entities appear to be two different entities as their nature/reality and characteristics are contradictory in nature to one another. But still, the Veda Verse "Tat Tvam Asi" conveys identity of the two entities. Further the "Brahman" is declared as the material cause without a second entity. This means that we have to negate the qualities of the two entities as discussed above and accept the identity of them that is only the knowledge-self reality without any attributes/qualities.

Shree Adi Sankara also quotes from the Veda "[Niranjanaha](#) etc" and "[Nethi Nethi](#)" in favor of negating the qualities of Brahman. Thus Shree Adi Sankara interprets this verse and argues that "Brahman which is only knowledge-self reality is without a second entity - Brahman is not having any characteristics". Therefore Advaita purely talks about the identity of Paramaatman and the Jeevaatman and says that the Jagat is "Mityaa" - "Illusion" like the mirage in the desert. In this context, the Brahma Sutras in the fourth paada of first chapter of "JagatVasitvaatadhikarana" namely "[Prathignyaa Sidherlingam Aasmarathyaha](#)", "[Utkramishyata Yevam Bhaavaatthiowdalomi](#)" and "[Avasthiterithi Kaasakrtshnaha](#)" are interpreted by Shree Adi Sankara in accordance with his Advaita philosophy. These sutras will be explained in future lessons.

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"Tat Tvam Asi" - interpretation by Visistadvaita school

We now take up the interpretation given by the Visistadvaita School of philosophy for the Vedic verse "Tat Tvam Asi".

As told earlier, "Tat" denotes "Brahman" and "Tvam" denotes the "Jeeva" as per the discussion above regarding individual qualities associated with them. These two appear different entities but the verse ascertains identity of them. This identity is not the identity in nature-reality (Swaroopa) as told by Shree Adi Sankara. "Tat" denotes the "Brahman" who is attributed with characteristics like being the only cause of universe, having the universe as his body etc. The term "Tvam" also denotes the same "Brahman" who is attributed by Jeeva (here Swetaketu) as his body.

Therefore "You are That" means "O Jeeva! (Here O Swetaketu!) You are the body/mode of the Brahman who is the cause of the universe and has got the entire universe as his body".

Readers! I think this needs more explanation. I explain it in detail as follows as it is bit technical and you need to follow it carefully! There is a concept called "Saamaanaadhikaranyam" (explained in [lesson 11](#)) in Sanskrit language. It is a grammatical concept, which I will explain now before explaining in detail the explanation given by Visistaadvaita regarding the verse "Tat Tvam Asi". The understanding of this grammatical concept is required for further discussion and that is why I am explaining it.

Paanini explains this concept in his grammatical treatise. Bhagavat Raamaanuja follows the same explanation and has explained this concept in his celebrated work called "Vedarth Sangraha" as

"Saamaanaadhikaranyam Hi Idvayoho Padayoho Prakaara Idvaya Mukena Ekaartha Nishtatvam".

The meaning of this runs as follows:

"When two (or more) words denote the same object by denoting the object through the each of the different qualities of the object, then those words are called "Many words denoting an object by its various aspects/modes"

otherwise called in Sanskrit as "Saamaanaadhikaranyam". We can understand this concept by an example as follows:

Consider the Sanskrit words " Swethaha Samudrotbhavaha Shankaha mama vastuhu " All these three words denotes an object that is mine. It is a "conch shell - Shankaha". The term "Swethaha" denotes the conch shell by its quality "Whiteness". The term "Samudrotbhavaha" denotes the same object by its quality of being born from the sea. It is not necessary that those objects which are white should be born from sea and the vice-versa - still here in this group of words, the words end up to convey the same object by denoting it by its different qualities/attributes. Thus is the concept of Saamaanaadhikaranyam explained.

Now we will apply this to the Veda verse under discussion "Tat Tvam Asi". "Tat" is a word that denotes the "Brahman" by the qualities of Brahman like being the cause of the universe, having the universe as his body, infinite etc. "Tvam" is a word again denoting the same "Brahman" by the quality of Brahman which is having Swetaketu (Jeeva) as His body. This is how the Veda here talks about both the entities (Paramaatman (Brahman) and the Jeevaatman) by Saamaanaadhikaranyam.

In the example quoted to understand Saamaanaadhikaranyam, when the conch shell was denoted by the word "Swethaha", whiteness is not the conch shell but only a quality

possessed by the conch shell inseparably. Similarly when the conch shell was denoted by the word "Samudrotbhavaha", being born from sea is not the conch shell but only a quality possessed inseparably by the conch shell. Like this, "being the cause of universe", "having the universe as body" etc are attributes/qualities possessed by the Brahman which are different from Brahman who possesses them. Similarly, the Jeeva is an attribute (body/mode) of Brahman who is different from Brahman but is inseparable from Brahman. The word "Tat" denotes the Brahman by his qualities like "Being the cause of the universe", "having the universe as his body/mode" etc. The word "Tvam" also denotes the same Brahman by his quality of having the Jeeva as his body/mode. This is how the "identity" is conveyed by the verse "Tat Tvam Asi" and it is not the identity of nature-reality (swarupa) as told by Shree Adi Sankara as per Advaita.

