

Iśopanisad

Commentary By

Madhvācārya

Vedānta Deśika

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana

Bhaktivinoda Thākura

Translated by

H.H.Bhānu Swāmī

DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Prabhupāda, who inspired the
world to take up the path of bhakti.*

Readers interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with:

His Holiness Bhanu Swami Maharaj
ISKCON
Hare Krishna Land,
Injambakkam,
Chennai-600 041.

India

Email: info@iskconchennai.com

Web: www.iskconchennai.com

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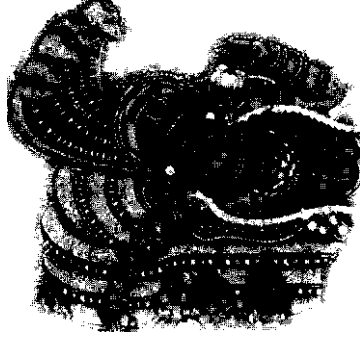
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INTRODUCTION



The head of the *Vedas* is the *Upanisads*. They are the final conclusion of the *Vedas* and thus are called *Vedānta*. In the words of the followers of *Vedānta* they are called *śruti-prasthāna* (*śruti* texts, without author and eternal). *Vyāsa*, in order to harmonize the statements of the *Upanisads* wrote the *Vedānta-sūtras*. That is called *nyāya-prasthāna* (work involving logic to find the meaning of the *Upanisads*). The *Mahābhārata* and *Purānas*, which he also wrote, are called *smṛti-prasthāna* (*smṛti* texts, authored but following the *Vedas*).

Upanisads are the crown jewel of the *Vedas*. What is *Veda*? *Veda* comes from the verbal root *vit*, meaning to know or be aware. *Vedayati dharmam brahma ca vedah: the scripture that teaches about dharma and brahman is called Veda*. They are the sound incarnation of the Lord. The *Vedas* are usually in verse with meter and each verse is called a *mantra*. A collection of *mantras* is called a *sūkta*. A collection of *sūktas* is called a *samhitā*. The *Brāhmanas*, another part of the *Vedas*, deal with *mantras* for sacrifice and rules for sacrifice. They are usually written in prose. The *Āranyakas* are another part of

the Vedas, similar to the *Brāhmanas*. *Upanisads* are the fourth part of the *Vedas*.

The meaning of the word *Upanisad* is as follows. Those scriptures which help the practitioner achieve liberation and bring the person close to the Lord are called *Upanisad*. *Upa* means "near" and *nisīdati* means "bring." Or the word may be divided as *upa* meaning "near," with *ni* meaning "certainly" and *sad* meaning "to loosen, destroy or attain." That knowledge which loosens bondage with certainty, destroys the ignorance concerning the *jīva's svarūpa* and brings one close to the Lord is called *Upanisad*. *Upanisad* is called *brahma-vidyā* and *rahasya-vidyā*, secret knowledge, imparted by the guru to the disciple, who realizes it in his heart.

There are many *Upanisads*. The *Muktikopanisad* lists 108 names, of which the first ten are:

*īśa kena katha praśna munda māndukya tittirih
aitareyam ca cchāndogyam bṛhad-āraṇyakam tathā*

Along with the *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* this makes eleven. Śāṅkara wrote commentaries on them. Some claim that Śāṅkara did not write the commentary on *Śvetāśvatara* since it contains many *mantras* describing the Supreme Lord and his energies. But this argument is defeated by the fact that Śāṅkara quotes the *Śvetāśvatara* many times in his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtras*.

Śrī Rāmānujācārya did not write any commentaries on the *Upanisads* himself but his follower Raṅgarāmānuja wrote commentaries on them (except *īsopanisad*). Śrī Madhvācārya

wrote commentaries on the eleven *Upanisads*. Baladeva apparently wrote commentaries on ten *Upanisads*, but unfortunately, except for the *īśopanisad* commentary, none can be found at present.

Īśopanisad takes its name from the first word of its first verse. It is the last chapter of the *Śukla-yajur-veda* containing 40 chapters. Because it is contained within the *Vājasaneyā-samhitā* section it is called *Vājasaneyā-samhitopanisad*. Its 18 mantras describe the Paramātmā, *jīva* and the *jīva's* goal.

What is the sum and substance of the *śruti* including the *Upanisads*, *smṛti* and *nyāya-prasthāna*? Vyāsa, after writing all the scriptures for the benefit of the *jīvas* wrote the *Bhāgavatam* to explain the meaning of the *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Mahābhārata*, *gāyatrī mantra* and the *Vedas*. It is worshipped as the crown jewel of the all scriptures. *Bhāgavatam* contains the essence of *śruti*, *smṛti* and *nyāya-prasthānas*. Thus we can understand the meaning of the scriptures through the conclusions of *Bhāgavatam*. Thus the meaning of the *Upanisads* should not contradict the conclusions of *Bhāgavatam*.

INVOCATION

*om pūrnām adah pūrnām idam
pūrnāt pūrnām udacyate
pūrnasya pūrnām ādāya
pūrnām evāvaśīsyate*

TRANSLATION

The unmanifest *brahman* is perfect. The manifested *brahman* is perfect. From the unmanifest *brahman* appears the manifested *brahman* as various *avatāras*. When the manifested forms emerge from the unmanifest *brahman* the unmanifest *brahman* remains¹.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura's commentary

The perfect *avatārī* and the perfect *avatāra* are complete, endowed with all energies. From the perfect *avatārī* appears the perfect *avatāras* for the purpose of spreading the pastimes of the Lord. When the perfect *avatārī* accepts a perfect form for accomplishing certain pastimes, he is still present, but in a covered form. In no circumstance is there a diminution of the perfection of the Supreme Lord.

¹ This is technically not part of the *Upanisad*. Translation has been taken from Baladeva's commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra 1.1.9.

MANTRA 1

*īśāvāsyam idam sarvām
yat kiñca jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhujīthā
mā grdhah kasya svid dhanam \\1 *

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

The entire universe, whatever exists in *prakṛti*, is pervaded by the Lord. Enjoy what is given by the Lord but do not desire the wealth of others.

COMMENTARY

I offer respects to Hari, the support of all eternal and non-eternal objects, who has an eternal body, made of knowledge and complete bliss, and who is the enjoyer of all sacrifices.

I offer respects eternally to my guru, the supreme Lord, by whom Brahma, Indra, Śiva and other *devatās*, and Laksmī as well, sustain their knowledge.

By the mantras of *īśopanīśad*, Svāyambhuva Manu praised Yajña, the incarnation of Visnu, who was the son of Ākūti. The *Brahmānda Purāna* says:

Svāyambhuva Manu attentively praised Yajña, his grandson, with the mantras of *īśopanīśad*². Fierce *rāksasas* approached,

²*Bhāgavatam* 8.1.10 has this *mantra*:
*ātmāvāsyam idam viśvam yat kiñcij jagatyām jagat
tena tyaktena bhujīthā mā grdhah kasya svid dhanam*

desiring to eat him. Hearing his verses, Yajña liberated him after killing the *rāksasas*, who could not be killed by others, and could kill all others. This benediction was given to them by Śiva. But their powers could not be applied against Hari³.

Īśāvāsyam (*īśa* and *āvāsyam*) means "fit to be dwelt in by the Lord, because nothing moves without the presence of the Lord." *Jagatyām* means "in *prakṛti*". Thus the meaning is "The whole world, whatever is within *prakṛti*, is fit to be dwelt in by the Lord." One should enjoy that which is given (*tyaktena*) by the Lord (*tena*).

The *Brahmanda Purāna* says:

*Syatah pravṛtṭy aśaktatvād īśāvāsyam idam jagat
pravṛtṭye prakṛti-gamyasmāt sa prakṛtīsvarah
tad adhīna-pravṛtṭivāt tad iyam sarvam eva tat
tad dattenaiva bhujñītha ato hānyam prayācayet*

Because the world cannot function on its own, the Lord must dwell within it for it to function. Because he enters *prakṛti* for it to function he is called the lord of *prakṛti*. Because the functioning of everything is dependent on him, it is said to belong to him. Enjoy what is given by him (the owner), and do not ask for anything else.

³ According to a commentator, the description gives the four *anubandhas*: the mercy of Visnu is the *abhidheya* or subject (*visaya*), the liberation of the devotee is the *prayojana* or result, the *adhikārī* or qualified person for the *mantras* is a devotee like Svāyambhuva Manu, and the *sambandha* or element connecting the other three elements is Visnu and his greatness. As well, the *rsi* is Svāyambhuva Manu and the *devatā* of the *mantras* is Yajña. The meter and *vinīyoga* vary with each *mantra*. It is traditional to mention these two groups of four before recitation of a work.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The Lord is inside and outside of everything in this world and beyond. Therefore experience the objects of the world with a sense of detachment, since nothing belongs to oneself. Do not desire anyone else's wealth.

COMMENTARY

I worship Vāsudeva, a river of pure, eternal qualities, who pervades this universe which is composed of conscious and unconscious entities. He is the controller of all⁴, filled with natural greatness⁵, and resides within as the soul of all beings.⁶ He transcends all faults.⁷ He alone is to be known by all knowledge.⁸ Since he dispenses *karma* and withdraws and destroys sin, who else is the object of meditation for the liberated soul⁹ and who else is the means for liberation?¹⁰ This person, who is also the means of perfection, is clearly revealed at the end of the White Yajur Veda, in the *īśopanisad*. It should be understood that these verses are spoken by the *guru* to a disciple as instructions on knowledge of God. This *Upanisad* is placed at the end of the *samhitā* to indicate that all actions described in the *samhitā*, by being applied as secondary to knowledge, will be useful for gaining knowledge of

⁴ This is depicted in the first verse of the *Upanisad*.

⁵ This is described in verses 4 and 5.

⁶ This is described in verses 6 and 7.

⁷ This is described in the 1st half of verse 8.

⁸ This is described in the 2nd half of verse 8 as well. *Vidyā* can refer to general knowledge or to the thirty-two types of *vidyā* mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upanisad*.

⁹ These three items are described in verse 11.

¹⁰ This is described in verses 15-16.

the Lord¹¹.

With the desire to make the disciple qualified, in the first verse, the teacher proclaims the position of the Supreme Lord—that all others are dependent upon him, thus rejecting all false notions about this independent person.¹² *Idam* refers to the world composed all conscious and non-conscious entities, excluding the Lord, and who are verified as truly existing. *īśā* means "by the Supreme Lord," the controller of all things, famous as being distinct from the *jīvas*. He is described in texts like the following. *Jñājñau dvāv ajāv īś-anīśau*: there are two eternal beings, the Lord full of knowledge and the *jīva* full of ignorance. (*Śvetāsvatara Upanisad 1.9*) This world is pervaded (*yasyam*) by that Lord. Or it can mean "this world must be inhabited by him, or must dwell always within him." The following should be remembered:

*sarvatrāsau samastam ca vasaty atreti vat yatah
tatah sa vāsudeveti vidvadbhih paripathyate*

¹¹ The thirty-nine chapters of the *Śukla-yajur Veda* deal with deal with sacrifice and duties (*karma*). The last chapter is the *īśopanisad*, dealing with knowledge.

¹² The first verse declares the *tattva* or highest truth. The first group, consisting of verse one and two, declares the major theme of the work — knowledge accompanied by works. The second group, from verse three to eight, deals with knowledge of the Lord and the results of that knowledge. The eighth verse as well makes clear the distinction between the *jīva* and the Lord. The third group, from verse nine to fourteen, deals with the practice, and also indicates the ultimate goal. The fourth group, from verse fifteen to eighteen, consists of prayers to be used by the worshipper, whereas the previous verses were instructions.

The learned people say that the Lord is called Vāsudeva because he lives (*vasati*) everywhere and everything lives within him. *Visnu Purāna* 1.2.12

Jagatyām (in this world) indicates as well places beyond this world. *Jagat* means all beings as enjoyers who stray away (*gacchanti*) from their quality (*dharma*)¹³ and all things as enjoyed objects which stray away from their very form (*svarūpa*). To emphasize the point that nothing can exist without the Lord's presence inside and outside all things, *yat kinca* (whatever) is added. This is confirmed by the following:

*indriyāni mano buddhih sattvam tejo balam dhrtih
vāsudevātmaḥkāny āhuh ksetram ksetra-jnam eva ca*

They say that the senses, mind, intelligence, existence, power, strength, determination, *prakṛti* and the soul are all Vāsudeva alone. *Visnu-sahasra-nāma*

"According to the saying that conventional meaning overrides etymological meaning, *īśa* should mean Śiva, since it commonly refers to him. As well, it is not combined with *sarva* to make *sarveśa*, which would specifically imply Visnu." This is not so, because the conventional meaning is also excluded in cases where words like *akāśa* and *prāna* are said to be the cause of everything.¹⁴ And there are statements such as the following:

¹³ Jiva's eternal nature, his *svarūpa*, can never change. However his awareness of God and the world (*dharma-bhūta-jnāna*) can change. Material objects, which are temporary, are different in *svarūpa* from their spiritual counterparts, which are eternal.

¹⁴ *Vedānta-sūtra* 1.4.14

eko ha vai nārāyana asīt na brahmā neśānah

Only Nārāyana existed, not Brahmā and not Śiva. Mahā Upanisad

*Anapahata-pāpmā 'ham asmi nāmāni me dhehi'*¹⁵

Śiva said: I am not free from sin. Give me names. Śatapatha-brāhmana 6.1.3.9

By such statements, Śiva cannot be said to be the final cause of everything, and is described as being controlled by *karma*. Therefore it is impossible that he pervades everything and contains everything. Thus the well-established etymological meaning — the controller of all with unobstructed powers — must be taken in this case. Though there is a difference in the case of *tīś* in this verse from the use of words such as *ākāśa*, since well-known indications (such as inclusion of the words *ha* or *ha vai*) are lacking in the verse, it is reasonable to reject the conventional meaning of Śiva because there is contrary meaning to the word *tīś* in the verse at hand. This is according the rule *vacanāttva yathārtham aindrī syāt*.¹⁶ (Jaimini-sūtra 3.2.2) Nor can the word is have a restricted

¹⁵The following version is found in the Śatapatha-brāhmana 6.1.3.9 *anapahata-pāpmā vā asmy ahita-nāmā nama ma dhehi*

¹⁶Rg Veda 8.51.7 mentions Indra: *kadā cana starīrasi nendra saścasi dāsuse/ upopen nu maghavan bhūya in nu te dānam devasya prcyate*. However, the conventional meaning must be rejected, since the verse is used in reference to Agni in the household fire.

meaning according to the rule *sarvatvam ādhikārikam*¹⁷ (*Jaimini-sūtra* 1.2.16) since no limitation is seen in the verse.

Those who maintain that there is a different lord created for each new universe, and those who maintain that there are many lords within one universe, are defeated by scriptural evidence establishing a single Lord who prevails through eternal time in all universes.

The following verse shows that the Lord has power upon which everything else rests:

patim viśvasyātmeśvaram

He is the master, the Lord and the soul of the universe. *Mahā-nārāyana Upanisad* 13.2

yo 'śāv asau purusah

He who is the famous Lord dwelling in the sun is that Lord in the heart. *Īśopanisad* 16

This verse will be explained later.

Verses have been quoted which prove positively that Brahmā and Śiva arise from him. He is glorified as the Lord who dwells

¹⁷In the statement "all results accrue from the performance of sacrifice," the word "all" is restricted to the results designated as such for the sacrifice. It is does not mean all favorable and unfavorable results. In the same way, the word *īś* does not mean a limited controller but an absolute controller, because the verse states that he controls the whole universe.

within everything, as the soul in statements such as *esa sarva-bhūtāntarātmā apahata-pāpmā divyo deva eko nārāyanah*: Nārāyana is the soul within all entities, free of sin, the one shining lord. (*Subāla Upanisad*)

Though there are statements such as *sa brahmā sa śiva*: he is Brahmā and he is Śiva, these statements mean that Nārāyana pervades them. When it is stated *viśvam evedam purusah*: Nārāyana is the universe (*Mahā-nārāyana Upanisad*), it means that he pervades the whole universe. These descriptions show how the universe is dependent on the Lord. Enough has now been said to criticize the ignorant persons who have not studied all the verses which are devoid of the conventional meaning of *īśa*.

After making the student understand that everything is dependent on the Lord, the teacher instructs the pupil to become detached from the world. With complete detachment (*tyakena*) towards objects (*tena*) which one mistakes as objects of one's own enjoyment, from seeing all the faults in the objects, one should take only what is necessary for maintaining the body, and only that which is not contrary to *yoga* or *dharma*. Thus the goals of both knowledge (with renunciation of material objects) and continued life (necessitating material objects) are fulfilled. Or you should enjoy a limited amount of objects by the method being explained, since (*tena*) it has just been described that the Lord pervades everything.

