

UPADESHA SAARA

Written by Sri Ramana Maharishi

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NOTE: Swami Paramarthananda has not verified the transcription of talks. The transcriptions have been done with Swamiji's blessings by his disciples.



Published by :



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INTRODUCTION

In one of the Puranas, Lord Shiva imparts Vedantic wisdom to a group of rishis. One of Ramana Maharishi's devotees (Muruganar) was translating this Shiva Upadesha into Tamil. He requested Ramana Maharishi to compose this Upadesha in Tamil. He does so in 30 verses containing the condensed version of the Vedantic teachings of Lord Shiva. This is called Upadesha Saara. He first wrote it in Tamil and then later in Malayalam & Sanskrit.

Upadesha Saara has 30 verses containing the essence of the Vedantic teaching but it is written in a cryptic manner. He talks about all the spiritual Sadhanas in 4 levels in the form of karma yoga, upasana yoga, ashtanga yoga and gnana yoga. A spiritual seeker has to follow all the 4 yogas compulsorily & systematically and attain spiritual enlightenment.

Karma yoga, upasana yoga & ashtanga yoga are preparatory disciplines which will give gnana yogyatha, preparing the mind for spiritual knowledge. Gnana yoga will enlighten a person through this knowledge. Shri Ramana has beautifully brought out these 4 yogas with more emphasis on gnana yoga.

This is the background of the text.

Verse 1 - Karma Jadam

Karthurajnayaa prapyathe phalam

Karma Kim Param Karma Tad jadam

Word meaning

Karthuh – by God

Ajnayaa – will

Praapyathe – are attained

Phalam – fruits

Karma kim param – how or why is work then superior?

Karma tad jadam – that Karma is insentient only.

Sloka meaning

The fruits of all actions are attained and controlled by the Lord or the creator. Then how is work is superior? Work is an insentient thing only.

Any Scriptural work must be looked up in the background of the Vedas. The Vedas are the original sources of all our spiritual knowledge so are called the *Shruthis* (primary literature). And all the literature following that is called the *Smrithis* (secondary literature).

The Vedas are divided into 2 parts. The 1st part is called Veda-Purva and the 2nd part is called Veda-Antha. The Veda-Purva part is called Karma Kanda which is the ritualistic part of the Veda. This section is important for purifying the mind. It has rituals which are physical (puja), vocal (japa / parayana) & mental-meditation (kayika, vachika&manasa karmani). One should remember that the karma kanda portion of the Vedas helps in purifying the mind but does not give liberation. Thus one should use the Karma, purify the mind and then go beyond. Moving on from the karma kanda to gnana kanda, from ritualistic part to the philosophical part.

But there are some who do not attempt the karma part thinking it is of no use whereas there are some who never leave the ritualistic part. The

ideal approach is that we should enter karma kanda, purify and grow out of it and enter into gnana kanda. Thus we must avoid the two extremes of totally avoiding karma kanda and sticking only to karma kanda. Karma kanda is like a womb which we must stay till the appropriate time and then grow beyond.

There is one school of philosophy called **purvamimansa philosophers** who have some misconceptions about the Vedas.

1. They don't believe in God but accept the Vedas.
2. They believe that the world & the Vedas are eternal and not created by God. They don't believe that there is any karma phala datha. They say karmas give karma phala by itself.
3. According to them Vedic rituals gives all the benefits during life, after life & as well as get moksha.

They do not put much value on the gnana kanda portion of the Veda. They say it is like barren land areas on earth which are useless. Vedanta part is of no use to them.

In the Puranas, Lord Shiva talks about the limitations of concentrating on rituals only, since the rishis were focussed on the rituals.

Ramana in this verse criticises these philosophers. He talks about the limitations of karmas in the 1st 2 verses. He later, talks about the advantage of Karma. Advantage of karma is it purifies the mind. Limitations of karma are it cannot give moksha. Therefore, Ramana says use karma, purify the mind, go to Vedanta and be free.

In the 1st line of the 1st verse Ramana Shri refutes the purvamimansaka philosophy that karma will give the result by itself. He says there is a higher principle which determines the karma phala for different types of karma. The higher principle decides whether a karma is papa or punya and how much of it. An example here is that the books of law by themselves cannot judge an event. It needs a sentient principle in the form of a Judge to pass a judgement.

The word Kartu or kartha means God. Agnya means God's will. Only by Ishwara sankalpa is the karma phala determined. Sometimes the result is

determined not only by action alone but by motive also. Action does not know the motive. We require an intelligence principle for it. (For example. A person being pushed out of the way on a road, is the motive to hurt or to save him? Punyam or papam is not decided by the action but the motive). Action (karma) is inert and so cannot determine the motive behind the action. This requires higher force to decide Punyam & papam & that is Bhagwan.

Verse 2 – Karma Pathana Karanam

Krithi mahodadhau pathana kaaranam

Phalam asaashvatham gathi nirodhakam

Word meaning

Krithi Mahodadhau – the big ocean of action or work

Pathana Kaaranam – is the cause of fall down or spiritual declination.

Phalam asaasvatham – fruits of actions are temporary and not permanent

Gathi nirodhakam – and they obstruct the progress of a spiritual seeker.

Sloka meaning

The big ocean of action is the cause of fall down. The fruits of actions are not permanent and they obstruct the progress of a spiritual seeker.

In the 1st verse Ramana Shri removes the misconception regarding karma phala and in the 2nd verse he removes the misconception about Karma. The misconception of Purva mimamsa philosophers being that the karmas can achieve all the goals or purusharthas i.e dharma, artha, kama & moksha. He says it is wrong to think like that as karmas can never give liberation. Instead *karmas can make samsara more complex*. Every action of a human being is prompted by a desire and there is no end to desire. It keeps multiplying trapping one in it.

Initially desire is only for oneself but gradually includes the family's desires also because of attachment. One gets deeply entrenched in samsara. Karma becomes a vast ocean of samsara. Each desire is responsible for thousands of Karmas and Karma is responsible for stress and anxiety. It is the cause of one's fall. It can never produce moksha. Moksha is defined as permanent happiness, peace & security. Karma can never give moksha because the result of karma is not permanent.

Therefore, karma does not give moksha, it keeps one in samsara and also it is an obstacle to attaining moksha. It becomes a barrier to one's spiritual progress.

Karma becomes an obstacle to moksha because of lack of time. Moksha requires self-enquiry under the guidance of a competent teacher in order to attain gnana. One who is a workaholic has no time for self-enquiry & self-knowledge. This karma obstructs him from moksha.

Verse 3 – Karma v/s Karmayoga

Ishwara arpitam na icchayaa kritam

Chitta shodhakam mukti sadhakam

Word meaning

Ishwara arpitam – Work which is offered to God and

Na Icchaya kritam – done without any expectation for the fruits.

Chitta shodhakam – helps in purification of mind

Mukti sadhakam – and thereby is a path to realization (or leads one to realization or liberation).

Sloka meaning

Work which is performed as an offering to the Almighty and done without any expectation for the fruits – helps in purification of mind & thereby leads one to liberation or realization.

In the 1st 2 verses, Ramana says that karma (worldly activities or religious activities) will not give moksha & that it is a barrier in one's spiritual growth. But does it mean one should not do any karma? Does it mean one must drop one's business? Does it mean one must stop one's employment? Does it mean one must cease all his religious activities?

Karma does not give liberation but it is very useful. *Moksha is attained only through self-knowledge.* However, this self-knowledge is gained only through a prepared & purified mind. This preparation of the mind is called *manojaya* or *chittha- samskara* for which karma is required.

Therefore Ramana says - do perform the karma, however, when you perform the karma your *motive should be changed.* Usual motive is to fulfil worldly desires. Ramana says - do karma for the refinement of the mind. *Let the karma be converted into worship (of God) and accept whatever the result of the action as the Lord's will.* Don't pray for a particular result when performing the karma but asks the Lord to give strength to accept whatever result occurs weather results happen favourable or not (fully knowing that

the result depends so much on prarabdha) (*Law of Karma is a constant fight between the present Punyam (prayers) and the past papam (prarabdha)*). Ishwara arpana bhava and Ishwara prasada buddhi is the essence of karma yoga. Prayer for success is asking for material benefits, this is referred to as Loka Jayaha. When we pray for mental strength to accept any result we are asking for spiritual benefit which is referred to as Mano Jayaha. Any action for loka jaya is called “Karma”, while action performed for Mano jaya is called “Karma Yoga”. A Karma Yogi’s prayer is never to change the future or to change the world. A karma yogi’s prayer to God is to give a mind which can accept any kind of world, any kind of future. Then there is happiness in any situation. *I don’t want to be happy because of situations; I want to be happy in spite of situations*. This makes the mind stronger and more refined. It becomes more open to self-enquiry and develops a desire for self-knowledge.