I hope that the explanation of Saamaanaadhikaranyam and its application in interpreting "Tat Tvam Asi" as per Visistaadvaita is now clear. Though the Advaita also used saamaanadhikaranaya here in this context, it does not hold well as per their identity in nature-reality (swarupa) of Brahman and Jeeva. The Advaita application of saamaanadhikaranyam violates the rule of the same as they negate the qualities to establish identity whereas saamaanadhikaranyam is based on qualities as we saw its definition. Therefore the application of saamaanadhikaranyam by Visistaadvaita alone is in accordance with the Saastra. Thus is the interpretation of "Tat Tvam Asi" by Visistaadvaita.

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Arguments & Counter-arguments in this Context

Satakopa Namalvar, Bhagavat Yaamunachaarya, Shree Bhagavat Raamaanuja, Shreemath Vedanta Maha Desikan are notable personalities who have elaborately dealt with refuting the Advaita philosophy and establishing Visistaadvaita philosophy. Shree Raamaanuja has objected Advaita using the Veda as authority and also logic wherein he has mentioned seven objections against Advaita called "Sapta-Vidha-Anupapathi", pointing out mistakes in Advaita. Shreemath Vedanta Maha Desikan has dealt with refuting Advaita and establishing Visistaadvaita in this celebrated masterpiece called "Satha Dhushini" wherein he has raised hundred objections against Advaita for which Advaita scholars are not able to answer even for one objection. Further the same scholar of extraordinary intelligence and logical power has written a book called "Para Matha Bhangam" wherein he refutes Advaita and many other illogical schools of thought in philosophy and establishes Visistaadvaita. I am not going into the details of the above mentioned refutations but only going to present to you some basic refutations as essence from them.

Now a basic question arises! -

Why should we refute other philosophical schools of thoughts?

The answer is simple. We do not have any intention to hurt other people's feelings by refuting their philosophical school of thought. Our intention is only to ascertain that the only purport of Veda is Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam and it is the only logically correct philosophy that has got universal approach that is not at all a sectarian philosophical school of thought. It to be noted that in debates, arguments, and counter-arguments favoring something and refuting another thing is the basis to ascertain theories based on a premise. The basic objection in the form of a question against Advaita is

"Why should the Brahman get obstructed/covered by Avidya? Advaita says Brahman is pure knowledge-self reality without a second entity and without any attributes. Advaita is that which cannot be explained in words but of nature opposed to knowledge-self. How can the pure knowledge-self-reality Brahman be obstructed by Avidya which is of opposite nature to knowledge? If Avidya's nature itself is to argued that it is of obstructing Brahman and create false illusion of universe composed of living and non-living things, then a serious controversy arises. That is, Brahman according to Advaita is without a second entity. Then from where this Avidya came to cover Brahman and create illusion? If Avidya too has to be accepted as an entity, then the basis of Advaita gets shaken - "Chin Maatram Brahma" "Brahman is without a second entity" is getting contradicted. If they argue that Avidya is not a second entity then it should be an attribute of Brahman. If so "Nirguna" "Brahman is without any attributes" is getting contradicted."

Readers! You may just think over this - why should the real Brahman get itself into the cover of Avidya and should create a mere illusion that is unreal as Jeeva and matter? Why should then after get trapped like this, attempt for liberation from this? If liberation is needed, then the entity to get liberated in Advaita is the Brahman itself! Why should the Brahman suffer in illusion of Jeeva? Advaita says the universe is unreal, as it is only an illusion. So the Brahman does not suffer. This is not acceptable because the universe is the creation of the Brahman as per the Veda and the process of creation is described by it in detail. Saying that the universe in unreal is contradictory to perception through our sense organs also. The real Brahman has no necessity to create an unreal universe and then attempt to get liberated from it.

Now consider logic. If Avidya covers the Brahman and creates illusion as Jeeva and matter, then is a part of Brahman covered or the entire Brahman is covered? The Brahman has not parts. If it covers the Brahman then it should block the self-illuminating knowledge - self-reality Brahman. This "self-illuminating" is not considered as an attribute of Brahman as it is told by Advaita that Brahman has no qualities. That means Avidya obstructs the knowledge-self-reality (swaroopa) itself and creates the illusion. Therefore the entity called "Brahman" itself is lost when Avidya covers it and cannot be established.

