

GITA CLASS – CHAPTER 2, PART 7

*‘Avināśī tu tadviddhi yena sarvamidam tatam
Vināśamavyayasyāsyā na kaśchitkartumarhati. 2.17.*

2.17. ‘But know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can bring about the destruction of this Immutable.’

We can look at the commentary for this *śloka*. It says, ‘*Kim punaḥ tat yat sat eva sarvadā eva asti iti? Uchyate.*’ So, we can analyze this. It says, ‘*Yat,*’ what, ‘*sarvadā,*’ at all times, ‘*sat,*’ exists? Then, ‘*kim punaḥ.*’ This means ‘how is this explained?’ Then, the Lord again speaks about the. *Ātma Tattva*, with the words ‘*Avināśī tu tat viddhi.*’ Know that That is imperishable.’

‘Kim punastadyatsadeva sarvadaivāstīti, uchyate – avināśīti. Avināśī na vinaṣṭum śīlamasyeti. Tuśabdo/sato viśeṣaṇārthaḥ. Tadviddhi vijānīhi.

*Kim yena sarvamidam jagattatam vyāptam sadākhyena brahmaṇā
sādkāśamākāśeneva ghaṭādayaḥ. Vināśamadarsanamabhāvamavyayasya
na vyeti, upachayāpachayau na yatītyavyayam tasyāvyayasya.*

*Naitatsadākhyam brahma svena rūpeṇa vyeti vyabhicharati
niravayavatvāddehādivat. Nāpyātmīyenā/tmīyābhāvādyathā devadatto
dhanahānyā vyeti na tvevam brahma vyetyato/vyayasyāsyā brahmaṇo
vināśam na kaśchitkartumarhati na kaśchidātmānam vināśayitum
śaknotīśvaro/pi. Ātmā hi brahma svātmani kriyāvirodhāt.’ 2.17.*

In the *bhāṣyā*, this is explained. It says, ‘*avināśī na vinaṣṭum śīlam yasya iti.*’ That which is called ‘*avināśī*’ does not have the nature to be destroyed.’ This is the structuring of the word ‘*avināśī.*’ Then, the next word in the *śloka* is ‘*tu.*’ This is explained as, ‘*Tu śabdaḥ asataḥ viśeṣaṇārthaḥ.*’ Why is this word ‘*tu*’ used? It is to distinguish between the Real (*Sat*) and Unreal (*Asat*). *Asat* is one thing, and *Sat* is another. The Unreal (*asat*) is the imagined objects, and

the *Ātman* is the Reality (*Sat*). To distinguish between these two, the word ‘*tu*’ is used.

Then the *śloka* says ‘*tat viddhi.*’ The explanation given is ‘*tat viddhi vijānīhi.*’ You must understand this.’ That is the meaning. Then, ‘*kim?*’ What should be understood? It says, ‘*yena sarvaṃ idaṃ jagat tataṃ vyāptaṃ sadākhyena brahmaṇā sākāśaṃ, ākāśena iva ghaṭādayaḥ.*’ This is the explanation of the part in the *śloka*, ‘*yena sarvaṃ idaṃ tataṃ.*’ The words ‘*sarvaṃ idaṃ*’ refer to ‘*jagat*’ the universe. Then, ‘*tataṃ*’ means ‘*vyāptaṃ*’ pervaded by. That by which this entire universe is pervaded, ‘*sadākhyena brahmaṇā,*’ is called the Reality, *Sat*, which is *Brahman*.

Then an example is given. It says, ‘*sākāśaṃ. Ākāśeneva ghaṭādayaḥ.*’ In the same way that space fills all objects such as pots. We have discussed this already, so there is no need to discuss it again. Then, it explains the word ‘*vināśaṃ.*’ It says, ‘*vināśaṃ adarśanaṃ abhāvaṃ.*’ This is from the part, ‘*vināśaṃ avyayasyāsyā na kaśchit kartuṃ arhati.*’ So, ‘*vināśaṃ*’ is the non-existence of something. So, it says that no one can make That non-existent. Therefore, the meaning of the word ‘*vināśaṃ,*’ is non-existence.