Verse 4 – 4 fold Yoga as a means for Mano Jaya and their order.

Kaaya Vaang manah kaaryam uttamam

Poojanam japah chittanam kramaath

Word meaning

Kaaya vaang manah karyam – Action done through the body, words and mind which are

Poojanam, japah, chintanam – pooja, japah and meditation respectively

Kramaath uttamam – are superior respectively with the previous action.

Sloka meaning

Action can be done with the body, words and mind. The action done with body is pooja, the action done with words is chanting and action done with the mind is meditation. The action done with words is superior to action done with the body. The action done with the mind is superior to action done with the words.

In other words, action done with the mind is superior to action done with body and words.

In this verse Ramana maharishi elaborates about karma yoga being used to change one's mind and not the world. Karma yoga makes one's mind ready for all types of situations. When changing oneself is the goal then one becomes a spiritual person. One who wants to change the world is a materialistic person.

Karma yoga is at 3 levels because our activities are at 3 levels.

They are

1. Kayika karmani (physical activities),
2. Vachika karmani (verbal activities) and
3. Manaha karmani (mental activities).

Ramana says, the Veda-Purva part of the Vedas gives several activities. Some are for Loka jaya. Some are for mano jaya. These (mano jaya) are the *nishkama karmas* meant for strengthening the mind. They are puja, japa and chintanam.

Most people follow a materialistic type of religion, performing pujas & rituals that will get them material benefits & solve their worldly problems. The Scriptures clearly state that that these pujas & rituals will not guarantee full success. They just generate a favourable punya which will fructify only if there is no obstruction due to our past karmas. If the past papam obstructs the present Punyam generated by the puja then the result is diluted. Does this mean religion is invalid? No, it only means there is no full guarantee.

Thus, we have no way of escaping unpleasant experiences. Therefore the intelligent approach is to rise above the unpleasant experiences by strengthening the mind. The scriptures also say that religion should be used to strengthen the mind. Use religion only to strengthen the mind to rise above all types of experiences.

This strengthening of the mind is called mano jaya. So use all devotion for mano jaya. The moment one decides to do *this*, conversion of materialistic version of religion to spiritual version of the religion will happen. Lord Krishna in the Bhagwad Gita glorifies those people who follow spiritual version of the religion. He criticizes the materialistic portion of the religion. Spiritual version of religion is called Yoga.

Shri Ramana introduces four- fold yoga here. By these we can strengthen our mind which will lead to liberation. He says the karma that we do should be for that purpose (of developing a strong mind). We should do this through puja (Kayika), japa (Vachika) and chintanam (Manasa-meditation). This will lead to mano jaya and prepare one for moksha through self-knowledge.

Verse 5 – Puja as a means to Mano Jaya

Jagada Isha yukta sevanam

Astha murthy brid deva poojanam

Word meaning

Jagada sevanam Isha yukta – Service of the world having the idea that God is present everywhere (Vishwaroopa ishwara),

Astha murthy brid deva poojanam – is worship of God having eight-form or eight-fold form (asta murthy - another name for vishwaroopa).

Sloka meaning

Service of the world is service of God having eight-fold form, having the idea that everything is God alone.

Here Ramana talks about Kayika puja or the physical worship of the Lord. This worship is of 2 types. One type is the worship of the Ishta devatha done in the morning. He says there is another type of puja which is more important. *This type of puja is done throughout the day.* This is done by *converting all our actions into a form of puja or worship.* Thus every routine activity must be converted to worship.

Ramana says that one's attitude should be that the whole world is Vishwa roopa Ishwara, so all one's actions should be like an offering to the Lord. Ramana Shri refers to Vishwa roopa Ishwara as Ashta murthy Ishwara – the Lord with 8 aspects or components. The 8 facets of the Lord are the panchabhoothas (space, fire, water, air and earth), the Sun (representing all stars), the Moon (representing all planets and satellites), and the Jivarashi (all living beings)

We should offer our actions to the Lord and not expect anything in return. Whatever karma phalam we get we should accept it. Ishwara arpana & prasada buddhi is the goal. The aim of our worship is to have the strength of mind to accept whatever be the result of our actions.

Therefore convert all the worldly activities as a puja towards mano jaya.

Verse 6 – Japa as a means to Mano Jaya.

Uttama stavaat uccha mandathah

Chittajam japa dhyaanam uttamam

Word meaning

Uttama stavaat – Of Paramatma Chanting,

Uccha mandathah – singing or chanting in loud and low volume is greater or superior

Chittajam japa dhyaanam uttamam – Chanting in the mind or meditation is superior to both.

Sloka meaning

Of chanting of the paramatma, singing or chanting in loud and low volume is greater or superior. Superior to both of these is meditation or contemplation in the mind.

Here Ramana Shri talks about the Japa or Vachika aspect of karma yoga - worship. Japa means repetition of a mantra or Lord's name. Japa produces a vibration which is supposed to be beneficial. He says japa is of 3 types. They are

1. Uchcha Japa or loud chanting,
2. Manda Japa / Upamshu Japa or soft chanting &
3. Manasa Japa or mental chanting.

The most effective chanting is mental and least effective is loud chanting. Mental chanting is as good as meditation. Ramana Shri calls it Dhyana.

Japa can be used for materialistic purposes (loka jaya) or for strengthening of the mind (mano jaya). Our aim should be for mano jaya. Success for mano jaya is 100% guaranteed while for loka jaya may not be so due to the law of karma.

The mantra itself being powerful, the very chanting is beneficial, although it is better if one knows the meaning too. In Japa one should always focus on the mantra. Focus on the deity before the japa begins, as an invocation, and not during the chanting. So Japa is shabda pradhana.

Verse 7 –Chintanam or Saguna Upasana as a means to Mano Jaya.

Aajya dhaarayaa srotasaa samam

Sarala chintanam viralatah param

Word meaning

Aajya dharayaa – like the flow of ghee

Srotasaa samam – and like the flow of river water,

Sarala chintanam – effortless meditation or continuous flow of one thought

Viralatah param – is better than broken thoughts.

Sloka meaning

**Meditation or continuous thoughts (or continuity of a single thought)
which is like the flow of ghee (or oil) and river water is better than broken
thoughts.**

Ramana Shri deals with the 3rd form of Puja which is mental or Manasa Karma. In the previous verses, 5 & 6 he talks about Kayika puja (chanting where all can hear) & Vachika japa (chanting where only oneself can hear), which together are Karma Yoga. In verse 7, 8 & 9, he talks about upasana yoga which is Manasa karma or mental activity (where there is not physical chanting but only mental).

Mental focus on any ista devatha is called upasana. It is ista devata *saguna* devata dhyanam.

Verse 8 –Saguna Upasana to Abheda Upasana for Jnana Yogyatha Prapthihi

Bheda bhaavanaath soham ithyasau

Bhavana abhidha paavani mataa

Word meaning

Bheda bhavanaath – Better than the thought of a God being different from oneself

Soham ithi asau – is the thought that “I am God”,

Bhavana abhidhaa – which has no differences from God

Paavani mataa – is more sacred and preferred.

Sloka meaning

Better than the thought or Bhavana of a God different from oneself, the thought that “I am He” which has no differences is superior, more sacred and preferred.

In the first 6 verses, Ramana Shri talked about Loukika karma (worldly activities) and shastriya karmani (religious activities) activities. Initially he talked about the limitations of Karma and later about the benefits of these karmas. He also talks about how we can convert our worldly activities into a form of worship. Such a person’s aim is for mano-jaya and which makes his mind stronger. This should be the aim of karma yoga.

Mano-jaya or mental strength *expresses* in different forms – 4 fold “S” –
Benefits of mano-jaya-

1. **Satisfaction** – mind is **satisfied** and comfortable with itself.
2. **Serenity** – non-reaction or **calmness** of the mind. The mind has resistance to not be disturbed by unfavourable situations.
3. **Spiritual growth** – **reduced raga-dvesha** hence there is spiritual purity or the mind is purified. Stronger mind is not emotionally attached to external factors because the mind is comfortable with itself. Material

world is as if a crutch for the weak mind. This reduction in raga-dvesha leads to chiththa-shuddhi & mala-nivriti, purification of the mind.

Thus materialistic desires come down & spiritual desire increases.

4. **Spiritual quest** – spiritual desire leads one to self-enquiry through upasana yoga and Sadhana- Chatusthya –sampatti. Previously the goal was Mano jaya and now it is to acquire the prerequisites for Jnana yoga. Those prerequisites are Upasana yoga.

