

Advaita Manjari K. Sadananda

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Advaita Manjari 1

Shree Krishna Paramaatmane namaH! Shree gurubhyonamaH!

Many questions were raised in the past in the internet lists - Advaitin, AdvaitaL and Vaadaavali lists - in relation to advaitic understanding of the nature of the reality, moksha and means of attaining it, shaastra as pramaaNa, samanvaya, questions about saakshee, valid knowledge, validation process, paroksha and aparoksha j~naana, apourusheya of veda-s, perception of objects, visheshNa and visheshya, lakshNa, knower-known-knowledge, prama-bhrama and pramaaNa, khyaati vaada-s, anirvachniiyam aspect of Advaita, avidya (bhaava or abhaava), Brahman with or without attributes, lower and higher nature of Brahman, and many others. Many of them are seemingly unrelated, but deeper analysis shows that they have some relevance in understanding the nature of reality. In Indian philosophy, it has been well recognized that epistemological and ontological issues are intimately connected. Some of the topics will be discussed based on my understanding of these terms. The topics are addressed not necessarily in any particular order, but perhaps will evolve into some order as we proceed to address the issues involved. The goal is to relate the apparently unrelated concepts and unite them as a garland of flowers, using the fundamental concepts of Advaita. Hence this article is titled as Advaita Manjari, a garland of flowers, in adoration of my teacher, H.H. Swami Chinmayanandaji, who taught me everything that I know, with abundant love.

Samanvaya: Samanvaya means consistency. Human intellect looks for consistency, and therefore cannot accept that which is not consistent. Emotional mind can accept different degrees of inconsistencies depending on the degree of blockage (or dullness) of that intellect. In many cases, a human intellect due to its limitations cannot see clearly the consistency or even inconsistency in the statements, because of emotional attachments, sometimes even intellectual attachment to a particular philosophy. However, as it becomes sharper or subtler, it gains more discriminative power to detect and to detest inconsistencies in life as well as in the experiences gained. Religion is actually addressed to that intellect that detests inconsistencies in life, when that intellect starts to examine its life experiences. Mundaka Up. says – “pariiksha lokaan karma chitaan brahmaano” –It says, a seeker

after critically examining all his life-time experiences comes to a conclusion that any action or any series of actions are not consistent with the solution to the fundamental problem that he is facing in his life. After critically examining all the accomplishments that one has gained throughout his life, he recognizes that one cannot gain through action moksha, which is unlimited and eternal. Once he recognizes the inconsistency in terms of goal versus the effort, scripture advises him that he should go in search of a teacher who can guide him to achieve that ultimate goal of life. In Brahmasuutra-s, suutras 4 says 'tattu samanvayaat', declaring that vedaanta is self-consistent and teaches about 'Brahman' which cannot be known otherwise. In this article, 'samanvaya' is used in a more general sense with the hope to establish a high degree of self-consistency in all the concepts. I am going to use the term in more general sense and not necessarily in the narrow definition of consistency of statements of prastanatraaya. The three philosophies – Advaita, VishishhTadvaita and dvaita provide self-consistent models based on the Vedic statements while finding fault with each other. There are books and books available in each philosophy criticizing other models while establishing the supremacy of theirs. I will not present that kind of discussion here since my purpose is only clarification of any misunderstandings of Advaita from my perspective, and occasionally present criticism of some concepts that do not seem to be consistent with current understanding of the nature of the world - that too from my persepctive.

Samanvya therefore is interpretation of the scriputral texts as well as the scietific and/or logical analysis of the world or obejcts, and our experiences in a self-consistent way that a human mind can appreciate and evolve - recongnizing very well that the hightest reality is beyond the human comprehension. Even this apect has to be consistent, for a human mind to accept. Since we are at an age where relatavistic nature of the universe is becoming increasingly evident through scientific analysis, the scriptural interpretations should be consistent with the objective knowledge of the world, while pointing something beyond the objective nature of the world. We will try to approach the subject from this persective.

Advaita Manjari-2

Who is jiiivanmukta or what is the state of Jiivanmukta?

– One who has liberated while living?

1. When we are discussing about the state that is beyond our intellectual comprehension (beyond the mind and intellect), and at the same time if we do not want to rest our understanding completely on the statements of a particular person or persons, we have to resort to 'a

pramaana' or a means of knowledge that is not illogical and at the same time that which everybody can agree upon including those individuals on whom we have our personal trust and whom we think are realized. Hence Shaastra becomes a more valid pramaana or valid means of knowledge of such states.

2. Who is Jivan Mukta and what is the state of realization? -

Recognizing that the root cause for bondage is the 'ignorance' - either ignorance of 'one-self' or 'ignorance of the nature of the Lord' (vishishtadvaitic point) depending on how one interprets it, then realization is removal of that ignorance or clear understanding of 'who one-self' is or 'what is the nature of the reality'. From Advaita point - 'I do not know my self as my-self and take my-self as other than myself. I am being 'the subject' the knower I - takes myself the object that I am aware of as myself - Here ignorance plays as two aspects - one is taking object is different from subject (for example - this is my body, my mind, my intellect and this is my world and I can see this world and the world is different from me and this world is a creation and creator is different from me since I did not create this world, etc.). The second is taking the object as the subject - that is this is my body translates next as I am the body, mind and/or intellect - when I take object as subject and hence limitations of the objects become my limitations - I suffer the consequence of these limitations and all the life struggles in terms of 'pravRitti' and 'nivRitti' - trying gain what I like and get rid of what I dislike - become a means to solve the self-imposed problem based on my misunderstanding about myself.

3. Self-realization or state of jivanmukta is then realization of one self as the 'true self'. But what is that true self ? - First that self is the subject and not an object of any means of knowledge -All means of knowledge presupposes the existence of the subject 'I'. Hence all means of knowledge are valid because of the subject hence the self is beyond any means of knowledge - aprameyam - and it is a self-evident entity - or self- conscious entity - that is it is chit - and has to be existent entity since we cannot talk of nonexistent self - there it is 'sat' and since free any limitations since it is pure bliss and hence it is unlimited or infinite or anantam - therefore one without a second (since limitations come from the presence of the second). Hence knowledge of the self is the knowledge that "aham Brahmaasmi" - 'I am the Brahman' - or the 'Infinite Consciousness' -a notion of finite consciousness is illogical since that gives rise to a logical question of what is there beyond that finite consciousness? - if there is something then who is conscious of that - If one is conscious of that then that 'beyond thing' is not really beyond since it is within the consciousness - hence consciousness has to be infinite and there is nothing beyond consciousness. Neither from existence point it is

divisible since even the dividers have to exist.

4. A Jivanmukta is one who is a mukta or liberated while body is alive. One cannot get any liberation if one is finite since he is bound eternally by that very finiteness, if that finiteness is his intrinsic nature. If he is infinite but thinks he is finite, then liberation is possible when he drops his notion of himself as finite realizes his true or intrinsic nature. A finite also cannot become infinite that is also illogical. Hence liberation itself need to be understood correctly. A jivan mukta is one who is liberated while living and liberation is liberation from all misunderstandings that he is not an object and is the very subject in all objectifications - He has understood that his true nature is 'aham Brahmaasmi' or 'ayam atma Brahma' - This is realization as JK puts 'understanding as understanding as a fact' 'not as a thought'. Hence 'self-realization' - realization of 'who one-self is' - and that oneself is the - existent - conscious and infinite self that one is. Then only brahavit brahma eva bhavati has a direct relevance.

Krishna declares about this in B.G. Ch 6.

sarvabhootastam atmaanam sarvabhootaanica atmani|
iikshate yogayuktaatmaa sarvatra samadarshanaH||

'my-self is in all beings and also all beings are in myself' - one who sees or understands such a yogi has everywhere (at all times and places) has equanimity or sees the same everywhere - whether it is dog or brahmana - just as whether it is ring or bangle or bracelet - one sees oneness of the gold in and through the names and forms.

