

GITA CLASS- ŚAṆKARA'S PREFACE- PART 1

*Aum Nārāyaṇaḥ Paro 'Vyaktād Andham Avyaktasambhavam
Andasyānta Tvime Lokāḥ Saptadvīpa Cha Medinim.'*

According to the traditional manner of a *bhāṣyā*, the writer must display a *mangalachārana*, an introductory verse. Here, the *mangalachārana* is in the form of a *śloka*. One group of scholars believes that this śloka was composed by Śaṅkarāchārya himself, while another group believes it was taken from some *Purāṇa*. This *śloka* begins with remembrance of the Lord, with the word, 'Nārāyaṇaḥ.' The Supreme Lord, *Nārāyaṇa*, is 'avyaktāt paraḥ,' beyond the Unmanifest. Here the word 'avyaktam' refers to *Māyā*, the cause of the Universe. Why does it say that *Māyā* is Unmanifest?

The creation of the *Jiva* (individual soul) is produced from the Supreme Consciousness. This creation of the *Jiva* is a product of *Māyā*. Because the *Jiva* is a product of *Māyā* and under *Māyā*'s control, *Māyā* can never be revealed to him. That's why it is said, 'anirvachaniya nirbhāsa,' 'an indescribable illusion.' Because of that, *Māyā* is 'Unmanifest.'

The products of *Māyā* are manifest to the *Jiva*. This is the Universe, in the form of taste, sight, sound, smell, and touch. That is manifest to the *Jiva*. However, *Māyā* being his own cause, that can never be fully revealed to the *Jiva*. How that arises, and how that is sustained; these can never be understood. *Māyā* can be destroyed, but even after it is destroyed, it doesn't become revealed. That destruction is the ultimate state of the *Jiva*. But even though *Māyā* can be destroyed, its nature can never be fully revealed. That is why it is 'Unmanifest.'

This *Māyā Śakti* is a unique Power that is dependant on the Supreme Consciousness, while veiling that Consciousness. Its existence is dependant on the Supreme Consciousness. At the same time, it veils That. Who experiences this? It is the *Jiva*. Being dependant on the Supreme Consciousness, *Māyā* creates a veil between the *Jiva* and God. That is how *Māyā* is 'avyaktam,' Unmanifest.

In this way, *Māyā* deludes the *Jīva* and creates a veil between him and God. That why it says, ‘*Nārāyaṇa*, who is beyond the Unmanifest..’ Because of this, the *Jīva* must search for That, the Beyond. Why is that? When the *Jīva* becomes veiled from his True Self through *Māyā*, then God who is beyond *Māyā* naturally becomes veiled from him. That is why the word ‘beyond,’ is used. Here, the Lord is ‘beyond.’

Thus, the *Jīva* experiences all the products of *Māyā*. The *Jīva* has freedom in whatever is beneath *Māyā*; that which can be thought of or known. That freedom itself comes from *Māyā*. The *jīva* becomes identified with all of this. And what about God? Because the *Jīva* is under the control of *Avidyā*, God is felt to be ‘*paraḥ*,’ distant. That is why the *Jīva* begins to search for what is beyond.

In truth, the *Jīva* and God are one. That is the essence of the *Advaita* philosophy. However, God remains ‘distant’ to the *Jīva*. This is indicated in the shloka, ‘*Nārāyaṇaḥ paro ‘vyaktād.*’ For the *Jīva*, God is ‘beyond,’ separate. However, in truth, God is close. He is unseparable from the *Jīva*.

In this way, the *Jīva* becomes identified with the products of *Māyā*; all of objects in the Universe. In the Brahma Sutras, this is called ‘*adhyāsa.*’ There, the *Jīva* distinguishes between ‘*para*,’ God, and ‘*apara*,’ the world. In truth, the identification of the *Jīva* should be with the Lord, *Nārāyaṇa*. Instead, that *Nārāyaṇa* becomes separate from the *Jīva*, and beyond the Unmanifest. God becomes distanced away from the *Jīva*, above *Māyā*.

Then the *Jīva* becomes identified with ‘*apara*’ – the inert objects, both gross and subtle, from the mind, to the gross body, and to all external objects in the Universe. In truth, what should happen? The *Jīva* must have the unseparable identification with God, who is Beyond the Unmanifest. Instead, the *Jīva* makes God to be separate, and becomes identified with the products of *Māyā* in gross and subtle forms. This is what is explained here. This is what is called ‘*saṁsāra.*’ This is also ‘*jagat*,’ the world. This identification takes place in two ways; in the subtle level and the gross level.

That is what is said next in the *śloka*; ‘*avyaktād aṇdham.*’ The seed-form of the entire gross creation is called ‘*Aṇdham.*’ This is the Seed; the subtle condition of this identification. The *samasthi*, or Universal form of the subtle Creation is called ‘*Hiraṇyagarbha.*’ The gross *bhāva* of that is called ‘*Virāt.*’

These are two beings. Śankara indicates these here. ‘*Avyaktād aṇḍham.*’ How is that Andham? ‘*Avyaktasambhavaṁ.*’ ‘It is born from the Unmanifest.’

Everything arises from the Unmanifest; from *Māyā*. From *Māyā Śakti*, everything is produced, both subtle and gross, in countless separate forms. Each *Jīva* becomes separate from each other. That is called *Veṣṭi*, the individual level. Then there is the level of *samasthi*, the Universal level. In that there are endless *Jīvas*. Bringing all of them together and joining them forms the *samasthi*, the Universal Form. The gross *bhāva* of that is called ‘*Virāt Puruṣa.*’

Thus, this Creation is connected to the *Jīva* in two ways; in the *samasthi*, or universal level, and the *veṣṭi*, the individual level. The Universal Form of the subtle *bhāva* of the Universe is called ‘*Aṇḍham.*’ From where did that come? ‘*Avyaktasambhavaṁ.*’ The cause of its birth is the Unmanifest. That is the meaning.

In this process, God has no doer-ship at all. Later in the Gita, the Lord will say, ‘*sūyate sacharācharaṁ.*’ ‘For all of this Creation which is seen, ‘*mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtī.*’ ‘I remain as an Overseer.’ This means the Lord merely witnesses. ‘In My presence, Primordial Nature creates all of this.’ That is the Unmanifest.

In the language of *Advaita*, the Universe is called ‘*charācharātmikām*’ – ‘the moving and non-moving.’ This is also called ‘*chit-jaḍa saṁyogam,*’ the combination of consciousness and matter. How are they merged? This is in subtle and gross *bhāvas*. That is the *Jīva bhāva* of God, where the state of ‘*Jīva*’ is attained.