Upasana is defined as a flow of thoughts centred on God undistracted by other thoughts. Ramana Maharishi compares upasana to a continuous flow of **viscous liquid** like oil or ghee from one vessel to another. He also compares it to a flow of a **perennial river**. Ramana says *initially an effort* is required to get a continuous flow of thoughts but later on with practice it will flow *effortlessly* like the river. He says this sarala chintanam is a superior form of meditation compared to distracted meditation.

There are many benefits of this type of saguna Ishwara upasana.

1. Mano-nigraha. Regulation or control of thoughts. **Mind is controlled** or focussed.
2. When we invoke the Lord during meditation we also invoke the **virtues** of the Lord and **imbibe** it. Like compassion, peace, patience, love, fearlessness etc. By association with the Lord our mind is influenced with the very same qualities.

But saguna upasana also has some disadvantages. In this form of meditation there is always a division between God and oneself. Slowly the division is reinforced and then it becomes an obstacle for advaita spiritual growth. God is the object of meditation and I am the subject of meditation. This can be an obstruction for Advaita gnana later on. Because the final Jnanam is that there is no distance between God & me and that we are one. AhamBrahmasmi.

In dvaitha gnana, Lord is the master and I am the dasa. But there is no freedom or moksha if one is a dasa. The only way for moksha is through Advaita gnana.

So, then what is the solution? Saguna Upasana must be replaced by Abheda Upasana or Abheda dhayanam. Instead of invoking the Lord on a deity outside one invokes the Lord on oneself. Thus, Ramana says after sometime one should move from saguna upasana to Abheda upasana. Here, instead of invoking the lord on an object outside, one invokes the Lord within oneself because God is everywhere. One must practise on the fact that God is not away from oneself as He is all pervading. (Soham)

Ramana uses the word Bhakti to mean upasana. Abheda bhakti means non-dual meditation. Ramana says that this form of meditation is more sacred than the dualistic saguna upasana. This form of meditation is superior because now you are ready for Jnana yoga and self-enquiry. This upasana will facilitate Aham Brahma Asmi enquiry, which Ramana Shri discusses towards the later part of the Upadesha Saara.

Ramana Maharishi talks about karma yoga from Verse 1-6. From verse 7 -9 he talks about upasana yoga.

Upasana is a mental activity. Strictly speaking a physical puja cannot be called Upasana. When we meditate upon the Lord *with attributes* then it is called saguna upasana. When one is meditating upon the *Nirguna Brahma* then it is called *Nididhyasanam*.

Here 2 types of upasana are mentioned –

1. Bheda-Upasana where the lord is perceived different from oneself. This is Saguna upasana. This helps in chitta ekagratha and chitta shuddhi
2. Abheda-upasana where I am one with the Lord. Aham Brahma Asmi.

Everyone has to go through the first type of upasana, gain the necessary qualification and then be qualified for the 2nd type of upasana.

(The 3rd type of upasana called Vishwa roopa Upasana is not mentioned here. In this we meditate upon the Lord as the very cosmos.)

In Abheda-upasana one should start invoking the lord on oneself; the argument being that if one can invoke the lord on a stone, photograph,

fire etc., why not invoke the Lord on oneself. This is called Soham Upasana. The word soham is made up of 2 words – Saha and Aham.

Saha means ‘He’, the Lord and **Aham** means ‘I am’: **He I Am.**

Thus Soham means there is no distance between oneself and Ishwara. And this visualisation is called Abheda-upasana. This form of upasana is more superior according to Ramana.

Verse 9 – The highest Upasana – Sad Bhaava or Abheda Chitanam

Bhaava soonya sad bhaava susthithih

Bhaavana bhalaath bhakthih uttama

Word meaning

Bhaava soonya – Upasana without any divisions

Sad Bhaava susthithih – Remaining totally absorbed in Sad Bhaava (Abheda Chintanam)

Bhavana Bhalaath – is achieved through deliberate repetition for a length of time

Bhakthih uttama – is the highest state of upasana.

Sloka meaning

Upasana without any divisions, Nirvikalpa samadhi, when a person is totally absorbed in abheda chintanam, is achieved through practice alone & is the highest upasana.

IN Upasana 2 stages are spoken about –

1. One is deliberately thinking about the deity where willpower is involved and therefore the division is very evident. This is called Savikalpa-Avastha or Savikalpa-Samadhi (absorption). Savikalpa means division. Thus there is absorption in the deity with division (Dwaita).
2. After continuous practice the mind gets used to the thought and thereafter does not require a deliberate effort. Absorption happens without any effort from the meditator and hence there is no division between the meditator and the object of meditation. This is called Nirvikalpa-Samadhi. The mind continues to meditate without any effort from the meditator, without will power or individuality (Advaita).

Ramana calls it Sadbhava which means Abheda-chintanam. Bhaava-shunya means without any division. Remaining absorbed in division-less thoughts

without being distracted happens only after deliberate chanting (bhavana-balam), this is the highest state of upasana.

Note : we should remember that *Advaita upasana* or *Abheda-upasana* is different from *Advaita gnana* or *abheda-gnanam*. *Advaita upasana* is only a visualisation or an assumption that I am God. It is not a fact. No self-enquiry is involved. *Advaita gnana* comes later through shastra-vichara, by Sravanam, Mananam & Nididhyasanam under the guidance of a competent teacher for a length of time. After an elaborate self-enquiry process a Jnani arrives at the fact that I am God, Aham Braham Asmi. Thus, the imagination state becomes a stepping stone for the later stage of Jnanam.

Verse 10 – The Unified goal of the 4 fold Yoga

Hrit sthale manah swasthathaa kriya

Bhakthi yoga bhodaascha nishchitam

Word meaning

Manah swasthathaa – fixing the mind

Hrit shtale – within oneself is the aim

Kriya – of Karma.

Bhakthi – of Upasana,

Yoga – of astanga Yoga,

Bhodah cha –Jnaanam also

Nischitam – definitely.

Sloka meaning

Abiding the mind in oneself, is the aim of Karma, Upasana, astanga Yoga and Jnaanam definitely.

With the 9th shlokas the topic of Upasana is over. After karma yoga & upasana yoga, Ramana Shri now introduces **ashtanga yoga** (verse11-12) (concentration on pranayama) and **gnana yoga** (verse 13 -30). Before going into it he says that all the 4 yoga's have the same ultimate goal and one should remember that always.

Manaswasthatha – the mind should abide in one's own nature, Swaroopam, because the atmaswaroopam (ones real nature) is the only source of permanent peace, security & happiness (since there is no fear of losing this). Thus the mind should abide in the un-losable atma. Mind abiding in external objects causes stress. Ramana says this atma is within you in your mind (heart) as the chaitanyamsakshi.

Does this mean that this must be the only goal and one has to stop all kind of activities? Even though one carries out his daily activities his mind is always abiding in the atma, subconsciously, so one get PHS from within and not from outside. This is called Jeevan-mukthi. This is the aim of all four Sadhanas. Kriya-bhakthi-yoga-bodha (read as a compound word) which are the 4 yoga's as mentioned by Ramana are all prescribed for

Manaswasthatha – mental abidance in oneself (God and Atma are not different).

1. Kriya – karma yoga (Verses 1-6)
2. Bhakthi – upasana yoga (Verses 7-9)
3. Yoga- ashtanga yoga (pranayama) (Verses 11-12)
4. Bodha–Gnana yoga(Verses 13-end)

Verse 11 – Use Pranayama to calm the mind

Vaayurodhanaath leeyathe manah

Jaala pakshivad rodhasaadhanam

Word meaning

Vayurodhanaath – By control of breath,

Manah leeyathe – the thoughts in the wandering mind subside

Jaala pakshivad rodha saadhanam – like a fluttering bird trapped in a cage

Sloka meaning

By control of breath, the thoughts in the wandering mind subside. This is like a fluttering bird being trapped in a cage.

Ramana Maharishi discusses ashtanga yoga, especially pranayama which involves regulating and controlling the breath. **Pranayama** is one of the 8 limbs of astanga yoga. Vayu – breathe – Prana & Rodhanam – regulation. Shri Ramana deals with Ashtanga yoga, focussing on pranayama. He says pranayama is a spiritual discipline which helps in calming the mind. If this pranayama is done along with a mantra then it is even more beneficial. It helps to purify the mind. By regulating the breath, the mind becomes like a caged bird – it cannot wander.

Ramana says that another way of quietening the mind is by regulating our breathing. It has been scientifically proved that deep breathing brings about beneficial chemical changes in the body. Breathing and the mind are interconnected.

He says that by regulating the breath the thoughts in the wandering mind subside. He compares it to a caged fluttering bird. Pranayama serves like a cage for the wandering mind. Thus pranayama is one method of quietening the mind.