Interestingly Krishna reiterates the same message in the very next sloka even from a Bhakta point -

yo mam pasyati sarvatra sarvanca mayi pasyati|
tasyaaham na pranasyaami sa ca me na pranasyati||
he who sees Me everywhere and everything in Me - he can never be away from Me nor I can be away from him -

Hence there is no more misunderstanding of oneself - Please note that in the very understanding of one-self or his-self -there is also a simultaneous recognition that there is no other 'self' other than 'one-self' - since the self I am is unlimited and infinite. This understanding also includes ' not only I am in all of them but all are in me - that is they are not different from me. Hence the world is in my consciousness - I am not separate from the world and I am in the world and the world is in me - Just as clay saying I am in all pots and all pots are in me. Yet the 'naama and ruupa' the superficial entities

which are just projects as well as the consequences of those projections - that is 'individual notions' - I am a mud pot or I am a honey pot etc., belong not to me only to the superficial names and forms.

This is stated by Krishna in Ch. 9

mayaatata midam sarvam jagadavyakta muurthinaa|
mastaani sarva bhutani na ca aham tesvavastitaH||

I pervade this universe in an unmanifested form and all manifestations are in me but I am not accountable or responsible for the sufferings of these beings due to their misunderstandings. Those belong to them and not to me.

Hence one is Jivanmukta when one has not just intellectual but clear 'understanding' of one is and there is no more misunderstanding taking 'I am ' 'this or that'. That one 'individual' has realized is 'no more' - he is dissolved. His true nature that is 'I am Brahman'. Hence the correct understanding the 'ego' what was identifying that I am this body etc. is not more - that ego is replaced by a correct understanding "I am the totality' or 'aham brahma asmi'.

Since the original 'ego' (based on ones misunderstanding that one is an object) is completely dissolved - Since he is no more, there is no more a question of talking about 'him' as an individual. The correct question is how does that 'Brahman' operates that 'body or uses that body' - Krishna gives an elaborate answer in the 'stitapraJNa LakshNa' which we have discussed elaborately when Madhava presented that part of B.G.

Since it is as though That one who was living there in that body is dead and gone is replaced by the one who has clear understanding that He is the Brahman. In reality it is the 'Brahman' the infinite consciousness uses the readily available equipment (body, mind and intellect - since the tenant has left) for the benefit of the universe - (either to fulfill the vaasanas of the samashhTi who need a living teacher for their realization - sitting a remote cave meditating on the universality of the self - for the good of all). Unlike someone pointed out - he does not really eat - sleep or do things - since there is no more 'he'. - From the total self point - ' akartaaham abhoktaaham ahamevaaham avyayaH" - I am neither doer nor the enjoyer - I am all by myself and unlimited and inexhaustible -. Then who eats and sleeps - Krishna again answered that –

prakrityevaca karmaani kriyamaanaani sarvashaH|

All actions are done by prakRiti itself - of course under my president ship - But that prakRiti is only my lower nature -not different from me. This is further explained beautifully in the two slokas –

naiva kinchit karomiiti yukto manyeta tatvavit|
pasyan shRinvan spRushan jighran ashnan svapan svasan||

pralapan visRijan gRihNan unmishhan nimishhan api|
indriyaaniidriyaartheshu vartanta iti dhaarayan||

The one who knows the truth knows “I am not the doer of anything” – and Krishna gives all ‘-ns’ or ‘-ings’ to illustrate the point starting from seeing, touching etc. Since I am the doer or kartRitva bhaava is only a notion due to the error of identification that I am this body – a confusion of subject-object relation due to adhyaasa.

From the point of the realized souls It is suffice to understand at this stage to take that Lord himself manifests in the body of the Jivanmukta and operates for the benefit of all mankind. Hence we pray –

'Gururbrahma gururvishnuH gururdevo maheswaraH' -

essentially the guru is the manifestation of the Lord himself - since He is nothing but Brahman and he has the true understanding that 'I am Brahman'.

From these discussions we understand that there is no more 'ego' as we understand operating in the Jivanmukta and Jivanmukta is the one who has clear understanding of himself.

5. The definition of clear understanding is that there is no more misunderstanding. If after one has clear understanding if one gets misunderstanding then that the understanding is not clear!

yad gatvaa na nivartante taddhaama paramam mama|

Once one has reached my state - or clear understanding of oneself or understanding of Brahman (brahma vit bramhaiva bhavati - the one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman) there is no more return - no more misunderstanding again. Hence one understands as a fact there is no more notions left for misunderstanding.

6. As long as there are equipment's, through the equipments (and depending on the limitations of the equipments), jivanmukta can 'see' and 'act' in the world (with clear understanding that he is not really the seer but prakRiti itself acts in his presence). Hence plurality can

still be there but he does not have a notion or misunderstanding that the plurality is a reality or separate from him! Hence we see that he sees, acts etc. like a normal beings but he knows truly that he is not the seer or actor but appropriate seeing and acting is going through those equipments in His presence). He may use the words within vyavahaara not to confuse the rest - I am hungry or I am sleepy etc. but that is for vyavahaara or convenience for transaction but true understanding is different - just like we all know the Sun does not raise or set yet we can operate even with that understanding enjoy saying that - look at beautiful sun set. - This is the difference between aatma rati and atma kreeda - Jivanmukta can revel oneself, in oneself by oneself - atmanyeva atmanaa tushTaH - Yet for a can enjoy his own glory - aisvaryam - the creation projected as plurality.

To answer the question if he decides to come back - he, as ego-centric individual, is no more as ego but he is now with an understanding as 'I am Brahman', hence what is so-called 'coming back' is with clear understanding that I am Brahman - when he comes back - it is Brahman that is operating through the equipments - not the old ego that was there before realization. Since He is Brahman one without a second - what is there to be afraid off. He does not act - but divine actions come forth from those equipments since He is full of divinity. All actions are for the benefit of the entire world since world is Him and He is the world. He transacts with the world just like a scientist knowing fully well all things are essentially made up of fundamental particles – yet garbage treated differently from food. Just a space is indivisible and even the dividers are in space, yet for transactional purposes bath room is different from kitchen.

Lastly about the gradual versus sudden - Swami Chinmayanandaji used to tell us a story of Mr. Jones and the cat. This is also helps to understand the adhyaasa part and so-called 'I am I' part!- Mr. Jones somehow got the feeling or understanding that 'he is a rat and not a man' – Do not ask me when he got this idea and is there a scriptural pramaaNa for that – it is just like a conscious entity thinks that I am this unconscious body. If you have that notion, you can tell me how you got that kind of ridiculous misunderstanding. If you do not have that misunderstanding my saashhTanaga praNaams to you. You have realized who you and should not have misunderstanding of what you are not. If you say I know very well you are not inert shariira – sthuula, suukma and kaaraNas shariira-s- and still act as though you are one, then Mr. Jones story is very relevant.

Coming back to our friend Mr. Jones, since he has the notion that he is a rat, he was always trying to avoid any cat nearby and runs away from one since he is afraid for his safety. (udaramanataram kurute athatasya

bhayam bhavati – a spec of dvaita can cause fear- says scriptures). His wife learned about his problem and took him to a psychologist - after many sittings and repeating reinforcement - 'I am man and I am not a rat' - he 'understood' that he is a man and not a rat. After paying the doctor fees he goes back home but after a hour he came back running to the doctor gasping for his breath - when confronted by the doctor - Mr. Jones said - 'I know very well I am man and I am not a rat'. Doctor asked then, what is the problem? Why did you come back running?' Mr. Jones replied -"I am afraid because, I know that I am a man and not a rat, but that cat on the street may not know that I am man and not a rat" –

'aham brahmaasmi' is not I am I or I am this etc it is realization of ones own intrinsic nature that I am sat-chit-aananda swaruupa. They are not attributes of I. That is my 'swaruupa'.