The Supreme Consciousness becomes identified with the subtle and gross *bhāvas* of the Universe. That is *jīvatvam*. In the subtle form, in the *samasthi* level, it is called ‘*Hiraṇyagarbha.*’ The gross form of this, in the *samasthi* level, is called ‘*Virāt.*’ Here it says, ‘where do these come from?’ What does this indicate? This shows the *Jīva*’s condition of bondage.

What is the specialty of the *Jīva*? He is never able to recognize *Māyā*. Because of that, the *Jīva* is not able to understand that he is in bondage. If he must recognize this, the *Jīva* needs at least some awareness about *Māyā*. Only then is it possible. Because that is lacking, the *Jīva* needs the help of the *śāstras*

or the Guru to become aware. That is why it says that *Māyā* is ‘*avyakta*,’ Unmanifest.

This *Māyā* itself stands as an obstacle for the *Jīva* recognizing this. How does *Māyā* stand as an obstacle? *Māyā* doesn’t just stand as an obstacle to Mokṣa. It also stands as an obstacle for the *Jīva* realizing that he is bound. Because of that, a person doesn’t put forth effort consciously for his own Liberation. This is because he doesn’t recognize that that he is bound. If he knew, then he would strive consciously.

In these two ways, Unmanifest *Māyā* deludes the *Jīva*. The products of that *Māyā* are the gross and subtle aspects of the Universe. This *Māyā* thus binds the *Jīva* to the objects of the Universe. That is called ‘*chīṭ-jaḍa saṁyoga*,’ the connection of consciousness and the inert universe. Because of that connection, the consciousness of God attains the bhāva of the *Jīva*. That *Jīva bhāva* in the Universal Level (samasthi) is called *Aṇḍam*.

This is the first *Jīva Bhāva* that is experienced. Then it says next, ‘*Aṇḍasya ante tu ime lokāḥ saptadvīpāḥ cha medinī*.’ So, it says, ‘*aṇḍasya antaḥ*,’ ‘within that *Andam*, that *Hiraṇyagarbha* state, which is the Universal Form of *jīva bhāva* and a product of *Māyā*,’ ‘*ime lokāḥ*,’ ‘are all of these worlds.’ Here, ‘worlds’ means all of these gross forms. For making that clear, it says, ‘*saptadvīpāḥ cha medinīm*,’ ‘along with this Earth, along with its 7 continents.’ So, this Earth, along with its 7 continents, ‘*ime lokāḥ*,’ ‘and all of these gross *bhāvas* in Creation, are contained within the subtle condition of *Aṇḍam*.’

Why are they contained within that? It is because the effect is contained within the cause. This is said according to that principle. A pot is contained within clay. Ornaments are contained within gold. Like this, the Earth is contained within its cause, the subtle Universe. In this way, being identified with this Universe and its subtle and gross bhāvas, the *Jīva* becomes bound. That is indicated here.

Who is the *Jīva* distanced from in the condition of bondage? That is *Nārāyaṇa*. Here, the *śāstra* helps to indicate this to the *Jīva*. ‘You are in bondage. The Lord *Nārāyaṇa*, who is your true nature, has become separate from you. The Lord *Nārāyaṇa* has become veiled from you, due to the Unmanifest. You have become identified with the product of the Unmanifest, the Universe, and not

with the Lord. This is the condition of bondage. From this, you must strive for Freedom.'

Here, the subject (*viṣayam*) of the *śāstra* is the condition of unseparation, or oneness with God. In the *śāstras*, this is said as '*tat tvam asi*,' 'You are That, the Supreme Self.' Or, it is said, '*Jivabrahmaikyam*,' Oneness of the *Jiva* and *Brahman*.' This is the *viṣayam*, the subject of the *śāstra*. This is the identification with *Nārāyaṇa*, the Lord beyond *Māyā*.

Therefore, what happens? We discussed how the *Jiva* becomes identified with the subtle form of the Universal Being, *Aṇḍam*, and with the entire gross Universe. Through this identification with *Nārāyaṇa*, all of these are destroyed. That is called '*sarva samsāra nivṛtti*,' the cessation of all *samsāra*, or *Mokṣa*. This is also called 'ultimate freedom from *samsāra*.' That is the condition where one becomes free from *samsāra*, not to return again.

This is because 'freedom from *samsāra*' is something that always happens to the *Jiva*. That is something that happens without the aid of *śāstra*, the Guru, efforts, and *sādhana*. When is that? It is in deep sleep. That is where freedom from *samsāra* happens. That freedom from *samsāra* is not 'ultimate.' That is why it says, '*atyantika samsāra nivṛtti*,' ultimate freedom from *samsāra*. This is because even though the *samsāra* disappears in the state of deep sleep, it again appears more terrifying when we wake up. Because of that, we cannot call that 'ultimate freedom from *samsāra*.' It is a momentary, or incomplete cessation of *samsāra*.

What is needed for the ultimate cessation of *samsāra*? The *Jiva* must experience freedom from the subtle form of *Andham*, as well as the entire gross Universe. The *Jiva* must become one with *Nārāyaṇa*, the Lord. This *bhāva* of Oneness with the Lord is the utility of the *śāstra*. The subject, or *viṣaya*, is the identification of the *Jiva* with the Lord. The *prayojanam*, or utility, is the cessation of *samsāra*. Whoever desires this freedom is a suitable practitioner, an *adhikāri*.

When one listens to the *śāstra*, the dormant *samskāra* within the *Jiva* awakens. Then, the mind understands that these matters are true. As far as the *Jiva* is concerned, the bondage spoken of in the *śāstra* is a reality. If that is so, one will have the desire to avoid this bondage and attain freedom. This is called

jijñāsa. A person with this quality is called a *jijñāsu*, and is an *adhikāri* for the *śāstra*. This is indicated here.

When the bondage of the *Jīva* is explained, or when *Mokṣa* is spoken of, within whomever this desire awakens is a *jijñāsu*. Such a person is an *adhikāri*, a fit practitioner. Then, there is *sambandham*, or relationship. We discussed this the previous day. This is a most important matter. The last day we discussed completely about the matter of *sambandam*, relationship.

There is a mutual bond between matters such as the *śāstra*, the utility (*prayojanam*), the subject (*viśaya*), and the fit aspirant (*adhikāri*). Here, when we look at the most important relationship, who is it that makes the *Jīva* aware of this condition of bondage and Freedom? It is *śāstra*. Without the *śāstra*, there is no other means for the *Jīva* to become aware. Therefore, each matter listed has a relationship with the *śāstra*.