Verse 12 – Prana and Manaha are closely interconnected

Chittavayavah chitkriya yutaah

Shaakayor dvayee shakthi moolaka

Word meaning

Chittavaayavah – Mind and prana (internal breath)

Chit kriya yutaah – endowed with chit-Satva guna-Jnana shakti and kriya shakti-rajo guna respectively

Shaakayor dvayee – these (rajasa kriyashakthi yukta pranaha and satvika Jnana shakti yukta manaha) are the two branches

Shakthi moolaka – Shakti is maya or prakrithi, moolaha is the seed.

Sloka meaning

Mind and prana endowed with Jnana shakti and kriya shakti respectively are the two branches of maya or divine Brahman the root cause.

Here Ramana gives the logic behind the concept of controlling the mind through breath control. Are breath & mind are connected? He says both prana and mind are born out of the same prakrithi (subtle matter) and hence are inter-connected. By controlling one you can control the other.

Shri Ramana logically explains how pranayama helps in preparing the mind and the connection between prana & manaha. According to the scriptures, both prana & manaha have originated from the panchabhoothas or the 5 elements of nature. These panchabhoothas have originated from maya or prakrithi or shakthi (basic matter). This shakthi or basic matter is endowed with 3 gunas – satva, rajas & tamas. Satva is gnana shakthi & rajas are kriya shakthi.

The panchabhoothas also have the 3 gunas. Scriptures say that shakthi is like the seed & the panchabhoothas are like the trunk of the tree. 2 branches arise from this trunk. One branch is born out of the satvaguna of panchabhootha & the other from the rajoguna of the panchabhootha.

The satvaguna branch is called manaha endowed with gnanashakthi & the rajoguna branch is called pranaha endowed with kriyashakthi. This shows that both prana & the mind are like 2 limbs of the same tree. They are linked to each other.

Shri Ramana says that since both are connected to each other, if you regulate one the other automatically gets regulated. So through pranayama you regulate the breath & indirectly the mind also. This helps in manas-shanthi. If we control the breath you control the mind. Therefore pranayama is a very useful Sadhana.

With this verse the topic of ashtanga yoga is over. Now Shri Ramana talks about the main section of the Upadesha Saram and that is Gnana Yoga from verse 13 to 29th verse.

Verse 13 to 16 deals with introduction to gnana yoga, the principle of Jnana Yoga, role & purpose of gnana yoga.

Verse 13 – Principle of Jnana Yoga is “Rodhanam”. Destroy the problematic mind

Laya Vinaashane Ubhaya Rodhane

Laya gatham punar bhavathi no mritam

Word meaning

Laya Vinaashane – Resolving / Dissolution and removal of the mind

Ubhaya Rodhane – are the two types of control of the mind, among these

Laya gatham punar bhavathi –temporarily resolved mind again rises up

No Mritam – but the destroyed mind never rises again.

Sloka meaning

Resolving and destruction of the mind are the two different types of control of the mind. Among these two, the temporarily resolved mind again rises up, but the destroyed mind never rises again as it is dead.

Introduction to gnana yoga is given here. One should remember that karma yoga, upasana yoga & ashtanga yoga are preparatory steps to Jnana Yoga or liberation but they themselves do not give liberation. Only gnana yoga gives liberation. Everyone has to go through gnana yoga to get liberation. You can enter the temple through 4 main doors but there is only one door to enter into the garbhagudi to see the Lord.

The principles of gnana yoga - This can be presented in several ways. Ramana presents in a particular manner. Gnana yoga is required for moksha or liberation from bondage of samsara (insecurity / sorrow) or human problems. According to the scriptures all the problems are created by the mind. So if one wants liberation from samsara, one has to control the mind. The main aim of Jnana yoga is to remove the problematic mind. Ramana Maharishi calls this removal as “rodhanam”. He says this problematic mind can be removed in 2 ways –

1. **Laya of manaha** – Is temporary resolution or dissolution of the mind as in the states of Sleep, Pranayama, astanga yoga, drug and liquor
2. **Vinasha of the manaha** – Permanent removal of the mind

Mano - Layaha means temporarily dissolving the mind in the form of resolving the mind. The mind becomes dormant. In this dormant or *sleeping* state the mind is free from problems. Through *pranayama & ashtanga yoga samadhi* also we can achieve this state of calm or quiet mind. Some try it through *liquor & drugs*. But this is temporary.

Mano Vinashanam means the destruction of the problematic mind permanently which he discusses in the 14th verse. A spiritual seeker never goes for laya but for vinashana of the mind

Verse 14 – How to destroy the Problematic mind?

Praana bandhanaath leena maanasam

Eka chintanaath naasham etyada

Word meaning

Leena maanasam – Mind is resolved temporarily

Praana bandhanaath – by pranayama,

Adah – This ignorant mind (which has been resolved)

Naasam ethi – gets destroyed

Eka chintanaath – atma vichara - by thought on the ONE ultimate reality (concentration on the non-dual reality)(Jnana Yoga)

Sloka meaning

Mind resolved by control of prana or breath gets destroyed by knowledge of the ultimate Reality of non-dual Self or Consciousness.

Ramana talks about how to destroy the ignorant mind in this verse. According to the Scriptures a mind is problematic only when it is ignorant of its real nature of the self or Atma. Thus *ignorant mind is the problematic mind*. Thus to remove samsara you have to remove ignorance and replacing it with wisdom or Jnanam. Gnana yoga leads to an enlightened mind which leads to liberation.

In this verse Shri Ramana says by pranayama one may quieten the mind temporarily and through atma Jnanam the mind gets quietened permanently. It destroys all the problems in the mind. He says one get this Jnanam through atma- vichara or eka –chitthanam or self-enquiry. Through this one gets an enlightened mind which removes all ignorance and with this all problems of samsara are destroyed. Jnana yoga will not destroy the mind but it will replace the ignorant mind with a wise mind. Such a Jnani is a liberated person.

Verse 15 – Jeevan Mukta: The benefits of the liberated mind.

Nastha maanasotkrishta yoginah

Krityam asthi kim svasthithim yathah

Word meaning

Utkrishta Yoginah – The greatest Yogi

Nasta maanasa – whose mind has been destroyed,

Svasthithim yathah – and who abides in his atma swaroopam, who has discovered his inner self.

Krityam kim asthi – what is there to be accomplished (what action to be performed)?

Sloka meaning

For that greatest Yogi, whose mind has been destroyed and who is always established in the Self, what action is to be performed (for the sake of fulfilment)???

Ramana Maharishi gives the benefits of a liberated mind. (Jivan muktha). He says a Jnani is one who is free from a problematic mind. He is not affected by samsara. He says, he is the greatest of all yogis (Utkrishta Yogi), because he has passed through all the yogas successfully (Karma, upasana, ashtanga & gnana yoga). Such a yogi abides in his atma-swaroopam. He has discovered his inner self which is the only source of permanent peace, security & happiness (Swasthithi). He need not look outside for PSH. Such a yogi has accomplished whatever is there to accomplish in life. He is a fulfilled person. He has nothing else to accomplish for the sake of fulfilment. He works in this world **with** happiness, security and peace and not **for** happiness, security and peace. How to do this self-enquiry? Verse 16 onwards Ramana Shri talks about self-enquiry.

Verse 16 - The Vedantic Principle of DrikDrishyaViveka (Seed Verse)

Drishya vaaritham chittam (self-knowledge) atmanah

Chittva darshanam Tattva darshanam

Word meaning

Drishya vaaritham chittam Atmanah –With the self-knowledge, the mind negates all drishya (sense) objects (world-body-mind)

Chittva darshanam –this is the vision of one’s own Consciousness.

Tattva darshanam – that is knowledge of reality also.

Sloka meaning

With self-knowledge, the mind withdraws from the seen, this is the vision of Consciousness. That is the vision of reality also.

There are two portions in Upadesha Saara.

1. Preparatory Part (First 15 Verses)
2. Self-Enquiry Part (Last 15 Verses)

In the preparatory portion the Karma, Upasana and astanga yoga were dealt with.

Ramana Maharishi summarises (sankshepa) the *atma-chitthanam* or self-enquiry process in the 16th verse and elaborates (vistara) on it from 17th verse onwards. This second portion of the Upadesha Sara is little bit abstract, needs concentration to understand. It is also the condensed version of the Upanishads. Thus it is the Upadesha Saara

In the 16th verse Shri Ramana conveys 2 basic principles of Vedanta, which are used for self-enquiry. If these are grasped Vedanta is a walk over. If this is not grasped the foundation of Vedanta will collapse

These two principles are –

1. **Drik-DrishyaViveka - I, the experiencer (Consciousness) am different from whatever I experience in front of me.** The experiencer (subject) is different from the experienced (objects). Through negation we can reject the world - body-mind complex (more and more intimate in that order, yet the experienced) as not me, the Consciousness. (*Neti-neti* method in Upanishadic language or *Drishyavaritham*). After negation the only thing left is the *Drik* or Conscious Principle or the *sakshichaitanyam*, the observer, the subject.
2. **DrikDrishyaViveka – II, All the attributes I experience belong to the experienced objects and not to me, the experiencer, the subject Atma).** Consciousness is without attributes & properties. It is *nirakara*, *nirgunachaitanyaasmi*. This transcending the form (body) is real transformation.