Then, the *bhāṣyā* continues, ‘*avyayasyā na vyeti upachayāpachayau na yāti iti avyayaṃ.*’ Here the Self is described as ‘*avyayaṃ,*’ immutable. This Self that is immutable, ‘*na vyeti.*’ This means that the Self does not change or move. Then, ‘*upachayāpachayau na yāti.*’ ‘*Upachaya*’ means growth and ‘*apachaya*’ means decay. ‘*Na yāti.*’ The Self experiences neither of these. Because the Self experiences neither increase nor decrease, it is immutable. It does not experience ‘*vyayam,*’ destruction. ‘*Tasyā avyayasyā.*’ Therefore, it is not possible for anyone to destroy this immutable Self. That is the meaning.

Then the *bhāṣyā* continues. It says, ‘*na etat sadākhyam brahma svena rūpeṇa vyeti, vyabhicharati niravayavatvāt, dehādivat.*’ First it says, ‘*na etat sadākhyam brahma,*’ This *Brahman* named as ‘*Sat*’, ‘*svena rūpeṇa,*’ of itself, ‘*vyeti vyabhicharati,*’ does not experience any kind of change. Why is this? It says, ‘*niravayavatvāt.*’ It is because *Brahman* is devoid of parts. The body consists of parts so it says, ‘*dehādivat,*’ like bodies and so forth. This *Brahman* is not consisting of parts like bodies. Because it is composed of parts, the body is destroyed. Therefore, Krishna is indicating to Arjuna that the bodies of

Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and the other warriors are destroyed, but in their nature as the Self, they are Eternal. This is because Arjuna had the doubt, 'I will destroy all of them!' However, Krishna is saying this here to show that in truth, they do not undergo destruction.

Then, it says, '*na api ātmīyena, ātmīyābhāvāt.*' There are two kinds of destruction. One is where an object undergoes destruction of itself. That is why the Self is called 'immutable,' because this doesn't happen to the Self. Then there is another kind of destruction. That is why it says here, '*na api ātmīyena ātmīyābhāvāt.*' Then, it says, '*yathā devadattaḥ dhanahānyā vyeti, na tu evaṁ brahma vyeti.*' So, there are two kinds of destruction. One is to be destroyed of oneself, and the other is to be destroyed by the destruction of something one owns. That does not happen here. The example given is '*Devadattaḥ dhanahānyā vyeti.*' The wealth of *Devadatta* was destroyed, so we say, 'he is destroyed.' So a person can be destroyed through the destruction of a possession of that person. Or else, he can be destroyed by of himself. When a person dies, that is his own destruction.

Suppose a person loses all of his wealth and possessions. We will say, 'he is destroyed.' That is a different kind of destruction. However, there is none of these kinds of destruction for the Self. Why is this? It says, '*ātmīyena ātmīyābhāvāt.*' The Self has no possession. Then the example was given. '*Yathā devadattaḥ dhanahānyā vyeti.*' Because *Devadatta's* wealth was destroyed, he is destroyed. However, it says, '*na tu evaṁ brahma vyeti.*' Growth and decay do not occur in *Brahman*.

Then the *bhāṣyā* continues, '*ataḥ avyayasya asya brahmaṇaḥ vināśaṁ na kaśchit kartuṁ arhati.*' We can analyze this part. '*Ataḥ,*' therefore, '*avyayasya,*' being devoid of growth and decay, '*asya brahmaṇaḥ,*' of this immutable *Brahman*, '*vināśaṁ,*' destruction, '*na kaśchit,*' no one, '*kartuṁ arhati,*' is able to do. If we rearrange the words, it becomes, '*na arhati,*' is not suitable, '*kaśchit kartuṁ*' for anyone to do.' It is not possible for anyone to do this.

Then it says, '*na kaśchit ātmānaṁ vināśayitum śakṇoti īśvaraḥ api.*' We can analyze this. '*Na kaśchit,*' no one, '*ātmānaṁ,*' this Self, '*vināśayitum,*' to destroy, '*śakṇoti,*' is able to. '*īśvaraḥ api,*' even God cannot destroy the Self. Why can't God destroy the *ātman*? It because it says, '*na kaśchit.*' This means

that no one at all can do this. Why is this? This is because that *Ātman* is *Brahman* Itself.

‘*Ātmā hi brahma.*’ The *jīva* is itself the Supreme Self (*Paramātmān*). Then it says, ‘*svātmāni cha kriyāvirodhāt.*’ ‘*Svātmāni,*’ one cannot act by oneself in one’s true nature. That is what is called ‘*svātmāni kriyāvirodhāt.*’ An object cannot oppose itself in itself.