Advaita now counter-argues that the same objection is possible to be raised against Visistaadvaita also. In Visistaadvaita, the Jeevaatman is knowledge-self-reality, finite in nature. The Jeevaatman gets bound in his Karma (results of his action) in the material world and forgets who he is and thinks he is the body and suffers in the material world.

Advaita says during this phase, the entity "Jeevaatman" itself is lost and it cannot be established.

Visistaadvaita refutes this by saying that the karma does not cover the knowledge-self-finite reality of Jeevaatman but only makes his attribute knowledge to contract according to his karma. Visistaadvaita accepts qualities possessed by Brahman, Jeevaatman and matter. Therefore the contraction in the attribute-knowledge makes the Jeevaatman to forget his reality and suffer in the material world as per his karma.

The Advaita cannot take this refutation as "answer" for the objection raised by us because it does to recognize Brahman with qualities. The Veda says that the Brahman is "Niranjanaha etc". Brahman is called "Nirguna" (without attributes) for it does not possess bad qualities or qualities of material world or qualities that Jeeva has like karma. This does not mean that the Brahman is totally devoid of all qualities. It has qualities that are unique to it that are divine and infinite. If Brahman is to be taken devoid of all qualities, then numerous Vedic verses proclaiming that Brahman has divine infinite qualities become meaningless. This cannot happen. Further "Nethi Nethi" in the Veda does not negate the qualities of Brahman after saying them. Its meaning is "It is not only this much! Brahman is infinite with infinite divine qualities"

If Brahman itself becomes the Jeeva & matter by illusion, then the bad qualities of Jeeva (being bound by karma, sufferings etc) and matter (satva, rajas, tamas and changing nature) are applicable to Brahman. The Veda proclaims that Brahman is "Untouched by all impurities". This "proclaim" will be meaningless if Brahman by reality becomes Jeeva/matter. Still the Veda has declared Brahman as the material cause of the universe. Material cause is the one that undergoes change to become an effect. The Veda conveys the nature-reality of Brahman by the term "Satyam". This means "Nirvikaaratvam" "Unchanging" nature.

If the Brahman is also declared as material cause, don't you think there is a contradiction here?

In fact there is no contradiction. Before creation, subtle Chit & Achit entities as his body attributed the Brahman. The Brahman wished to create and expanded the subtle entities by giving expanded forms, names, gender, class etc. He gave the Chit, form name etc., as per the Chit's individual karma that has no beginning. Therefore the Brahman is impartial in his creation. After creating, the Brahman entered into all the Chit and Achit entities (sentient and insentient entities) and got attributed by them as his body. Therefore the same Brahman attributed by subtle Chit-Achit entities (before creation) as his body became attributed by expanded Chit-Achit entities as his body (After Creation). This is the reason why the Brahman is declared as the material cause of the universe. Therefore creation is this which is wished and done by him as expansion of his body which is Chit & Achit entities. As he wished and created, he is also the instrumental cause of the universe. As the Veda declares that Brahman is all-powerful with transcendental divine powers, he needs not accessories in the process of creation. The Vedas says that the sentient (Chit - Jeeva) and the insentient (Achit - matter) and the Brahman (Iswara -

Paramaatman) are always eternal and has no beginning or middle or end. This ascertains the subtle and expanded states of his body. It has to be carefully noted that only the Brahman's form (body) undergoes the contraction and expansion as destruction and creation of universe and not his reality (Swaroopa). Therefore the Brahman is material cause and also is of unchanging nature. Thus there is no contradiction.

As the Brahman is the soul of the universe, he remains untouched by the qualities of the universe (chit & achit) as it is his body. Let me explain the nature of body and soul in detail. Soul is the one that eternally and inseparably supports controls and owns the body for its purpose. Body is the one that is eternally and inseparably supported, controlled and owned by the soul and exists for the purpose of the soul. This is the definition of soul and body respectively. Generally when I say "body", the picture of it which comes to a person's mind is "that which has head, legs, hands etc.". If you take the body of a snake, it does not possess legs hands etc as it is found in human body. The body's physical form thus varies from species to species. Therefore the definition is not in terms of these physical natures but only of the definition given above holds good as far as the soul-body relationship is concerned.