Do not lust after the wealth of someone who is a friend or not a friend. Yama says to his servant *parama-suhrdī... śatha-matir upayāti... yo artha-trsnām... parusa-paśur na sa vāsudeva-bhaktah*: one who hankers for wealth is not a devotee of

Vāsudeva. (*Visnu Purāna 3.7.31-32*)

This rejection of wealth indicates detachment from all objects other than the Paramātmā. Thus it is stated:

*paramātmāni yo rakto virakto 'paramātmāni
sarvaisānā-vinirmuktah sa bhaiksam bhoktum arhati*

He who is absorbed in the Lord and is detached from everything other than the Lord is qualified to become a renunciate, free from all desires. *Nārada-parivrājaka Upanisad 18*

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

This visible world, and whatever exists beyond perception, is under the control of the Lord. Because of this you should enjoy only what is allotted to you by the Lord through *karma*. Do not hanker for more than that. Whose property is it?

COMMENTARY

Introduction:

I worship Śyāmasundara, the Supreme Lord, ever unchanging, with a form non-different from himself, controlled by surrender alone, filled with inconceivable powers, whom the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* praise as the final cause of creation, maintenance and destruction.

There are many mistaken ideas about the meaning of the Vedas. Some persons of defective intelligence say that the Vedas indicate prescribed actions called *karma* to attain the four *purusārthas* (*artha, dharma, kāma and moksa*), that Visnu is subordinate to those actions, that the results of karma such

as Svarga are eternal, that the *jīva* and *prakṛti* are independent of the Lord, that the *jīva* is a fragment of *brahman*, a reflection of *brahman*, or a delusion of *brahman*, that the *jīva* can destroy repeated birth in the material world just by realizing that he is the spiritual *brahman*. Taking these as the opponent's views (*purvapakṣa*), the *īsopanisad* replies that the supreme form of Visnu is independent, omnipotent, omniscient, possessing all qualities which are the goal of human endeavor, and composed of knowledge and bliss.

There are five *tattvas* mentioned in the scriptures: *īśvara*, *jīva*, *prakṛti*, *kāla* and *karma*. Among them, *īśvara* is the Lord, unaffected by time and place. He is the supreme conscious entity (*vibhu-caitanya*), and the *jīva* is the minute conscious entity (*anu-caitanya*). The *jīva* and *īśvara* are both endowed with qualities such as eternal knowledge and an identity of "I". *Jīva* and *īśvara* are knowers (of self and other things) and also knowledge itself.¹⁸ This is not a contradictory state, but rather it is just like the sun, which illuminates itself and other things, and which is also light itself.

But the Lord, by nature endowed with all powers, enters into *prakṛti* and controls it, and supplies material enjoyment and liberation to the *jīva*. Though one, he appears in many forms, and though non-different from his body and qualities, he appears as a person with qualities or as a soul with a body to the qualified person. He is unavailable to the mind and senses, but is controlled by devotion, and thus he offers his form of bliss and knowledge to the devotee.

¹⁸ This point is covered also in Baladeva's commentary on *Gītā* 2.29

The *jīvas* however are not one but many, in many differing conditions. By rejection of the Lord they are bound by *samsāra*, but by being favorable towards the Lord, the *jīvas* give up the coverings on their form and qualities and attain their true form and qualities.

Prakṛti is a state of equilibrium of the three modes. It is called by names such as *māyā* and *tamah*. Only when the Lord glances upon *prakṛti*, does it give rise to variety in the universe.

Kāla is a special ingredient which arranges for experience of past, present, future, simultaneity, fast and slow. From a moment to a *parārdha*,¹⁹ there are many divisions of time. It revolves continuously like a wheel. It appears for the purpose of creation and destruction.

Īśvara, *jīva*, *prakṛti* and *kāla* are eternal ingredients, without creation or destruction, but *jīva*, *prakṛti* and *kāla* are dependent on *īśvara*.

The *karma* of the *jīva* is also called *adrsta* or fate. It has no independent power and is inert (like *prakṛti* and *kāla*). It has no beginning but is liable to have an end (unlike *prakṛti* and *kāla*). *Jīva*, *prakṛti*, *kāla* and *karma* are the energies (*śakti*) of *brahman* (*śaktimān*), and thus they are considered non-different from it. In that sense there is agreement with the Advaita doctrine which says that there is only Brahman and nothing else.

¹⁹ This is half of Brahma's life span

To define these five items clearly, the *ācārya* among the śrutis, *Īśopanisad*, is presented. Since these mantras define the nature of the *ātmā*, they are not useful for performing *karma* for enjoying in this world but are useful for worship (*upāsana*). *Upāsana* means to establish a relationship of *jīva* with the Lord. The relationship is one of favorable service attitude of the *jīva* to the Lord.

I will now briefly explain the verses. The first three *mantras* are in *anustup* meter. The *rsi* or revealer of the *mantras* is Dadyañ-ātharvana (Dadyañ, the son of Atharvana).²⁰ Atharvana's student and son was pure in heart through following selfless conduct, was desirous of good association, faithful to the meaning of scripture, and had control of his senses and mind. When he approached his father to know the truth, the father spoke this *Upanisad*.

The word *īśa* comes from the noun *īt*, meaning ruler or controller, derived from the verb *īś*. It can be derived by adding the ending according to the rule *kvip ca*. (Pānini 3.2.76) In the instrumental case, it becomes *īśā* (by the controller) in relation to the verb form *vāsyam*. In the context it means "He controls all the living entities or the Supreme Lord." He controls them all because he is the very essence of all living beings (*ātmavā*). *Idam sarvam* refers to the whole of the real, visible material world. The whole material realm is covered by (*vāsyam*) the Lord. *Vāsyam* means "capable of being covered," from the root *vas*. *Vas* becomes *vāsyā* by the rule

²⁰ Dadhyan was the son of Atharvana. In the *Vedas*, each set of *mantras* has a *rsi* who revealed it. Before reciting Vedic *mantras* it is customary to recite the name of the *rsi*, the meter of the particular *mantra* as well as the presiding deity (*devata*) and the use of the *mantra* (*viniyoga*).

rhalor nyad: the ending *nya* (*ya*) is added after a verb that ends in *r* long or short or in a consonant (Pāṇinī 3.1.124). *Vas* belongs to the verb class which takes long *ā* and *svarītaḥ* accent with the suffix of *ya*. Thus the meaning is "This world should be covered by the Lord. The world must be pervaded by the supreme Lord in order to function." The *śrutis* say: *sa evādhastāt sa evoparistāt antar bahiś ca tat sarvam vyāpyā nārāyaṇaḥ sthītaḥ*: Nārāyaṇa is the beginning and the end, within and outside everything. (*Mahā-nārāyaṇa Upanisad*)

Or, one can take the meaning of *vas* as "to dwell in." The Lord must inhabit the world. Thus, it means "the Lord creates, maintains and controls this world." *Śruti* says *yato va imāni bhūtāni, jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti*: he by whom all are created, maintained (*Taittirīya Upanisad 3.1*) and *yamayaty esa ta ātmāntaryāmy amṛtaḥ*: he controls; he is the immortal supersoul within. (*Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad 3.7.22*)

Not only the visible universe (*idam*, this), but the whole universe with its seven layers is under his control. Thus the verse says *yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*. All the moving and non-moving entities (*jagat*) in the world (*jagatyām*), whatever is known to exist through statements of scripture (*yat kiñca*), is brought into being by the Lord and is under the control of the Lord.

Because of this, you should enjoy (*bhujjithāh*) only those objects allotted to you (*tyaktena*) by the Lord (*tena*) through one's *karma*. But do not hanker for more (*mā grdhah*). *Grdhu* means hankering. In the negative imperative (aorist) with *mā* the meaning is "do not desire." One should give up the thought that one should have more. Even if you have more desire, you cannot attain it because it will be blocked by the Lord.

Whose wealth is it? (*kasya svid dhanam*) *Svit* is a particle indicating conjecture. Whose is it? It belongs to no one in this world. *Sa esa sarvasya vaśi sarvasyeśānah sarvam icam praśāsti yad idam kim ca*: he is the controller of all, the lord of all; he is the ruler of anything that exists in this world. (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upanisad* 4.4.22) Such statements show that the Supreme Lord alone is the primary benefactor, and not any other living being. Thus one should live with a sense of detachment from enjoyment.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Whatever exists in this universe is all covered by the Lord. Because of this you should enjoy along with the practice of renunciation. You should not hanker after the wealth of others.

COMMENTARY

Creating the universe by his own energy, the Lord enters everywhere within it by his energy. *O jīva!* You are also a particular type of substance emanating from his energy. He is the supreme soul and you are an individual soul. You are soul, but you cannot be anything else other than a minute soul. You unfortunately have mistaken your identity, and try to enjoy those objects for your own pleasure, which actually belong to someone else. But if you accept all objects in relation to the supreme soul and give up selfish enjoyment, then you cannot accept someone else's wealth as your own.

Offer everything to the Lord and whatever little you accept, take it as the mercy given by the Lord. Then, everything becomes spiritual.

MANTRA 2

*kurvann eveha karmāni
jijīviṣec chatam samāh
evam tvayi nānyatheto 'sti
na karma lipyate nare ||2||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

One must live his full life of a hundred years while performing his prescribed actions with detachment, offering them to the Lord. There is no alternative for you. Such actions do not contaminate any man.

COMMENTARY

It is not a fact that by non-performance of action one is not bound in the world. *Nāradya Purāna* says:

*ajñāsya karma lipyate kṛsnopāstīm akurvatah
jñānīno 'pi yato hrāsa ānandasya bhavet dhruvam
ato lepe 'pi lepah syād atah kāryaiva sādā*

If a man is ignorant and does not worship Kṛṣṇa, then he incurs sins. If he is a *jñānī* and fails to worship the Lord, his bliss will definitely diminish. Thus even a *jñānī* who is free from sin becomes sinful by his omission of worship. Therefore everyone should perform action related to the Lord.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

One can live for a hundred years doing prescribed actions

with detachment, understanding that the Lord is the proprietor. There is no other path for you to follow than this. Action does not bind the man who performs work with knowledge.

COMMENTARY

This verse shows how the learned person lives his whole life performing daily and periodic duties while renouncing doership, desires and the results of action. The desiderative form of the verb (*jijīviṣet*—he should want to live) is used to indicate that even the man searching for *brahman* should engage in his duties until he achieves the goal of his life in the form of full realization of *brahman*. Mentioning a hundred years is approximate. Living a hundred years or until one has realized *brahman*, one should perform actions suitable to one's qualification. One should never give up those prescribed duties which assist in the cultivation of knowledge. This verse does not enjoin that prescribed actions should be done independently for results. Thus, *Brahma-sūtra* says *nāviśeṣāt*: there is no specification that a man should perform *karma* throughout his whole life. (*Brahma-sūtra* 3.4.13) Another case not contrary to that statement is then mentioned in the *sūtras*. *Stutaye 'numatir vā*: permission to perform *karma* (prescribed duties) throughout one's life is only for the sake of glorifying knowledge. (*Brahma-sūtra* 3.4.14) The *Śrī-bhāṣya* says: *vā* indicates exclusion, meaning "only." Therefore, there is permission to perform duties in life only for the glorification of knowledge (not for independent results), since this statement follows the subject concerning knowledge that the Lord pervades everything. Though a person performs actions throughout his life, because of the power of knowledge, he is not contaminated by *karma*. In this way knowledge gets glori-

fied. This is stated in the last line. For you (*tvayi*), who are qualified for knowledge of *brahman*, there is no other way than performing these actions (*evam*). The negative statement makes the meaning stronger.

"But by its very nature, performance of action should bind the performer." The verse answers, "*Karma* does not contaminate this man (*nare*), the seeker of knowledge of *brahman*." Actions do not give results such as going to Svarga because the prescribed actions of *karma* are done as secondary to the pursuit of knowledge.²¹ *Agnihotrādi tu tat-kāryāyaiva tad-darśanāt*: fire sacrifices and other prescribed daily actions produce knowledge as their effect, because that is shown in the scriptures. (*Brahma-sūtra* 4.1.16)

There is no possibility for the discriminating, detached person, having intelligence, to perform *kāmya-karmas* or forbidden actions which are not favorable for knowledge. For those who do revert to previous habits, there must be suitable atonement. This is on the strength of statements such as the following:

*nāvirato duṣcaritāt
nāsānto nāsamāhitah
nāsanta-mānaso vāpi
prajñānenainam āpnuyāt*

²¹ Though knowledge is the cause of liberation, *karmas* should be performed along with knowledge because they are helpful for that attainment. The *karmas* are done without desire for attaining Svarga-loka, and therefore do not cause bondage. If *karmas* are done independent of knowledge, then they would give material results such as Svarga-loka. This idea is expressed in *sahakāritvena ca* (*Vedānta-sūtra* 3.4.33) and *ekasya tūbhayat|e sarhyoga-prthaktvam* (*Pūrva-mīmāṃsā* 4.3.5)

A person who has not abandoned sins, a person who is not peaceful, a person who does not strive to attain the Lord, or a person who does not control his mind, cannot attain the Supreme Lord, even though he may be very intelligent and learned. *Katha Upanisad 1.2.24*

In *Brahma-sūtra* from 4.1.13 onwards (explaining the results of knowledge for the *jīva*) it is shown, however, that there is no trace of contamination by committing unintentional sins for those who have attained knowledge of the Lord. The idea that the person who has burned all sins to ashes by knowledge does not need to follow rules and prohibitions is not approved by those who know the Vedas.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

Performing prescribed actions without attachment while living in the world, you can aspire to live for a hundred years. There is no other method than this for you or any human being to become free of contamination. These actions do not contaminate you.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the necessity of *varnāśrama-dharma* according to scripture for purifying the consciousness. By performing actions like fire sacrifice without personal desire (*kurvan karmāni*) one can desire to live on this earth (*iha*) up to a hundred years (*śatam samāh*). Therefore (*itah*) since you desire to live a hundred years (*tvayi*), and must perform actions as a human being (*nare*), you cannot attain liberation by any other means (*na anyathā*) than performing actions such as fire sacrifice. Or it can mean "there is no other way of

avoiding contamination." Such actions do not contaminate you (*karma na lipyate*).

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Performing action in this world with previously described mentality you can live for a hundred years. Living in this way, you will not be affected by *karma*. There is no alternative to this.

COMMENTARY

When one performs actions while establishing everything in relation to Paramātmā, all activities become spiritual. Even if you live for hundreds of years you will not be contaminated. While living day-to-day life, one must necessarily perform action. Otherwise you will die or at least live uncomfortably. But if a person lives his life while cultivating a relation to Paramātmā, actions in relation to him are no longer causes of bondage. Those actions actually take the form of knowledge or *bhakti*. The activities performed with knowledge of Paramātmā are *bhakti*. Thus Nārada has said:

*sarvopadhi-vmirmuktam tat paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti is defined as service to the Lord using the senses. It should be done with the intention of pleasing the Lord, free of other desires, and unobstructed by other processes. *Nārada-pañcarātra*

MANTRA 3

*asuryā nāma te loka
andhena tamasāvrtāh
tams te pretyābhigacchanti
ye ke cātma-hano janāh ||3||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

The planets attained by the demons, full of misery, are certainly covered with deep darkness. Those who defame the true nature of Visnu enter those planets after death.

COMMENTARY

The place is called *asuryā* because it is the place where the asuras go and is without (*a*) fine (*su*) pleasure (*ra* from *ram—enjoy*). As *Bhāgavata Purāna* says *na bata ramanty aho asad-upāsanayātma-hano*: people in general fail to delight in you; rather they attack the Lord, worshipping with wrong conceptions instead. (SB 10.87.22)

Vāmana Purāna explains this mantra:

*mahā-dukkhaiha-hetuvāt prapyatvād asurais tathā
asuryā nāma te lokāh tan yanti vimukhā harau.*

These planets are called *asuryā* because they give great suffering (no pleasure or *sura*) and because they are attained by the *asuras*. Those who are opposed to the Lord go to these planets.

The *mantra* states a rule: any person (*ye ke*) who is opposed

to the Lord goes there.²² Scripture also says *niyamena tamo yānti sarve 'pi vimukhā harau*: as a fixed rule, anyone opposed to Visnu goes to that darkness.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

After death, those who do not cultivate knowledge of the soul immediately enter the planets covered with intense darkness, where the demonic dwell.

COMMENTARY

With the goal of stimulating a person to engage immediately in the knowledge just described, the teacher describes how the killers of the soul - those who do not engage in knowledge, but rather engage in other pursuits such as seeking wealth, rejecting knowledge of the Lord just explained - certainly go to hell. *Asuryā* means, "belonging to the demons." This implies "to be experienced by those of demonic tendencies." Those places, which are famous (*nāma*) for inhabitants with demonic tendencies, are known as hellish planets. Furthermore they are spread with intense darkness (*andhena tamasā āvrtāh*). Those killers of the soul (*te*), whether they are *devatā* or human, whether they are *brāhmaṇa* or *ksatriya* (*ye ke*), immediately go (*abhiḡacchanti*) to those places without light (*tān*) after giving up their present bodies (*pretya*).