We discussed this concept before, *Ātmasrey doṣam*. One thing can destroy another thing. Why is that? This is because the other thing is separate from the first. However, it is not possible to destroy one’s Self. Why is this? It says, ‘*svātmāni cha kriyāvirodhāt.*’ A person can act in relation with other objects, but cannot act against his own Self. A person cannot climb over his own shoulder. That is what is called *Ātmasrey Doṣam*. If a person thinks, ‘that is possible,’ this *doṣam*, or defect occurs. That is impossible. It isn’t possible for the eye to see itself without the aid of a mirror. That is what is said here.

‘*Svātmāni,*’ in one’s true nature, one cannot act. In truth, the true nature of the *jīva* is God. Therefore, that *īśvara* cannot destroy the *Jīva*. This is what is called ‘*Svātmāni Kriyāvirodhāt.*’

The scriptures say, ‘*yathā chakṣurgatarekha chakṣur na paśyati.*’ This means that the eye cannot see the eye’s pupil itself. ‘*Chakṣurgata rekha,*’ there may be any kind of mark in the eye. What is that? In the eye, some tiny object may enter. For that, ‘*chakṣur na paśyate.*’ The eye isn’t able to see that. The eye can see all external objects. However, the eye cannot see within the eye, like its own pupil. Unless one uses a mirror, this is not possible. By itself, the eye cannot see its own pupil. Why is that? This is because an object cannot act within its own self. One can only act in relation to separate objects. Because of this, it said, ‘*na kaśchit,*’ no one, even the Lord, cannot destroy the *Jīva*. This is because God is the true nature of the *Jīva*.

Now we can look at the *śloka*. ‘*Yena Sarvaṁ Idam Tataṁ,*’ That by which, ‘*sarvaṁ idam,*’ all of this, ‘*tataṁ,*’ is pervaded, ‘*Tat tu,*’ that, ‘*avināśī vidhhi,*’ know as the immutable. ‘*Vināśam avyayasya asya,*’ the destruction of this immutable Self, ‘*kartum,*’ to do, ‘*na kaśchit,*’ no one, ‘*arhati*’ is able. Or it is, ‘*kaśchit,*’ anyone, ‘*na arhati,*’ is not able. Here the imperishability of the Self is explained. This is in response to the doubt of Arjuna. Arjuna was thinking,

‘I am able to destroy all of them.’ The Lord says, ‘that’s not correct. The True Self that pervades all of these bodies is eternal, and can never be destroyed.’ That is what is said. Now we can go to the 18th śloka.

*‘Antavanta ime dehā nityasyoktāḥ śarīriṇaḥ
Anāśīno ‘prameyasya tasmādyuddhyasva bhārat. 2.18.*

2.18. ‘These destructible bodies are said to belong to the everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable, embodied One. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, join the battle.’

The introduction to this shloka in the commentary is this. ‘*Kim punaḥ tat asat yat svātmasattām vyabhicharati iti? Uchyate.*’ We can look at this part. It says, ‘*asat.*’ We said that the word ‘*asat*’ means what is imagined. That is the meaning in *Advaita*, imaginary. Why is this? It says, ‘*tat asat yat svātmasattām vyabhicharati.*’ The very nature of these objects, ‘*vyabhicharati,*’ is subject to change and destruction. The very nature of these imagined objects is to change, to be destroyed. ‘*Uchyate,*’ this is said, to give the discrimination between the Self and non-Self. Then the shloka is commentated on.

*‘Kim punastadasad yatsvātmasattām vyabhicharatīti? Uchyate –
antavanta iti. Antavano/nto vināśo vidyate yeṣām te/ntavanto yayā
mṛgatrṣṇīkodakādaḥ sadbuddhiranvṛttā pramāṇanirūpaṇānte
vicchidyate sa tasya antastatheme dehāḥ.*

*Svapnamāyādehādivacchāntavanto nityasya śarīriṇaḥ
śarīravato/nāśīno/prameyasyā/tmano/ntavanta ityuktā
vivekibhiritarthāḥ. Nityasyānāśīna iti na punaruktaim. Nityatvasya
dvividhatvālloke nāśasya cha. Yathā deho bhasmībhūto/darśanaḥ gata
naṣṭa uchyate Vidyamānopanyathāpariṇato vyādhyādiyukto jāto naṣṭa
uchyate. Tatrānāśīno nityasyeti dvividhenāpi nāśena
asambandho/syetyarthāḥ.’*