The Vedas talk about identity of Brahman & Universe by Abheda Sruthi Verses. The same Vedas talk about the categorical difference between the Brahman & Universe by Bheda Sruthi Verses. There appears that a contradiction is present. But there is no contradiction when both these types of Veda Verses are synchronized using Gataka Sruthi that talks explicitly the body-soul relationship between Brahman and the universe. When the Gataka Sruthi is used to synchronize, the abheda sruthi verses tell that nothing other than the Brahman qualified by the universe as his body exists. In the same way when the Gataka sruthi verses are used to synchronize, the bheda sruthi verses tell that the Brahman who is the soul of the universe is different from the universe which is his body - as body and soul are different entities but they are inseparably related. Therefore the entire Veda is without contradiction and only conveys one meaning that is the Visistaadvaita. Thus Visistaadvaita explains the verse "Tat Tvam Asi". Advaita views regarding the same are refuted and rejected as they are not in accordance with entire Veda and also contradict logical reasoning.

Conclusion

To conclude this lesson, I would like to say that the Saastras especially the Veda that is the ultimate authority of knowledge, is a vast source. It needs to be studied with its six accessories properly and practiced and interpreted without pride and prejudice. Only then the purport of it can be ascertained. Visistaadvaita Shree Vaishnavam is the only school of philosophy that has ascertained the purport of the entire Veda. I would like to request the readers to kindly send their valuable comments and suggestions to me regarding this article. Reader's question and doubts are also welcome.

Lesson 13

Prelude

Swamy Shreeman Nigamanta Maha Desika in his extraordinary work "Sankalpa Sooryodaya" says that it is a must to do Vedanta Vicharam (study and analysis of Vedanta) "[Aasareeraath saareeraka pravachana vrathamAADriyethaa](#)". The Veda-Gita-Brahma Sutras are treasure house of knowledge. Unless and until a student of philosophy studies the Sareeraka Saastra (Brahma Sutra's purport), he/she will not get full satisfaction as far as philosophy is concerned. As far as the Vaidika schools of philosophies are concerned, many philosophers have commented on the Prastaana Trayam and attempted to establish their philosophies. Bhagavath Ramanuja has also

commented on it. As far the Vedanta is concerned, the Aacharya has not commented on each and every Upanishad. As Bhagavath Ramanuja is Adi Sesa's incarnation, he summarized the entire Veda in his celebrated work titled "[Vedantha Sangraha](#)". As far as the Bhagavath Gita is concerned, our Aacharya has commented on it and it is called "Gita Bhaashya". As far as the Brahma Sutras are concerned, he has blessed us with three commentaries.

1. [Shree Bhaashya](#) - this is a very detailed commentary and is unparalleled and unsurpassed. When I find people talking about "work of year", "work of century" etc., this Shree Bhaashya is to be called as "the work of all the infinite time - past, present and future". Such is its immeasurable greatness.

2. Vedanta Deepam - this is shorter (in volume) than Shree Bhaashya

3. Vedanta Saaram - this is shorter (in volume) than Vedanta Deepam. After a detailed introduction to Saareeraka Saastra, I will present my translation with notes on Vedanta Saaram explaining the Saareeraka Saastra.

Before we could get into Brahma Sutra and analyze Veda-Vedanta, we need to understand many concepts. In that line, we will try to understand the essence of Gita following Bhagavath Yamunaacharya's Gitaartha Sangraha in 20 postings. After Gitaartha Sangraha, we will study the Tatva-Hita-Purushsaarthas ascertained in Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnava matham once again in detail in 32 postings following the divine words of Swamy Desika. I promise, these postings will be done by me as simple as possible - lucid and easy to understand without much technical terms.

Gitaartha Sangraha is a famous work of Bhagavath Yamunaacharya, where the entire contents of Bhagavath Gita are summarized in 32 slokas (verses). During this, we will also see portions from Bhagavath Ramanuja's Gita Bhaashya and Swamy Shreeman Nigamanta Maha Desika's Tatparya Chandrika. The postings on Bhagavath Gita & Tatva-Hita-Purushsaarthas will continue for few weeks before we take up the Brahma Sutras through my translation and notes on Vedanta Saaram. By this way I would like to establish that Visishtadvaita Shree Vaishnava philosophy and practice is the only purport of Prastaana Trayam and it is the logically correct universal philosophy and practice. I therefore request you to kindly follow the lessons very carefully.

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Brief Introduction to Bhagavath Gita:

Lord Shreeman Narayanan who is in Shree Vaikunta Paramapadam, accompanied by his divine consorts Lakshmi-Shree, Bhumi and Nila Devi and surrounded by Nitya Soories and Muktas supporting, controlling and owning the Ubhaya Vibhuthis, out of his infinite mercy, wished to protect the Saadhu Shree Vaishnavas, uproot the evil and establish Dharma in the material worlds. The Lord incarnated in Matura as Shree Krishna. Devaki and Vasudeva were chosen by him as his parents. He exhibited his parama-sowlabya-

guna (most easily available nature) to all by spending his childhood with Yasodha-Nandagopa in Nanda-Gokulam. By his divine beauty and extraordinary divine sports, enchanted everyone and exhibited his paratvam (unparalleled and unsurpassed supremacy) and sowlabyam to all. The Lord only because of his infinite mercy considered himself as messenger for Paandavas.