Here, what does the *śāstra* indicate, most importantly? ‘*Avyaktād paraḥ Nārāyaṇaḥ*.’ ‘That *Nārāyaṇa* is beyond the gross and subtle *bhāvas* of this Universe. Everything is contained within Him.’ When this is said, it indicates the true nature of the *Paramātmā*, the Supreme Self. This makes the *Jīva* aware of the true condition of the *Paramātmā*, and of *Mokṣa*. That awareness, or knowledge is what aids the *Jīva* to reach That. What is a cause of that? It is *śāstra*. There is nothing else to make the *Jīva* aware.

Therefore, the *śāstra* becomes something that gives birth to *Mokṣa*. Thus, there is a relationship between the *śāstra* and *Mokṣa*. It is said, ‘*śāstram janakam*,’ ‘the *śāstra* gives birth to Freedom.’ ‘*Mokṣam janyam*.’ ‘*Mokṣa* is born from the *śāstra*.’ This means that the *Jīva* attains that through the aid of the *śāstra*. That is the meaning. This doesn’t mean a ‘creation.’ This is speaking about relationship.

Therefore, *śāstra* is what destroys *Avidyā* (Ignorance), and gives *Ātma Jñāna*, Knowledge of the Self. The *śāstra* reveals one’s own true nature. That is the *janya-janaka* relationship. There are different kinds of relationships. These are between the *śāstra* and the *adhikāri*; *śāstra* and the *prayojanam*, etc. Both of these can be related to the *śāstra*. Revealing all of these matters, one thing that aids a student to enter the *śāstra* is the *mangala śloka*.

‘*Nārāyaṇaḥ avyaktād paraḥ.*’ ‘*Nārāyaṇa* is beyond the Unmanifest.’
‘*Andham avyaktasambhavam.*’ ‘*Aṇḍam* is produced from the Unmanifest.’ That
is *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Lord *Nārāyaṇa* becomes identified with that, along with the
entire subtle *bhāva* of Creation. This means that the Universe and *samsāra*
begin.

‘*Aṇḍasya antaḥ tvime lokāḥ sapta dvīpā cha medinīm.*’ So, it says, ‘*aṇḍasya
antaḥ.*’ ‘Within that subtle form of Creation, are contained,’ ‘*ime lokāḥ,*’ ‘all of
this gross Universe that is seen, in the form of *Virāt.*’ ‘*Saptadvīpa cha medinīm,*’
‘as well as this Earth.’ Why is this added? There, it would have been enough to
say ‘this world.’ What is the reason for saying this specifically? There is a reason.

The *Jīva* lives on this Earth. The *Jīva* thinks about bondage, about
Liberation, etc., so that is its importance. That is why this is said in particular.
Otherwise, it would have been enough to simply say in a single word, ‘*Virāt.*’
Why does the *Jīva* have to think about this here? It is because the *Jīva* receives a
suitable body on this Earth. The śāstras speak about many different lokas, or
worlds, such as *bhū*, *bhūvaḥ*, *svāḥ*. In all of these other worlds, one cannot
receive a body that is this suitable for the attainment of Self-knowledge, and
Mokṣa. The senses, organs, and body; these can’t be obtained in the same
manner elsewhere. Therefore, being here, the *Jīva*, in the body consisting of the
five elements, uses this body to contemplate the *Ātman*. That is why importance
is given to this Earth. That is why this is said in particular.

Because the *Jīva* is here, he strives to go beyond these bondages to attain
Freedom. That is indicated here. After, that, Śankara explains more.

***Sa bhagavānsṛṣṭvedaṁ jagattasya cha sthitim chikīrṣur
marichyādīnagre sṛṣṭvā prajāpatīnpravṛttīlakṣaṇaṁ dharmam
grāhayāmāsa vedoktaṁ. Tatonyāmscha
sanakanandanādīnutpādyā nivṛttīlakṣaṇaṁ dharmam
jñānavairāgyalakṣaṇaṁ grāhayāmāsa.’***

It says, ‘*sa bhagavān,*’ ‘He, the Lord, who is ‘*nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ.*’ ‘This
Nārāyaṇa, who is the Supreme Being.’ this is indicated here. ‘*Idam jagat sṛṣṭvā,*’

‘having created this Universe..’ When we say that the Lord created the universe, we should know clearly what the universe is. For knowing this, it is said in the second part, ‘*aṅḍam avyaktasāmbhavamī,*’ ‘*aṅḍam* is born from the Unmanifest.’ ‘*Andhasyāntaḥ tvime lokāḥ,*’ ‘within this *Andham* are all worlds,’ ‘*saptadvīpā cha medinī,*’ ‘as well as this Earth, with 7 continents.’

This is the world of the *Jiva*. We can generally consider Creation in two ways. How is that? There is *Jiva* and *jagat*, the world. This exists as two. This is called ‘*charācharam,*’ the moving and non-moving. Some things move; that is *Jiva*. That which is un-moving is *jaḍa*, matter. Both of these combined is *jagat*, the world. This is what we said earlier; ‘*chit-jaḍa sambandham* – the combination of Pure Consciousness and Inert matter.

It says that God created the world. ‘*Sṛṣṭvā idaṁ jagat.*’ This is explained in the Gita, like I mentioned before. ‘*Mayādhyākṣeṇa prakṛtī sūyate sacharācharamī.*’ ‘In My presence, this *Prakṛti* continuously creates this Universe of the moving and non-moving.’ Here, it says that after this Creation, two groups of people were created; ‘*marīchyādīn,*’ the Marīchis, and ‘*prajāpatīn,*’ the Prajāpatīs. These are *Jivas* that have been assigned the specific duty of sustaining the world.

Then, there is ‘*sanakasanandānādīṇ,*’ sages such as *Sanaka* and *Sanandana*. They are created for *sāmhāra*, the destruction of Creation. Their job is to destroy *Prakṛti*. This means the path to *Mokṣa*. The Lord created this group as well; the *Sanakādīs*.

Two kinds of sages were created. One group strives for the sustenance of the *Jiva*, and another for the destruction of *Jivatvam*, the individuality. There are two things indicated here in the *bhāṣyā*. What is the sustenance of the *Jiva*? It is the sustenance of this *jagat*, the world. Then, the Creator, *Nārāyaṇa*, desired the sustenance of this Creation. This means the *Jiva* becomes identified with the world, and continuously travels.