Understanding or realization we are talking about is the understanding as a fact - not any more as a thought - That understanding is complete and once and for all - That occurs only once and that is the end of all misunderstandings. When the mind is clear of all misunderstanding then the self is self-revealed. Till then, even as of now for everyone, one has glimpses or 'experience' of the self, but the misunderstanding still prevails. The happiness that one gains during the sensuous enjoyments is also 'glimpses of the self' - 'vishyaanade paramaanadaH' - says Vidyananya in 'Pancadasi'. Clear understanding of the nature of reality is what Bhagavan Ramana calls in 'sat darshan' as 'dRiDaiva nishTa' - firm understanding of the self. There are no gradations in the self-realization - but there is gradation is the purification of the mind - as the mind is getting purified - clearer the screen - the more light of self -illumination beaming through. I am that self is total, complete and firm and occurs only when the 'ego' falls down since it is false.

Hari Om!
Sadananda

Advaita Manjari-3

PramaaNā: Just a few comments on PramaaNā, but more elaborate discussion will be presented when we examine the Knowledge and Knower and Knowing process. Since one considers oneself ignorant of both the world and to some extent about oneself too (the two essential things that one deals with while living), the pursuit for knowledge is inborn to beings. Knowledge becomes the basis of all transactions. Therefore, the means of knowledge, pramaaNā, becomes a basis to separate valid vs. invalid

knowledge or mistaken knowledge. In the pursuit of knowledge, 'one' is always a given – that is the knower himself - since without him present, the discussion of knowledge has no meaning. Implication of the above statement is that the knower has to be an existent one and also a conscious one, for any knowledge to take place. That is one is sat and chit – and these form a fundamental basis for any knowledge, as given facts - and no means of knowledge (pramaaNa) is needed to prove to himself that he is existent and he is an awareful being. It is not that I have sat or I have chit – they are not qualities that I possess; they are my very essential nature. If I have to possess something other than myself – that possessing self has to be existent self to start with to have a quality 'existence' for me to possess. If one pursues that kind of logic, it will lead to ad-infinitum. If I have consciousness, then that consciousness has to be existent one since we cannot talk about non-existent consciousness. Furthermore, if that consciousness-existence (chit-sat) is the quality that I have, and then I should be conscious of that to make use of it – essentially such arguments will lead to infinite regress. To overcome such problems, one has to postulate some other criterion – postulation of inherence or some other relation less-relationship with visheshaNā and visheshya. Implication is any other counter hypothesis is not free from some other assumptions or additional implications. The fact of the matter is I know I exist and I am conscious – and therefore I am self-existent and self-conscious entity requiring no means of knowledge to know myself. And that is my essential nature.

Therefore I do not need – perception (pratyaksha), logic (anumaana) and including shabda (scriptures) to prove that I exist or I am conscious. Because I exist only all means of knowledge or pramaaNa are validated and no means is required to validate my own existence. Hence I am beyond any pramaaNa-s. Furthermore, I am the knower and without me, the known and the means of knowledge have no validity. Unlike I, the world (assemblage of objects) is not self-conscious entity to know itself. Conscious entity has to be preexistent for the world to be known. Scripture is not a conscious entity and therefore it cannot prove either its own existence or the existence of the world. I have to be present to validate even the scriptures. One can believe that scriptures are eternal – why the scripture says so. There is no problem in having beliefs if that helps in the understanding the nature of the self and the world. But I have to be there even to validate the eternity of the scriptures. We will address this problem more when we discuss the concept of time-space complex and the play of the mind.

Of the three PramaaNa-s, discussed above – pratyaksha, anumaana and shabda (according to Advaita there are three additional ones), pratyaksha is based on sense-input and anumaana or logic also indirectly

rests on pratyaksha, sense perceptions for proof. To know things that are beyond the sense perceptions one has to go to shabda pramaana. For Hindu's shruti-s form the fundamental basis of the knowledge which is beyond sense perceptions.

Vedas: For a Hindu, Vedas are considered as apaurusheyam, that is, not authored by a human being. Shaastra is pramaana or means of knowledge for that which cannot be known by any other means. These include dharma and adharma (beyond the realm of ethics), swarga and moksha, as well as means of attaining them. Any objective science is based on objective analysis of the objective world (anaatma), and therefore it is not applicable to subjective arena, 'I', i.e. atma. Since Veda-s are considered as apaurusheya, they are considered as free from any defects (such as inconsistency) that gets introduced when authored by a limited human intellect. It follows, therefore, that if one sees inconsistencies in Veda-s, it only implies a lack of correct understanding of the import of the Veda-s, since the language is necessarily mystical. Mystical language follows since the subject of the discussion in Veda-s is the very core of 'The Subject', which cannot be objectified. Hence Veda-s become the essential means of knowledge, pramaana, for knowing one's own self, which cannot be known as 'object', since subject cannot be objectified. Here one should be careful - We already mentioned that one-self cannot be known by any pramaana, since 'I' is aprameyam - yet here we are saying that Veda-s are pramaana for knowing one-self. Hence it is only a removal of ignorance of what I think I am versus what really I am. I know I am existent and consciousness but what I am seeking through all my pursuits in life is only one thing - that is happiness. Veda-s essentially point-out 'what I am seeking for I am - tat tvam asi - you are that what you seeking. Veda-s 'aid' in the removing my misunderstanding about myself. Happiness is limitlessness since any limitation causes unhappiness. Limitless ness is infiniteness and that is Brahman - and Veda-s point out that you are that - and ayam atma Brahman - the self you are is limitless or infiniteness or happiness that you are seeking. Hence it is not new knowledge I gain but old misunderstanding is removed. The contradiction is not in the analysis but in the very pursuit of happiness itself, when I take myself as not myself. Even though I am know that happiness is not an object or in any object, I still go after objects in pursuit of happiness and there exist the very fundamental contradiction of life. Veda-s tries to remove contradiction by stating you are what you are seeking for - and that should lead to self-realization. It is re-cognizing what oneself is. One cannot recognize by perception or by anumaana since they deal with anaatma or non-self. Hence shabda becomes the only source of information. The vision of scriptures is different from my own notion of myself. The scripture works only if I can do the introspective about myself. For that only I need a proper frame of mind

since I cannot objectify myself as 'this'. Scripture has to come to my rescue with the teaching of 'na iti' not this - not this. By process of elimination of my misunderstanding that involves 'I am this' I can 'see' the vision of the scriptures - dhyaanena atmani pasyanti kaschit aatmaanam atmaanaa- By contemplation of oneself by oneself one can 'see' oneself. For that my mind should be able to discard all the notions which involves taking all that not-self as self.

A proper teacher is therefore needed to import the true meaning of Vedic statements to a seeker, and to point out the samanvaya in the apparently inconsistent statements due to its mystical language. Hence in the above quoted Mundaka sloka (see part 1), the seeker is advised to approach a teacher who has the knowledge of the shaastra-s and who himself has 'understood' the nature of the reality that the Veda-s reveal.

'apourusheyatva' (authorship by an non-human) of the Veda-s cannot be easily appreciated by a rational intellect. But one can easily rationalize this concept. Veda actually means knowledge and knowledge is not purusha tantra, that is, it is not created by a human being. In addition, knowledge has to be preexisting and cannot be willed by a human being. When a human intellect intensely contemplates or meditates on a subject of investigation, intuition develops, and knowledge dawns on him. Intuition in Vedanta is called j~naana kshakshu or 'wisdom eye'. Spiritual masters call the knowledge gained as 'revelation', since it is revealed to them. On the other hand, an objective scientist may call it as 'break-through'. Hence Veda-s can be considered as recordings of the revelations to the sages of the yore in their seat of meditation. Since they are not the authors of the knowledge (veda), Veda-s are considered apourusheya. In principle, all knowledge comes under this category. As stated above, scriptural knowledge has additional aspect associated with it, in the sense that it deals not with 'anaatma' or objects but with oneself or the very subject 'I' or 'aatma'.