In the Kuru-kshetra war, he became the Partha-Saarathy - driver of Arjuna's chariot. Shree Krishna wished to destroy all the opponents of Arjuna and by just keeping Arjuna as an instrument, wanted to wage war against Adharma and make the Dharma to win. Without understanding this, Arjuna who was first very much enthusiastic to wage war against the Kowravas, came to the battlefield. He saw his relatives, friends and preceptors in the opponent side. He became suddenly overwhelmed with affection, attachment, love and became very much grieved to fight with them and kill them in the war. He misunderstood that "to kill the opponents in war is a sin". He became agitated and got confused regarding dharma and adharma. Without knowing that to fight in war is his dharma, he with doubts in his mind regarding dharma, surrendered Shree Krishna. He requested Shree Krishna to tell him what is good and to lead him. Arjuna became the disciple of Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna wished to clarify the doubts in the mind of Arjuna. Lord Krishna blessed the entire world with his divine sermon - [Bhagavath Gita](#).

Shree Krishna first explained to Arjuna that the Jeevaatma is imperishable and is different from the body. The Jeevaatma is eternal Sesha of Paramaatma Shreeman Narayanan (Shree Krishna). Therefore, Lord Krishna explained the **Karma Yoga** and **Jgnyaana yoga**, which are accessories of **Bhakti Yoga**. Then, Lord Krishna explained the Bhakti Yoga, which is the Moksha-upaayam (Saadyopaayam) - means to get salvation. Visistadvaita Shree Vaishnavam was clearly explained. To test Arjuna thoroughly, he stressed Bhakti Yoga again and again. On seeing the difficulties and complexities in practicing the Bhakti Yoga, Arjuna's grief started to cross limits. Arjuna became overwhelmed with sorrow.

All these terms will be explained in detail in future postings.

Bhakti Yoga is difficult to be practiced with its accessories. He who wants to adopt it has to have Jgnyaana and Sakti. It has to be done for a (indefinite) long period to yield result, which is moksham. Further, it has to be done very carefully. When Arjuna saw Krishna to stress it again, his sorrow naturally became limitless. On seeing the poor state of Arjuna, Shree Krishna recognized Arjuna as the right person to know the supreme secret of secrets, which is Prapaththi (Saranagathi). As soon as Shree Krishna taught this to Arjuna, Arjuna got all his doubts cleared and all his grief disappeared. He with bliss obeyed the order of Shree Krishna and did his duty as prescribed in the Saastra.

This history took the form of Bhagavath Gita. The one and only God told in the Veda is Shreeman Narayana ([Apathapaapma Divyo Deva: Eko Narayana:](#)). He alone is called as "Bhagavan". His sermon is therefore called as Bhagavath Gita. This has got 18 chapters. It is considered as the essence of the Veda-Vedanta. The Mahabharatha of Veda Vyaasa is like an ocean of knowledge with two extraordinary treasures in it. They are the

Sahasranama and Gita. The term Sahasranama only denotes the thousand names Shreeman Narayana. Similarly the term Gita only denotes the sermon of Shreeman Narayana. The Bhagavath Gita is matchless because it is the divine sermon of Shree Krishna himself. Considering its greatness, [Bhagavath Yamunacharya \(Alavandar\)](#) summarized its contents as "Gitaartha Sangraha". Bhagavath Ramanuja followed it and explained the purport of Gita wonderfully in his Gita Bhaashya. Swamy Shreeman Nigamaantha Maha Desikan elaborated it in his "Tatparya Chandrika". In "Tatparya Chandrika", Swamy Shreeman Nigamaantha Maha Desikan has established that only Bhagavath Ramanuja's commentary, which follows Gitaartha Sangraha, is the purport of Gita in strict accordance with the Veda as told by Shree Krishna. Swamy has refuted the points in the commentaries of people belonging to other schools of thoughts like Advaita. Swamy has also translated Gitaartha Sangraha in divine Tamil.

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Contents of Gita Summaried

First, the Jeevaatman (Chit) has to realize that he is different from the insentient body (Achit). He has to do Karma-Yoga and control his sense organs and Manas. After that, he has to do Jgnyaana yoga and realize the Jeevaatma Swaroopam. Then, he has to do Bhakti Yoga to reach the lotus feet of Shreeman Narayanan and to do eternal service at Shree Vaikunta Paramapadam. The entire apowrusheya Veda states that the goal of Bhakti yoga is Shreeman Narayana (Purushoththama: - Brahman) who is the only cause of the universe and having the universe has his body. The Jeevaatamn who is unable do the Bhakti yoga has to adopt Prapaththi. Shree Krishna Bhagavan is the Purushoththama: who is celebrated in all the Veda and Smruthis.