What is the meaning of the word, ‘*jagat*?’ In Sanskrit, there is a *dhātu*, or verb root, ‘*gam.*’ This means ‘to go, to travel.’ That is how the word ‘*jagat*’ was produced. That constantly travels. How does it travel? Does it have legs? No, it doesn’t travel with legs. Instead, it is through ‘birth, life, and death; then again, birth, life, and death – through these transformations, with the aid of Time, it constantly moves forward.

Māyā is constantly imponderable. It is beyond the capacity of man's intellect to even guess about. Despite this, *Māyā* has a manifest *bhāva*. The most manifest form of *Māyā* is *Kāla*, Time. Time is what gives the *Jiva* awareness of the past and future. Along with the aid of Time, this *jagat*, or world, continuously travels through the process of creation, sustenance, and destruction on the Universal level, and individually, as birth, life, and death. Because of this continuous travel, this is called '*jagat*,' that which travels.' If the *Jiva* must continue to travel in this *jagat*, the Consciousness of God must be identified with the universe, along with its subtle and gross *bhāvas*.

Thus, the *Jiva* and the *jagat* continuously move forward, with the aid of Time. The beginning of this is called '*Sṛṣṭi*,' Creation.' It says that this began, but this isn't a true beginning. Creation is *anādi*, beginningless. Still, there is a beginning. How is that? How can a beginning come in that which is beginningless? That is what is called '*kalpam*.'

If we try to divide the Creation through Time, imagining the limitation of Time in Creation, then the beginning of that imagination is called the '*kalpādi*.' In this way, these *kalpas* extend back without beginning and continue. Because of that, the secret of Creation is never revealed to the *Jiva*. This is because Time is beginningless. This beginningless Time is the manifest *bhāva* of *Māyā*. That is what makes the *Jiva* continuously travel. This means that the *Jiva* is controlled.

The instruments of the *Jiva*, such as mind, intellect, etc, are all the creations given by *Māyā*. When these are compared with the infinite *Śakti* of *Māyā*, they are very insignificant. Using these very small and insignificant instruments, it is never possible to know the beginning or end of infinite Creation. This is because these instruments are very limited, while their Cause is *FULLY UNLIMITED*. How can something that is limited measure that which is unlimited? That's not possible.

The *Jiva* can never grasp the secret of Creation. This is the concept of 'Creation' in *Advaita*: '*Idam jagat sṛṣṭvā*,' 'having created this Universe, which is the combination of the *Jiva* and matter, giving a beginning to a new cycle of Creation, the *Kalpa*,' '*yathā tathā pūrvam akalpayet*.' 'However this happened in previous *Kalpas*, like that, this process repeats itself.' This means to give a beginning within the beginningless Creation. If it is said that Creation is

beginningless and has a beginning, we will become confused. For that reason, I am explaining.

This Creation means the beginning of a *Kalpa*. Once the *jagat* is created, it must be sustained. What does it mean to be sustained? We said before, that God has no part in this. *Māyā Śakti* plays the full part. So, for *Māyā Śakti*, this must be sustained. That is *sthiti*, or sustenance. This is said next. '*Tasya sthitim cha chikīrṣuḥ.*' '*Chikīrṣuḥ,*' the Lord desired, 'It must be sustained.' This means that the *Jiva* must continuously travel through birth, life, and death.

For that purpose, '*marīchyādīn agre sṛṣṭvā,*' Along with the Creation at the beginning of a *Kalpa*, the Lord created the *Marīchīs*, *Prajāpatīs*, etc. These are Sages who protect Creation. The Lord created the first batch. After that, what did He do? '*Pravṛttilakṣaṇam dharmam grāhayām āsa vedoktam.*' 'The Lord made them aware of the *Dharma* spoken of in the *Vedas*, of the form of action, *pravṛtti*.'

It says the God Himself made the *Ṛshis* aware of *Dharma* through the *Vedas*. In the beginning of the *Kalpa*, the beginning of Creation, the *Vedas* become manifest like an exhalation from God. From that *Veda*, the *Ṛshis* grasped what is *Dharma*. In the beginning of Creation itself, two groups were created.

How is this *Dharma*? 'It is in the form of *pravṛtti*, action. These are the actions that are described in the *Vedas*. That should be given special attention. These are actions that are related to the *varṇas* (classes) and *aśramas* (life-stages). For *Śankaracharya*, that is specifically what must be grasped through the word '*pravṛtti*.' The same meaning should be understood for the word, '*karma*'. Even if the Gita discusses the word '*karma*' in a very broad and subtle way, when we normally discuss the terms '*karma*' and '*karma tyāga*,' this is connected to the system of classes and life-stages.

This is connected to the four *varṇas*; the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Kṣatriya*, the *Vaiśya*, and *Kṣudra*. Then there are the *karmas* of the *aśramas*; *Brahmachāryam*, *Gārhasthyam*, *Vanaprasthyam*, and *Samnyāsa*. This is the *Dharma* that is connected to these systems through action, *pravṛtti*. This *Dharma* in the form of *Pravṛtti* is the cause of the sustenance of the *jagat*.

This is the *Dharma* that makes the *Jiva* become identified with the subtle and gross *bhāvas* of the Universe, the products of *Māyā*, and then takes the *Jiva* along for the travel of births and deaths. That is the *Dharma* in the form of *Pravṛtti*.

Awareness of that dharma, '*grāhayām āsa*,' was given through the *Vedas*. Who are the *ṛṣis*? They are called '*mantradraṣṭas*' - those who discovered the *Vedas*. In the beginning of the cycle of Creation, the *ṛṣis* were created, and God gave them awareness of the *Vedas*. What did they become aware of through the mantras of the *Vedas*? They understood, 'what is the dharma of action?' This is the first group created by the Lord.

The Gita speaks about two dharmas; the Dharma of *Pravṛtti*, and the Dharma of *Nivṛtti*. These came from the *Vedas*, taught by the Lord Himself. In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says, 'I instructed this Dharma to the Sun. The Sun instructed to the *Prajāpatīs*. In this way, *Dharma* was sustained.' This is what is said here as well.

'*Tataḥ anyāns cha sanaka sanandānādīṅ utpādya*.' Then there is another batch. '*Tataḥ anyān*.' These are different from the *ṛṣis* created before. These are *ṛṣis* such as *Sanaka and Sanandana*. These *Jivas* are distinct from the ones described before. To them, the Lord instructed the *Dharma* of *Nivṛtti* (renunciation). It says, '*nivṛttīlakṣaṇam dharmam*,' 'the dharma of *Nivṛtti*.' How is that? '*Jñāna vairāgyalakṣaṇam*,' 'indicated by Knowledge and Dispassion.'