This all-pervading *nirakara*, *nirgunasakshichaitanyam* is my higher nature. Remembering and abiding in this *chaitanyam* is *Jeevan mukthi*. For the purpose of worldly transactions we can use the “I” which identifies with the body-mind complex. This is called the *ahankara*.

Ramana Shri in this verse says that the knowledge through which I have negated all the objects of experience is self-enquiry or *atmajnanam* and we get *atma-darshanam* or *chitva-darshanam*. This self-knowledge is called *tatva-darshanam* or the knowledge of reality.

Verse 17 – The Direct Path to Reality: Idam Vritti to Aham Vritti to Atma.

Maanasam tu kim maargane krithe

Naiva maanasam marge arjavaath

Word meaning

Kim maargane Krithe – What (source of)? Enquire this way

Maanasam tu – this mind (bunch of idam vritti thoughts)

Naiva maanasam –there is no mind (idam vritti thoughts disappear).

Marge arjavaath – this is the direct path to reality

Sloka meaning

When a person enquires “What is the source of the mind”, he finds out that there is no mind. This is the direct path to reality.

Verse 17 onwards is a commentary on the 16th verse by Ramana Maharishi, is an elaboration on self-enquiry. How is this enquiry going to proceed? Several methods are described in shastra.

1. The whole world is reduced to three avasthas, jagrat / swapna and shushukthi and the negation of the world is done by avastaitraiva Viveka.
2. Another method is Panchakosha Viveka.

The method used by Ramana is described here. He says the entire world depends for its existence upon one’s perception. World existence depends on world perception. If we do not perceive a part of the world, then as far as we are concerned that part of the world is as good as non-existing. For example, if an incident occurs concerning a relative living abroad, then as long as the news does not reach us, that particular event has not occurred as far as we are concerned. The world will affect us only when it is within the range of your perception.

Thus, Ramana Shri says that world existence depends upon the perception by oneself, the subject/consciousness. Perception takes place in the form of thought. So the world depends upon one’s *thoughts* for its existence. *It has a dependent existence and hence is not real.*

For example, if ones beauty is dependent on the dress & jewellery then in their absence one is not beautiful. So here beauty has a dependent existence. It is not real beauty.

Ramana maharishi uses the word, '*idam vrithi*' for worldly thoughts or experienced thoughts. It is different from "'I" thought' called '*Aham Vrithi*'.

Idam vrithi depends upon aham vrithi for its existence. Without 'I', the 1st person singular, the 2nd or 3rd person does not exist.

1st person – I am (**aham** or ahankara)

2nd person – you are (**idam**)

3rd person – he, she, it is (**idam**)

Second & third person can exist only if "I" am (1st person).

Thus idam vrithi depends upon the aham vrithi or ahankara for its existence. So world depends upon the thoughts. All the thoughts depends upon "**I" thought or the ahankara.** (These were elaborated by Ramana in a later work *Ullada Napada*, Reality in 40 Verses– Translated to Sanskrit as *Sat Darshanam* by Ganapathi muni his disciple). That is why when one sleeps, the "I" thought resolves and therefore the world thought also resolves. When one wakes up, the "I" thought (*ahankara*) arises and then the world comes to existence.

Ramana says that this "I" thought or *ahankara* is also dependent upon the original "I" or the Consciousness or atma. "I" thought is also subject to arrival & departure whereas the original "I" or consciousness is always there. It is not subject to arrival & departure.

Thus our journey through self-enquiry is through world thoughts (objects) to "I" thoughts (*ahankara*) to Real "I" or Consciousness, which is the real self.

In **the 17th verse** He says when one enquires into the world, it will be reduced to a bunch of thoughts which is called the mind (this step is not mentioned in the verse and has to be supplied). Then when one enquires into the mind, it disappears into the "I" thought and then the only thing remaining is the Atma. And since the method of enquiry is straight forward one will get moksha also instantly. He discusses how to do that in next verses.

From the 16th verse Ramana maharishi enters into the main topic of Upadesha Sara namely *Jnana yoga or atma vichara* which is the essence of all the Upanishads.

This enquiry is conducted in 3 stages

In the **1st Stage** the whole universe is taken as a whole and it is reduced to a bunch of thoughts. The 1st stage is, resolving the world into a bunch of thoughts, is not mentioned in the text. He takes it for granted. He deals with the 2nd & 3rd stage. Ramana Maharishi says that one cannot prove the existence of the world or separate the world from the thoughts of the world. Thus the world has dependent existence on the thoughts or the mind. Thus we travel from the world to the mind. This is the 1st stage.

In the **2nd stage**, Ramana Shri says the thoughts cannot exist independent of the ego (“I” thought). The **2nd Stage is Mind to ego** – *manasantukim ...*, where Ramana asks what this mind is? When you make an enquiry thus, this mind disappears. That is, it has no independent existence. It is only name & form. No substance. (Example, Clay pot is only name and form of the substance clay. So the pot has no independent existence without the substance, clay.) Understanding the non-substantiality of the pot is called disappearance of the pot in Vedanta. Similarly we say the mind disappears on enquiry. It is only name & form. Thus the mind continues to exist for daily transactions but it is no longer known as an independent entity. . Just as the pot is not separate from the clay so also the mind is not independent of the ego or “I” thought (*naivamanasam*). In and through every experience the “I” thought is inherent in it. Without it one cannot experience anything. He says the thoughts or the mind do not exist separate from the ego or the ‘I’.

Ramana establishes that even the ego or “I” thought does not exist without the real ‘I’ or *atma or chaitanyam*. This is the **3rd stage**. This is the final destination of our spiritual journey.

1. **World** does not exist separate from the **mind**
2. The **mind** does not exist separate from the **“I”thought or ahankara or ego**
3. **“I” thought** cannot exist separate from the **consciousness**

Thus **World** to **thoughts** in **mind** to the **ego** to the **consciousness** is the
DIRECT spiritual journey.

Verse 18 – The Mind Depends on the “I” Thought for its Existence

Vritthayasthvaham vrittim aasrithaah

Vrittayo manah viddhyaham manah

Word meaning

Tu – Now

Vrittayah manah – Bunch of Thoughts are the mind.

Vrittayah aham vrittim aasrithaah – the thoughts indeed depend upon I-Thought (the first person thought).

Viddhi – Therefore know that

Aham manah – “I”-thought is the mind.

Sloka meaning

**Now, thoughts are the mind. The thoughts depend upon I-thought alone.
Hence know that I-thought is the mind.**

This is a commentary on the previous shlokas, on how to enquire into the mind. Ramana says ‘*vritthyomano*’; mind is a bunch of thoughts. There is no substance called mind as it is but a name given to a bunch of thoughts. That is why when we sleep, the thoughts are resolved and the mind is not experienced. For example, a variety of fruits make up a fruit salad. A salad has no existence without the fruits. So also the mind. A group of thoughts is called mind but the mind has no existence without the thoughts.

In sleep there is no “I” thought therefore there is no world thought also. The mind is dependent on the ego (“I” thought) for its existence. The ego is the cause of samsara. When you remove the ego all your problems automatically disappears.

Verse 19 – “I” Thought, ego Depends on the Consciousness for existence

Aham ayam kuto bhavathi chinvatha

Ayi patathyaham nija vicharanam

Word meaning

Kutah – How

Ayam – this

Aham – I-thought, ego

Bhavathi – is created

Chinvatha – suppose a person enquires

Ayi – Oh! (Great wonder)

Aham Patathi – the “I”-thought, ego vanishes.

Nija Vicharanam – this is Self-Enquiry.

Sloka meaning

“How this “I”-thought, ego arises?”, if a person enquires, “I”-thought, ego vanishes. This is Self-Enquiry.

3rd Stage, Ego to Consciousness. This is mentioned in the 19th verse on how to handle the ahankara. Ahankara also disappears on enquiry. Ego also does not have an independent existence. This is the subtlest topic in self-enquiry.

According to Vedanta, the ego is nothing but my reflection or image formed in the mind which serves like a mirror. The ego is the reflected image of the real “I” or *atma*. Any reflection is a mysterious entity. The reflected “I” (*prathibimbamukham*) is different from the mirror (mind) and the original “I” (*bimbamukam*). It is the third entity. Although one experiences it, does the third entity exist independently? If we remove the mirror or the face the reflection disappears. Thus, it is not an entity separate from the *bimbamukam*. This mysterious entity is called **Mitya** in Vedanta. It seems to appear when the *bimbamukam* (*atma*) and the mirror (mind) are in proximity and disappears when one of them is separated from the other.