The Bhagavath Gita as told above has 18 chapters. This is divided into 3 sections, each section called "Shadga" comprising of 6 chapters.

The summary of each Shadga is as follows:

- 1st Shadga (First 6 chapters):
 - Karma Yoga and
 - Jgnyaana Yoga

- 2nd Shadga (Next 6 chapters):
 - Bhakti Yoga

- 3rd Shadga (Last 6 chapters):

- Nature of Chit, Achit and Iswara (Purushoththama: Shree Krishna:)
Method of practicing Bhakti yoga with Karma and Jgnyaana as its accessories and Importance of obeying the Saastra.

All these terms will be explained in detail in future postings.

Lesson 14

Bhagavath Gita - Essence of Chapter 1

Bhagavath Yamunachaarya in his Gitaartha Sangraha says:

*Asthaana sneha kaarunya dharmadharma dhiyaaakulam |
Paartham prapannamudrusya saastraavatharanam krutam ||*

Arjuna saw his relatives like Bheeshma and his preceptors like Drona who have assembled in his enemy side eager to fight with him in the kuru-kshetra battlefield. They

where once very kind and affectionate to him. But now they are in his enemy side. On seeing them like this, Arjuna got his mind agitated. His love, attachment and mercy overflowed regarding them who are now actually not fit for that. He mistook his kshatriya-dharma, which is to fight in the war as adharma.

He then became frightened to kill the enemies in the war. He lost courage to fight and with trembling body, dropped his bow and arrows and sat down tired in his chariot with terrible confusion.

He then surrendered to Shree Krishna Bhagavan who was his driver of his chariot. He requested Shree Krishna Bhagavan to kindly direct him.

Shree Krishna Bhagavan mercifully accepted Arjuna as his student and wished to clear Arjuna's doubts & confusion and direct him towards all goodness. Shree Krishna Bhagavan with his divine gentle smile in his divine lips, in order to teach him the essence of Veda - the tatva-traya, hita and purushaartha - the secret of all saastra in an extraordinary fashion wanted to start His sermon - The Bhagavath Gita.

This is the essence of the first chapter of Bhagavath Gita.

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Lesson 15

Bhagavath Geetha - Chapter 2 - Summary

Bhagavath Yamunacharya in his Geethaartha sangraham says

"nityaathmaasanga karmehaagocharaa saankya yoga dheer:
dviitheeye sthitha dheer lakshaa prokthaa tanmohasaanthaye"

Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramaatman addressed Arjuna as follows:

" O Arjuna! I (Shreeman Narayanan) am the Paramaatman-supreme lord of everything, unparalleled and unsurpassed, eternal and imperishable. There is no doubt regarding this aspect. The jeevaatman is also eternal and imperishable. There is no doubt regarding this aspect also. You have to understand the meaning of the terms like "death", "birth" of jeevaatman properly. The jeevaatman takes a body as per my sankalpa according to his karma. This is called birth. Only the body of the jeevaatman undergoes changes from childhood, youthfulness to oldness. The jeevaatman remains unchanged in this nature. "Death" is nothing but the Jeevaatman leaving his body for taking a new body as per his karma. Therefore, he who understands the eternal imperishable nature of the jeevaatman, never worries or feels sad for death. No weapon can cut the jeevaatman. Fire cannot burn the jeevaatman. Water cannot make the jeevaatman wet. Air cannot make the jeevaatman dry. The jeevaatman is eternal and imperishable. The jeevaatman is finite (aNu-sUkshma) and therefore he can penetrate into the body. This jeevaatman cannot be killed. Therefore understand that the people who will be killed by you in the kuru-kshetra battlefield, will leave their body and reach swarga and will take up another body. Just like a person who removes his torn/old cloths and wears new cloth, the jeevaatman removes his body and takes up a new body. After having understood this, you need not worry for killing the enemies in the battlefield. You may now worry for destroying their bodies. Even this is not appropriate because the body is just made up of the five elements of the nature namely ether, fire, water, air and earth. It has become the abode for the jeevaatman to experience his karma. Even if you are not going to be instrumental in war to kill them, their bodies will naturally get destroyed one day as per their karma. Therefore do not worry for this also. O Arjuna! Get up and execute your duty.