Asann eva sa bhavati asad brahmeti veda ce: if one thinks that *brahman* does not exist, that person ceases to exist. (*Taittirīya*)

²² *ātma-hā* means "those who have wrong ideas about Visnu (*ātma*)."

Upanisad 2.6) Persons who do not believe in *brahman* make themselves non-existent. Killers of the self (*ātma-hanah*) thus mean those who accumulate heaps of sin. The word *janāh* indicates those who take birth again (*jan* means to be born). Thus those who do not engage in knowledge of the Lord take birth again, in the realm of demons.

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

The planets attained by the demons are certainly covered with deep darkness. Those who kill themselves by wasting their lives in worldly pursuits enter those planets after death.

COMMENTARY

This verse criticizes those addicted to actions for their own enjoyment. *Ye ke* means *ye kecit*: anyone (whether he is high or low, learned or fool).

The phrase *ātma-hanah* (killers of the *ātmā*) refers to those who become bound by repeated births (by desiring excessive enjoyment). After dying (*preyta*) all those killers of the self go to those planets (*tān*). Then the planets are described. These planets where those with demonic tendencies go (*asuryā*) are covered with intense (*andhena*) darkness (*tamaśā*). The meaning is this: those who have no knowledge of soul or God and are addicted to material enjoyment go to the demonic planets covered with unlimited ignorance after death.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Those who do not establish a relation to Paramātmā and enjoy the world are called killers of the soul. They go to de-

monic worlds covered by darkness after giving up this body.

COMMENTARY

Those who do not perform actions aiming at *dharma*, those who do not perform *dharma* for attaining detachment, and those who do not take shelter of detachment for spiritual cultivation, perform *karma*, *dharma* and detachment only for selfish reasons, for sense gratification, and not for assisting their spiritual advancement. Their lives are thus similar to death itself. The *Bhāgavatam* says:

*na yasya karma dharmāya na viragāya kalpate
na tīrtha-pada sevāyai jīvann api mrto hi sah*

Anyone whose work is not meant to elevate him to religious life, anyone whose religious ritualistic performances do not raise him to renunciation, and anyone situated in renunciation that does not lead him to devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, must be considered dead, although he is breathing. SB 3.23.56

Those who act like this put their soul in a dull almost destroyed state. Therefore they are called killers, destroyers of their souls. Such persons gradually attain demonic tendencies, giving up the soul's natural tendency to worship the Lord. Therefore you should perform actions to maintain the body while establishing a relation with the Paramātmā while living in this world. Those actions are *karma* in name only. They have been completely transformed into service to the Lord.

MANTRA 4

*anejad ekam manasojavīyo
nainad devā āpnuvan pūrvam arsat
tad dhāvato 'nyān atyeti tisthat
tasminn apo mātārisvā dadhāti ||4||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

The Lord is without fear, supreme, faster than the mind. The devatās cannot understand him completely, but he has understood everything since eternity. Standing in one place he surpasses all others who move quickly. Under him, Vāyu supports the movements of all living beings.

COMMENTARY

Brahmānda Purāna says:

*anejan nirbhaytvāt tad ekam prādhānyatas tathā
samyag jnātum aśakyatvād agamyam tat surair api
svayam tu sarvān agamat pūrvam eva svabhāvatah
acintya-saktitaś caiva sarvagatvāc ca tat param
dravato 'tyeti samtisthat tasmīn karmāny adhān marut
maruty eva yatas cestā sarvām tām haraye 'rpayet*

The Lord is described as not trembling (*anejat*) because he is fearless. He is one (*eka*) because he is supreme. He is not understood by even the *devatās* (*nainad devā āpnuvan*) because they cannot understand him fully. But he, by his very nature, has understood everything from the beginning of time (*pūrvam arsat*). Because his power is inconceivable and because he is all-pervading, he surpasses all while remaining in one place, though they pursue him. Since all actions of the

living beings arise from Vāyu (*mātariśvā*) and Vāyu offers all actions of the living beings (*apah*) to the Lord, a person should offer everything to the Lord.

Arsat comes from *rs*, to know.²³

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The Lord is the independent person, who does not move, but he moves faster than the mind. The *devatās* cannot understand and perceive this Lord though he is present before them. Though remaining in one place, he overtakes all those who run. By his power, the air carries the water and clouds.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the teacher depicts the Supreme Lord, who is endowed with all-pervasiveness already mentioned, by showing his wondrous powers through the use of contradictory expressions. That Supreme Lord is without motion (*anejat*) and is the principal person (*ekam*), or the independent person with no equal. He is swifter than the quickest mind (*manaso javīyo*). Someone may object "It is impossible that he does not move, and is still faster than the wind." But it is not impossible. By understanding the real sense, it is easy for the Lord to do. It is figuratively said that he does not move because he is eternally pervading everything by himself alone (and thus does not need to go from one place to another), and he is swifter than the functioning of the mind since he

²³ The verse shows the following qualities of the Lord: fearless, supreme in power, swifter than the mind, incomprehensible even to the *devatās*, omniscient, inconceivable, omnipresent, and the source of all action.

exceeds the limits of where the mind can go at all times. The other statements should be understood in the same manner. Thus, the devatās such as Hiranyagarbha have not until this time attained this one person under discussion (*enat*) who has already attained all places. Before they attain real knowledge, persons in the material world, whose knowledge is bound by *karma*, cannot understand the Lord with their own intelligence, even though he is eternally present before them by his powerful nature. Thus there is no contradiction in the statement.

Similarly, *Chāndogya Upanisad* says:

*tat yathā hiranya-nidhim nihitam aksetra-jñā upary upari
sancaranto na vindeyuh
evam evemāh sarvāh prajā ahar ahar gacchanty etam
brahma-lokam na vindanti anrtena hi pratyūdhāh*

Just as ignorant people wandering about over a golden treasure hidden in the earth do not attain the treasure because they are unaware of it, similarly all the living beings in this world, covered by *karma*, though daily going to the Lord in deep sleep, do not attain the world of the Lord. *Chāndogya Upanisad* 8.3.2

He remains everywhere (*tisthan*). It is said *yah prthivyām tisthan*: he remains in the earth (*Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad* 3.7.3) and *ya āmani tisthan*: he remains in the soul. Thus remaining motionless everywhere, he overtakes all others such as Garuda who are running. However quickly they run, the Lord, though remaining motionless, is far away from them. Thus it is said:

*varsāyuta-śatenāpi paksirād iva sampatan
naivāntam kāranasyeyāt yadyapi syān manojavah*

Even if one travels at the speed of the mind, like Garuda, flying for a million years, one cannot find the end of the Lord. *Ahīrbudhnya-samhitā*

It is astonishing because all others who remain motionless cannot overtake a running person. The teacher speaks of another astonishing feature of the Lord. Situated in him, the air, though without firmness of substance to prevent objects from falling, carries the water. This means that being supported by the Lord who is the controller of everything and the container of everything, Mātariśvā (air), by the Lord's power, carries the sun, the clouds, the constellations, the planets and stars. The *smṛti* says:

*dyauh sacandrārka-naksatram kham diśo bhūr-mahodadhih
vāsudevasya vīryena vidhrtāni mahātmanah*

The power of Vāsudeva, the greatest soul, supports the sky, the moon, the sun, the stars, the *ākāśa*, the directions, the earth and the ocean. *Mahābhārata* 13.135.134

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

The Lord is without fear, supreme, faster than the mind. The senses cannot reach him. He has gone far in front. Standing in one place he surpasses all others who move quickly. Vāyu offers the actions of the living entities to him.

COMMENTARY

Knowledge of *brahman* or God leads to liberation. But who is

that God? This verse answers the question. It is in *tristubh* meter (four lines of eleven syllables). *Anejat* means "not shaking; not moving; without fear." *Ekam* means "one with no equal or no superior." It can also mean "among all entities the one person with a form full of condensed knowledge." *Manaso javīyah* means "he who is faster than the mind," the person who cannot be attained. *Devā* means the senses such as the eye or Brahma and other *devatās*. The *devatās* or senses cannot reach the Lord (*enat*), they cannot know the Lord. Why? Because he has departed previously (*pūrvam arsat*), since he is swifter than the mind. The verse then describes another of his extraordinary qualities. Though situated in one place (*tisthat*) he can surpass (*atyeti*) all others (*anyan*) who move quickly (*dhāvatah*), for he is all-pervading. By his *acintya-śakti* he can accomplish these feats. Moreover by the Lord's will alone, *Vāyu* (*mātariśvā*), the cause of action in the universe²⁴, sustains the actions (*apah*) of all living beings. Or, *Vāyu* offers the actions of the living beings to the Lord (*tasmin*).²⁵

²⁴ Though *Vāyu* often refers to the *devatā* in charge of the air element, here it refers to the deity in charge of all movement and life, the support for all life in the universe. He is also called *Mukhya-prāna*, and is again mentioned in verse 17 as *anila*.

²⁵ Baladeva takes the first meaning according to Śāṅkara and the second meaning according to Madhva.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Paramātmā and *jīvātmā* are unmoving, superior to matter, and faster than the mind. The senses cannot grasp them because they always precede the senses. Though the mind may pursue Paramātmā and *jīvātmā*, it cannot surpass them. While they remain inactive, Vāyu performs actions on their behalf.

COMMENTARY

The word *ātmā* refers to any object having qualities of *ātmā*: it refers to both the *jīva* and Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord. Paramātmā is the *vibhu-caitanya*, the powerful conscious entity and *jīva* is the *anu-caitanya*, the minute conscious entity. Though the distinction of *vibhu* and *anu* is eternal they are one in quality of *caitanya*. In Vedic statements, sometimes *ātmā* refers to *jīva* and sometimes to Paramātmā. One should understand which is meant according to the context. In this verse *ātmā* refers to both. The verse shows the superiority of the conscious entity to the gross and subtle world of matter. In the gross and subtle worlds the mind is the quickest. But it lags behind the *ātmā*. Though *jīva* does not move, it takes on life and performs actions through accepting *Vāyu* or *prāna*, a product of *māyā-śakti*, material energy. Paramātmā is also unmoving but is active through his spiritual *icchā-śakti* and *kriyā-śakti*.

MANTRA 5
tad ejati tan najjati
tad dure tad v antike
tad antar asya sarvasya
tad u sarvasyāsyā bāhyatah ||5||

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

Others fear the Lord but the Lord fears no one. He is far away, but close. He is inside everything and outside everything.

COMMENTARY

Tad ejati means "others are afraid of him (*tat*)."
Tan najjati means "he is not afraid of anyone."²⁶ The *Tattva-samhitā* supports this with a similar statement:

tato bibheti sarvo 'pi na bibheti harih svayam
sarva-gatvāt sa dūre ca bahyo 'ntaś ca samīpa-gah

All fear him but Hari is not afraid of anyone. Since he is all pervading, he is far off and near, and is outside and inside.

(This continues the thought from the first word of the last verse *anejat*. He is not afraid.)

²⁶ This meaning is a continuation of the meaning given to *anejat* in the previous verse. *Anejat* means "not trembling" or "not fearful."

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

That entity moves but does not move. It is very far way but also close. It is within everything and also outside everything.

COMMENTARY

What was taught in the previous verse is now taught in another way out of great respect for the subject. That entity who is all pervading (*tat*—neuter gender) moves (*ejati*) in the manner just explained—being faster than the wind but not moving, remaining in the *devatās* but being beyond their perception, and surpassing all, though remaining in one place. It appears to move, but by the inherent nature of that entity, it does not move. It remains far away and also very close. This statement of the Lord being close and far simultaneously depends on being enlightened or ignorant. Thus Śaunaka says:

*parāṅmukhānām govinde visayāsakta-cetasām
tesām tat paramam brahma dūrād dūratare sthitam
tan-mayatvena govinde ye narā nyasta-cetasah
visaya-tyāginas tesām vijneyam ca tad antike*

For persons who have an aversion to Govinda and who are attracted to material enjoyment, the supreme *brahman* is situated very far away. For those who are absorbed in Govinda, surrendering full to him, while giving up material enjoyment, the supreme *brahman*, who should be known, is very close. *Visnu-dharma* 95.13.15

Some objects are contained within other objects, and thus they are not outside. And some objects are outside other objects, and thus are not inside. The Lord is in neither of these conditions. This is stated in the next line. That supreme

brahman (tat) which pervades everything is within all conscious and unconscious objects which are verified to exist by proper proofs (*asya sarvasya*). Because he has no obstacle to doing that, the Lord is; situated within everything, and without discontinuity is also situated in the environment surrounding the object. He remains, simultaneously, outside of all these objects. Just as he exists wherever objects exist, he also exists where those objects do not exist. This is clearly stated in the *Upanisad* attached to the *Krsna Yajur Veda*, in the verses describing the thousand-headed Lord, to specify the object of highest knowledge:

*yac ca kiñciñ jagaty asmin drśyate śrūyate 'pi vā
antar bahiś ca tat sarvam vyāpya nārāyanah sthītah*

Nārāyana pervades inside and outside of everything seen and heard in this universe. *Mahā-nārāyana Upanisad*

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

He moves and does not move. He is far and he is close. He is within all existing things and is outside all existing things.

COMMENTARY

Because of the difficulty in understanding the teachings of the previous verse, the *ātmā* (Supreme Lord) under discussion is described again in this verse. This verse is in *anustubh* meter. The *Paramātmā* moves (*ejati*) and does not move. The fool may think he moves, but he does not actually move. Or "does not move" can mean he does not stray from *dharma*. *Paritrānāya sādḥūnām*: he always protects his devotees. He is also situated far away. The ignorant cannot approach him for

millions of years and thus he seems far away. But he is also very close (*antike*), because he is in the heart of the knower of *brahman*. For one who pervades all, where is the question of far or near? Not only is he near and far, but he is within all manifested objects endowed with name, form and action (*asya sarvasya*), and he alone (*tad u*) is at the same time outside all these objects, like the *ākāśa*.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Ātmā is both moving and non-moving. He is far and near, within and outside the universe.

COMMENTARY

Just as every material object has its own inherent energy, so the spiritual objects have their own *ātma-śakti*. By this energy all the contradictory qualities found in the material realm are resolved in the spiritual objects. Movement and non-movement are opposite qualities, near and far are opposite qualities, residing inside and outside are opposite conditions. These cannot exist simultaneously in material objects. However they can exist together in the *ātmā* by the inconceivable potency of *ātmā*.²⁷

²⁷ Bhaktivinoda continues to use the word *ātmā* without distinction until verse 7, where he identifies *ātmā* as Paramātmā. However, in the present and following verses, the word *ātmā* should more likely mean Paramātmā as well. The *jīva* is not described as having inconceivable powers like the Lord.

MANTRA 6

*yas tu sarvāni bhūtāny
ātmany evānupaśyati
sarva-bhūtesu cātmānam
tato na vijugupsate ॥6॥*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

**He who sees everything in the Lord and the Lord in every-
thing does not desire to protect himself.**

COMMENTARY

The *Saukarāyana-sruti* says:

*sarvagam paramātmānam sarvam ca paramātmani
yah paśyet sa bhayābhāvān nātmānam goptum icchati*

**He who sees everything in the Supreme (support) and sees
the Lord in all (regulator, controller) does not desire to pro-
tect himself since he has no fear of anyone.²⁸**

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

**Thus, he who sees all beings ultimately in the Lord and the
Lord in all beings never criticizes anyone.**

²⁸ Vijugupsate can mean either "he hates" or "he desires to protect."

COMMENTARY

It has been said that everything has *brahman* as the soul. This verse speaks of the suitable benefit for the knower of *brahman*. The word *tu* indicates the special glory of one who knows *brahman*. In this verse the word *ātmā* refers to the inner soul of all beings (the Lord, not the *jīva*), because the Lord does not contract himself into the *jīva*, and the subject matter has been the Supreme Lord. Whatever is situated on the earth is actually situated in the *Paramātmā* ultimately. That is the significance of the word *eva*. The person meditates skillfully and continuously (*anupaśyati*) on this. "He is in all beings" means simply that he pervades them all (without depending on them), because it is impossible that he should be supported by them. The word *sa* (he, the knower of *brahman*) should be supplied as the subject of the verb. Seeing that all things have *brahman* inside and outside, he never criticizes anyone because everyone has *brahman* as their very self. He treats everyone just as a person treats his personal wealth and family. He never dislikes or insults anyone.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

He who sees all beings in the *ātmā* and the *ātmā* in all beings does not hate anyone.

COMMENTARY

After describing the Lord, now the method of worshipping him is described. This *mantra* is in *anustubh*. The qualified person who sees all entities from the unmanifest state of *prakṛti* down to the immobile grass, both conscious and unconscious

things in the *brahman* (*ātmani*)²⁹, and who sees the *brahman* (*ātmānam*) in all things, as a result of seeing this way (*tatah*), does not hate anyone (*na vijugupsate*). This means he becomes liberated.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

He who sees all entities in *ātmā* and *ātmā* in all entities does not show hatred to any creature.