Two aspects are revealing about the Veda-s. Veda-s themselves declare that the nature of the reality is beyond human comprehension since (a) what a human mind can comprehend is finite and only objectifiable entities (yat vaachaa anabhyditam..., yan manasaa na manute..., yatho vaacho nivartante apryaapya manasaa sah, etc.) and (b) it is beyond logic (naishaa tarkena matiraapaneya). This is not to say that Veda-s are illogical. The second aspect is that Veda-s classify themselves as part of the lower knowledge, since it is pramaana or a means of knowledge to know that which cannot be known (aprameyam). Hence it uses a mystical language to indicate (indicate may not be proper word either since 'indicate' has a connotation of pointing that which, in fact,

cannot be pointed – perhaps ‘imply’ may be better) the essential truth, provided the seeker’s mind is tuned to the teaching. Just as for higher mathematics, the language of communication is reduced to some symbolic elements involving alphabets and therefore one’s mind has to be appropriately trained in order to receive that knowledge. Similarly to appreciate the import of Vedanta, one’s mind has to be adequately prepared to receive that knowledge. Hence qualifications of the student become an important consideration before teacher can impart or the student to grasp the correct understanding of the mystical language. Unlike the objective sciences like mathematics, the Vedantic teacher faces more difficult task, since the subject of the teaching is about one’s own self. Student comes to the teacher with so many preconceived notions about oneself, about God and about the world and those notions themselves become great obstacles for the knowledge. Hence the student should have unconditional faith in the teacher and the teaching of the scriptures for the teaching to be effective or productive. It is said in Vivekachoodamani that only due to grace of god one attains the human birth, desire for liberation and an appropriate teacher. In Avadhuta Geeta, Shree Dattatreya says that it is only due to the grace of God that one acquires Advaita vaasana-s

Advaita Manjari 4

In the previous post I have established that for any knowledge to take place ‘knower’ has to be present and prerequisite even for pamaana to operate. Therefore he has to be existent entity and conscious entity. That world exist even otherwise is only an assumption subject to confirmation by a consciousness entity. Hence it is called indeterminate. In addition, it is not that object or matter makes conscious entity to arise – that is chaarvaka matam or accidental theory. Concept of time, space and therefore the world, presupposes the existence of conscious entity or observer. Any arguments against this is only like a fellow shouting at the top of his voice “I am dumb, I cannot speak” – the very statement proves the contrary. To disprove my statement a unconscious entity (not by a conscious entity though a unconscious entity) to declare its existence and in that very declaration the statement becomes like our so-called dumb friend. Krishna K has not proved anything - he assumed that the world is there and that is the QED. To prove the world exists, I have to be there to do even QED. The rest is only an assumption. This becomes more clear when we analyze the concept of space and time.

I have stated categorically that these Manjari-s are intended not to prove advaita siddhanta but only clarify the advaita concepts. So all the mails criticizing my posts are mostly centered on establishing why Advaita is wrong how dvaita is better. That kind of discussions are

beyond the scope of my notes as I have no interest in vaada with any body, besides I find this vaadavali is mostly jalpavaali. Most of the objections of our dvaitin friends are not new and they have been exhaustively answered in many Advaitic books. I find there is clear lack of interest to learn what exactly advaita says and does it match with what they have studied.

If one feels that I am not discussing Advaita Vedanta, that is a separate issue, and for that reason only I am posting these series to Advaitin lists as well, so that the experts there can correct me if I am wrong. If I do hear anything that contradicts my statements please rest assured that I will not hesitate to point them to the readers of vAdAvali. Now next Manjari.

moksha: moksha means freedom and is considered as highest human pursuit in life. 'Freedom from what?' is question that props up next. Since nothing is specified with the word, it implies that it is an absolute freedom from all limitations. It becomes essentially freedom from dependence on anything other than oneself, since any dependence on other than oneself is itself a cause for enslavement. 'aatmanyeva aatmanaa tuShTaH'- A j~naani is the one who revels himself in his own self, says Geeta, and such a j~naani, says Krishna, is the greatest among the bhakta-s. Any dependence on other oneself, makes one to long for that object which is beyond his control since it is other than oneself to long far. In that very longing, there is an inherent assertion that one is an inadequate person or unfulfilled and unhappy without that object. He will get the sense of fulfillment, that is, a sense of adequacy when he gains that object that he is longing for. It is in those moments of fulfillment that we say 'we are happy'. But experience has shown us that this sense of adequacy or happiness gained is only temporary until another desire props up in the mind for another and/or better object. Fulfillment of any desire is not an end in itself, since it leaves behind further dependence on the objects other than oneself. Thus one get enslaved to ones 'likes and dislikes' or 'raaga -dveshha-s. What one is seeking for is an eternal, unlimited or infinite or unconditional happiness i.e. freedom from all limitations. That can never be gained as long as the sense of inadequacy remains. Therefore moksha cannot anything of the type that one can gain. It is interesting to note that a finite cannot gain infinite or finite cannot become infinite. moksha on the other hand is a freedom from any dependency on anything other than oneself. This can happen only if that 'oneself' is itself unlimited and eternal. moksha is therefore cannot come under the category of 'apraaptasya praaptam' i.e. gaining what one does not have, for in all such gains there is always a loss and one will be still left with a sense of inadequacy. Therefore it should be of the type of 'praaptasya praaptam', gaining what one already has. No one tries to

gain what one already has, unless one does not know that he has it already. That is, one is ignorant of what one really is. Ignorance, therefore, becomes the fundamental human problem, if the seeking for moksha is the essential human pursuit in life. moksha is, therefore, not gaining some thing or not going somewhere or not being something other than what one already is. This is because in any one of these, there is always a loss in the gain, or dependence on something other than oneself, leaving one bound or leaving one with a sense of inadequacy or lack of freedom. Unfortunately one cannot accept the fact that no finite gain will make him an adequate person that he wants to be. Longing for adequacy seems to be inherent desire that can never stop, even if one wants. Hence all pursuits in life, pravRitti or nivRitti, that is gaining something that one likes and getting rid of something one dislikes, is ultimately only towards this one end; to reach a state of mind where one feels that he has gained all that need to be gained, and that he is now a full and complete or an adequate person. That state can never be reached by any pursuit since by definition all pursuits are limited and limited pursuits can give only limited results. Series of limited pursuits still give series of limited results and cannot sum up to infinite result. Man therefore remains as an inadequate person in spite of one life or many lives efforts. When one examines this inconsistency in terms of pursuits versus goal, he becomes mumukshu, seeker of moksha, or seeker of absolute freedom. Hence the scripture says .. pariiksha lokan karma chitaan brahmano ...

From the very definition of absolute freedom, we rule out all concepts of moksha that are contradictory to the definition. These contradictory concepts include, notion of eternal dependence (sesha-seshii bhaava), or one is in eternal service of the Lord etc., which are essentially concepts arising from Bhakti philosophy. Eternal and infinite happiness with limitations is self-contradictory and is like absolute freedom while being an eternal slave. We also dismiss the notions that moksha is somewhere (viakunTa or kailaasa, etc), unless that somewhere includes everywhere or infinite. Since moksha is somewhere else and not here and not now but after death etc, such concepts by mere exclusion of here and now, become self- limited. And that contradicts moksha which is freedom from all limitations. To be more specific moksha excludes any spatial or temporal concepts (in that sense even here and now if those involve constraints of space and time should also be excluded), since absolute freedom is absolute in all respects.