From the Veda-Saastras, know that the jeevaatman's nature is as told above. Having known this, do the karma-yoga, which is executing the duties prescribed by the saastra for you with saatvika tyaga as service to my lotus feet. That is, you have to sacrifice the ego "I am the doer of karma", "I am the enjoyer of its results" and the "Results are mine". But you should never sacrifice the karma itself. You have to do your karma without fail. "War" as per kshatriya-dharma is a prescribed duty for you. Therefore remove all your misunderstandings from your mind and get up to execute your duty. If you do the karma-yoga as told above, it will purify you and gradually lead you to adopt mokshopaaya (means to attain salvation).

With this karma-yoga practiced, you can have you mind under your control. Then by continuous contemplation on the nature of jeevaatman who is the body of Paramaatman, you can do jgnyaana-yoga and get the jeevaatman's swarUpa fully realized. Then, with these two yogas as accessories, you can do bhakthi-yoga and finally reach my lotus feet. Therefore O Arjuna, first get your wrong ideas removed from your mind. Understand very clearly that the Jeevaatman is different from the body. Doing Karma with Satvika Tyaga is very important. "

Lesson 16

Bhagavath Gita - 3rd Chapter Summary

Bhagavath Yamunacharya says:

"*asakthyaa lokarakshaayai guneshvaaropya karthruthaam |
sarvesvare vaa nyasyokthaa thruteeye karma kaaryathaa ||*"

In the second chapter, it was told that one has to do the karma-yoga and control his sense organs and mind (manas). Then he has to do the jgnyaana yoga. At this point, one may object the need to do the karma yoga in those cases where he can do directly jgnyaana

yoga. The objection is overruled here that the jgnyaana yoga cannot be even initiated if karma yoga is not done. The karma yoga has to be done as per the Saatvika tyaaga described earlier. By doing karma like this, one has to invoke the mercy of the Lord Sriman Narayana Paramaatman. By His grace, the jeevaatma's sins gets washed away. Only after this, the mind of the jeevaatma gets stabilized and clear. After conquering evil things like anger, enmity, desire etc., he gets his sense organs controlled and hence the mind. Only after this level of mental maturity, the jeevaatman can initiate the jgnyaana yoga. Therefore, karma yoga is mandatory for those who want to initiate jgnyaana yoga. The jeevaatman cannot do jgnyaana yoga without doing karma-yoga as told in the second chapter.

Further, the jeevaatma cannot stay away from doing karma except during the pralaya. The jeevaatman always does some or other karma stimulated by the prakruthi, which has satva-rajas and tamas attributes. The karma-yoga is not only less difficult but also ideal. Without doing karma, the jeevaatma cannot progress even in his material life. As this is the importance of karma-yoga, Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramaatman addressed Arjua:

"O Arjuna! Do the karma properly as I explained it. You have earned a leading position and you are the leader. If you fail from doing your duties, then the people who recognize you will also fail to do karma and try to do jgnyaana yoga directly and fail miserably. This will add sins to you and you will fail from jgnyaana yoga".

The karma-yoga has to be done only for the satisfaction of the Lord Shree Krishna Paramaatman. It should be "*nishkaamyaa*", meaning karma-yoga must be done without anticipation of results.

The jeevaatman who realizes that he is different from the body, does the karma yoga with Satvika tyaaga: That is, one has to sacrifice the ego "I am the doer of karma", "I am the enjoyer of its results" and the "Results are mine". But he should never sacrifice the karma itself. One has to do his karma, which is prescribed in the Saastra, without fail. One must realize that he is just instrumental in doing the karma and Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramaataman is his only support, controller and Lord who has all the jeevaatmans and the insentient entities as instruments for HIS sport.

Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramaataman stressed these aspects in the 3rd chapter of Gita and ordered Arjuna to get up and execute his duty properly.

Lesson 17

Bhagavath Gita - Chapter 4 - Summary

Bhagavath Yamunacharya says:

PrasangAth swaswabhAvOkthi: karmaNOakarmathAsya cha |
BhEdA jgnyAnasya mAthmyam chathurthAdhyAya uchyathE ||

In the fourth chapter of Bhagavath Gita, Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramathma addressed Arjuna and revealed certain secrets enshrined in the Veda.

The avathara-rahasyam (the secret regarding incarnation) was revealed as a part of discussion between Bhagavan Shree Krishna Paramathma and Arjuna. It is as follows:

1. The avataram (incarnation of Bhagavan Narayana: like Narasimha, Krishna, Rama) are real and are not illusion.
2. When Bhagavan Narayana: incarnates, his qualities like knowledge etc., do not contract and he incarnates with all his qualities in supreme absolute form.
3. The form that Bhagavan Narayana: takes in his incarnations are of sudhda-satva, which is divine and pure.
4. The birth of Bhagavan Narayana:, which is incarnation is as per his own wish.
5. He incarnates during the period when there is necessity to re-establish dharma.
6. He incarnates to make the Shree Vaishnavas enjoy his divine form and sport. He destroys adharma and re-establishes dharma.