COMMENTARY

Hatred and love are opposites. Unless one is devoid of hatred, one cannot attain love. One who sees everything in relation to *ātmā* has no object of hatred. He easily attains love.

²⁹ Sometimes the word *ātman* is found instead of *ātmani*. Baladeva says it means *ātmani*.

MANTRA 7

*yasmin sarvāni bhūtāny
ātmaivābhūd vijānatah
tatra ko mohah kah śoka
ekatvam anupaśyatah ||7||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

The Paramātmā within whom all living beings reside (*yasmin sarvāni bhūtāni*) has always existed within all living beings. For one who sees Paramātmā as one in all beings and attains him, what delusion can exist?

COMMENTARY

The grammatical structure is as follows.

The Paramātmā (*ātmā*) in whom all living beings reside (*yasmin sarvāni bhūtāni*) has always existed in all living beings (*tatra*). For one who knows Paramātmā is one in all beings, what delusion can exist?

The *Pippalāda-śākhā* confirms this:

*yasmin sarvāni bhutani sa ātmā sarva-bhūta-gah
evam sarvatra yo visnum paśyeta tasya vijānatah
ko mohah ko 'thavā śokah sa visnum paryagād yatah*

The Paramātmā in whom all beings exist pervades all beings. For the knowing person who sees Visnu everywhere, what delusion or lamentation can exist, since he attains Visnu? In addition to the fact that the knower of the Lord becomes

fearless, as stated in the previous verse, this verse adds that he becomes free of lamentation and illusion. The repetition in the two verses is to emphasize the Lord's all-pervading nature.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

What lamentation or illusion can exist for that person who sees the Lord pervading everything, who at the time of meditation realizes all beings as parts of the one Lord?

COMMENTARY

Confirming how the Lord is the soul of everything by stating the identity of *brahman* with everything, the teacher now shows how seeing *brahman* destroys illusion and lamentation. At the time of meditation, for the person who knows this independent entity through considering the scriptures as taught by the *guru*, there is a perception that Paramātmā alone has all other entities as its attributes (*sarva-viśiṣṭha*). That is the meaning of saying "All entities are the *ātmā*." Identity of *ātmā* or the Lord with everything is similar to the relation of the soul to the body (being the prime factor in the body). This usage is in the Vedas and in common perception, as in the statement "I am the Lord." (This does not mean literal identity, but identity because the Lord is the prime mover of one's existence.) Thus the theory that on realization of the one *brahman*, the individuals in the universe cease to exist (*bādha*), the theory that the *jīva* and the world are simply a false superimposition on *brahman* (*upacāra*) and the theory of oneness of *svarūpa* (*svarūpaikya*) of all things where *brahman* transforms into everything are rejected. When at the time of meditation, there arises the perception that

Paramātmā is the soul of all entities in the person who has knowledge, then at that time, illusion (*moha*) in the form of erroneous knowledge concerning the *jīva*'s independence, does not arise. That person, who sees the one Lord pervading all things (*ekatvam anupaśyatah*), suffers no lamentation (*śoka*) from death of a son or loss of a kingdom because he has attained complete lack of possessiveness for all things in this world - since he understands that everything is part of the Lord.

*anantam bata me vittam yasya me nāsti kiñcana
mithilāyām pradīptāyām na me kimcīt pradahyate*

Detached Janaka said: My treasures are unlimited but nothing belongs to me. If the whole of Mithila were burnt down, still nothing of mine is burnt. *Mahabhārata* 12.17.18

The word "oneness" (*ekatvam*) does not mean "only one entity and nothing else," but rather one entity with everything else as its attributes, because there is no statement in this work which negates the statement in the first verse "everything is pervaded by the Lord." (Everything, including this material world, is also real.) And it would be impossible to begin teaching about such absolute oneness, since a person would have to admit duality in the form of knowledge and ignorance concerning the falsity of all experience even to begin teaching.

Nor can one talk of "seeing oneness" by realization of one *svarūpa* in mutually contrary existing objects (which are not false), because there would arise a destruction even of one's own or others' ability to discern that oneness at the time of

perfection, when there is a dissolution of obstacles to seeing oneness. What is explained in this verse is seeing one entity with all other real entities acting as its attributes, following after all scriptural evidence. It is better to explain oneness under discussion in terms of a particular relationship. For instance the word "one" is used to describe a particular relationship in the following example, *rāma-sugrīvayor aikyam*: there is oneness of Rama and Sugrīva. (*Rāmāyana* 5.33.49)

Though it is possible to take these two verses (6 and 7) as descriptions of how the liberated persons (*mukta*) see the world, according to the context of what has been said earlier, they are meant as praise of the person aspiring for liberation (*mumuksu*).

Here the word seeing (*anupaśyatah.*) refers to seeing with knowledge arising from scriptures and with knowledge which takes the form of worship of the Lord, which is the essence of the scriptures, with an intense desire for a clear vision of the Lord. The verse should not be considered as praise for the direct realization of the Lord arising from *samādhi*, because the method to attain that realization (rather than the realization itself) is the topic under discussion. In the *Śrī-bhāṣya* it is also explained that the word *darśana* ("seeing" or *anupaśyatah*) means "the object of one's worship" (rather than seeing or realizing) in all statements concerning teaching the method of liberation.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

What delusion or lamentation can exist for one who sees oneness, when all beings are *brahman* for that knower?

COMMENTARY

The same meaning is expressed in this verse. It is in *anustubh* meter. For the person in knowledge, if all entities are in the Paramātmā and the Paramātmā is in all things, and thus all entities are *brahman* (*ātmā eva abhūt*), by contemplating śruti statement such as *sarvam khalv idam brahma: everything is brahman* (*Chāndogya Upanisad 3.14.1*), what illusion or lamentation can exist for that person seeing oneness (*ekatvam*)? Illusion and lamentation arise from ignorance of this matter.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

When a person sees the oneness of the Lord with all entities, what illusion or grief can exist for that person seeing oneness?

COMMENTARY

Illusion and grief act contrary to knowledge. When illusion and grief exist in the heart, knowledge cannot remain there. Just as all hatred vanishes when a person sees everything in relation to Paramātmā, illusion and grief also disappear. Thus it is necessary to establish a relationship with Paramātmā.

MANTRA 8

*sa paryagāc chukram akāyam avranam
asnāvīram śuddham apāpa-viddham
kavir manīsī paribhūh svayambhūr
yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāc chāśvatībhayah samābhayah* \\8\\

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

The knower of the all-pervading Lord attains the Lord, who is without grief, perfect in qualities and eternal, without subtle or gross body, most purifying and untouched by sin. He is omniscient, controlling the minds of all, the best and independent. Such a Lord has created real objects eternally.

COMMENTARY

Varāha Purāna explains the verse:

*śukram tac-choka-rāhityād avranam nitya-pūrnatah
pāvanatvāt sadā śuddham akāyam liṅga-varjanāt
sthūla-dehasya rāhityād asnāvīram udāhrtam
evam bhūto 'pi sārva-jñāt kavir ity eva śabdyate
brahmādi-sarva-manasām prakrter manaso 'pi ca
tīśitrvān manīsī sa paribhūh sarvato varah
sadā 'nanyāśaraytvāc ca svayambhūh parikīrtitah
sa satyam jagad etādm nityam eva pravāhatah
anādy-ananta-kālesu pravāhaika-prakāratah
niyamenaiḥ sa sarje bhagavān purusottamah
saj-jñānānanda-śrīso 'sau saj-jñānānanda-bāhukah
saj-jñānānanda-dehaś ca saj-jñānānanda-pādavān
evam bhūto mahāvisnur yathārtham jagad īdrśam
anādy-ananta-kālinam sasarjāt mecchayā prabhuh*

The Lord is called *śukram* (bright) because he is devoid of lamentation. He is called *avranam* (without blemish) because he is eternally perfect. He is called *śuddham* because he purifies everything. He is called *akāyam* (without body) because he is devoid of a subtle body. He is called *asnāvīram* (without veins) because he is devoid of a gross body. He is called *kaviḥ* (wise) because he knows everything. He is called *manīsī* (wise) because he controls the minds all beings beginning with Brahma and even controls the mind of Laksmī. He is called *paribhuh* because he is the best of all. He is known as *svayambhuh* (self-born) because he never takes shelter of anyone else. The Supreme Lord has created the real world in a regulated way in the manner of a continuously flowing current, which is eternal but changing, in beginningless and endless time. His head is eternal existence, knowledge and bliss. His arms are eternal existence, knowledge and bliss. His body is eternal existence, knowledge and bliss. His feet are eternal existence, knowledge and bliss. By his will alone such a Lord with perfect qualities, Mahavisnu, creates a real universe which is without beginning and end.³⁰

³⁰ The Lord is without grief because he is perfect, without a gross and subtle body. He is without sin because he is pure. But can a bodiless person create a universe? To remove this doubt, the next line indicates the Lord still has qualities in a spiritual body. Thus he is described as omniscient, the controller of the mind, the best, and independent. Finally he is described as creating a real world as it was before, eternally.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The knower of the Lord, with transcendental vision, who is intelligent, who surpasses all others in knowledge, who is indifferent to objects of this world, attains the Lord who is self-manifesting, without a material body having defects or veins, whose character is faultless, and who is untouched by sin, piety, karma or ignorance. Carefully considering all objects of this world, he continually sees which are favorable and unfavorable for his attainment of the Lord.

COMMENTARY

The teacher again describes the person who knows the Lord and *jīva* by clearly defining the object he should know. That person (*sa*) who understands that *brahman* is the soul within all beings will attain (*paryagāt*) that Lord described in the verse.⁴¹ This is reasonable because there are statements saying that he who knows *brahman* attains *brahman*. Or it can be taken as a description of what the practitioner experiences during *samādhi* as in statements such as *atra brahma samāśnute: in that state he enjoys brahman. (Katha Upanisad).*

He attains the Lord who is dazzling (*śukram*), being self-manifesting like light. Though the Lord is the soul in all bodies, he does not have a body produced by *karma* (*akāyam*). Therefore he has no defects (*avranam*) and has no veins (*asnāvīram*).

⁴¹ *Paryagāt* is an aorist form, which usually denotes the past. However according to the rule *chandasi luñ lañ litah* (Pānini 3.4.6), in the Vedas, the aorist, imperfect and perfect tenses can be employed optionally to indicate all tenses.

He has no faults such as dissatisfaction or ignorance (*śuddham*). The Lord is not touched by *karmas* in the form of sin and piety caused by cause and effect originating in ignorance (*apāpaviddham*). The same is concluded in statements such as *sarve pāpmāno 'to nivartante: all sins are absent in him.* (*Chāndogya Upanisad 8.4.1*) Thus this Paramātmā, who is contrary to all despicable qualities, should be attained by the aspirant for liberation, and because he is the cause of that attainment, he should be worshipped.

Then the knower of *brahman* (*sa*) is described with terms such as "the seer of what is beyond the senses." The knower has extended vision (*kavi*). Or *kavi* (poet) can mean the creator of compositions expressing realization of the Supreme Lord such as Vyāsa. That which controls the mind is intelligence. It is called *manīsā*. One who possesses that intelligence is called *manīsī*. *Paribhū* means one who exists everywhere (he is beyond the limits of the body), or surpasses all others who have knowledge. Or it can mean the person who overcomes all hostile elements such as anger, lust and greed, which are difficult to control. *Svayambhū* means he is indifferent to all other things, while constantly seeing the *ātmā*. Carefully considering all things, he fixes in his mind on the supreme goal, the methods for attaining it, and the obstacles (*yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāt*) for many years (*śāśvatibhyah samābhyah*)—for removing all obstacles until he attains *brahman*.

Or one can explain the verse taking the subject as the Lord and the object as the *jīva*. Thus all words like *śukram* refer to the pure *jīva* free of all contamination. *Sa paryagāt* refers to the supreme lord who is situated everywhere. The other words

in reference to the Lord such as *kavi* (meaning poet, and *mansi*—most intelligent, *paribhū*—containing everything, *svayambhū*—independent) are easily understood. This Lord arranges all real objects in this world (*yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāt*) until their destruction (*śāśvatibhyah samābhyah*) for the liberated *jīva*. They are not simply appearances like magical tricks of a magician.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

That person in knowledge attains the Lord who is pure consciousness and bliss, who is without material body and without veins, and who is pure, devoid of sin. The Lord, who is omniscient, wise, the controller of all beings and independent, has established all real objects eternally.

COMMENTARY

The result of perceiving the *ātmā* by the qualified person as described in the previous verses is here delineated. This verse is in *jagati* meter. (There should be four lines of twelve syllables each, but there are exceptions.) *Sa* indicates the qualified person described in the previous verses. That person in knowledge attains (*pariyagāt*) the Paramātmā. What is the nature of that Paramātmā? He is *śukram*, having the nature of pure consciousness and bliss. He is *akāyam*, without a material body whose purpose is sense gratification. He is *avranam*, without faults, being perfect. He is without veins (*asnāvīram*). The cause of this is described in the next descriptive element. He is *śuddham*, without a touch of impurity. This is made clearer by the word *apāpa-viddham*: he is devoid of *pāpa* and *punya*. Though without (a material) body, by his inconceivable energy he creates, maintains and destroys

the universe. Thus the verse says that the man in knowledge sees that *ātmā* (*brahman*) as the person who has established (*vyadadhāt*) eternally (*śāśvatībhyah samābhyah*) all objects with their real form (*yāthā-tathyatah arthān*). What are his qualities? He is omniscient (*kaviḥ*), intelligent (*manīsī*), the controller of all (*paribhūh*), and independent (*svayambhūh*).

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

The Paramātmā is all pervading, pure, without body, without injury, without veins, without false appearance, beyond *māyā*, seeing everywhere, omniscient, self-manifesting and controlling all. He arranges all eternal objects in their proper category by his inconceivable powers.

COMMENTARY

The *Bhāgavatam* shows five basic objects of existence (*padārtha*) which are dependent on the Lord:

*dravyam karma ca kālāś ca svabhāvo jīva eva ca
yad anugrahatah santi na santi yad upeksayā*

One should definitely know that all material ingredients, *karma* or destiny, time, impressions, and the living entities who are meant to enjoy them all, exist by His mercy only, and as soon as He does not care for them, everything becomes nonexistent. SB 2.10.12

These *padārthas* are distinguished by their particular qualities. *Śruti* says *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām eko bahūnām*: among eternal objects the Lord is the chief eternal object and among all conscious entities the Lord is the chief conscious entity: he is the chief among many. (*Śvetāśvatara Upanisad*)

6.13) By this we understand that the five objects are eternal. But the Paramātmā is the supreme eternal because he is the shelter of all other eternal objects. He does not have a material body. His perfect body is always spiritual. He performs all activities by his spiritual energy.³²

³² This commentary is an explanation of the last sentence of the verse: he arranges all eternal objects in their proper category by his inconceivable powers.

MANTRA 9

*andham tamah praviṣanti
ye 'vidyam upāsate |
tato bhūya iva te tamo
ya u vidyāyām ratāh ||9||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

Those who worship with false knowledge fall into blinding darkness and those who worship with true knowledge alone (without correcting false knowledge) fall into even greater darkness.

COMMENTARY

The *Kūrma Purāna* explains:

*anyathopāsakāye tu tamo 'ndham yānty asamśayam
tato 'dhikam iva vyaktam yanti tesām anindakāh
tasmād yathā svarūpam tu nārāyanam anāmayam
ayathārthasya nindām ca ye viduh saha sajjanāh
te nindayāyathārthasya dukkhājñānādi-rūpinah
dukhājñānādi-santīrnāh sukha-jñānādi-rūpinah
yathārthasya pariñānāt sukha-jñānādi-rūpatām yanti*

Without doubt, the worshippers of deities other than Visnu go to blinding darkness, but even more so those who do not criticize them. Those who know Nārāyana in his true form, free from faults, and simultaneously criticize those with false knowledge of Visnu are the true devotees. By criticizing false knowledge, which is full of sorrow and ignorance, they cross over sorrow and ignorance. By knowing the complete truth,

which is full of bliss and knowledge, they attain bliss and knowledge.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

Those who are absorbed in performance of prescribed actions without knowledge enter into darkness. But those who engage only in knowledge while neglecting the performance of prescribed duties enter into even greater darkness.