The ones before grasped the *Dharma* of Action. However, this *Dharma* is in the form of knowledge and dispassion. '*Grāhayām āsa*' - the Lord gave awareness of this Dharma. Thus, there are two meanings for 'Dharma.' There is the Dharma of Action, and the Dharma of Renunciation. In the last chapter of the Gita, Krishna says, '*sarvadharmān parityajya*,' having renounced all dharmas, '*mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*,' 'take refuge in Me alone.'

What is meant by 'all dharmas?' These are the dharmas spoken of in the *Vedas*. That must be given attention. '*Sarvadharmān parityajya*,' having renounced these, '*mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*,' surrender to Me alone.' That is *Nivṛtti*, renunciation. This is '*Jñānavairāgyalakṣaṇam*,' 'indicated by Knowledge and Dispassion.' That surrender is also a *Dharma*. Who gave the instruction of

that? ‘*Sanakasanandānādīn,*’ ṛṣis such as *Sanaka* and *Sanandana*. This Dharma is in the form of Knowledge and Dispassion.

Here, *Śankara* shows that a seeker desirous of Mokṣa must renounce one dharma and accept another. This is for a mumukṣu, one with intense longing for Mokṣa. There are also *Jivas* who don’t accept either of these *Dharmas*, and simply engage in natural actions.

Then, there is a group of *Jivas* that accept the *Dharma* of Action instructed by the *Prajāpatīs*. That is a *Dharma* spoken of in the *Vedas*. *Śankara* explains that these are *Jivas* situated in the system of classes and life-stages, and accept the *Dharma* of *Pravṛtti*. There are others who don’t accept either of these *Dharmas*. They live performing actions by instinctive nature. These *Jivas* simply produce offspring, and become immersed in *karma* according to their vāsana.

Here, *Śankara* says that God Himself instituted this system of classes and life-stages for the society. What do those who accept that system do? They follow the *Dharma* of Action; the actions spoken of in the *Vedas*. Just any kind of action isn’t sufficient. That is important. They accept the *karmas* spoken of in the *Vedas*, and travel down that path. But what is that?

That isn’t a cause for the Liberation of the *Jiva*; it is the cause for the *Jiva*’s sustenance. This means that it is a cause for the sustenance of *Samsāra*, and of the *jagat*. That is the cause of the *Jiva*’s travel. That becomes a cause for the *Jiva* travelling through birth and death, through the aid of Time. That is a *Dharma* that was revealed by God.

Instead, there is another group who follows the path laid down by ṛṣis such as *Sanaka*. What do they do? They renounce these actions spoken of in the *Vedas*. That renunciation is indicated by the word ‘*Vairāgyam.*’ *Vairāgyam* indicates *sanyassa*, renunciation. They accept the path of *sanyassa*. They discard the *karmas* spoken of in the *Vedas*, and accept the path of *Nivṛtti*. What is it that helps them? It is *Jñāna*, Knowledge. They obtain Knowledge and Discrimination. Through that *Jñāna*, they renounce all of the *karmas* spoken of in the *Vedas*. Here, the matters that will be discussed again and again in the *Bhāṣyā* are being made clear here.

This means that the *Jiva* has only two paths. One is the path of *śreyas*, Liberation, and the other is the path of *preyas*, enjoyment. For establishing the

path of enjoyment, the Lord instructed the *Dharma* of *Pravṛtti* to the *Prajāpatīs* through the *Vedas*. ‘Perform *Yāgas* and other *karmas*. Obtain fruits such as heaven. Otherwise, obtain on this earth sons, cattle, and wealth.’ For that, perform *karmas* according to the injunctions of the *Vedas* and the scriptures.’ That is one path.

The other path is ‘*sarvadharmān parityajya*’ – ‘having renounced all other *Dharmas*,’ accept the *Dharma* of *Nivṛtti*, in the form of Knowledge and Dispassion. That is what the Lord instructs to Arjuna. ‘*Sarvadharmān parityajua mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*.’ That is a *Dharma*, the *Dharma* of *Tyāga*. That is why it is called ‘*Nivṛtti*.’ This means, ‘the opposite of action.’ This means to ‘withdraw from *Pravṛtti*.’ This is another path, the path to Mokṣa. The other path continues bondage.

These are the two paths spoken of in the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* speaks about the *Dharma* of Action, and the *Dharma* of Renunciation. When the *Dharma* of Action is spoken of in the *Gita*, there is a specialty. This is because the question arises, ‘why would the *Gita* instruct the *Dharma* of Action, which is a cause for the sustenance of the world and continuance of *Samsāra*? If that doesn’t help one to attain Freedom, then why does a scripture instruct that?’

Śankaracharya will tell the answer to that later. If one practices that *Dharma* in the spirit of *Yoga*, then that also will become a cause for *niḥśreyasa*, Liberation. This will be explained later. When we move ahead, we will understand. That is what is said next.

***‘Dvididho hi vedokto dharmā; pravṛttīlakṣaṇo
nivṛttīlakṣaṇaścha.***

‘*Dvididho hi vedokto dharmā*.’ The *Dharma* instructed in the *Vedas* is of two types. The basis of all of this is the *Vedas*. Whenever we hear ‘*dharmā*’ or ‘*karmā*,’ we cannot at any point think in the worldly sense. In relation to *Śankarāchārya*, the subject of worldly actions and *karmas* doesn’t become a topic of discussion. The subject is only the *karmas* ordained by the *Vedas*. ‘Should one renounce or accept these?’ That is the subject of discussion.

The other actions we perform day-to-day aren't the subject here. Why is that? It is because these aren't ordained by the *Vedas*. So, the *Dharma* ordained by the *Vedas* are of two kinds. What is that? '*Pravṛtti lakṣaṇo nivṛttilakṣaṇaḥ cha.*' This is again explained. One is in the form of *Pravṛtti*, action. The other is '*nivṛtti lakṣaṇo,*' in the form of renunciation.

I have said before, that all of *Śankarācharya's* thoughts and discussions are based on the authority of the *Vedas*. In the commentary, thinking that is independent of the *Vedas* cannot be found in any section. *Śankara* thinks only with the basis of the *Vedas*. If even a word is written, it will be connected somehow to the *Vedas*. That is what is being explained here. There are two kinds of *Dharma* of the *Vedas*; that of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti*. This is then explained.