Vedanta in fact points out to the seeker of moksha that 'tat tvam asi' or 'you are that', meaning you are an adequate person that you are longing for. Therefore it is praaptasya praaptam and not apraaptasya praaptam. Therefore 'aham brahmaasmi' should be the correct understanding of oneself. That understanding leaves one as sthithaH

praj~naa - 'prajaahati yaadaa kaamaan sarvaan paartha mano gataan, 'aatmanyeva aatmanaa tushTaH' sublimating all the desires in the mind with the knowledge of oneself that one is already full and complete. He, therefore, revels himself in himself. That is, he does not depend on anything other than himself since he has understood that 'the self that he is, is an adequate self beyond any spacial or temporal limitations – 'aham brahma asmi – I am the totality'.

Once we understand the nature of moksha that it is freedom from all limitations, that is it is limitless absolute, any definition of that infinite falls short of infinite, and any description (description of any thing can only be in terms of qualifications or attributes – these aspects are discussed more elaborately later) is not really a definition of infinite but only a description to dismiss any or all finite as not the total. In principle, the language fails in pointing that which cannot be pointed. Hence Vedaanta uses a methodology what Advaita calls as 'adhyaaruupa apavaada' to take the students in steps to go beyond the limitations of words. It is like using a pole to go beyond the pole. Using the finite word to go beyond the words by implication. Hence one can see why Veda-s classify them as lower knowledge only since higher knowledge we are referring is beyond any finite words to speak. A correct interpretation of the Vedic statements, therefore, becomes an essential ingredient. Hence the emphasis for proper teacher who is trained by his teacher, how to teach. Hence a guruparampara and sampradaaya are also emphasized in the tradition.

Thus, infinitely infinite (if such a word can be coined) should be the one which is free from all limitations since any limitation make it not infinite. One cannot gain therefore moksha, nor can it be given, since infinite can neither be gained nor given. Thus when scripture says "it is the Lord that gives one moksha" or 'one has to gain the knowledge' - it should be correctly understood that it is not of the type of 'apraaptasya praaptam', since those gains and knowledge will still leave one inadequate or limited. It should be of the type of 'praaptasya praaptam' that is gaining what one already 'has'. Therefore it cannot be knowledge of any thing other than oneself, since anything other than oneself involves a gain and necessarily becomes finite and therefore not moksha. –Hence Vedanta says "ayam aatma brahma", this self is brahman. It is a realization of what one is or self-realization that 'aham brahmaasmi" I am the brahman. Hence it is not gaining or becoming but by re-cognizing what one already is by re- analyzing who that aham or 'I' is. Therefore aatma vichaara, enquiring about oneself, is not different from brahma vichaara, inquiring into Brahman. The knowledge should culminate as 'aham brahmaasmi' and the 'brahma vit brahma eva bhavati' – I am that Brahman and knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Since I have pre-conceived notions about myself due to lack of correct

or incomplete knowledge of oneself, scripture becomes a pramaana to teach me what I am really. The vision of scripture about myself is different from the notion of myself about myself. Since these notions are deep rooted that have been carried through endless past lives, the mind requires an adequate preparation or adhikaaritvam to 'own' this knowledge. Hence yoga becomes a means for purification of the mind so that adequately prepared mind can grasp the essential truth expounded by the shastra-s. Yoga only prepares the mind or integrates the mind but is not a means for knowledge. Since the knowledge involves knowledge of oneself which is self-existing and eternal and unlimited, any means has to be direct and immediate (aparoksha), just as seeing the fruit in ones own hand. This aspect will be discussed later.

Brahman: Brahman comes from the root 'bRih' meaning growing or expanding, or that which is big. We know that big is an adjective that qualifies a noun. Interestingly the adjective big also gets qualified by the noun that it qualifies. When we say, that is a big mountain and this is a big mosquito, bigness of the mountain is obviously different from the bigness of the mosquito. If we need to refer to that which is bigger than 'any thing' that we know, if it is bigger than the biggest that can ever be possible, or essentially it is unqualifiedly big, we need a new word. To accomplish that, the adjective big itself is made into a noun – and that is what Brahman implies. Upanishad talks about as infinite is Brahman -'anantam brahma' or ekam eva advitiiyam, one without a second, etc. Essentially it is unlimited in all dimensions, without any distinctions that qualifies it like saajaati, vijaati swagata bheda-s. Therefore Brahman means infiniteness or absolutely infinite. In mathematics we are familiar with many types of infinities. For example we say two parallel lines meet at infinity or irrational numbers like pi can have infinite series. But all these infinities are limited. Parallel lines are separated by a finite distance and pi is less than 4. When we say Brahman, the word therefore implies that it is absolutely infinite or unqualifiedly big or undefinably big. These terms are not qualifications or descriptions or definitions to indicate what Brahman is, but they are used only to negate all that can be qualified as not Brahman. Otherwise one cannot think or talk of absolute infinity using words which are limited. In that sense scriptures also uses the words that imply this unqualified absolute infiniteness and the implied words are not descriptors or definers or attributes of Brahman but only excluders that separate any conceptualization entities as Brahman. The word Parabrahman is also used to emphasize that it is supreme or absolute not that there is another aparabrahman to separate it from. Scriptures defines Brahman as sat chit ananda swaruupam or satyam, j~naanam and anantam brahma. Before we analyze these words, it is important to understand the meaning of swaruupa and tatata lakshaNas.

Some theories have accounted Brahman as all pervading or infinite reality but have internal entities that are different from Brahman. They give following examples for illustration: 1) It is like space that is all pervading and yet mountains and rivers which are different and distinct from space yet are in space. 2) It is like red hot iron ball. The heat that is all pervading the iron ball is different from the iron ball. Similarly the Brahman can be all pervading infinity and still be different from jiiva and jagat. Jiiva and jagat are in Brahman just as mountain is in space. Similar view is also taken by Bhagavaan Ramanuja where he considers in addition to the above that jiiva and jagat form attributes of Brahman, and hence inseparable from Brahman. We reject all these concepts for several reasons. First, attributes are not substantives. 'That is so' is an assumption than a fact. If these are attributes of Brahman, then Brahman itself becomes substantive for jiiva and jagat. That reduces to advaitic concept. If the attributes such as jiiva-s and jagat have their own substantives, and the substantive of Brahman is different from those of jiiva and jagat, then one substantive limits the other and Brahman ceases to be Brahman. If Brahman is the material cause for both jagat and jiiva-s, then it is acceptable that Brahman can be substantive for both. Then that excludes the inertness of jagat and separateness of jiiva and concepts converge back to advaitic nature of reality. In addition, a) space is not the material cause for the mountains and rivers and heat is not the material cause for iron ball. They do not arise from the space, sustained by the space and go back in to space. b) Mountain and rivers etc are distinct from space unlike the waves in the water, which arise from water, sustained by water and go back into water. Space only accommodates mountain and rivers. Brahman does not accommodate jiiva and jagat in him since scripture clearly points out that 'sarvam khalvidam brahma, neha naanaasti kinchana' – idam, that is, this entire universe is nothing but Brahman and there is nothing else. That 'pot-space is not different from a total space' is a valid statement but 'pot is not different from space' is not a valid statement. Nor 'pot' can be an attribute of Brahman. If Brahman is different from jiiva and jagat like space is different from mountains then Brahman ceases to be an absolute limitlessness since it gets limited by the very fact that mountains are different from Brahman. There is a mutual exclusion, and accommodation does not exclude one from the other. Therefore we conclude that in the absolute infiniteness or limitless existence 'swagata bheda-s' or internal differences cannot exist.

VishishhTadvaita overcomes this objection by saying that Brahman is all inclusive and that jiiva and jagat are like attributes of Brahman. This attribute-substantive relationship may cause several other problems, which we may take up later. It is suffice here to say that attributes are definable and distinguishable entities that identifies an object.

Attributed Brahman reduces to an object, because of the attributes. Hence Brahman becomes finite and limited, and therefore Brahman ceases to be Brahman. For the same reason, then satyam, jñānam, anātman are not attributes of Brahman either since attributes objectifies the Brahman.