COMMENTARY

Having already taught the cultivation of knowledge whose object is the Paramātmā endowed with wondrous energies, while performing *karma* as an auxiliary activity (verses 1 and 2), the teacher in this verse criticizes the practice of *karma* alone and knowledge alone, and states that the highest goal will be achieved only by cultivating knowledge along with practice of *varnāśrama*. Those who, excessively attached to enjoyment and power, perform with absorbed mind (*upāsate*) *karma* (*avidyām*) devoid of *jñāna* enter into very dense ignorance (*andham tamah*). *Avidyā* is equated with *karma* in the following verse. *Avidyā karma-samjñā 'nyā trīyā śaktir isyate*: there is a third energy called *avidyā* or *karma*. (*Visnu Purāna* 6.7.61) Or, they enter the place of suffering inevitably caused by absorption in *artha*, *dharma* and *kāma* without *moksa*. The writers on the subject declare the continual suffering of those engaged only in *karma*:

*plavā hy ete adrdhā yajñarūpā astādaśoktam avaram yesu karma
etac chreyo ye 'bhinandanti mūdhā jarā-mrtyum te punar evāpi yanti*

Those who practice inferior *karma* of eighteen parts are like

unsteady boats with their absorption in sacrifices. These foolish persons, who rejoice that this is the highest goal, attain old age and death repeatedly. *Mundaka Upanisad 1.2.7*

Those who engage only in knowledge, giving up *karmas* suitable to their qualifications, enter into even greater ignorance than those absorbed in *karma* alone. The word *iva* suggests that the extent of ignorance cannot be properly understood. The word *u* should be connected with *vidyāyām*. Thus the meaning is "those engaged in knowledge only."

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

Those who engage solely in *karma* attain blind ignorance and those who engage solely in *jñāna* attain even greater ignorance.

COMMENTARY

Now the *Upanisad* speaks to the persons who desire to live their lives simply performing prescribed actions, without knowledge of the *ātmā* which was previously discussed.

This and the next five *mantras* are in *anustubh* meter. In these verses there is criticism of both *karma* and *jñāna* when they are performed independent of each other, with a desire that they should be performed together. Those living beings who perform (*upāsate*) only *karma* (*avidyām*), which is the opposite of knowledge, who perform actions to attain *Svarga*, enter into darkness or ignorance (*tamah*) where nothing can be seen (*andham*). This means they experience repeated birth and death with material bodies. But (*u*) those who cultivate only impersonal *ātmā-jñāna* (*vidyāyām*) enter an even worse

state (*bhūyah*) of ignorance than the blind state of repeated birth and death (*tatah*).³³

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

One who is situated in ignorance (material life) goes to the region of darkness. One engaged in knowledge (seeking impersonal liberation) goes to an even darker region.

COMMENTARY

Paramātmā has inconceivable energy. This is understood from scriptures. The *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* (6.8) says: *parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate*: the Lord has various energies. One of the energies is called *māyā*. By this *māyā*, Paramātmā creates this world. *Māyā* has two functions: *vidyā* and *avidyā*. The *vidyā* function destroys matter. The *avidyā* function creates matter. Those men engaged in matter are situated in the *avidyā* function and their spiritual nature is covered by the darkness of matter.

Those who become detached from matter—though they are able to destroy matter (with the *vidyā* function)—do not receive the shelter of the Lord's spiritual *śakti* unless they perform *bhakti*. Thus, they (absorbed in *vidyā*) enter into a darker region where the *ātmā* seems to be destroyed. If the

³³ Cultivation of *vidyā* alone without previously doing *karma* leads to worse darkness because it will lead to failure. One will attain neither liberation, nor the purification that *karma* brings.

jīva does not establish a relation with Paramātmā in this material world, he cannot be liberated from matter. When a person gives up the variety of qualities found in this world as despicable, he then becomes attracted to something without qualities, which creates a great obstacle for the *jīva*. The *devatās* describe this state:

*ye 'nye 'ravindāksa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayah
āruhya krcchrena param padam tatah
patanty adho 'nādrta-yusmad-añghrayah*

O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for your lotus feet. SB 10.2.32

MANTRA 10
anyad evāhur vidyayā
anyadāhur avidyayā |
iti śuśrūma dhīrānām
ye nas tad vicacaksire ||10||

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

They say that one result is attained by correct knowledge (*vidyā*) and another result by correcting wrong knowledge (*avidyā*).³⁴ Thus we have heard from the wise who have explained it to us.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The previous *ācāryas* have said that the means of liberation is different from cultivating only prescribed duties or only knowledge. We have heard this from the seers of the Lord who taught us about liberation through combining both practices.

COMMENTARY

In this verse the teacher explains the method of gaining liberation. Against the normal usage, the instrumental case has been used with the meaning of the ablative case (*avidyā* and *vidyayā* should mean *avidyāt* and *vidyāt*). Otherwise there

³⁴ Following his quotation from Kūrma Purana, Madhva gives the meaning of *avidyā* in this and the next verse as condemning false knowledge, whereas in the previous verse it meant only "wrong knowledge."

would be no meaning to the statement (otherwise there would be no connection to the word *anya* and consequently no meaning to the statements). Verse 13 is structured in the same way. The previous *ācāryas* (unstated but understood) have said (*āhuh*) that the means of attaining liberation is different (*anyat*) from the practice of *karma* alone without knowledge and different from the practice of knowledge alone without *karma*. Or suitable also is "The *Upanisads* say." Next, it is stated that the meaning presented here comes in a long line of succession. In this way (id) we have heard (*śuśrūma*) from them, those who were fully dedicated to meditation on Paramātmā (*dhīrānām*), the previous *ācāryas*, who after de-liberation, taught this means of liberation (*tad*) to us (*nah*), who have humbly approached them with obeisance. The possessive case (*dhīrānām*—of the dedicated teachers) means the ablative (we have heard from the dedicated teachers). Or the word *vacanam* (words) can be supplied with *dhīrānām* to mean "we have heard the words of those dedicated to Paramātmā." The perfect tense (*śuśrūma*) is used to show the inability of grasping the whole meaning of *brahma-vidyā* because it is difficult to understand.³⁵

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

The wise say that one result is attained by *jñāna* and another result is attained by *karma*. Thus we have heard from the wise, who have explained it to us.

³⁵ The perfect tense indicates a remote past beyond the experience of the speaker.

Therefore first person (I or we) is rarely used, since this would indicate direct experience. When the first person (I or we) is used in the perfect tense it shows a distracted state of mind, very distant from one's own experience.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the different results from *karma* and *jñāna*. By *jñāna* (*vidyayā*) one gets one result. By *karma* (*avidyayā*) one gets another result. The adherents of *brahman* claim that only from *ātma-jñāna* one can attain liberation and other learned men claim that by *karma* one can attain *Pitr-loka*. Thus the śrurt says *karmanā pita-loko vidyayā deva-loko deva-loko vai lokānām śresthas tasmād vidyām praśamsanti: by karma one attains Pitr-loka and by jñāna one attains Deva-loka; Deva-loka is the best place, and that is why the wise praise jñāna. (Bṛhad-āranyaka Upanisad 1.5.16)* How does one know this? In this way (*iti*) we have heard (*śuśrūma*) words of the wise men (*dhīrānām*), who, as *ācāryas*, have explained to us *karma* and *jñāna* (*tat*) in terms of their actual result. This means that this scripture has come to us in the disciplic succession from them.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Knowledge of *Paramātmā* is different from both knowledge (*vidyā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*). We have heard this from the learned who have taught us.

COMMENTARY

Ātmā is a spiritual object, separate from both *vidyā* and *avidyā* (which are functions of *māyā*). *Paramātmā* cannot be covered by *māyā* at all. *Paramātmā*'s *svarūpa-śakti* allows *māyā* to act. *Paramātmā* is thus the controller of *māyā*. Though *jīva* is also a spiritual object, he is minute:

*bālāgra śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvah sa vijñeyah sa cānantāya kalpate*

When the upper point of a hair is divided into one hundred parts and again each of such parts is further divided into one hundred parts, each such part is the measurement of the dimension of the spirit soul. *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad 5.9*

From this statement of *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* we can understand that the *jīva* is *anu-caitanya*. Because the *jīva* is not all-powerful, he ends up being controlled by *māyā*. Falling under *māyā*'s control, he begins to lament. Covered by *avidyā* he experiences suffering in the darkness of matter. When he takes shelter of *vidyā* to get relief from suffering, he falls into even greater suffering by contemplating the impersonal God without qualities. Thus the Veda (this verse) says: **O *jīva*, searching for truth about *ātmā*, *ātmā* is different from both *vidyā* and *avidyā*.³⁶**

³⁶ This is a unique explanation of this verse.

MANTRA 11

*vidyām cāvidyām ca yas
tad vedobhayam saha |
avidyayā mrtyvah tlrtvā
vidyayāmrtam asnute ||11||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

He who knows both correct knowledge and false knowledge, having surpassed misery and ignorance by defeating false knowledge - which is full of misery and ignorance - attains knowledge and bliss by true knowledge - which is full of knowledge and bliss.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

He who knows prescribed duties and knowledge together, who practices both together, with duties as an assistant to knowledge, crosses over *karmas* which cause repeated death by performance of duties which purify him, and attains the faultless Lord by meditation on the Lord.

COMMENTARY

This verse summarizes what was said in the previous verse. The possessor of the above teachings knows both *vidyā*, consisting of worship of Paramātmā, and *avidyā*, consisting of *karma* as a secondary practice and combines them together without mutual conflict (*ubhayam saha*). It is said that he knows both together (*saha veda*) because he practices both impartially, *vidyā* being the main element and *karma* being

the secondary element. In this way, both should be known without prejudice. The statement does not mean that one should know both because knowing both the beneficial and unbeneficial is valuable. If one argues that such a meaning is possible because *karma* has just been criticized, that must be rejected because knowledge has also been criticized. Both (*karma* and knowledge) should then be rejected. The next statement also defeats that argument.

Having completely crossed over all accrued *karmas* which cause death (*mṛtyum tīrtvā*) in the form of restriction of knowledge, by performing prescribed *karma* as a limb of knowledge, he attains Paramātmā (*amṛtam*) who possess no faults, by *vidyā* (contemplating Paramātmā) as explained earlier (verse 6). *Amṛta* refers to the *brahman*, *etad amṛtam abhayam etad brahma: this brahman is amṛta and fearlessness.* (*Chāndogya Upanisad 4.15.1*) Though the word *amṛta* is synonymous with liberation or freedom from death, there is no fault of redundancy in the statement by accepting the above explanation.³⁷ *Mṛtyum tīrtvā* means "having crossed over the obstacles in practicing the means of realization." Because of having destroyed the obstacles to attainment of the Lord, one then attains the Lord (*amṛtam aśnute*).

Some explain this statement as "attaining death by ignorance" by forgetting the natural import of the verse.³⁸ In doing so,

³⁷ The statement could read "having being liberated (surpassing death) by *avidyā*, the knower of *brahman* attains liberation (eternal life). However that would be a literary fault called *punar-ukti* or redundancy.

³⁸ Perhaps this is a sarcastic reference to Śankara's interpretation. For him, *avidyā* is performance of sacrifice and *vidyā* is worship of *devatās*. Both lead to rebirth.

they attain death by their own ignorance. *Visnu Purāna* however confirms the explanation just given:

*iyāja so 'pi subahūn yajñān jñāna-vyapaśrayah
brahma-vidyām adhisthāya tartum mrtyum avidyayā*

Devoid of knowledge of *brahman*, Janaka performed many sacrifices in order to cross over obstacles by *avidyā* (sacrifice, *karma*), in order to fix himself in knowledge of *brahman*. *Visnu Purāna* 6.6.12

The *Śrī-bhāṣya* has explained *avidyā* as *karma* or prescribed duties, which are assistants to knowledge, because of the context of the discussion and the suitable meaning it produces.

"What is meant by the word *avidyā* is *karma*, actions prescribed by *varnāśrama*. The *avidyā* acknowledged as a means of crossing over death is that which is opposite to *vidyā*." The word *avidyā* excludes knowledge (*vidyā*), just as the use of the word *ksatriya* excludes *brāhmana*. All acts performed and not included in knowledge should come within the scope of *karma*.

Other confirming statements should also be considered:

*tapo vidyā ca viprasya niśreyasa karāv ubhau
tapasā kalmāsam hanti vidyayā 'mrtam āsnute*

Austerity and knowledge bring the highest benefit to the *brāhmana*. By austerity he destroys sin, and by knowledge he

enjoys the Lord. *Manu-smṛti* 12.104³⁹

Others⁴⁰ describe the verse as proposing an equal combination of the practices of knowledge and *karma* in bringing about crossing death and attaining immortality. In response to them, one should say that *śruti*, *smṛti* and *Vedānta-sūtra* and following them, the *Śrī-bhāṣya*, clearly state that *karma* and *jñāna* act as subordinate and primary elements, and that knowledge alone produces deliverance from death.

Bhāskara explains that *karma* should be subordinate to *jñāna*. However he claims that *karma* still gives direct results similar to *jñāna*. Such an idea strays from the statement of scriptures which say that *karma* is an assistant to meditation (removing obstacles but not directly giving vision of the Lord). Those knowledgeable of interpretation of the scriptures do not accept this proposal.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

He who engages in *jñāna* and *karma* side by side overcomes impurity by *karma* and attains liberation by *jñāna*.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of performing *jñāna* and *karma* together. A person who knows that both *jñāna* (*vidyām*) and *karma* (*avidyām*) should be performed together (*ubhayam saha*) by one person, or a person who knows that *ātma-jñāna* and

³⁹ *tapo vidyā ca viprasya nihsreyasakaram param
tapasā kilbisam hanti vidyayāmrtam aśnute*

⁴⁰ Yādava Prakāśa maintains *karma* and *jñāna* are of equal importance.

karma - which leads to that *jñāna* - should both be performed by one person, since they mutually assist each other to the same goal, that person overcomes the contamination of the heart (*mṛtyum*) by thinking of the actions such as fire sacrifice (*avidyā*) as offerings to the Lord. Having attained inner purification, he attains liberation (*amṛtam*) by means of *ātma-jñāna* (*vidyā*)⁴¹

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

One who understands the *ātmā* shares the qualities of both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, overcomes death by *avidyā* and enjoys immortality by *vidyā*.

COMMENTARY

Māyā, which is the shelter of both *vidyā* and *avidyā*, is not completely different from the *cit-śakti* (spiritual energy) of the Lord, but rather its shadow, a modification. Whatever is in a shadow exists in the original object in complete and faultless form. Thus, without doubt, the ideal forms of both *vidyā* and *avidyā* exist in the *cit-śakti*. If the *jīva* in striving for the spiritual forms takes care to destroy the perverted forms of *vidyā* and *avidyā* in matter, then he can see the variety of quality in the spiritual energy. When he takes support of variety, he no longer meets destruction at the hands of material *vidyā* with its concept of no variety and no qualities. And

⁴¹ Baladeva differs from Śāṅkara in the interpretation of *vidyā* and its result. Śāṅkara says *vidyā* means knowledge of *devatās*, by which one attains the status of a *devatā*, called *amṛtatvam*. Baladeva says *vidyā* means *ātma-jñāna*, by which one attains liberation. For Baladeva *avidyā* is *karma*, performance of sacrifice and worship of *devatās*. For Śāṅkara, *avidyā* is performance of sacrifices without knowledge of the *devatās*.

material *vidyā* takes the *jīva* away from material variety and thus leads him to *amṛta*. By seeing the ideal spiritual counterpart (real objects and variety), material *avidyā* (material variety) becomes transformed into the ideal counterpart (spiritual qualities and form). Then the *jīva*, with a clear realization of his own spiritual form, the form of Paramātmā and their spiritual relation, can experience spiritual *rasa*.

MANTRA 12

*andham tamah praviśanti
ye 'sambhūtim upāsate |
tato bhūya iva te tamo
ya u sambhūtyām ratāh ||12||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

Those who worship the Lord only as the destroyer of misery and ignorance, not accepting the Lord as the creator of good qualities, enter into deep darkness.⁴² Those who worship the Lord only as the creator of bliss and knowledge, not accepting the Lord as destroyer of bad qualities, enter into even deeper darkness.⁴³

COMMENTARY

The *Kurma Purāna* explains:

*evam ca srsti-kartrtvam nāngikurvanti ye hareh
te 'pi yānti tamo ghoram tathā samhāra-kartrtām
nāngikurvanti te 'py eva tasmāt sarva-guṇātmaham
sarva-kartāram iśeṣam sarva-samhāra-kārakam
yo veda samhrti-jñānād deha-bandhād vimucyate*

⁴²Such belief would lead to destruction of sinful qualities in the person, but keeps him bound in the world.

⁴³Such belief would lead to apparent attainment of good qualities, but these would be unsteady because sinful qualities would also be present. Thus the person would become degraded more than the worshipper of the Lord as destroyer of bad qualities.

*sukha-jñānādi-kartrtva-jñānāt tad-vyaktim āvrajat
sarva-dosa-vinirmuktam guna-rūpam janārdanam
jānīyān na gunānām ca bhāga-hānim prakalpayet
na muktānām api hareh sāmīyam visnor abhinnatām
na vai pracintayet tasmāt brahmādeh sāmīyam eva vā
mānusādi-virīncāntam tāratamyam vimuktigam
tato visnoh paroṅkarsam samyagjñātvā vimucyate*

Those who do not accept the creatorship of Lord Hari attain deep ignorance and those who do not accept the destructive potency of Lord Hari enter into deeper ignorance. Those who know the Lord as both the creator and the destroyer, full of all auspicious spiritual qualities, completely surpass the bondage of the body through their knowledge of the Lord as the destroyer⁴⁴ and attain joy and knowledge through their knowledge of the Lord as the creator of joy and knowledge. One should know that Lord Janārdana is full of all auspicious qualities but is free from all defects; one should not imagine the Lord deprived of any of those qualities. One should not think that the liberated *jīva* is equal to, or non-different from, Hari, or that the *jīva* can equal Brahmā and other elevated *jīvas*. Having understood completely that there is a gradation of souls from men to Brahmā and that Visnu is the highest, one attains liberation.