***'Jagataḥ sthītikāraṇam prāṇinām sākṣād
abhyudayaniḥśreyasahetuḥ yaḥ sa dharma brāhmanādyaiḥ
varṇibhiḥ āśramibhiḥ cha śreyorthibhiḥ anuṣṭhīyamānaḥ.'***

Who is it that practices that *Dharma*? '*śreyorthibhiḥ.*' Those who desire *śreyas*, auspiciousness, practice *Dharma*. Others perform *Adharma*. Those who desire auspiciousness perform *Dharma*. What is the reason for saying that this is spoken of in the *Vedas*? It is because the *Vedas* have set down certain systems for the society, some progressions and disciplines. '*This is dharma; this is adharmā.*' This has been made a discipline in the *Vedas*. That is why it says that this *Dharma* depends on the *Vedas*.

Thus, '*śreyorthibhiḥ,*' what is practiced by those who desire auspiciousness, '*sa dharma,*' is *Dharma*. How is that? '*Prāṇinām,*' for all *Jivas*, '*sākṣād abhyudaya niḥśreyasahetuḥ*' - the *Vedic Dharma* in the form of *Pravṛtti* is the cause of '*sākṣād abhyudaya.*' This *Dharma* leads the *Jiva* directly to *abhyudaya*, the fruits of karma, such as heaven.

Then there is another group. What is that? That is the *Dharma* of *Nivṛtti*. What does that do? '*Sākṣād niḥśreyasahetuḥ;*' this directly leads the *Jiva* to *Mokṣa*. One path leads one directly to the fruits of *karma*, and the other leads one directly to *Mokṣa*, to *Niḥśreyasa*. That is '*jagataḥ sthīti kāraṇam,*' the cause of the sustenance of the Universe, '*prāṇinām sākṣād abhyudayaniḥśreyasahetuḥ*

yaḥ sa dharmo. What is *dharmā*? It is the cause of the sustenance of *jagat*, the world. It is this *Dharma* that makes the world constantly move forward.

Why does it say that this *Dharma* is the cause for the world's sustenance? One *Dharma*, the *Dharma* of *Pravṛtti*, sustains the *Jiva*'s travel through birth and death. And what about the *Dharma* of *Nivṛtti*? That also leads the *Jiva* forwards, through the path of *śāstra*, *sādhana*, and *mokṣa*, etc. This leads the *Jiva* to *Mokṣa*. Thus, the *Jiva* is led forwards from beginningless time. One way is through the *śāstra* and *sādhana*, leading the *Jiva* to *Mokṣa*. That is also a part of *jagat*, the world.

What does the other group do? Even if that *Dharma* ultimately leads the *Jiva* to *Mokṣa*, it is through the dealings which are a product of *Māyā*. It is within *Samsāra*. Without freeing the *Jiva* from *Samsāra*, this continues *Samsāra*. Both of these are the cause for the sustenance of the world, and the sustenance of the *Jiva*. One is the cause for sustaining the *Jiva*'s condition of bondage, and the other is the cause for sustaining the Liberation of the *Jiva*.

In that way, the *Dharma* spoken of in the *Vedas* is of these two types; of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti*. Then who performs these? '*Brāhmaṇādyaiḥ varṇabhiḥ āśramibhiḥ cha.*' The *Dharma* spoken of in the *Vedas* is to be practiced by the *varṇas*, such as the *Brāhmaṇa*, etc., and by the different life-stages. When this is said, we will immediately feel, 'is this for us? It says, '*Brāhmaṇādyaiḥ.*' When it says that this *Dharma* is for *varṇas* such as the *Brāhmaṇa*, and the four life-stages, we think, '*I'm not a Brāhmaṇa.* Is this possible for me to practice?'

Here, this isn't what is being practiced by the *Brāhmaṇas* of today, or the classes and life-stages of today. What is said here is something that has happened in the past. In the past, in whatever time period, the society was composed of the classes such as the *Brāhmaṇa*, and *āśramas*, who followed the *Dharmas* of the *Vedas*. That isn't here today. Today's *Brāhmaṇas* work in business. That's not what it is speaking about here.

In the past, in one time, this was practiced. We don't have much knowledge about that time. In that period of time, the system of the *varṇas* and *āśramas* was followed, depending on the *Dharma* spoken in the *Vedas*. Now, that time is lost and long gone. That is what is said next.

*‘Dīrghēṇa kālenānuṣṭhātrṇām kāmodbhavād
hīyamānavivekavijñānahetukena adharmeṇa abhibhūyamāne
dharṁe pravṛddhamāne chādharṁe jagataḥ sthitim
paripipālayiṣuḥ sa ādikarttā nārāyaṇākhyo viṣṇurbhaumasya
bramaṇo brāhmaṇatvasya rakṣaṇārtham devakyām
vasudevādamśena kila sambabhuva.
Brāhmaṇatvasya hi rakṣaṇena rakṣitaḥ syādvaidiko
dharmastadadhīnatvādvārṇāśramabhedānām.’*

Here it says, ‘*dīrghēṇa kālena anuṣṭhātrṇām kāmodbhavād.*’ In whatever time period in the past, this *Dharma* of the varṇas and life-stages was practiced in society. This *Dharma* in the form of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti* was practiced. Through the lineage descending from the *Sanakas* and *Marīchīs*, this *Dharma* was practiced for a time. However, what happens? ‘*Dīrghēṇa kālena,*’ through a long time.. This is practiced from one generation to another. That is ‘*dīrgha kāla,*’ through a long period of time. When this *Dharma* was practiced in this way, ‘*anuṣṭhātrṇām kāmodbhavād.*’ Within those who were performing this *Dharma*, negative desires came into their minds.

Because of that, what happened? Here, *Śaṅkara* is saying in summary what happens. ‘*Hīyamāna vivekavijñānahetukena adharmena.*’ These people became *Adharmic*. What happens in the classes such as the *Brāhmaṇa* and in the life-stages? These people follow *Adharma*. They leave the *Dharma* of the *Vedas*. Why is that? ‘*Hīyamānavivekavijñānahetukena.*’ It is because discrimination and practical knowledge become weakened and destroyed. All of the discrimination and practical knowledge in the varṇas and life-stages was lost.

Why is that? ‘*Kāmodbhavād.*’ In the minds of those *Jivas*, the sleeping, dormant *vāsanās* obtained in previous *Kalpas* awaken. These awaken and begin to function. Then, this *Dharma* that was instructed to the *Jivas* by God becomes undermined and destroyed. That is what is said here, ‘*hīyamāna vivekavijñāna hetukena adharmena.*’ What is the cause for *Adharma*? It is when one’s discrimination and practical knowledge is destroyed.