Scripture provides three beautiful examples to explain the cause-effect relationship in the creation. If Brahman is the cause as the tāstā lakṣhāNa indicates (yatova imāni bhūtāni jāyante), the relation between the universe and the material cause Brahman is similar to – (Ch. U.) yathā soumya... a) ekeṇa lohamaṇīna ... b) ekeṇa mṛitpīḍeṇa ... and c) ekeṇa nakhaṇiṅgāna ... Just as a) Gold is the material cause for the ornaments – gold remains as gold yet gold pervades all the ornaments. Ornaments appear to be different from one another, each ornament has its own attributes that distinguishes one ornament from the other (such as size shape, utility or kriyā etc), but none of those attributes belong to gold. Ornaments arise from gold, sustained by gold and go back into gold. Gold that is pervading ornaments is not like space pervading the mountain where mountain is different and distinct from space although space accommodates the mountain. Material cause implies that ornament is nothing but gold and gold alone – ring, bangle etc are only nāma and rūpa (name and form) but gold has not undergone any transformation in ‘becoming’ the ornaments. In reality, gold has not really become anything since it remains as gold. There are no two things here – gold plus ornament – gold is the ornament yet gold differs from ornament since all the attributes belong to the ornament and not to gold. That is exactly the relation between the cause and the effect in terms of Brahman and the jagat. There are no distinctions of ring, bangle, necklace in gold. Gold remains gold without undergoing any mutation, yet ring is different from bangle and necklace. When scripture says, gold is ‘antaryāmi’ in dweller of ring and bangle and at the same time it says that gold is pervading all the ornaments such as the ring and the bangle, it only means that ring and bangle are nothing but gold and gold alone. There is no separate substantives for ring and bangle or bracelet other than gold, yet ring is different from bangle different from necklace. These distinctions are only superficials associated with rūpa and nāma, form and name and their associated utilities.

The relation between ornaments and gold is not like the relation between attributes and the substantive as Ramanuja extends for jīva, jagat for Brahman. Ornament is only a tāstā lakṣhāNa for gold. It is not an attribute inseparable from gold. Bangle can be destroyed to make into ring or necklace without destroying the substantives gold. On the other hand, according to viśiṣṭhādvaita, the jīva-s and jagat are eternal and hence cannot be destroyed, while retaining Brahman. To reinforce

this concept, scripture provides two more similar examples – just as the mud pots from mud or just as a nail cutter from black iron. We cannot but salute those sages who are so precise in their definitions. They are able to communicate that which is beyond any communication using examples that we are all familiar. Interestingly all these examples emphasize the material cause to emphasize that Brahman is the material cause in addition to the intelligent cause, as it is easier to point out the former than the later. Krishna reinforces this concept in B.G IX-4 and 5. *mayaa tatamidam sarvam jagadavyakta muurthina, masthaani sarvabhootani na chaaham teshu avasthitaH|| na cha masthaani bhootaani pasyame yogamaishvaram| bhootabhRinna ca bhootastho mamaatmaa bhootabhaavanaH||* I pervade this entire universe in an unmanifested form. All beings are in me, but I am not in them. Yet I am not involved in their mutations. I am in them but they are not in me. Look at my glory. – It is like gold saying that I am in all of the ornaments but they are not in me in the sense that their mutations, modifications, their attributes, birth and death, and utilities do not belong to me. Look at my glory. They do not affect me.

Tatata LakshNa: Tatata lakshNa is an incidental qualification. The classical example for tatata lakshNa is ‘That house where a crow is sitting right now is Devadatta’s house’. Devadatta’s house may not have anything to do with crow but it is convenient tool to identify Devadatta’s house which cannot be otherwise identified. After saying that one has to inquire into the nature of Brahman, sage Badarayana uses the *tatalakshNa* for Brahman in his *Brahmasuutra-s– janmaadyasya yataH* – Brahman is that which is the material cause for Brahman taking the *Taittiriya U. sloka* “*yatova imaani bhootani jaayante, yena jaataani jivanti yatpraym tyabhisam viSanti*” – that from which the whole world arose, by which it is sustained and into which it goes back – is Brahman – This is a *tatashalakshNa* for Brahman, as creation is not necessary qualification for Brahman, since even before creation Brahman was there. Essentially we define a *tatata lakshNa* is that which is neither necessary nor sufficient qualification to define an entity as an entity. Why Badarayana chose this *lakshNa* to define Brahman (remember Brahman, in principle, can not be defined and these are only operational definition) only to accomplish two important aspects 1) to establish that Brahman is also material cause for the jagat or the universe (in addition to, of course, the intelligent cause) and 2) to reject the theories such as *sankhya* that assumes the *achetana* or inert or *jada prakRiti* as the cause for creation.

Swaruupa LakshNa: *Swaruupa lakshNa* as the name indicates is that which defines the *swaruupa* or its intrinsic nature. These are essentially inseparable qualifications of an object that distinguishes an object from rest of the objects in the universe. These are specific necessary

qualifications that define an object as what it is. Ring has its swaruupa lakshana that distinguishes it from a bangle – Gold, obviously cannot be swaruupa lakshana of either ring or bangle even though they both are made of gold. From the example of ring and bangle, we arrive at a definition for swaruupa lakshana. It is that distinguishing ‘feature’ or features or attributes (substantive like gold is therefore excluded) of an object that separates or distinguishes that object from the rest of the objects in the universe. Form, shape, utility and therefore a name, for a ring are distinctly different from those for a bangle. The material cause can become swaruupa lakshana if it helps in separating object A from object B, that is if they are made of two different or distinct materials. If there are two pots, one made of gold and the other made of clay, the material cause becomes of the distinguishing feature that separates object – one is gold pot (object A) and the clay pot (object B). But if the material cause is the same for both, then that cannot be a feature to distinguish one object from other. Therefore material cause ceases to become a swaruupa lakshana for the two objects in question.

Is there a swaruupa lakshana for Brahman? In principle, there cannot be any, since swaruupa lakshana is that which distinguishes that object from the rest of the objects whose swaruupa lakshana-s are exclusive distinguishing feature of those objects. Brahman cannot have a swaruupa lakshana since being absolutely infinite it cannot exclude ‘anything’. In other words there is nothing other than Brahman for swaruupa lakshana to operate (i.e to make it distinguishable from the surroundings). It follows therefore that only a ‘thing’ can have a swaruupa lakshana that distinguishes it from other ‘thing-s’. If Brahman includes all things, since it cannot exclude any ‘thing’, then all swaruupa lakshana-s should be inclusive in Brahman. Then all inclusive definition is essentially a trivial or useless definition. Or it is also not incorrect to say that all swaruupa lakshana-s of all objects should be excluded in the swaruupa lakshana of Brahman. Let us take a simple example to illustrate the point. If there is a white cow, a black cow and a brown cow, swaruupa lakshana of a cow should exclude all these specific colors- white, black or brown colors per se but only pick up that which remains as common factor for all the cows that distinguishes a cow from, say, a horse. This does not mean that cow cannot be white or black or brown but it only means that it need not be of any particular color. It can be any combinations of all the colors. Hence it only means that any particular color is excluded as a specific qualification of a cow. Applying this logic, if Brahman includes ‘everything’ then it should exclude all the contradictory swaruupa lakshanas of each and every object in the universe and only take that which is common for all objects that are discovered and yet to be discovered. Is there a swaruupa lakshana that is common for all objects that can be used as