Up to the third chapter, the importance of karma with sathvika tyaga was stressed. Now the discussion regarding j~gnyana yoga starts.

He who does the karma yoga as told before, gets his sense organs controlled gradually. On understanding the nature of jivathman, he contemplates on the jivathman, which is different from the body.

With this contemplation on the self (jivathman), the j~gnyana-yogi does the karma yoga perfectly. That is, the karma-yoga, which encompasses Athma-j~gnyana, gets the form of j~gnyana-yoga.

On doing this j~gnyana-yoga, the person gets to realize the jivathma's swarupam and this is called as the jivathma-sakshathkaram. This person, totally gets his ahamkaram and mamakaram removed from his mind. He gets himself ready to cross the ocean of samsara. By the grace of Bhagavan Sriman Narayana:, which gets invoked by the practice of j~gnyana and karma, the sins of the j~gnyana-yogi gets destroyed just like the huge logs of wood getting destroyed by fire. The glory of the person who practices karma and jgnyana is great. These aspects were covered in the fourth chapter of Bhagavath Geeta.

The following Sanskrit verses summarize the avatara rahasyam:

avathArasya sathyathvam ajahathswaswabhAvathA |
Sudhda-sathva-mayathvam cha swEchchAmAthra-nidAnathA ||
Dharma-igIAnOw samudaya: sAdhu-samrakshaNArthathA |
ithi janmarahasyam yO vEthi nAsya punarbhava: ||

The Bhakthi-yogi (he who practices the sadyopaya-bhakti as told in upanishads), who gets to know the avatara-rahasyam (which is told in Bhagavath Gita, which explains the Veda verses like "ajAyamAnO bhahudhA vijAyathE") gets his bhakti culminated in that birth itself and never gets rebirth.

Lesson 18

Bhagavath GeethA - Chapter 5 - Summary

The karma-yoga is easier than j~gnyana-yoga. Also, the karma-yoga grants the results quicker than j~gnyana-yoga. This is because the karma-yogi does the karma with Satvika-tyaga with jivathma-paramathma-j~gnyana. This quickly leads to the Bhagavath-Preethi. The karma-yoga purifies the karma-yogi removing rajas and tamas gunas and gradually leads to the control of sense organs. It thus leads to jivathma-sakshathkaram (realization of the jivan within oneself) easily. On the other hand, j~gnyana-yoga is difficult and gives result (jivathma-sakshathkaram) after a long period.

The sense organs (Indriyams), vital airs (*praana-vaayus*) etc are doing their respective actions, which are as per the control of the karma-badhda-jivathman. The jivathman has mere *sambandam*(connection) with the sense organs (Indriyams), vital airs, etc just because of karma. The jivathman is different from these things and is j~gnyana-swarupa. Having got the knowledge about jivathma-swarupa, through Acharya-upadesam, the jivathman has to contemplate on his swarupa continuously and this is j~gnyana yogam. If this is done, his erroneous ideas like "Body and Aatma are same" etc., gets removed and he gets the realization of self, which is **jivathma-sakshathkaram**.

Having attained jivathma-sakshathkaram, he does not worry for bad events and never feels happy for good events. He remains aloof. He sees that the jivathma is of same nature (j~gnyana-swarupa) in all the types of bodies like devatha (demi-god), mansuhya (human), mrugam (animal) and stavara (plants, trees etc). That is, the yogi sees a learned person, an ignorant man, cow, elephant, dog and he who eats the dog equally. This only means that the jivathman inside such bodies are of the same nature - j~gnyana swarupa and j~gnyana asraya (having dharma-bhutha-j~gnyana). Of course, the differences in body and means of approaching each of these entities are not over ruled here. "All these entities are seen "equal" by the yogi" - this necessarily means that each of the individual jivathman inside the entities are of same nature.

These aspects were explained in the fifth chapter of Bhagavath Geetha.

The jivathma-sakshathkaram and j~gnyana-yoga are further explained in the sixth chapter. It will be covered in the next posting. Thus the first 6 chapters (prathama-shadgam) explains karma and j~gnyana which are means for jivathma-sakshathkaram.

After this, the next 6 chapters (madyama-shadgam) explains the Bhakti-yoga which is the means for ***Paramathma-sakshathkaram*** - realizing Paramathma Sriman Narayana: who is Purushoththama:

Bhagavath Yamunacharya has summarized the contents of this fifth chapter as follows:

Karmayogasya sowkaryam Saighrayam kASchana thadvidhA: |
Brahma-j~gnyana-prakAraScha panchamAdhyAya uchyathE