Thus, in sleep, when the mind resolves, the ego also resolves. The *prathibimba* is visible whereas the *bimba* is not visible.

The *prathibimbamukam* does not have its own original attributes. It borrows some attributes from the mirror, some from the face and a cooked up mysterious third entity called reflection arises. The attributes of location and clarity of the image are borrowed from the mirror, while the facial features are borrowed from the face. Vedanta says this third mysterious entity is **Mitya**. *The ego is nothing but one's own image formed in the mind, called reflected consciousness, it has cooked up attributes of the original consciousness and the mind.* The emotions are borrowed from the mind, while the consciousness is borrowed from the original consciousness. Thus *ego is an emotional conscious mysterious entity.* This image, ego, has a temporary existence, when the atma and the mind are in close proximity. During deep sleep one does not experience the ego or the "I" thought. It resolves as the mind (mirror) has resolved.

Thus Ramana asks, from where does this "I" thought arise? When one enquires into it, one negates the ego, the "I" thought or ego disappears. Thus when one enquires into the ego (the cooked up entity), one must handover the emotions to the mind and claim the consciousness as one's real self. Only thing left is the original "I" or the original consciousness. The ego is visible just as the reflected image is visible. But the original "I" like the *bimbamukam* being the subject can never be seen as an object and must be accepted as myself. When the mirror, the mind is negated then the reflected image, the ego (located in the mind) disappears. What is left is the face, the original consciousness which is located outside the mirror or the mind. The mistake one makes at this point is to look for the face, the original consciousness. This is ever evident although it cannot be 'seen' since it is oneself, subject and never the object. Separating the original "I" from the mirror, the mind is the real enquiry. This is *nija vicharanam*, self-enquiry.

Ramana Shri talks about Gnana yoga which is a difficult and abstract concept. He points out that the *ahankara* is also an object of our knowledge. In the philosophical context the word *ahankara* does not mean pride & arrogance but it means the individuality, 'I'. This "I" has a bio-data like I am male/female, I am old/young etc. This individualistic 'I' is called *ahankara* in

Vedanta. This 'I' is available during the waking stage as I am aware of myself. During sleep stage this 'I' is resolved and I don't have a bio-data at that time.

This individualistic 'I' which comes and goes is called ahankara in Vedanta. In Vedanta ahankara is defined as my own reflection formed in the mind mirror. When you stand in front of a mirror, your reflection in the mirror is an object of your experience. That reflected image is subject to fluctuation depending upon the condition of the mirror. For example, a dull mirror will have dull reflection; moving mirror will have a moving reflection. When the mirror is removed then the reflection is also not there but I, the observer, am always there.

Similarly Ramana Maharishi wants to say that "I" am the atma, never the observed object but ever the observer subject. And my own image (atma-abhasa) is formed on the mind which serves as the mirror. This atma-abhasa is called ahankara which is an object of experience. This ahankara will have fluctuations depending upon the condition of the mind. When the mind has happy thoughts – ahankara is the happy 'I'. When the mind has depressive thoughts – ahankara is depressed 'I'. During sleep when the mind is resolved, the ahankara is also resolved. Therefore Bhagwan maharishi says that the object ahankara comes and goes but the subject atma never comes and goes. And instead of claiming the ahankara as me we should learn to claim the atma or the sakshichaitanya as the real 'I'.

Verse 20 – When “I” Thought, ego is destroyed the Consciousness Shines

Ahami naasha bhaajyaham aham tayaa

Sphurathi Hrut Svayam parama poorna sat

Word meaning

Ahami Naasha bhaaji – When the I-thought (Ego or Ahamkaara) is destroyed,

aham aham tayaa – The real “I”

Hrut – the pure I or Consciousness present in the heart

Sphurathi – shines forth

Svayam – on its own

Parama Poorna Sat – as the limitless unlocalized timeless original consciousness and as permanent un-negatable entity

Sloka meaning

When Ego is destroyed, the Consciousness shines forth on its own as the limitless, unlocalized, timeless, original consciousness, Chit and as permanent un-negatable entity, Sat

Referring to the same example between the face and the reflection, the reflection comes and goes, is subject to arrival and departure. The reflection is a pseudo face; it is variable (as with a convex and a concave mirror) and depends on the mirror. Similarly we have the “I” which is the original consciousness which is reflected in the mirror, the mind as the ego. Thus the ego is variable (if the mind is happy we say “I” am happy, when the mind is disturbed we say “I” am disturbed) and is subject to arrival and departure (goes in sleep and comes back when we wake up). The aim of Vedanta is to “dis-claim” the pseudo self, the ego and “claim” the original consciousness which remains after dis-claiming the ego, which is non-variable and is constantly there. Ramana Shri says that when the ego is destroyed, after enquiring into the mind, the self which is the original consciousness shines forth independently. It is the original “I”. It is not

subject to arrival & departure. One should claim this original consciousness as it is always there. However, the original “I” is not suitable for daily worldly transactions. Use the reflected “I”, the ego, for worldly transactions but always be anchored to the original consciousness. AhamBrahmanAsmi.

Even when the ahankara is resolved in sleep, I the atma is very much there. That atma is the real “I”. This Atma is always present and shining (sphurathi). Ramana describes the nature of Atma as parama-purnaha. It means Atma is absolutely limitless because all the limitations belong to the body, mind and intellect. Thus “I” am the conscious principle, the Atma which is all pervading. I am the **chit**-roopa atma, which is sarvagatha. “I” the limitless atma am the observer of the limited body, mind & ahankara.

Ramana also adds another significant expression. He describes the nature of atma as the conscious principle (chit) as well as the existence principle (**sat**). I am sat-chit-atma. Vedanta says that if you have to prove the existence of any object in the creation, then it should be known. If an object is not known then it is as good as not-existing. Thus a thing has to be knowable to prove its existence. *Existence pre-supposes know-ability*. There should be a knowing principle (knower) for an object to be known thereby proving its existence. Thus a knower is required to show the existence of anything in this creation. This knower should be a conscious entity. Whenever an object comes within the consciousness of a knower then only its existence is known. Thus Vedanta says *Consciousness alone lends existence to the objects of the creation*. Therefore, this whole world of objects has borrowed existence depending upon the conscious principle/knower/observer. So, according to Vedanta the nature of consciousness is not only chit but also sat. That is why Ramana Shri mentions here that chit alone is sat and sat alone is chit. He further says that “I”, the atma, am sat (existence principle) & chit (conscious principle). I am the sat-chit-atma and the whole world’s existence depends upon me. Therefore he says only the param-purna-atma remains when you negate everything.

Verse 21 – The real meaning of “I”: Sat-Chit-Atma

Idam Aham pada abhikyamanvaham

Ahami leenakepyalaya Sattayaa

Word meaning

Idam – This (sat-chit-atma alone)

Aham pada abhikyam – Is the real meaning of the word Aham or “I”

Anu Aham – Every day

Ahami Leenake api – & when the ego resolves (Night)

Alaya sattaya – (Because of my nature of) Indestructible existence.

Sloka meaning

This sat-chit-atma is the real meaning of the word “I”, every day, and when the ego resolves (Night), because of my nature of indestructible existence.

Ramana Maharishi says that this sat-chit-atma alone is continuously there throughout the life without arrival or departure in all the states, wakeful, dream and sleep. Here, he applies the Vedantic law – *whatever is subject to arrival and departure is not my real nature. This is my incidental nature.* The *chaitanyam* principle is not subject to arrival and departure. It is my intrinsic nature (Example of boiling vegetables in a pot of water over a flame: The vegetables, water & the pot become hot because they have borrowed heat from the fire. Heat is not their intrinsic nature but incidental nature. So when the fire is removed it loses the heat. The intrinsic nature of the fire is heat. It is always there and not subject to arrival and departure). Thus the attributes of the physical body, senses, ahankara appear and disappear. It is incidental and not my real nature. My real intrinsic nature is sat-chit-atma. This is the real “I” or the self. He says in the deep sleep stage when everything (ahankara) dissolves then only the conscious principle is there witnessing the arrival & departure of the ahankara. “I” the witness am always there. This “I”, the witness consciousness is the real Atma. In deep

sleep the witness consciousness is aware of the absence of ahankara and is also the witness to the arrival of ahankara in the waking state. To know the presence or absence of something we need a conscious, witness principle. This atma is the one that make us aware that we slept deeply.

Verse 22 – Pancha-Kosha-Viveka: The Method to Wake-up to the Atma

Vigrahendriya praana dheetamah

Naham eka sat tad jadam hi asat

Word meaning

Aham – I, (am) the Consciousness **Eka sat** – the one and only Existence or reality in world.