swaruupa lakshNa for Brahman – just as we were searching a common feature for white cow, black cow and brown cow, as swaruupa lakshNa for any cow. Obviously, we get into an inherent contradiction here. We have defined swaruupa lakshaNa of any object as that which distinguishes from other objects. Therefore there cannot be any swaruupa lakshna that can be common for two objects yet distinguishes one from the other. One can still pick up a common feature of two objects, object A and object B, leaving aside their distinguishing features that are mutually exclusive (swaruupa lakshaNa-s). Since both objects exist (that is why we are comparing the two), we can say ‘existence’ itself is a common feature for both. It is not swaruupa lakshaNa of either object A or object B but it is common feature of both object A and object B. Now if we include ‘every-thing’ or all objects in the entire universe or universe itself (that includes space, time etc.) – At least one common feature is they all exist or the universe exists. ‘Existence’ is definitely the only common feature, recognizing that it is not swaruupa lakshna of any particular object or all objects per se. Since Brahman includes ‘everything’ and can not exclude ‘anything’, it follows that ‘existence’ itself can be considered as swaruupa lakshaNa, or at least as all inclusive common factor, recognizing that it is not specific enough to distinguish ‘any one thing, from any other thing’, besides the fact that there is no other thing than Brahman to distinguish it from. It is incorrect to argue, therefore, that ‘sat’ is a distinguishing feature of Brahman or quality of Brahman, since it is not a feature that separates it from any other object in the universe. One cannot also say that it separates from non-existence and since for it to separate from non-existence, that non-existence should first exist, and if it exists then it is no more non-existence. Thus, we may use the term ‘swaruupa lakshaNa’ of Brahman only to separate from the tatashta lakshaNa of Brahman. However, if we examine correctly, Brahman cannot have swaruupa lakshaNa either, in fact cannot have any lakshaNa if it is all inclusive, as the very word Brahman signifies. Then what is ‘sat’ in the sat chit ananda, if it is not a quality of Brahman? And what is the purpose of defining Brahman in that way when Brahman cannot be defined at all. These are valid questions that need to be explored further.

We deduced above that only common factor for all objects that exist in the entire universe that are discovered or yet to be discovered is only the fact that they all exist. Existence or ‘sat’ is therefore the only an essential ingredient that is all-inclusive in all objects (that is, no object is excluded from the existence ‘feature’). Now, if an object A undergoes some transformation to object B, one thing that definitely does not change in this transformation and remains common for both is that ‘existence’ feature. Existent object A has become existent object B. Existence has not undergone any change while object A transforms to object B. Later in future it may become existent object C or existent

object D etc. Therefore object A or object B, C or D are all temporal (time bound) but existence feature is not temporal. An important feature of jagat or universe is the continuous change or continuous flux and we define jagat as 'jaayate – gachchate iti jagat', that which comes and goes. Essentially it means that objects continuously change, space-wise, time-wise as well as other swaruupa lakshana-s wise. Since every object has an existence as a basic factor, in all these changes only entity that does not undergo any change is the 'existence' itself in all objects– that is their 'sat' aspect. We now arrive at a definition for 'sat' or 'satyam' – it is that changeless entity in all changes – since change defines a time – sat is that which is beyond the time concept and for convenience we can provide an operational definition for sat or satyam as 'trikaala abaadhitam satyam', that which remains the same in all three periods of time; past, present and future. Krishna says the same thing in Geeta 'naabhaavo vidyate satH', the existence can never cease to exist. Since Brahman cannot also undergo any change or mutation (immutable)–and existence is only factor that is common factor in all mutants and mutations that itself does not go any mutation, and is all inclusive factor in all objects whether they change or not, 'sat' or existence itself is THE appropriate word that Vedanta uses to define that which is not definable.

Using this framework we will next define what is real, unreal and mithya.

Advaita Manjari 5

This may be a little digression but may be still worth to note for clear understanding of Advaita Vedanta. It was pointed out by our dvaitin friend that what I wrote in the Manjari 4 was neither Science nor Vedanta. Actually it is the other way around, it is both science and Vedanta if one understands both correctly. If one reads without any preconceived notions, there is beautiful samanvaya or self-consistency in what I wrote and it will become more evident as one studies further, whether one agrees with the theory or not. Dvaitins start with the axiomatic statements that world is real, jiiva is real and Iswara is real and discuss everything from that biased notions. With that preconceived notions, they look for grammatical, contextual or other to justify rest of their model or criticize Advaita.

For these specific reasons only I have no interest in indulging in any item-by-item quibbles with Dvaitins, particularly when they fail to recognize the fundamental problem. Secondly, of course, none of the objections are really new and have been answered exhaustively by many Advaitins in the past, and I have no interest in spending time to

reinvent the wheel, with semi-baked knowledge. I am not ignoring them out of any disrespect; only I have realized it is fruitless for me to discuss when they fail to understand the fundamental problem involved. One can disagree with these statements too, so be it. One can ignore these Advaita Manjari posts as well, like the multitude of dvaitin posts flooded without clear understanding the fundamentals. I have no problem with that either. These Advaita Manjari posts are intended only to those who are really interested to learn Advaita Vedanta and obviously based on my understanding of the siddhaanta. As stated before, I started writing these in response to Krishna K's questions. My thanks to him for instigating it.

I have mentioned that these quibbles do not come under VAda, but mostly Jalpa. In brief, discussions are classified under four major types; samvaada, vaada, jalpa and vitanDa. Samvaada is discussion between a teacher and the taught. This is flow of knowledge from higher to lower. For the knowledge to take place student should have full faith in the teacher and questioning by the student is only in terms of clarifying his lack of understanding of the topic of discussion. Krishna does not begin his teaching (samvaada) until he discovers the student in Arjuna.

Vaada is between two equals. The purpose of the discussion is to establish the truth. In the traditional vaada, of course, there will also be an impartial judge that both can agree upon, and pramaana's that both agree as valid for their discussions. Even though both come to the table with pre-conceived notions, they are willing to discuss and establish whose theory is more valid, again within the guidelines that are pre-established and agreed upon. One who conceives the defeat actually does so when he is convinced that the opponent theory is right. If not the judge makes that conclusion based his understanding of the issue or debate. The famous discussion between Shankara and Mandana Misra supposed to have lasted for 18days and Mandana Mishra's wife Bharati, was the presiding judge of the debate. VAda is like our modern proverb when we have disagreements –we all say - Let us sit down and discuss this to seek solution to a problem at hand.

It is obvious that none of the discussions in this vAdAvali list are of that type to claim that it is Vaada. I appreciate the moderators' vision in naming this list as such, but one can see that it is impossible to have that kind of discussions among the members. One can always point a finger at others but the fact remains. From the beginning, I stated that I have no interest in involving myself in any vAda. First I am not qualified and second I find such discussions are fruitless.

If I look at the discussions that went on so far between Advaitins and

Dvaitins (I do not see any vishishhTadvaitins in the list!), many Advaitin gave up not that they are convinced of the opposite view but for two prominent reasons: (obviously from my perspective) 1. Major criticism of Advaita by Dvaitins is baseless due to not clearly understanding the theory because again not having read in detail many of Shankara Bhaashya-s. We are accused of having the audacity to point this out to them, but surprisingly that seems to be the consistent opinion of any Advaitin who reads the Dvaitin's comment on Advaita. Does it not make one wonder, why Advaitins say so? This came out clearly not only in advaitaL list, Advaitin list and now in vaadaavali list but even before, when anyone reads the dvaitin books referring to Advaita. It is interesting to note that if one makes the last comment I made, Dvaitins will be jumping all over him saying – What Dvaitin books you have read and How much have you studied etc. – but they seem to miss that these are precisely the same questions they should ask themselves first before they criticize the Advaita theory.- -whethere what they have studied about Advaita and how much of the analysis presented is true representation of Advaita, particularly when all Advaitins are pointing that they are misinterpreting what Advaita theory. 2. Second, I find the criticism of Advaita theory is mostly based on the contextual, grammatical or some other sloka or mantra that they interpret in their own way. This reduces to more packaging issue to suite a theory based on original assumptions. One can get lost in these baseless arguments when one has missed already the essential points of Advaita. My notes on Advaita Manjari is only to bring these essential points. If you miss these points any criticism of Advaita theory is baseless. Obviously I have no interest to indulge in any jalpa. I am presenting only my understanding of Advaita for those who are interested.