⁴⁴ One can assume from the previous quotation from the *Kūrma Purāna* describing *avidyā* (see verse nine), and from the description of the word "creator" in this verse, that in this verse "destroyer" means "destroyer of ignorance, misery and other such qualities."

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

Those pursuing liberation who engage solely in meditating on destroying the unfavorable elements to attainment of the Lord enter into deep ignorance. But those who engage solely in meditation for attaining the Lord enter into even deeper ignorance.

COMMENTARY

The teacher has taught the nature of the Lord - the supreme entity worthy of worship - and the means - worship of the Paramātmā along with secondary worship (*karma*) - which leads to the goal to be achieved, namely, realization of the Lord.⁴⁵ Now in three verses the *guru* teaches that the process of destroying obstacles and experiencing Paramātmā should be practiced in a combined form as parts of the cultivation of knowledge.⁴⁶ In the present verse, practicing each separately is condemned. *Sambhūti*, attaining the Lord, is described in the following verses:

*etam itah pretyābhisambhavitāsmi yasya syād addhā na vicikitsā 'asti iti
ha smāha śāndilyah śāndilyah*

Departing from this world, one who thinks without doubt that he will attain the Lord, certainly achieves the highest goal. Śāndilya declares this. *Chāndogya Upanisad* 3.14.4

⁴⁵ These are called *tattva*, *hita* and *purusārtha*. This is the same as *sambandha*, *abhidhyeya* and *prayojana*.

⁴⁶ This is part of the means or *hita*.

dhūtvā śarīram akrtam krtātmā brahma-lokam abhisambhavāmi

Freeing myself from the dead body, having done what is to be done, I attain the world of God. *Chāndogya Upanisad* 8.13.1

Asambhūti is that which excludes attainment of God. Thus *asambhūti* means destruction of present obstacles to that attainment, for later it will be said *sambhūti ca vināśam ca* (where *asambhūti* is equated with destruction). *Asambhūti* cannot mean simply non-appearance (*prāg-abhāva*) or destruction (*pradhvathsa*) of God realization, because it would not be logical to say that some temporary thing with beginning or end (non-attainment of God) is the cause of surpassing death (*mṛtyum tīrtvā*). Already in the commentary on verse 11, another meaning of *mṛtyum tīrtvā* "having attained death" has been rejected.

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

Those who worship the unmanifest *prakṛti* attain the ignorance of the material realm, and those who worship the manifest *brahman* attain even deeper ignorance.

COMMENTARY

Here with a mind to show that both types of worship should be practiced together, the verse criticizes exclusive worship of either manifested *brahman* or unmanifested *brahman*. *Sambhūti* is that which has a birth, the manifestation of an effect. Thus *asambhūti* refers to that which is the cause of the manifested effect or *sambhūti*. It is the invisible *prakṛti* which is the cause of manifested world, and which is the seed of ignorance, lust and *karma*. Those who worship the unmanifest

prakṛti attain the material realm (*andham tamah*) as a result of their worship.⁴⁷ But, those who are absorbed in worship of the *sambhūti* or *kārya-brahma*, in the form of Hiraṇyagarbha (Brahma) and other *devatās*, enter into even greater darkness in the material world.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Those who worship the impersonal feature of God (*asambhūti*) enter into darkness and those who are absorbed in matter (*sambhūti*) enter greater darkness.

COMMENTARY

When an object loses its qualities it becomes *asambhūti*. *Asambhūti* occurs by destruction or merging. Those who cultivate the impersonal aspect of the Lord without qualities (*nirviśesa*) are worshippers of the *asambhūti*, and they enter darkness. When the *jīva*'s consciousness of his existence disappears, nothing can be understood. In that state there is no light at all. (Thus it is called darkness.) Those who are engaged in *sambhūti* or material existence, are even further from realizing *ātmā* (soul and God) and enter worse darkness.

⁴⁷ This interpretation of *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* comes from Śāṅkara. Engaging solely in worship of the unmanifest *prakṛti* is likely to lead to failure.

MANTRA 13

*anyad evāhuh sambhavād
anyad āhur asambhavāt |
iti śuśrūma dhirānām
ye nas tad vicacaksire ||13||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

They say that by knowing the Lord as the creator, one result is attained, and by knowing the Lord as the destroyer, another result is attained. Thus we have heard from the sages who explained it to us.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The previous ācāryas have said that the means of attaining the Lord is different from solely destroying the obstacles or meditating on the Lord. We have heard this from the seers of the Lord who taught us about liberation through a combination of both practices.

COMMENTARY

Tad refers to the practice of combining *asambhūti* and *sambhūti*, which will be explained in the next verse.

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

The wise say that one result is attained by worship of *Brahma* and another result is attained by worship of unmanifest *prakṛti*. We have heard this from the wise who have explained it to us.

COMMENTARY

This verse speaks of the different results obtained by performing separate worship with the aim of showing that both should be done together. The wise say that there is one result from worshipping the *kārya-brahman* (*sambhavāt*): entering into deep ignorance. And from the worship of the unmanifest *prakṛti* (*asambhavāt*), the wise say that there is a different result: they enter into darkness (but not as much as those who worship the manifest *brahman*). We have heard such words of the wise men, who have explained the results of worship of *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* to us.

Bhaktinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

Ātmā (God and *jīva*) is different from both matter (*sambhūti*) and impersonal realization of God (*asambhūti*). We have heard these words from those who have understood the truth.

COMMENTARY

Attraction to creation or destruction, appearance and merging, *sambhūti* or *asambhūti* in this material world has nothing to do with *ātmā*. *Ātmā* has no birth or destruction for it is eternal. Since the *jīva* is eternal, those who think that the *jīva* has creation and destruction do not know about the *jīva*. Liberation means the *jīva's* severing his relationship with matter.

MANTRA 14
sambhūtim ca vināśam ca
yas tad vedobhayam saha |
vināśena mrtyum tīrtvā
sambhūtyāmrtam aśnute ||14||

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

He who knows the Lord both as creator (*sambhūtim*) and destroyer (*vināśam*) crosses over the bondage of the body by knowledge of the Lord as destroyer of bad qualities and attains liberation by knowledge of the Lord as creator of good qualities.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

He who practices both destruction of unfavorable elements and cultivation of favorable elements for attaining the Lord crosses over all obstacles by practicing destruction of unfavorable elements and attains the Lord by practice of the favorable elements.

COMMENTARY

Having stated in the previous verse that the real practice is different from the exclusive practice of either *sambhūti* or *asambhūti*, the teacher elaborates on this by explaining that both should be practiced as limbs of knowledge in the first line. He establishes its necessity by then describing the results of that combination. Removing obstacles (*mrtyum tīrtvā*) by meditation on the destruction of unfavorable elements

(*vināśena*), one attains *brahman* (*amrtam*) by meditation on *sambhūti* (attaining the Lord). In order to praise the combined practice of *sambhūti* and *vināśa*, both of which are secondary elements (*aṅgas*) of knowledge, the teacher states the result which is suitable for the primary element, namely, knowledge (*aṅgī*).

Another meaning is as follows. *Vināśa* can refer merely to the destruction of pride, pretense, violence, thieving mentality, and the functions of the external senses. This avoids disrupting the pattern of its corresponding verse 11. Having removed sins which are obstacles to *samādhi*, by employing the secondary practice which destroys those obstacles, one attains the Lord by perfection of *samādhi* (*sambhūti*). By taking the words *sambhūti* and *vināśa* to mean literally creation and destruction, the sentence becomes "crossing over death by destruction, one attains immortality by creation." This has no meaning.

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

He who worships the unmanifest *prakṛti* along with the manifest *Brahmā*, having attained powers by worship of *Brahmā*, merges with unmanifest *prakṛti* by worship of the unmanifest *prakṛti*.

COMMENTARY

It is better to worship both together, because they bestow different necessities. *Sambhūti* in the verse actually means *asambhūti*. For sake of meter, the *a* of *asambhūti* has been

dropped.⁴⁸ *Vināśam* (destructible) means the temporary Hiranyagarbha, *sambhūti*. *Vināśa* is a quality but is not different from the object - *sambhūti* - it represents. He who worships both *asambhūti* and *sambhūti* together surpasses lack of powers and other items (*mṛtyum*) by worship of Hiranyagarbha (he gains powers and good qualities)⁴⁹ and he attains a relative type of liberation (*amṛtam*) in the form of merging into the unmanifest *prakṛti* by worship of the unmanifest *prakṛti*.⁵⁰ One should understand that a person who worships both *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* can attain pious results such as powers like *anima-siddhi* (through the worship of *sambhūti*).

⁴⁸ Śāṅkara gives the same meaning to the word. However, on comparing this verse with the three companion verses on *vidyā* and *avidyā*, the words *sambhūti* and *asambhūti* get reversed in this verse. Following the pattern of verse 11, "by *avidyā* one crosses death and by *vidyā* one attains immortality," this verse should read "by *asambhūti* one crosses death and by *sambhūti* one attains immortality." But in this interpretation it is opposite.

⁴⁹ Baladeva's commentary here follows Śāṅkara's to some degree. Śāṅkara says that surpassing death (*mṛtyum*) refers to overcoming lack of powers, lack of principles of *dharma*, lust etc. found in sinful persons. Thus by worship of *kārya-brahman*, one attains material piety and then can proceed steadily towards liberation.

⁵⁰ The idea of worship of the unmanifest *prakṛti* may come from Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtra* 1.19: *bhāva-pratyayah videha-prakṛti-layānām*: this practice gives rise to the experience of bodilessness and merging into *prakṛti*. This is a stage of yoga meditation prior to the perfect state of *nirbīja-samādhi*. Perhaps worship of Hiranyagarbha is equated with the processes of *īśvara-pranidhāna*, also an assistant to perfect *samādhi*. Hiranyagarbha worship is mentioned in *Aitareya Upanisad* 2.3.8.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

He who understands the *ātmā* as having the capacity to both accept matter (*sambhūti*) and destroy matter (*vināśa*) conquers death by destruction of matter (*vināśa*) and enjoys immortality by spiritual variety (*sambhūti*).

COMMENTARY

Material association is the cause of the *jīva*'s bondage and repeated death. One who attains destruction of material bondage (*vināśam*) surpasses death. Then, he enjoys spiritual happiness in variegated spiritual existence or *cit-sambhūti*.⁵¹ If he attains destruction of matter (*asambhūti* or *vināśam*) but fails to attain variety in the spiritual world (*cit-sambhūti*), he is lost.

⁵¹ In this interpretation, the meaning of *sambhūti* in the previous verses was "material variety." In this verse it becomes "spiritual variety."

MANTRA 15

*hiranmayena pātreṇa
satyasyāpihitam mukham
tat tvam pūsann apāvṛnu
satya-dharmāya drstaye ||15||*

Madhyācārya:

TRANSLATION

O Visnu! Your form is covered by the brilliant sun. Please remove the covering so that your devotee can see the form.

COMMENTARY

Brahmānda Purāna says:

*pātram hiranmayam surya-mandalam samudāhṛtam
visnoḥ satyasya tenaiva sarvadā 'pihitam mukham
tat tu purnatvataḥ pūsā visnuḥ darśayati svayam
satya-dharmāya bhaktāya*

Hiranmaya-pātram refers to the sun planet. The face of Lord Visnu (*satya*) is always covered by this. Visnu is addressed as *Pūsā* (*nourisher*) because he is full and perfect, and reveals that form to the devotee (*satya-dharmāya*).

The devotee is called *satya-dharma* because he holds (*dharma* from *dhr*, to hold) the Lord called *Satya*, full of good qualities, in his heart.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The mind of the *jīva* is covered by a golden covering made of ignorance and passion. O lord, maintainer of my devotion! Please remove that covering for realizing you, which is the natural function of the pure *jīva*.

COMMENTARY

Mantras (15-18) are now taught which should be utilized by the person fixed in the performance of *brahma-vidyā* or knowledge of *brahman*, along with its limb of *karma* until the final result is achieved. In these *mantras* various names such as *Pūsā* must indicate only Paramātmā. They have this meaning either directly, or because he is the life of the *devatās* indicated by those names. That being the case, the *mantras* indicate only one pleasurable object through many names such as *Yama* and *Sūrya*. In the first *mantra* the devotee prays to the Lord addressed as *Pūsā* to destroy the obstacles to meditation (*samādhi*) on the Lord, which have been mentioned (as *vināśam* in the previous verse). *Satya* refers to the *jīva*. The usage is found in the following:

satyam cānrtam ca satyam abhavat

Having entered the world, the Lord became the *jīva* (*satya*) and matter (*anrtarh*). *Taittirīya Upanisad* 2.6

atah nāmadheyam satyasya satyam prānā vai satyam tesām esa satyam

The *jīva* is called true of the true, the essence of *satya*. The *jīvas* are called *satya*. *Satya* belongs to them. *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upanisad* 2.3.6

Mukham (head) refers to the mind of the *jīva* (*satyasya*), which is situated in the head and is the organ upon which the senses depend. The mind of the *jīva*, covered by passion, is compared to a golden vessel, because of the great attachment it exhibits, which obstructs its meditation on the Lord. Though the Paramātmā is very close, residing in the heart, the mode of passion obstructs the vision of Paramātmā. Though passion is mentioned, ignorance is also included. Or the word "golden" can suggest the various types of enjoyment coming through *karma*. O nourisher of those who take shelter of you! Remove that covering on the mind (*tat*) of the *jīva*. Why? Remove the covering on the mind so he may see (*drstaye*) the Lord. This vision is the intrinsic nature of the *jīva* (*satya-dharmāya*).

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

The form of the eternal Lord is covered by the brilliant rays of the sun. O nourisher! Uncover your form so that your devotee may see it.

COMMENTARY

After the guru delineates the form of Paramātmā to the qualified disciple, the disciple engages in selfless worship of the Lord to meet the Lord directly and then attains a liberated state. This has been described in the previous verses. But meeting the Lord directly is not possible just by *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāśana* etc. and liberation is not possible just by meeting the Lord. Only when one attains the mercy of the Lord can one attain the Lord. The concluding verses of the *Upaniṣad* show the method of praying for the Lord's mercy so

that one may attain perception of the Lord through hearing and meditation, and so that one may attain liberation from the world through perceiving him.

Among the verses, this verse speaks of worship of the Lord in the form of the sun. The verse is in *anustubh* meter. The word *hiranmayena* (literally "golden") in the verse means "like gold" or brilliant. *Pātra* refers to a vessel from which one drinks (*pā*). Here it refers to the sun planet. The sun is called a vessel because it is the object in which the rays situated there drink nourishment, or it is the object from which people drink or receive the rays. By the brilliant (*hiranmayena*) sun globe (*pātreṇa*) the face (*mukham* - meaning also body suitable for pastimes as well as the face) of the indestructible person (*satyaśya*), the Supreme Lord, situated in the sun planet, is covered (*apihitam*). O person who nourishes the devotee (*pūsan* vocative of *pūsā*, nourisher), O Paramātmā (who nourishes from within), you must uncover (*apāvṛnu*) that face (and whole form). Why? It is for the direct perception (*drstaye*) of a devotee like me (*satya-dharmāya*). This is the prayer of the rsi.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

The form of Paramātmā is covered by a vessel of light. O sun, please remove the covering so that we can see the nature of Paramātmā and His eternal qualities.

COMMENTARY

O Supreme Lord, you are the spiritual sun. I am your very small particle of light. Though I can see, your light does not allow me to see your eternal form. Thus, being deprived of

seeing your wonderful qualities, I remain covered by the energy of *māyā*, the shadow of the *cit-śakti*, your spiritual energy. Be merciful and remove the effulgent covering. Then it will be possible for the minute soul to see your real form. The great devotee Nārada seeing that form said: *jyotir abhyantare rūpam atulam śyāmasundaram*: **There is an incomparable form of Śyāmasundara within the light.** (*Nārada-pañcarātra* 1.3)

MANTRA 16

*pūsann ekarseyama sūrya prājāpatya
vyūha raśmin samūha
tejo yat te rūpam kalyāna-tamam
tat te paśyāmi yo'sāv asau purusah so 'ham asmi ||16||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

O nourisher! O knowledge incarnate! O supreme controller! O goal of the devotees! O goal of Brahma! Expand knowledge of my self, and increase my sense knowledge, so that I can see your beautiful form. That Lord in the sun planet is also present as *Aham* (who cannot be discarded) and *Asmi* (who respects the *jīva*'s eternal existence) within Vāyu.