Thus, when one's discrimination and practical knowledge are destroyed, what happens? '*Dharmena abhibhūyamāne dharme,*' *Dharma* becomes overpowered by *Adharma*, controlled by *Adharma*. This is a progression. And what is the cause of that? Even though the Lord directly revealed the *Dharma* of the *Vedas* in the beginning of Creation, and this was practiced from one generation to another for a long time, the discrimination and practical knowledge within those generations was destroyed.

This explains what occurs in any period of time, even today's. *Dharma* being destroyed, *Adharma* grows – this happens in any period of time. The period of time in the *Gita* is well-known to us. That is what is said next. '*Pravṛddhamāne cha adharme.*' There was a time when *adharmā* had grown very strong. What is this time? This is said, '*jagataḥ sthitiṁ paripālayiṣuḥ.*' Having the desire to protect the world's sustenance, '*sa adikartā,*' the Creator, '*nārāyaṇākhyo viṣṇuḥ,*' that *Viṣṇu*, by name '*Nārāyaṇa,*' incarnates. What for? '*Jagataḥ sthitiṁ paripālayiṣuḥ,*' desiring the sustenance of this world, what does *Nārāyaṇa*, the Lord see?

This is said in the *Gita* also. Krishna says, 'I instructed this *Yoga* in the beginning, but it has become lost over time.' 'The *Dharma* I have instructed to the *Marīchīs* and *Sanakas* is destroyed. The systems of *varṇas* and life-stages have all become lost. Within the *varṇas*, such as the *brāhmanas*, what happened? Their discrimination and practical knowledge was destroyed. *Adharma* had grown, and had undermined *Dharma*.' In this circumstance, *Nārāyaṇa* incarnates.

We know about this time period. We are familiar with the time in which *Viṣṇu* incarnated, through our *Purāṇas* and epics. To understand this time, it says, '*Devakyāṁ vasudevād,*' in *Devaki*, through *Vasudeva*, the Lord incarnated. At that time, this *Dharma* had been completely destroyed, and *adharmā* had undermined *Dharma*. This time period is familiar to us through the *Purāṇas* and Epics. The *Purāṇas* say that this is right before the advent of the *Kali Yuga*. This time period is indicated here.

All of that has been lost today. Today, the system of the classes and life-stages has been completely destroyed. Why did the Lord incarnate in that time? It says, '*bhaumasya brahmaṇaḥ.*' The word '*bhauma,*' means 'related to *Bhūmī*, the

Earth.’ We said before, ‘*saptadvīpā cha medinī*,’ the Earth with its 7 continents. In that Earth, ‘*brahmaṇaḥ*,’ for *Brahman*. This means the *Brahman* in this Earth. This means the *Brahman* that we see with our eyes. That is the meaning.

What is that? That is explained. ‘*Brāhmaṇatvasya*.’ This is *Brāhmaṇatvam*. The quality within a *Brāhmaṇa* is called *Brāhmaṇatvam*.’ Wherever there is *Brāhmaṇatvam*, that is the *Brahman* we can see with our eyes. That is the meaning of ‘*bhaumasya brahmaṇaḥ*.’ This part must be paid attention to. ‘*Bhauma*’ means ‘related to Earth.’ What did we say earlier about *Brahman*? ‘*Avyaktād parah*’ – *Brahman*, *Nārāyaṇa*, is beyond the Unmanifest. However, that *Nārāyaṇa* Himself is directly seen on Earth. How is that? It is through the quality of *Brāhmaṇatvam*.

The word ‘*brāhmaṇatvam*,’ means ‘through the qualities of *Brāhmaṇas*.’ This is made clear in the Gita. ‘*samo damaḥ tapas satyam śaucham*.’ The Gita explains these qualities, such as tranquility, self-control, austerity, truth, and cleanliness. Thus, through that *brāhmaṇatvam*, or through the *Brāhmaṇa* in which those qualities dwell, *Nārāyaṇa* becomes manifest on Earth. That is the meaning.

For the protection of that *Brāhmaṇatvam*, the Lord incarnates. ‘*Brāhmaṇatvasya rakṣaṇārtham*.’ The Gita speaks about the qualities of a *Brāhmaṇa*, such as tranquility, self-control, and austerity. For the protection of those qualities, the Lord incarnates. This is being made clear.

For the protection of *brāhmaṇatvam*, the qualities of the *Brāhmaṇa*, the Lord incarnates. This is the *brāhmaṇatvam* that the Lord instructs in the Gita. This isn’t just in the Gita, but in the *Mahābhārata* as well. In several sections, it speaks about this *brāhmaṇatvam*, the qualities of the *brāhmaṇa*. It says that only through the protection of this *brāhmaṇatvam* can this world be protected. In this way, who is such a person, endowed with good qualities such as self-control and tranquility? In truth, that is *Nārāyaṇa* Himself. ‘*Bhaumasya brahmaṇaḥ*.’ *Nārāyaṇa* becomes manifest on the Earth itself. That is our *sankalpa* of the Guru.

We call such a *Brāhmaṇa* ‘Guru.’ That is why we worship a Guru. They are worthy of worship. Why is that? It is because of the quality of *brāhmaṇatvam*. For protecting this kind of *brāhmaṇatvam*, ‘*Devakyām vasudevād*’ – this is showing the Incarnation described in the *Bhagavatam* and *Mahābhārata*. ‘In

Devaki, from *Vasudeva*, ‘*aṁśena kṛṣṇa kila sambabhuva.*’ In a condensed form, a limited form, *Nārāyaṇa*, who is beyond *Māyā*, assumes a human body. This is a form we can see, with face, hands, and legs, everything. ‘*Sambabhuva,*’ Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa incarnated. ‘*Kila*’ – this means that this matter is famous in the *Purāṇas*.

Here, it says that in the beginning, the Lord instructed *Dharma* to the *Prajāpatis* and *Sanakādīs*. Through the lineage, this *Dharma* was practiced. Then, after a long time, what happened? Adharma grew and overpowered *Dharma*. Why is that? ‘*Kāmodbhavād.*’ Desire was born. Negative desires appeared from within the individual. The *samskāra* gained in previous lives awakens in the form of desire.

Then, the two forms of *Dharma* instructed by the Lord are destroyed. These are the *Dharma* of *Pravṛtti* and the *Dharma* of *Nivṛtti*. Seeing that both of these are lost, what does the Lord do?