Now about Jalpa. Jalpa is the discussion between two people who come to the discussion table, each with preconceived notion that he is absolutely right and the other fellow is absolutely wrong, and the purpose of the discussion is only to try to convert the other fellow into ones camp. But the fact of the matter is the other fellow also comes with the same premise that he is right and the first fellow is wrong. Neither one is interested in establishing the truth, therefore only lot of noise results. Now how many Advaitins in this list got convinced about the Dvaitins' arguments and vice versa? I can confidently say none what so ever. Of course, one who is already in that camp, can learn more about their own accepted theory. In that sense, I must say it has a valid role. Since this is internet list, the arguments and counter arguments manifests in the forms of loads and loads of mainly meaningless posts. Now you see why the discussions on the list clearly fall under the category of jalpa and not vAda. Sometimes the bystanders either learn something out of this jalpa or just quit after completely confused. In the jalpa, the discussers

ultimately quit either because they get fed up (not that they got convinced of the opponents view) or the discussion quibbles to meaningless trivialities. It is mostly like unwritten Italian traffic rules – the one who can shout louder (post more) or the one who has bigger car or truck has the right of way! That is why I see no vaada here but jalpa. We are not ready for any vaada.

For completeness we can say few words on the last type of discussions- VitanDa. I should say none of the discussions in this list fall under that category. One example of VitanDa is like – the statement is wrong, because you said it. The same statement is right if I say it. This type of arguments are used some times to disqualify the credibility of the speaker and therefore whatever he speaks. It is like a notorious liar taking a witness stand and stating that whatever he says is truth and nothing but truth. He may in fact be telling the truth. But the credibility becomes an issue than the statement per se. This is only one type but they are others types of vitanDa vaada too.

Now some emphasis of the fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta and why this is so important to understand. The samanvaya or consistency that I mentioned in my first Manjari also follows if one is willing to think deeply the issues involved.

There are fundamentally two entities that everyone experiences as one goes from cradle to grave. One self, projected as 'I' and the world in front of me that I have to deal with; thus I and the world. The world includes all the objects or more accurately all that I can objectify. Hence that reduces to only two; I, the subject and the world the object or assemblage of objects. I am including all the concepts, thoughts and feeling (objects, emotions and thoughts, OET as part of the world). These are given facts as we 'experience the world'. Since I have a notion that I am born and I die and the world is there, even before I came into this world and world will be there even after I quit, I am not the author of this world. Since this universe (idam) follows thermodynamically a well-ordered system and well-behaved system with identifiable cause-effect relations, and with Universal laws governing the system, we cannot but agree that it is creation with order and laws. Now we bring in this equation a third factor – a creator to create this universe – Iswara, who has to be sarvaj~na (all knower) and sarvashaktimaan (all powers). Anything inside the creation cannot be cause of the entire creation since that cause is limited by the creation. There cannot be anything outside the creation either since outside has to be created first to have outside and then that outside becomes part of the creation only. Hence if there is an intelligent cause for creation he cannot be separated from the creation and therefore (He) becomes sarvavyaapakaH or all pervading. He obviously

cannot be identified with any form or shape or locality since those descriptions are self-limiting and cannot be applicable to one is sarvavyapakaH or all pervading. Hence Krishna clearly declares “mayaa tatam idam sarvam jagat avyakta muurthinaa” – I pervade this entire universe in an unmanifested form, manifestation in any particular forms gets special or temporal limitations by that very form. In the duality of I and the world - any thing that is unconscious or inert entity comes under the world. If we go further, any 'thing' that requires my presence as pre-existent entity to establish its existence, comes under object or the world. If we extend it further, any thing that does come under the category of 'idam' is the world. By default I am separate from idam - na iti not this. Idam shariiram when we say, all shariira comes under the category of the world only. aham or I am separate from idam - the world. I am involves both self-existent and self-conscious entity that is different from the world which is not self-existent and self-conscious entity, since I have to be there to establish the existence of the world of objects.

Going back one step to understand this clearly – I am there and the world is there – as these are given on the basis of experience (we have not examined the validity of this experience itself – we will come to that). Given that experience of duality, I have brought a third factor to explain the cause for the world – and this third factor is Iswara, the Lord or the creator. This third factor 'creator' is brought in, since I 'see' or experience the creation. We assumed that creation is real since we experience it, and we brought in to explain the cause for this creation, the Iswara as third entity into the equation. Obviously the reality of third entity does not arise if the reality of second itself is questionable. The fundamental problem that arise now is – is the world real? Dvaita and VishishhTaadvaita start with the premise that the world is real and therefore the third factor is real. Whether they agree or not, this is the assumption based on the experience not that the world proves itself independent of the conscious entity to validate its existence. Before we go further that assumption itself need to be validated.

The world is real because 'we experience it'. Here lies the fundamental problem to start with. Unless this is clearly understood, one cannot get to the next step. Experience itself is not knowledge; one has to understand the knowledge behind the experience. Before even we go to that level of analysis we need to understand what is involved in any experience. What I am discussing now is the very basis of Advaita Vedanta. As I have mentioned categorically that only given factor in the triad – experiencer, experience and experiencing, the experiencer, myself - the “I”, is self-existent and self-conscious entity. That is the only 'thing' that need not depend on any proof since all proves are

based on its existence only. As agreed upon, a conscious entity 'I' has to be there to establish that world exist, for pratyaksha pramaaNa to operate. And I do not need any pramaaNa to establish my own existence and my own consciousness. Now of the two entities that we started with, I and the world, I am self-existent and self-conscious entity where as the world is not. It has to depend on me to prove its existence. There is no independent proof that the world exists without a conscious entity establishing its existence. One cannot say it is there or it is not there – to say either one has to be conscious. This is precisely the reason why it comes under anirvachaniiyam. Any arguments to the contrary is what I said about the man shouting at the top of his voice that he is dumb and cannot talk. One can of course assume stating that the world exists and real, there is no problem in that, as long as one recognizes that it is an assumption since its independent existence cannot be established.

Even the scriptures fall under the same category of insentient and cannot be validated independent existence of the conscious entity. Even to provide the validity of the statement 'yathartham pramaaNam', I or conscious entity has to be there to validate the yatha artham. Only that is yathaa artham and no need of any pramaaNa is that I am – self-existent and self-conscious entity. The rest is indeterminate problem since independent existence of an object or the world or its yathartham cannot be established. Ultimately even at the quantum mechanical universe, the observed gets affected by the observation but observer is independent of the observed. If this is not science, I do not know what else is science.

As Krishna K. pointed enough is said about the world and I.

Now there was a comment that as what I wrote is not Vedantic. Yes, it is not if you start with the assumption is the world is real and define reality to suite that assumption. Before the analysis of three examples from Ch. Up – yathaa soumya ... Uddaalaka starts with the statement – 1. sadeva soumya idam agra asiit. 2. ekam eva advitiiyam. And later he says 3. tad aikshataa. 1. Existence alone was there before creation and 2. it is one without a second and 3. it saw. 1. Existence is self-existent entity and 2. It is infinite entity since existence cannot have any boundaries since both boundaries and beyond the boundaries have to exist and therefore part of existence. 3. It is conscious entity – that which exists before the creation is self-existent and self-conscious entity since there is nothing else for it to 'see'. It is sat chit ananda and also explained as satyam j~naanam anantam – hence anantam is anandam – infiniteness which is limitless or unlimited is happiness. If you study Manjari 5 this is exactly what I tried to establish both as Brahman as well as what moksha involves. There is a

self consistency in every statement I have made in the Manjari – in terms of aham brahmaasmi, brahmavit braham eva bhavati and ayam aatma brahman, tat tvam asi. If this is not Vedanta, if there is no samanvaya in my statements, I do not know what else is Vedanta.

Yes Krishna enough is said.

I will continue with the topic where I left it last time.

Hari OM!
Sadananda