COMMENTARY

Brahmānda Purāna says:

*pradhāna-jñāna-rūpatah
visnur eka-rsi-jñeyo yamo niyamanāt harih
sūryah sa sūri-gamyatvāt prājāpatyah prajāpateh
viśesenaiva gamyatvāt aham cāsāvaheyatah
asmi nityāstitā-mānāt sarva-jīvesu samsthītah
svayam tu sarva-jīvebhyo vyatiraktah paro harih
sa kratur jñāna-rūpatvāt agnir anga-pranetrītah*

Visnu is called *ekarsi* because he is the principal form of knowledge. He is called *Yama* because he controls everything. He is called *sūrya* because he is the goal of the devotees (*sūris*). He is called *prājāpatya* because he is particularly the goal of

Prajāpati Brahmā.⁵² He is called *aham* because he cannot be discarded (a - not, ha - discard). He is called *asmī*, situated in all beings, because he has respect for the *jīva*'s eternal existence. But the Supreme Lord also remains separate from all *jīvas*.

He is called *kratu* (verse 17) because he is the form of knowledge. He is called *agni* (verse 18) because he is the guide (*ni*-to lead) in the body (*ag* for *añga*).

In the verse, the first use of the word *asau* comes from the word *asu* (life). *Asau* thus means "in Asu or in Vāyu."

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

O Lord, supreme nourisher of the devotee! O Lord who sees everything! O controller of everything! O giver of intelligence to the devotees! O ruler of all the *jīvas*! Please remove the fierce rays which hide your form. Please gather together your glowing effulgence. May I see that form of yours which is most beautiful! "I," the Paramātmā dwelling within me is he who is that person in the sun.

COMMENTARY

Describing what is seen in that vision of the Lord, the devotee requests such a vision. (*Pūsan* means nourisher.)⁵³ *Ekarsi* means the supreme seer beyond the perception of the senses.

⁵²Pūsa the first name was explained in the commentary on the last verse as "Visnu is called the nourisher, because he is completely full."

⁵³This was already mentioned in the previous commentary, and is not stated in this verse.

Yama means the inner controller. *Sūrya* means one who inspires the intelligence of his devotee. *Prājāpatya* means the inner ruler of all those born from Brahma. Or the meaning of the suffix *ya* can be discarded. Then the compound of *prājā* and *pad* means "master of the people."

Please remove the fierce rays which obstruct the sight of your form. Collect your glowing effulgence. I see that transcendental form of yours, the shelter of all auspiciousness, which is more beautiful than all beautiful things. This form has been described with such words as *āditya-varnam* (colored like the sun) in various *śrutis*. The use of the present tense, as in the succeeding statement (so 'ham asmi). indicates that the devotee is performing his practice at that time. However, since it is a prayer, it should be converted to the potential tense: may I see your form! The word *te* is repeated to convey the unusual nature or form of the Lord. Or, if the second *te* with *paśyāmi* is taken to mean "I see your form for your purposes alone," it can indicate a statement of absolute dependence.

Next there is a description of meditation on the Lord using the word *aham*: *yo asau asau purusah so 'ham āsmi*. Repetition of the word *asau* (that) expresses great respect for the Lord. Or it may be used as an accompanying word with *yad* as in the following example.

*yo 'sāv atīndriya-grāhyah suksmo 'vyaktas sanātanah
sarva-bhūtamayo 'cintyah sa esa svayam udbabhau*

He who is beyond the senses, subtle, unmanifest and eternal, who composes all beings and is inconceivable, shines independently. *Manu-smṛti* 1.7

Along with correlatives such as *yat* and *tat*, *asau* could then be repeated twice. The two uses of the word *asau* (that) also indicate the Lord who is famous in the scriptures for being very distant from our senses. (That person known as "I" is that famous person who is in the sun.)

The word *purusa* means that person who has qualities such as fullness (*pūrnatva*) and who exists before all others (*pūrva-sattvā*), who has a form the color of the sun (*āditya-varna*) and is famous as the *mahā-purusa*, the Supreme Lord, in verses such as *Purusa-sūkta* which are dedicated only to the Supreme Lord, occurring in all the Veda.

The word *aham* (I) indicates, through the *jīva*, the Paramātmā within the *jīva* (since Paramātmā is the soul of the *jīva*). The copula verb *asmi* (*am*) then also relates that "I," Paramātmā, of whom the *jīva* is his attribute. *Aham* accompanies a first person verb form (*asmi*) according to grammar (in spite of the fact that the speaker is speaking of not of himself, but the Paramātmā within himself). Thus the first person verb is not destroyed when the Paramātmā within himself is addressed as "I."⁵⁴ The phrase *tat tvam asi* (you are that) should be treated similarly. The second person verb form (*asi*) is accompanied by the second person pronoun (you), implied or stated, according to Pānini's rule.⁵⁵ Thus with second person

⁵⁴ The verb is the primary element in the phrase with the pronoun subject present or not. This indicates the continued presence of "I" or "you". "I" or "you" never become destroyed or merge into *brahman* because of the very nature of the verb element. The *sūtra* is *asmad uttamah*. (Pānini 1.4. 107)

⁵⁵ *yusmad upapade samānādhiharane sthāniny api madhyamah* (Pānini 1.4.105)

"you" or *tvam*, the verb form *asi* does not disappear when the person, the supreme conscious entity (*tat*), is addressed as "you."⁵⁶ (The meaning is "The Paramātmā within you (*tvam*) is (*asi*) that supreme conscious entity (*tat*).)

In common usage (not indicating God) the first and second person verb forms are similarly combined with "I" and "you" in a figurative way (not literal) in phrases such as *aham tvam asmi* ("I am you" which actually means "I am like you.") and *tvam aham asi* (you are me). The first or second person pronoun in this case also (even though the use is figurative only) accompanies the appropriate verb forms because of the grammatical rule of Pānini. In the scriptures we find combined second and first person pronouns employing the same verb agreement when used figuratively. For instance *tvam vā aham asmi bhagavo devate: O devatā, O lord, I am you.* (*Varāha Upanisad* 1.34) This is because Pānini's rule indicates that the verb form should be accompanied by the appropriate pronoun. The *Śrī-bhāṣya* commentary (1.1.1) on *tat tvam asi* says "What is accomplished when the subject of the verb designates nothing?" Coming at the conclusion of the section, it is clear that the intention of the statement is to forbid the twisting of grammatical rules beyond their stated scope.

⁵⁶ When a statement such as "I am that" is made, the verb "am" as well as the pronoun "I" indicate the existence of a person. If the statement "I am that" means "I am that other object", the person would be negated. Therefore absolute identity of "I" and "that" which indicate separate objects must be rejected.

Some claim that the sentences *tat tvam asi* and *so 'ham asmi*, teach the concept of only one *brahman* with no qualities, by destroying the false, illusory forms of cause (*iśvara*) and effect (*jīva*). However, like a knife, the word *asmi*, destroys this concept because it indicates the state of "my existing" even after the realization. Since the concepts of "you" and "I" are supposed to be rejected by the hearer (*tvam*) and seeker of *brahman* (*aham*) in these two sentences according to the proponents of this philosophy, there can be no one who is enlightened by the state of *tvam asi* "your existing" and there can be no one seeking *brahman* by the state of *aham asmi* "my existing." (Thus the statement would be useless.) One may argue that agreement with the verbs *asi* and *asmi* exists only because of the presence of learned speech which identifies illusory objects which should be dispelled (and do not indicate existence of anything in the present.) But we prefer to accept the logical connection between the words and objects designated, rather than reject them.

Others explain *tat tvam asi* and *so 'ham asmi* in terms of one existence (*sat* or *brahman*) alone which is qualified with two parts (*iśvara* and *jīva*).⁵⁷ If only "I" and "you" are to be identified absolutely with *brahman* or *sat*, then "I" and "you" could not even exist and be uttered. If one says that "I" and "you" are to be identified with *brahman* qualified with "I-ness" and "you-ness," this is rejected because then the statement should

⁵⁷ This is Yādava Prakāsa's theory. Brahman transforms via its *śaktis* into *jīva* and *iśvara* as well as matter. They are all real.

be expressed with the third person verb (asti instead of asmi and asi). (The statement should be: that existence qualified with "I" and "you" is the supreme.) If one says that the visible objects "I" and "you" are to be equated with the form of Īśvara who arises from the *sat* (*tat tvam asi* would mean "You are Īśvara"), this is rejected because the visible "I" and "you" cannot have absolute identity with the invisible Īśvara, just as one cannot equate a vase made of clay to the forms of a pot and a plate made of clay. If you say that "I" and "you" are identified with some aspects of *brahman* such as *sattā* or existence, this is unacceptable because there is lack of definition of the specific aspects of *brahman* which "I" and "you" possess. Consequently there would be an impossibility of meditating on "I" and "you" as identical with unspecified aspects of *brahman*.

Nor should one claim that *tat tvam asi* and *so 'ham asmi* are simply statements instructing to see "I" or "you," as if they are *brahman* (but actually are not), for gaining knowledge for the purpose of liberation (and which will later be discarded as untrue), for such a method (*drsti-vidhi*) is not accepted by the knowers of Vedānta.⁵⁸

Certainly one can explain the statements *tat tvam asi* and *so 'ham asmi* in a metaphorical (rather than literal) way where a term may have a derivative meaning (not absolute identity). In the statement "you are the king" or "I am the king" the

⁵⁸ There is a process of meditation mentioned in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.18.1 in which the mind and other objects are equated with *brahman*, even though they actually are not. The results mentioned are material, not for gaining liberation.

word king can have a secondary meaning - "you are like a king" or "I am like a king." Thus *so 'ham asmi* could be taken metaphorically: I am like *brahman*. However, metaphorical use is rejected in this verse, because there is a more natural explanation: the Vedas as well as common usage accept that words signifying class and particular qualities refer to existing objects (and not some illusory appearances whose meaning can be discarded), and ultimately to the conscious self within, in reference to *devatās* and humans. (Thus "I" in *so 'ham asmi* refers to *Paramātmā*.)

One may reject the calamity of equating the Lord with the *jīvas* (and annihilating the "I" or *jīva*) and propose instead that *so 'ham asmi* simply expresses seeking out the pure form of the self (I am that person who is the *purusa* called the *jīva*). But that cannot be accepted, because the same explanation cannot be given for statements such as *tat tvam asi* and *tvam vā aham asmi* (since *tat* and *tvam* do not refer the *jīva* at all but to *brahman*). There should be a common solution for all the statements. Even if we take the statement *so 'ham asmi* to mean "I am essentially *brahman*," indicating seeking out one's *ātmā* through higher knowledge, the meaning of *brahman* is still derivative (and it is preferable to take the direct meaning.)

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana:

TRANSLATION

O nourisher! O wise sage! O controller! O object of the devotee's worship! O Visnu! Withdraw your rays and remove your effulgence, so that I can see your beautiful form. That form in the sun planet is also present in another form. I am he!

COMMENTARY

Clarifying the nature of the Lord, the *rsi* prays again in this verse. The meter is *usnik* (28 syllables-8, 8 & 12 or 7 syllables x 4). "O nourisher of the devotee (*pūsan*), the supreme revealer of *mantra* (*ekarsi*), controller of the universe (*yama*), worshiped by the devotees (*sūrya*), descendent of Prajāpati (*prājāpatya*).⁵⁹ Displaying (*vyūha*) your splendor (*raśmīn*), contract (*samūha*) your form (*tejas*), and bestow knowledge to me." Or the sentence can mean "Withdraw (*vyūha*) the rays which obstruct my vision, and take away (*samūha*) your effulgence (*tejah*)." Then I will be able to see your form which is most beautiful or auspicious, by your mercy (indicated by *te*). Next, he explains in which manner one can see that form. That person who is situated in the sun is also situated in a separate form. I become that person (*so' ham*).⁶⁰

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

O Pūsan, Ekarsi, Sūrya, Prājāpatya, remove your rays, restrict your light. Then I can see your most auspicious form. I am qualified to see that form, because you, the complete person, and Paramātmā, your portion in the material world, and we *jīvas* also are all spiritual by nature. If you are merciful I can see you.

⁵⁹ Baladeva does not give meanings to these names of the Lord.

⁶⁰ According to Baladeva's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* 3.3.46, the phrase *so 'ham*, which is also found in *Gopāla-tāpanī Upanisad* as well as others, does not mean absolute identity of the devotee and God, but rather is an emotional expression uttered by the devotee when absorbed in intense devotion. Śankara explains *so 'ham* as identity of self with *brahman*.

COMMENTARY

Though you are the full Lord, you enter the world as the *purusa* - the controller of *māyā*. You use many types of energy to regulate *māyā*. Being the shelter of these energies you become designated by such names as Pūsā, Ekarsi, Yama, Sūrya, Prājāpatya (Vāmana-deva). Situated in the material world, I think of those forms and long to see your eternal form. When you are merciful and I become qualified to see you, I will be able to see your form. All good qualities are in your eternal form. You have situated me in a spiritual form as well. With your mercy, I can see your eternal form.

MANTRA 17

*vāyur anilam amrtam
athedam bhasmāntam śarīram
om krato smara krtam smara
krato smara krtam smara ||17||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

Though the body becomes ashes, Vāyu is immortal because he is supported by the immortal Lord. Such is the power of the eternal Lord!

Omniscient Lord, please have mercy on me, remember my acts of devotion to you.

COMMENTARY

Continuing from the previous verse, because the Lord is in Asu or Vāyu, Vāyu also becomes immortal (*amrta*).⁶¹ What to speak then of the Lord himself! Vāyu is called *Anila* because it is the abode (*nilaya*) of the Lord (a).

Rāma-samhitā says:

*ati-rohita-vijñānāt vayur api amrtah smrtah
mukhyāmrtaḥ svayam rāmah paramātmā sanātanah*

⁶¹ For Madhva, Vāyu or Mukhya-prāna is the most exalted devotee, with eternal knowledge.

Vāyu is also called immortal because he has extremely elevated knowledge. But the chief immortal is eternal Visnu, Paramātmā, Rāma.

Brahma-tarka says:

*bhaktānām smaranam visnor nitya-jñapti-svarūpatah
anugrah-unmukhatvam tu naivānyat kvacit isyate*

Invoking the Lord to remember can only mean "have mercy on the devotee," since the Lord eternally knows all things.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

The *jīva* moves like the air here and there, without a permanent shelter. But it is eternal. However, this material body is temporary, ending in ashes at death. O Lord, master of the *jīva* and the body! O Lord, approachable by actions of sacrifice and knowledge! By your mercy, please remember me! Remember all that I have done as service and compensate whatever I omitted!

COMMENTARY

After this the teacher describes the nature of the *jīva* in his pure state. The *ātmā* is called *vāyu* or air because its nature is to move about here and there according to *vidyā* and *karma* just as the wind blows (*vā*—to blow about). It is called *anilam* because it is without a resting place (*nilayana*) and lacks steadiness (This meaning of *anila* is derived from the verb *nilī*: *na nilīyate* means "it does not settle down."). Even though death occurs, with a succession of bodies, the *ātmā* is without death (*amrtam*) by its very nature. Being deathless is rep-

representative of other qualities which are not mentioned such as lack of aging. This is in agreement with other texts such as the statement of Brahma concerning the pure *jīva*:

esa ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimrtyur viśoko vijighatso 'pipāsah satya-kāmah satya-samkalpah

The *ātmā* is without sin, without age, without death, without sorrow, without hunger, without thirst, without deceit, fully satisfied. *Chāndogya Upanisad* 8.1.5

One should not think that this verse speaks of the second element (the material air element, after ether) with the words *vāyu*, *anilam* and *amrtam*. This is not agreeable with the context of the prior and subsequent verses. Even though these words could refer to the Paramātmā by some special use of the words or by etymology, because of the mention of the temporary body in the next statement, the words must refer only to the *jīva*. It is also foolish to say that *vāyu* refers to *prāna* (since it is also material). The *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* in discussing the enjoyer and the enjoyed, describes the *jīva*, called the enjoyer, as *amrta*.

ksaram pradhānam amrtāksaram harah ksarātmānāv īśate deva ekah

Matter (*pradhānam*) is temporary whereas the *jīva* (*harah*) is eternal and immutable. The one Lord rules over both matter and the *jīva*. *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* 1.10

ksaram tv avidyā hy amrtam tu vidyā vidyā 'vidye īśate yas tu so 'nyah

Matter (*avidyā*) is temporary whereas *jīva* (*vidyā*) is eternal.

He who rules over both is different from those two.
Śvetāśvatara Upanisad 5.1

Having described the immortal nature of the soul, which is confirmed in texts such as *na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścit*: the soul is not born nor does it die (*Katha Upanisad 1.2.18*), the inevitable death of the body of the *ātmā* is then declared: *athedam bhasmāntam śarīram*. The word *atha* (now) is used to introduce a topic different from the topic under discussion.⁶² Or it can indicate the exit of the soul from the body.⁶³ Or it can indicate that all *jīvas* are under the sway of *karma*.⁶⁴ In this connection it should be remembered:

*gaṅgāyām sikatā dhārāyathā varsati vāsave
 śakyā ganayitum loke na vyatītāḥ pitāmahāḥ*

Though it is possible to count the sand in the Gaṅgā or the drops when Indra showers rain, it is not possible to count the number of Brahmās who have perished in this world. *Agni Purāna 157.29*.