Vigraha indriya praana dhee tamah – annamayakosha, manomayakosha, pranamayakosha, vignanamayakosha and anandamayakosha

Na –(are) not me as

Tad jadam – they (all 5) are insentient

Hi – and hence

Asat – non-existent

Sloka meaning

I am the Consciousness, the one and only Existence or reality in the world. The five layers are not me as they are insentient and hence do not have an independent existence.

In this verse Ramana presents the method of arriving to this atma, the observer or witness by employing a methodology used in the Taitriya Upanishad. In the 2nd chapter of this Upanishad, the method of *Pancha-kosha-viveka* is discussed. *Pancha-kosha-viveka* means dividing our personality into 5 layers and negating each one of them and gradually withdrawing from each layer till you reach the *sakshi* principle of the pancha-kosha. Thus we reach PMK and negate AMK, we reach MMK and negate PMK, we reach VMK and negate MMK, we reach AnMK and negate VMK and finally we reach the sakshi chaitanyam and negate AnMK. (*neti-neti*). Ramana summarises this method in this verse. The 5 layers of the pancha-kosha mentioned by Ramana in this verse are -

1. **Vigraha** - is the *Annamaya-kosha* (AMK)– physical or anatomical personality is an object of experience, is negated.
2. **Prana** – is the *Pranamaya-kosha* (PMK)– physiological personality is an object of experience so is negated
3. **Indriya** – is the *Manomaya-kosha* (MMK)– psychological or emotional personality is experienced too, so is negated
4. **Dhee** - *Vignanamaya-kosha* (VMK)– intellectual or thinking or rational personality is experienced too, so is negated
5. **Tamaha**- is the *Anandamaya Kosha* (AnMK) – the potential personality experienced during deep sleep stage. Tamaha means total blankness experienced in deep sleep stage. This being experienced too, is thus negated.

This total blankness is negated by the observer or the sakshichaitanya.

Vedanta says one should claim this sakshichaitanya as one's true nature. I should claim "I" am that. "I", the atma am different from the pancha kosha because the 5 layers are jadam in nature. They are made up of matter. They are material in nature whereas "I" am the non-material chetanam, Conscious principle. Because of my chetana principle the body is existing. Thus the body has a borrowed existence (asat). The world has borrowed consciousness & existence from me, the conscious principle. (eg. Dream: we are scared of the dream tiger). Ramana says wake up to your true nature. Know that you are the waker and this whole world is created, sustained and resolved by you.

maieva sakalam jatam
mayi sarvam pratishtitam
mayi sarvam layam yati
tat brahmadvayam asmyaham
(Kaivalya Upanishad)

The scriptures define atma as pure existence & consciousness which an ordinary person finds difficult to understand. It is very abstract concept to grasp intellectually and so remain as just words in our minds without any real meaning attached to it. So the scriptures suggest that we have to fine tune our intellect to grasp this subtle concept. The scriptures recommend

that start with the material world before dealing with the *atma*. This is similar to the need for using a fine instrument for cataract surgery.

The material world is divided into 5 layers. Each layer is finer and abstract, than the previous layer. Start dwelling on the grossest form of matter and then in a graded manner reach the finest & most refined form of matter. Only then are you ready to dwell on the non-material abstract *Atma* (example: like acclimatization done by mountaineers by living at camps at various altitudes). Scriptures give many *Upasanas* to help in refining the mind in order to grasp the concept of pure existence and consciousness. This material stratification in 5 layers is done both at the **objective & subjective** level.

At the objective level it is divided into **pancha-bhoothani** – each level more abstract than the other. - The levels are-

1. **Earth-Bhoomi** – Grossest material form.
It is easily perceivable by all the 5 sense organs. It has *shabdha*, *sparsha*, *roopa*, *rasa* & *gandha* properties
2. **Water** – *Jala* -little more subtle than the earth. Recognised by 4 sense organs.
It has *shabdha*, *sparsha*, *roopa* & *rasa* properties, all except *gandha*.
3. **Fire** – *Agni* – even more subtle. It is perceived by 3 sense organs. It has the *shabdha*, *sparsha* & *roopa* properties but not *rasa* and *gandha*.
4. **Air** – *vayu*. Subtler still. It is perceived by two sense organs only. It has the *shabdha* & *sparsha* properties only.
5. **Space** – *akasha* – subtlest form of matter. No sense organ can grasp. With practice the intellect can be refined to grasp this. If the intellect dwells on the *akasha* matter for a length of time, then the intellect is refined to grasp abstract material. Once the teacher realises that the student can understand the concept of matter then he can raise the level of teaching to a higher level with reference to the existence principle which pervades the *akasha* but which is a non-material principle.

In this verse Ramana uses the subjective stratification. At the subjective level (individual) also, the material is stratified into 5 levels of matter called **Panchakosha** – each level more refined & subtler than the previous one.

1. **Annamaya-kosha** – grossest *physical* form
2. **Pranamaya-kosha** - *Physiological* level
3. **Manomaya-kosha** - *Emotional* level
4. **Vignana maya-kosha** - *Intellectual* level
5. **AnandamayaKosha**- *subtlest* form of matter. It is the blankness we experience during meditation, deep sleep stage – Shri Ramana refers to this level as tamaha in this verse. When we experience this blankness we should remember there is consciousness pervading. It is this consciousness which is able to perceive the blankness. This blankness should not be mistaken for nothingness. It is the finest form of matter. All the five layers are jadam only the consciousness is sentient.

Why so?

Anything material is subject to the laws of nature & undergoes changes, whereas Consciousness / Existence are not subject to any laws & hence they do not undergo any modifications.

Whereas, the panchakoshas are subject the laws of nature. They are

1. **Bhautika** (made up of matter),
2. **Drishyam** (object of experience), and
3. **Savikara** (subject to change).

Therefore they are jadam or inert which are made sentient by the non-material conscious principle. This is not a part, property or the product of the body.

Shri Ramana says I am the sat-chit-atma which is ekam. Matter is anekam. I am the non-material consciousness blessing or enlivening the material body.

Verse 23 – “I” am: Consciousness. “I” am: Existence.

Satva bhaasikaa chit kvavetharaa

Sattayaa hi chit chittayaa hi aham

Word meaning

Satva Bhaasikaa – Which can illumine Existence or Sat as an object³,

Kvava ithara – Separate from existence²

Chit – Where is the Consciousness¹? **Hi** – Because

Sattayaa chit – Consciousness is in the form of existence,

Hi – and **Chittayaa aham** – I am Consciousness.

Sloka meaning

Where is consciousness separate from existence which can objectify the existence as an object? Because Existence is Consciousness and I am Consciousness.

The word sat (pure existence) and chits (pure consciousness) are given as the definition of atma which also are synonymous with the self or “I”. Ramana says you cannot objectify any one of them. The atma cannot be seen or experienced. The experiencer cannot become the experienced object. We have to claim the sat-chit-atma as my real nature. The word *atmanubhava* can be confusing. It does not mean one has experienced atma. It again means, claiming the atma as oneself.

He says consciousness (chit) and existence (sat) cannot have a subject-object relationship. They cannot objectify each other. It cannot be experienced. It is my nature. He says consciousness is existence and existence is consciousness and it pervades the matter.

“I” exist in the form of that nonmaterial conscious principle pervading the material pancha-kosha making them alive and functioning; “I” am the non-material existence pervading the material panchabhuthas making them

existent. Because of me the body or pancha-kosha is alive and because of me the pancha-bhuthas are existent. This is called self-knowledge. The whole world depends on me for its very own existence and not the other way around.

Verse 24 – Jivatma-Paramatma-Aikyam

Isha Jeevayoh Vasha Dhee bhidaah

Sat Svabhaavatah Vasthu Kevalam

Word meaning

Isha Jeevayoh – Between Jivatma and Paramatma

Vasha Dhee Bhidhaa – there is difference only with respect to body-mind complex

Sat Svabhaavatah – Being of the nature of pure existence and consciousness

Vasthu Kevalam – it is nondual reality alone

Sloka meaning

Between Jivatma and Paramatma, there is difference only with respect to –mind complex. Being of the nature of pure existence and consciousness it is non-dual reality alone.