Again, ‘*jagataḥ sthitiṁ paripipālayiṣuḥ,*’ the Lord has the desire, ‘the world must be sustained.’ Man must be awakened to the paths of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti*. Both of these are revealed to man. One is the path of *Pravṛtti*, of Action, and the other is the path of *Nivṛtti*, renunciation. For revealing both of these, the Creator *Nārāyaṇa* incarnated.

However, how is that made aware to the Jivas? It is through *Brāhmaṇatvam*. It is through instructing *Brāhmaṇatvam*, qualities such as self-control and tranquility (*śama* and *dama*). In that way, it says next, ‘*brāhmaṇatvasya hi rakṣaṇena rakṣitaḥ syāt vaidiko dharmah tad adhīnatvāt varṇāśramabhedānām.*’ Once this *Brāhmaṇatvam* is protected, which is the basis of *Dharma*, the *Vedic Dharma* will be protected.

This *Brāhmaṇatvam* is instructed in the Gita, through the qualities of tranquility, self-control, austerity, cleanliness, etc. Once that is saved, ‘*rakṣitaḥ syāt vaidiko dharmah,*’ then this *Dharma* of the *Vedas*, in the form of both *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti* will be saved. This is because it is the *Brāhmaṇas* that instruct the other classes. The basis of the *Dharma* of the *kṣatriya*, the *vaiśya*, and the *kṣudra* is the *dharmah* of the *brāhmaṇa*. Once this *dharmah* is instructed and sustained, ‘*tad adhīnatvād,*’ depending on that, all other *dharmas* will be sustained.

Why is that? It is because depending on the *dharmā* of the *brahmana* are, ‘*varṇāśramabhedānām*,’ the sections of classes and life-stages. We are not familiar with the system of classes and *Dharma* of the life-stages here. What we think of when we hear about the system of the classes and life-stages, is the degenerated version of this. We said before, among the practitioners of this, desire was born. Then once *adharmā* grew and *dharmā* had been lost, that is the time we know about the castes and life-stages. That is all we have heard about.

The system of varṇas and life-stages described here is what existed before the time of *Sri Kṛṣṇa*. What we know about these is only after the incarnation of the Lord. In the time when the Lord incarnated, the system of classes and life-stages had gone bad. After that, there was no change in their situation. Afterwards, what remained? The ideas remained. Through the instruction of the Lord, the ideas about the high qualities of *brāhmaṇatvam* still existed.

In society, those dharmas had become invisible. What was possible through the Lord’s incarnation? ‘What is true *Brāhmaṇatvam*? What is the true *dharmā* of the life-stages and classes?’ This created an opportunity for sincere seekers to understand and practice this. Therefore, the utility is this opportunity. In the level of the society, however, this system had previously been destroyed, and only its shadow was sustained. That state of the varṇas and life-stages became full of inequalities. That is the meaning of ‘*kāmodbhavād*.’ In those who were practicing this, desire was born. From that, came the system of classes we are familiar with, along with inequalities, etc.

That isn’t what is said here. Here, it is referring to the true *Dharma*, according to the quality and karma of the individual. That is what the Lord is revealing here. The Lord revealed this, but the people didn’t become aware of it. That is what happened. This describes a society that functions along with this system of classes and life-stages. Only in this kind of society will the *Dharmas* of *Pravṛtti* and *Nivṛtti* be sustained. That is the kind of society viewed by the Gita. That is the true society seen by the Gita.

Otherwise, this isn’t speaking about the system of classes that we see or have heard of, full of inequalities, etc. Therefore, when we move forward, the Lord will say, ‘*chaturvārṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarma vibhāgaśaḥ*.’ According to the division of *karma* and quality, there was such a society. The Lord says, ‘I

created this,' in the part, '*marīchyādīn, .. sanakādīn.*' This means that such a society existed. However, it was destroyed. The Lord Himself says this. The true form of this was destroyed. Again, the Lord will again incarnate to instruct this. After instructing, some people will gain the awareness, 'what is the true *dharma* of the classes? What is the true *dharma* of the life-stages?'

Some people will practice this. Then again, this will be destroyed. Then again, there will be another *Avatar*. Thus, there are an infinite amount of Incarnations for this. This is for making the people aware of the true system of classes and life-stages. For that, some people with good tendencies and *jijñāsa* will become aware of this. Some people will move to the path of *Dharma*. Another section will continue to move in the path of *Adharma*. Then shouldn't those few people at least be benefited? For that, there are Incarnations in every age.

Thus, this *sankalpa* of the Incarnation is not opposed by *Advaita*. The proof of this are the words of the commentator, '*amśena kila sambabhuva.*' *Nārāyaṇa* Himself takes birth in a condensed human form, here on Earth.' Some people think that there is no idea of the Incarnation accepted in *Advaita*. Some say that pure spirituality does not accept this idea of incarnation. Thus, some people have misconceptions. In truth, it's not like that. All of these matters are agreed on by *Advaita*. While God is One, '*avyaktād paraḥ,*' being beyond *Māyā*, that God assumes a human body for the protection of *Dharma*. That is said again in the Gita.

'*Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati chārjuna.*' Whenever Righteousness declines, I incarnate.' In the beginning of the *Kalpa*, the Lord instructed that *Dharma* to the *Sanakas* and *Prajāpatīs*. Over time, through many generations, that was destroyed. Once it is destroyed, the Lord must incarnate on Earth to again instruct this. Like that, this continues even today, and will continue hereafter.

That kind of *sankalpa* of the Incarnation is not something that isn't grasped by our *śāstras*, by *Advaita* or *Vedānta*. That is agreed on by the *śāstras*. The proof of this is this section. We should especially keep this in mind. This primarily indicates the purpose of the Incarnation. We can accept that.

Here, *Shankarācharya* is indicating in this Preface about the *Vedic Dharma*, about its destruction, and about its re-establishment. Along with that, it says that it is the Lord Himself who instructs this Gita. It is Lord *Nārāyaṇa* Himself, in a condensed human form who incarnates on the Earth, and instructs the Gita. This matter is shown here. This is also said in the instructions of the Gita. ‘*Ahaṁ ātmā gudhākeśa sarvabhūtaśayasthitaḥ.*’ ‘I am the Self situated in all beings, Arjuna.’ In several sections, *Sri Krishna* says, ‘I am that *Paramātmā*, the Supreme Self. It is I who am situated in the heart of all beings.’ *Krishna* says to Arjuna, ‘you don’t know this, but I know. I know the beginning, middle, and end of everything. I Myself first revealed this *Ātma Vidyā*.’ This is said in the Gita. With that as a *pramāṇa*, or authority, *Śankarācharya* explains this in the *bhāṣyā*. We will discuss the next sections in the next class.