*brahmādisu pralīnesu naste loke carācare
 ābhūtasamplave prāpte praline prakṛtau mahān
 ekas tisthati sarvātmā sa tu nārāyanah prabhuh*

⁶² The soul is eternal. However (*atha*) the body is temporary, turning to ashes.

⁶³ The soul is eternal. Then (after the soul leaves the body) the body turns to ashes.

⁶⁴ The soul is eternal, but what can be done? Because all *jīvas* are under the control of *karma*, their bodies must die.

When Brahma and all others are destroyed, when the planets and all moving and non-moving entities are destroyed, when, at the final destruction of the universe, everything merges into *prakṛti*, the supreme lord Nārāyaṇa, the soul of all beings, alone exists. *Mahābhārata* 2.35.29

The word *idam* (this) distinguishes the material body from the bodies of the Lord and eternally liberated souls which are all eternal, as stated in the scriptures. *Bhāsmāntam* (ending in ashes) indicates only dying with the proper rituals for the dead body (what should be done for civilized persons). Or it can indicate, by describing the well known disposal of the body, other cases such as being eaten by worms as well. The word *śarīra* means "that whose nature is destructible (from *śarana*--killing)."

Having mentioned the distinction between the conscious and unconscious elements, the word *om* is used to indicate the Lord, the inspirer of both. This recalls statements such as *bhoktā bhogyam preritāram ca matvā: considering the enjoyer, the enjoyed and the inspirer. (Svetāśvatara Upanisad 1.12)* The syllables of *om* are described as follows in the Atharva Veda:

*yah punar etarh tri-mātrena om ity anenaivāksarena param purusam
abhidhyāyīt sa tejasi sūrye sampannah*

He who meditates upon the Supreme Lord using the word *om* composed of three letters attains the brilliant sun planet (and then attains Vaikuntha). *Praśna Upanisad* 5.5

kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair aparāmrstah purusa-viśesa īśvarah

*sa pūrvesām apī guruh kālenānavacchedāt
tasya vācakah pranavah*

The Supreme Lord is a specific person, devoid of ignorance, actions, *karmic* results and impressions. He is the *guru* of the ancient sages because he continues through all time. He is represented by the word *om*. *Yoga-sūtra* 1.24, 26, 27

Thus the all-knowing *Śiva* says:

om ity evam sadā viprāḥ pathadhvam dhyāta kesavam

O *brāhmanas*, chant the syllable *om* continuously and meditate on Keśava. *Hari-vamśa*

The Lord himself says:

om ity ekāksaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran

Uttering the one syllable *om* representing the Supreme Lord, meditate on me. BG 8.13

Thus *om* is seen as the representative of the Lord in all scriptures.

Then, the devotee, drawing the attention of the Lord, who is in the form of *Kratu* and who is thus approached by knowledge and sacrifice, prays for his mercy. The Lord is addressed as *Kratu* (sacrifice or intelligence) because he is the essence of sacrifice and knowledge. *Aham kratuḥ aham yajnah*: I am the Vedic sacrifice and the *smārta* sacrifice. (BG 9.16) Or, suitable to the present context, *kratu* can mean meditation

as in *evam kratuḥ ha* (one who has meditated thus) or the following example:

*yathā kratuḥ asmin loke puruṣo bhavati tathetah pretya bhavati
sa kratuḥ kurvīta*

If one meditates (*kratuḥ*) upon the Lord in this world, one attains him after death. Therefore one should meditate on the Lord. *Chāndogya Upanisad* 3.14.1

However, it is used here figuratively to mean the Lord, who is visible to the devotee as the object of meditation. Make me the object of your intelligence which is filled with mercy (om *krato smara*).

sneha-pūrnena manasā kim na smarasi keśava

O Keśava, do you not remember your devotee with your mind full of affection?⁶⁵

*tatas tam mriyamānam tu kāsṭha-pāsāna-sannibham
aham smarāmi mad-bhaktam nayāmi paramām gatim*

I remember my devotee who is dying like wood and stone, (without thoughts at that time), and take him to the spiritual world. *Varāha Purāna*

⁶⁵ This is apparently from *Varāha Purāna* but not available in the present editions.

Since the Lord directly remembers everything (and does not need any reminder to remember), the intention expressed in *kim na smarasi keśava* is that the Lord should simply review what the devotee has previously done as service. Similarly in saying *krtam smara*, the devotee asks that the Lord to review his previous service. "Remember whatever little favorable acts I have done for you. Since you know all that I did, please protect me!" Or the meaning can be "Assembling all that I have done to please you, you alone should complete whatever is lacking." Similarly there are verses such as:

*jāyamānam hi purusam yam paśyen madhusūdanah
sāttvikas tu sa vijneyo bhaven mokse ca niscitah*

The person born in this world upon whom the Lord glances should be known as *sāttvika* and will certainly become liberated. *Mahābhārata* 12.336.68

The Lord himself says:

*tesām satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogam tam yena mām upayānti te*

To those who are constantly devoted to serving me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to me. BG 10.10

The repetition *krato smara krtam smara* indicates a devotee urging the Lord to act quickly.

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

Let the subtle body merge into the subtlest of elements. Let this body become ashes in the fire. O Lord! Give blessings! O mind, help me remember the Lord. O Lord, remember my deeds.

COMMENTARY

Here the devotee prays "Now when I am dying may my life air give up the individual body and enter the greater air." The meter is *gāyatri* (3 lines of 8 syllables each; last line is here repeated). O *Paramātmā*, at the time of dying, may my *prāna* (*vāyuh*), indicating the subtle body of 17 elements (10 senses, mind, 5 *tanmātras*, and *ahañkāra*) give up the limited gross body and attain the universal consciousness of all *jīvas* combined (*amrtam*), the mass of all consciousness (*sūtrātmā*) in the form of a deity also called *Mukhya-prāna* (*anilam*).⁶⁶ There is no verb in this statement so it must be supplied.⁶⁷ The meaning is this: may the Lord separate the subtle body, purified by *jñāna* and *karma*, from the gross body (by merging the subtle body into the *mahat-tattva*).⁶⁸ Then may the gross body be burned to ashes in fire.

⁶⁶ *Vāyu* and *anilam* do not refer to the air of the five gross elements. *Vāyu* and *prāna* refer to the subtle body of the individual, the five life airs, which are an expansion of the *vāyu* element, and *anilam* refers to the totality of all *jīvas*. This is sometimes called *samasti-jīva*, *hiranyagarbha*, *sūtrātmā* or *Mukhya-prāna*, who is a deity embodying all *jīvas* in the subtle state of *mahat-tattva*, before *ahañkāra* becomes manifest.

⁶⁷ This follows Śankara's rendering. Bhaktivinoda also supplies a verb in this line.

⁶⁸ This appears to be preliminary to merging everything into the *avyakta-prakṛti* called *asambhūti* mentioned in the commentary on verse 14.

During worship, om is considered non-different from the *brahman* who is also called fire (see the next verse) and is pure spiritual existence. O mind which has will power (*krato*)!⁶⁹ Remember what is worthy of remembrance since death is approaching (*smara*). O Lord (*om*)! Remember that I have worshipped you as a *brahmacarī* and *grhastha*, and remember all the prescribed duties I have done (*krtam*) from childhood till now. Repetition of the statement indicates great respect.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

May the material life air in my body attain an eternal nature as spiritual life air in the spiritual world! After my subtle body passes away, may my gross body be burned to ashes! O mind, remember what you should do. Remember what you have done.

COMMENTARY

Though a prayer for liberation from the material world is not considered proper in pure *bhakti*, such prayers for liberation are uttered in *jñāna-miśra-bhakti*, which is a door for pure *bhakti*. In this *mantra* there is remembrance of *bhakti* along with liberation.

⁶⁹ *Kratu* means determination. It also refers to a sacrifice and deity of sacrifice, Visnu. Madhva takes that meaning. In Baladeva's and Śāṅkara's explanations, the first command to remember seems to be addressed to the mind. The second command to remember is addressed to the Lord. In Śāṅkara's explanation which is very similar to Baladeva's, this is made clear, since the word *agne* (o fire, *brahman!*) is added to explain the second utterance of *smara*.

MANTRA 18

*agne naya supathā rāye asmān
viśvāni deva vayunāni vidvān
yuyodhy asmaj juhurānam eno
bhūyisthām te nama-uktim vidhema ||18||*

Madhvācārya:

TRANSLATION

O leader dwelling in the body! Lead us on the correct path to liberation. O Lord! You know how much we know. Take away our degrading sins. We offer respects with knowledge and devotion to you.⁷⁰

COMMENTARY

Vayunam means knowledge. The usage is found in the *Bhāgavatam*: *tvad-dattayā vayunayedam acaṣṭa viśvam*: **Brahma saw the whole world by the knowledge given by you (SB 4.9.8.)** *Juhurānam* means "that which degrades us." *Yuyodhi* means "separate us." Thus the sentence means "Remove our sins which degrade us." *Skanda Purāna* says:

*yad asmān kurute atyalpāns tad eno 'smad viyojaya
naya no moksa-vittāyety astaud yajnam manuh svarāt*

Manu, the king, prayed to Yajña, "Remove from us sin which makes us "look very small" (and take rebirth), and lead us to the treasure of liberation."

⁷⁰After the devotee develops knowledge of the Lord and devotion, the Lord by his mercy qualifies the devotee to perceive him, and reveals himself to the devotee. All sins are washed away by that vision.

The root *yuyu* means "to separate" according to the dictionary. With knowledge and devotion we should offer respects repeatedly.

Vedānta Deśika:

TRANSLATION

O leader of all beings! Performer of pastimes! You know everything. Lead us to knowledge through practices which yield enough wealth to maintain our bodies. Destroy the obstacles which create crookedness in us. We offer respects to you saying *namah* repeatedly

COMMENTARY

This verse indicates attaining the object of desire, the Lord, who is addressed here as Agni. The Lord is addressed as Agni because the Lord acts through the body of Agni. The Lord as the indwelling spirit of Agni is expressed in verses such as

yo 'gnau tisthann agner antaro yam agnir na veda yasyāgnih śarīram yo 'gnim antaro yamayaty esa ta ātmāntaryāmy amrtah:

the eternal Lord as Paramātmā is situated in Agni, within Agni, whom Agni does not know, of whom Agni is the body, who controls Agni from within. (*Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad 3.7.5*) Or the Lord may directly be called Agni because Agni means "one who leads in front position (*agra-nayana*)."¹ Thus it is said *sāksād apy avirodham jaiminih*: Jaimini says that the word Agni can denote the Supreme Brahman without any contradiction. (*Brahma-sūtra 1.2.29*)

Manifest in us (*naya*) knowledge by the right method (*supathā*), by a method devoid of any trace of forbidden acts,

for attaining sufficient wealth for worshipping you and protecting our bodies to attain knowledge of you. Or also suitable to the context, *dhana* (wealth) can refer to spiritual wealth, as in the following statements:

*atashara-kara-grāhyam arājaka-vaśamvadam
adāyāda-vibhāgārha-dhanam ārjaya susthiram*

Earn steady, spiritual wealth, which cannot be stolen, cannot be dissipated by a king's powers, and cannot be divided by inheritance.

*anantam bata me vittam yasya me nāsti kiñcana
mithilāyām pradīptāyām na me kimcit pradāyate*

Detached Janaka said: My treasure is unlimited though I possess nothing. If the whole of Mithila were burnt down, still nothing of mine is burnt (since the treasure is spiritual). *Mahābhārata* 12.17.18

According to logicians, one single *mantra* can have several correct meanings corresponding to a specific context or other considerations.

O lord, endowed with suitable wonderful pastimes which will be awarded to us who desire them (*deva*)! Produce in us (*asmān*), your unalloyed devotees, surrendered only to you alone, with no other goal, by the proper means of gaining wealth, all types of knowledge (*viśvāni vayunāni*). *Naighantuka* says *māyā vayunam jñānam*: *māyā* means *vayunam* or *jñānam*. Thus *vayunam* and *jñānam* are synonyms.

In this verse, *vayunāni* means "various methods with knowledge as the chief means." Since you know everything (*vidvān*), all the methods for attaining the four goals of human life according to our qualification, you should lead us, who are all ignorant, towards them. Separate us from (*yuyodhi*) sin, destroy in us the obstacles (*enah—sin*) which prevent us from seeing you, consisting of omitting to perform what should be done," and performing what should not be done. These sins oppress us with an inconceivable variety of crookedness (*juhurānam*) which causes bondage in this world. We offer salutations to you plentifully and repeatedly (*bhūyisthām*) with utterance of *namah* by reciting your qualities such as being the sole resort for the *jīva*. The potential case instead of the present case (*vidhema* instead of *vidadhmahe*) is used according to a grammatical rule. Or the verb is in the potential case to express begging to the Lord to be able to do it. (O Lord, please be merciful so that we may offer you respects.) *Moksa-dharma* describes that even liberated persons offer such respects *nama ity eva vādināh: the inhabitants of Svetadvīpa*, assembling together, ran towards that light, with hands joined in reverential attitude, full of joy, and uttering the one word "Namah" (we bow to you). (*Mahābhārata* 12.323.36) (Section 337) The word *ukti* (utterance) indicates that even if one just utters the word *namah*, without mental or physical offering of respect, the Lord should be pleased.

Thus this work after compiling descriptions of the existence of the Lord, his powers, his worship and the excellence of the results, is completed.

By the mercy of Hāyagrīva, Vedānta-deśika, of Viśvāmitra *gotra*, for the pleasure of those learned in the scriptures, has

produced this commentary, meant for the welfare of the world, on the *īśopanisad* which appears at the end of the *Yajur Veda* or *Vājasaneyi Samhitā*, and which clarifies what is unclear concerning the Lord.

This *īśopanisad* does not in any way approve of the philosophy that all souls are one, that all souls are supreme Brahman, of *bhedābheda* philosophy (Yādava Prakāśa and Bhāskara), of the philosophy of the Jains or Buddhists, or of philosophy which speaks of the lack of necessity of liberation and the falsity of fearing material existence (Cārvaka).

Baladeva Vidyābhūšana:

TRANSLATION

O Lord of pastimes! O fire! Lead us on the splendid path to the treasure of liberation. You know all of our actions and thoughts. Destroy our sins which distract us from you. May we offer respects repeatedly to you.

COMMENTARY

After praying for a direct vision of the Lord (verses 15 and 16), the devotee prays for liberation to the Lord who is addressed as fire. The meter is *tristubh* (four lines of eleven syllables each). O person who has many pastimes (*deva*)! O Lord in the form of fire (*agne*)! Lead us on the right path, the path of liberation or *devayāna*, for the treasure of liberation (*rāye*). How is the Lord described? He knows (*vidvān*) all (*viśvāni*) our actions or all of our knowledge (*vayunāni*). Separate us (*asman yuyodhi*) from sins (*enah*), which are crooked (*juhurānam*), forming obstacles to liberation in the form of desires. Many times (*bhūyisthām*) may we offer respects (*namauktim*) to you (*te*) in order to become pure. We cannot repay

you for responding to our desires. All we can do is offer repeated respects.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura:

TRANSLATION

O Agni, purifier! Guide us on the right path to the highest spiritual treasure. O Lord, since you understand our extent of knowledge (knowledge of the world and consequent detachment from it, knowledge of God and devotion), please lead us there. Destroy our obstructing sins. We repeatedly offer you respects.

COMMENTARY

When the *jīva* remembers his previous sins, the *jīva* becomes anxious concerning attainment of liberation. Therefore he addresses the pure Paramātmā as Agni. The purifying power of fire comes from the Lord. The *jīva* then sees that there is no method except devotion to the Lord with suitable knowledge and detachment. Thus he prays in this way. Knowledge means "knowledge of God." By knowledge of the universe,⁷¹ one gets higher knowledge of the Lord (*vijñāna*). With that knowledge of God one attains *prajñāna* or *bhakti*. *Sruti* says: *etad vijñāya prajñānam kurvīta*: after understanding the Lord, you should perform *bhakti*. (*Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad* 4. 4.21)

⁷¹ Bhaktivinoda mentions *viśva-jñāna* as the first knowledge, followed by *īśvara-jñāna*, or *vijñāna*, followed by *bhakti*, *prajñāna*. But he does not explain it and how it relates to knowledge of God. Perhaps it means knowledge of matter, by which one becomes detached from enjoyment, as instructed in the first verse of this *Upanisad*.

Also one should consider the following *Bhāgavatam* verse:

*tac chraddadhānā munayo
jñāna-vairāgya-yuktayā
paśyanty ātmani cātmānam
bhaktyā śruta-grhītayā*

The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service in terms of what he has heard from the *Vedānta-śruti*. SB 1.2.12