Ramana Shri now says that this sat-chit which we have claimed as our real nature is also the nature of Paramatma or Ishwara. Thus jivatma & Paramatma are essentially one –ekatma. Both are depending upon the media. Through the media it is blessing as jivatma or Paramatma (Example wave & ocean). Thus consciousness blessing the individual is called jivatma and the same consciousness blessing the total is called Paramatma. By understanding the ekatma nature we call it *jivatma-paramatma-aikyam*

Up to the 23rd verse Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi analysed the nature of the individual & by negating the body, mind, ahankara etc. He arrived at the Atma as the essential nature of the jiva and this Atma is in the form of pure **Consciousness** and pure **Existence**. Both are non-material which pervade the material universe. Having established this atma-swaroopam, Ramana Shri, now says in the 24th verse, this jivatma is essentially same as the Paramatma. Based on the angle you view, the atma it is called jivatma & Paramatma. It is seen as Jivatma through media of micro cosmos, the body-mind complex. It is seen as Paramatma through the media of macro cosmos,

the universe. Operating medium is different but the operating atma is the same.

Verse 25 – Self Realization is God Realization

Vesha haanatah svaatma darshanam

Isha Darshanam Svaatmaroopatah

Word meaning

Vesha Haanatah – When the Body-Mind (Micro – Jiva & Macro – Ishwara) limitations [Media] are removed,

Sva atma Darshanam – A person will gain swaroopam eka atma Jnanam (knowledge of the self)

Isha Darshanam – This alone is vision of Ishwara

Sva atma roopatah – as the Self.

Sloka meaning

When the Body-Mind (Micro – Jiva & Macro – Ishwara) limitations [Media] are removed, a person will gain vision of swaroopam eka atma (knowledge of the self). This alone is vision of Ishwara, as one Self.

Here Ramana Shri is talking about jivatma-paramatma-Aikyam. The media through which jivatma (inferior) and Paramatma (superior) operate is different. If temporarily you remove the media then the essential nature of both is the same atma. This atma is neither superior nor inferior. It is without attributes. It is Nirguna chaitanya. Self-realisation is God-realisation. The word *sva atma-darshanam* (vision of the self) is explained further in the next 2 verses.

Verse 26 – Sva Atma Darshanam is abiding in one's real self (It is not an event)

Atma Samsthithih Svaatma Darshanam

Atma nirdvayaat Aatmanisthathaa

Word meaning

Atma Nirdvayaat – Since the Atma is non-dual or one without a second,

Atma Samsthithih – abiding in one's own self

Svaatma Darshanam – is the vision of the Self.

Aatma Nisthathaa – this is also fixing oneself in the Self.

Sloka meaning

As the Atma is non-dual or one without a second, abiding in one's own Self or Consciousness is the vision of the Self. This itself is being fixed in the Self.

He says eka-atma knowledge is not like any other type of knowledge. In other type of knowledge there is subject-object duality whereas this is not possible with atma as it is the very subject itself. It cannot be objectified or experienced. *Sva-atma-darshanam* or self-realisation or self-knowledge is not something that will happen at a particular time & place. He says *sva-atma-darshanam* is *self-experience is abiding in the self*. It is learning to abide as eka-atma-aham-asmi. I am neither jivatma nor paramatma but pure atma or Nirguna chaitanyam. The Jiva and Parama adjectives belong to the media only. Abiding in this manner is called *sva-atma-darshanam*, *Atma-nishtha*. Ramana says atma is only one (non-dual) and the atma is ever the observer and can never become an object of observation. Thus a special explanation is given.

Verse 27 – Remove the Attributes to Reveal and Claim the Real Self

Jnaana varjita ajnaana heena chit

Jnaanam asthi kim jnaatum antharam

Word meaning

Ajnaana Heena Chit – Atma being the nature of the consciousness we are never ignorant

Jnaana Varjita – there is thus no arrival of Jnanam.

Jnaanam asthi – Is there a second knower

Kim antharam – other than atma

Jnaatum – to know the atma

Sloka meaning

Atma being the nature of the consciousness we are never ignorant thus there is no arrival of Jnanam. Is there a second knower other than the Consciousness to know the atma?

The same idea is reinforced here about why there is no special atma experience. The nature of atma is chit / consciousness which make one a conscious being which is ever experienced by all the people at all the time. So you don't require doing any ritual or Sadhana for it. Since it is ever experienced nobody is ignorant of consciousness. Since there is no ignorance you don't need any knowledge so there is no question of getting atma-gnana.

So here he says, the atma is of the nature of chit or the ever experienced consciousness and therefore we are never ignorant of atma. Since there is no ignorance, there is no question of arrival of Jnanam **as an event**. Jnanam is relevant only when there is ajnanam. There is no need for gaining Jnanam as we are all the time experiencing the atma. But this fact gets hidden because we have taken the attributes of the body-mind complex as the real self. We have attached these attributes to the real 'I' the

atma. We don't need atma Jnanam; we only have to remove the attributes which we have covered the atma with. Vedantic study helps you to remove all these attributes and reveal the real self "I am" which was always there. Abide as "I am". The entire Vedantic study is thus not to gain Atma experience but to remove the false attributes to reveal the real self. So, we must stop at "I am" (as against I am a doctor... etc...Etc.,). Vedantic study is to remove all the attributes to arrive at "I am". Atma cannot be known because it is ever the knower never the known. Atma will always remain as the knower, the experiencer

Verse 28 – Atma is of the Nature of True Happiness

Kim svaroopam ithi Atma darshane

Avaya abhava aapurna chit sukham

Word meaning

Kim Svaroopam – What is the nature

Atma darshane ithi – of the atma (thus enquiring, one finds that the atma is)

Avyayaa, abhava – death-less, unborn [eternal]

Aapoorna chit sukham – Limitless Existence Consciousness and Bliss.

Sloka meaning

What is the nature of the atma (thus enquiring), one realizes the atma as eternal, limitless, Existence Consciousness and Bliss.

Ramana Maharishi adds another dimension. Until now he has discussed that atma is the essential nature of jivatma & Paramatma. He said this atma is sat-roopam, non-material existence (verse 20) and chit-roopam, non-material consciousness (verse 27). He says there is one more essential nature of atma besides sat-chit. He reveals it here as *ananda swaroopam*. Thus our real nature is sat-chit-ananda.

According to Vedanta there is no ananda anywhere besides the atma. You cannot get happiness from anything else in this world. There is only one source of ananda and that is “I”. But how do I know “I” am the source of ananda? If I eat an ice cream I become happy so I know that I got ananda from an outside source. But Vedanta says that is not the case. It says that when you experience an object which you like and which conforms to your expectations, then under these ideal circumstances the mind will get into a calm and Sattvik condition. In that mind the atma-ananda is reflected. So we are not getting ananda from outside but the object just helps in manifesting the ananda which is already inside; it has been brought out as a reflection in the mind and that reflected ananda is what we are experiencing (example,

Dog Logic! Dog- biting bone- tastes its own blood-bites more). No external object gives joy all the time to all the people uniformly. This shows that joy is not external but is internal. The external objects help to manifest it so we wrongly attribute joy to that particular object.

So Ramana says when you enquire into the atma, the enquirer discovers that the atma is sat-chit-ananda-swaroopa. It is deathless (avyaya), abhava (birth less).Both together mean eternal. It is limitless. So remember whenever you enjoy anything, it is my joy reflected in an appropriate medium.

Verse 29 – Liberation is dropping the Idea that one is bound, In Here.

Bandha Muktyatheetham param sukham

Vindhathi iha jeevah thu daivikah

Word meaning

Jeevah tu – The individual jeeva **Vindhathi** - attains (realizes)

Daivikah – with the divine virtues

Param – Infinite,

Sukham – happiness

Bandha Mukthi atheetham – beyond bondage and liberation

Iha – here in this world itself.

Sloka meaning

The Jiva with divine virtues realizes infinite happiness beyond bondage and liberation here in this world itself.

This atma ananda is infinite, is non-experiential ananda and it is myself (experiential ananda is finite). It is beyond bondage and liberation. When a Vedantic student discovers the atma-swaroopam, he understands that atma was all the time free. Therefore there is no question of getting freedom. That I am bound is a misconception. When the idea of bondage goes away then the necessity of liberation also goes away. Liberation is dropping the idea that I am bound. Such a person with divine virtues attains atma-ananda here & now.

Verse 30 – The Greatest Tapas which gives Liberation

Aham apethakam nija vibhaanakam
Mahad idam tapo ramana Vaageyam

Word meaning

Aham apethakam – which is remover of Ego or Ahamkaara²
Nija Vibhanakam – and that in which the real “I” shines or is evident³
Mahad idam tapah – This knowledge alone is the greatest tapas or austerity¹
Ramana Vageeyam – Composed by Ramana

Sloka meaning

This knowledge alone is the greatest tapas or austerity, which is remover of Ego or Ahamkaara and that in which the real “I” shines or is evident.
Composed by Ramana

This self-knowledge is the greatest form of austerity (tapas) since it removes ignorance and gives liberation (as against walking / fasting). In this type of knowledge the false self (ahankara) is eliminated and the real “I” is evident. This is the composition of Ramana Shri.

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