The first word, ‘*antavantaḥ*,’ is explained. ‘*antaḥ vināśaḥ vidyate yeṣāṃ te antavantaḥ.*’ This word ‘*antavantaḥ*’ is plural. The single form is ‘*antavān.*’ The dual form is ‘*antavantau,*’ and ‘*antavantaḥ*’ is the plural form. It says that the word ‘*antaḥ*’ means destruction. ‘*Vidyate yeṣāṃ*’ for those whom this destruction exists, ‘*te antavantaḥ,*’ they are subject to destruction.’

When the suffix ‘*vat*’ is added to a quality, the word describes someone with that quality. So, here it says, ‘*antavān,*’ that which undergoes destruction. The plural form of this is ‘*antavantaḥ,*’ those for which destruction exists.

Then an example is given. It says, ‘*yathā mṛgatṛṇīkāḍau sadbuddhiḥ anuvṛtṭyā pramāṇanirūpanānte vicchidyate, sa tasya antaḥ.*’ So what does this destruction refer to? It says, ‘*yathā mṛgatṛṇīkāḍau,*’ like the appearance of a mirage. ‘*Sadbuddhiḥ anuvṛtṭyā,*’ we will feel that it is real. However, ‘*pramāṇanirūpanānte,*’ after having examined the mirage directly, what happens? ‘*Vicchidyate.*’ We understand. This ‘*sadbuddhiḥ,*’ the knowledge that the mirage is real, ‘*vicchidyate,*’ is destroyed. ‘*Sa Tasya Antaḥ.*’ This is the destruction of the mirage. When we say that a mirage was destroyed, this is what we mean. Here what is said? When we see a mirage, we feel that it is real. We go close to it, examine it, and the mirage disappears. Then what do we understand? We understand, ‘what I thought before was not true. The thought, ‘this is true,’ was not correct.’

So what is the destruction of the mirage? It is the knowledge that it is not real. This does not refer to an external destruction here. Why is that? This is because it can again be seen. That is why this is said. Therefore, the destruction of an object does not necessarily indicate the destruction of its true nature. It is enough if a person becomes aware. That is its *anta*, its destruction. That is how we should understand.

If we say that the word ‘*asat*’ means ‘what is non-existent,’ it will become difficult for us to understand. This is because we see the mirage water as existing. We don’t have the experience ‘this doesn’t exist.’ However, after becoming aware that that isn’t true, one sees it. Therefore, an external destruction doesn’t happen. The external destruction of an object is not needed in order to understand that it is imagined. That is the meaning of what is said.

We can explain this one more time. Just as the case of the mirage, it says, ‘*tathā ime dehāḥ svapnamāyādehavān cha, antavantaḥ nityasya śarīriṇaḥ śarīravataḥ anāśīnaḥ aprameyasya ātmanaḥ antavantaḥ iti uktaḥ vivekibhiḥ ityarthaḥ.*’

We can look at this part. It says, ‘*tathā ime dehāḥ.*’ These bodies that are seen, your body, and the bodies of *Bhīṣma* and *Droṇa*, how are they in truth? ‘*Svapnamāyādehavān,*’ they are like the bodies seen in a dream. They are like the bodies seen in a mirage. In this way, they are ‘*antavantaḥ,*’ subject to destruction. As we continuously see these bodies, they are continuously being destroyed. As we continuously see a mirage, we understand that it is unreal. Similarly, while seeing all of these bodies, you should understand, ‘these are not real.’ The word ‘*anta*’ here doesn’t refer to external destruction. It is enough if you understand that they are unreal.

Who do these bodies belong to? It says, ‘*nityasya śarīriṇaḥ,*’ these bodies belong to the Self. How is the Self? ‘*Anāśīnaḥ*’ indestructible, and ‘*aprimeyasya,*’ immeasurable. What is that? ‘*nityaṁ śarīrī śarīravān anāśāḥ aprameyaṁ.*’ For who is this said? ‘*Ātmanaḥ.*’ This group of words all indicate the *Ātman*. Your true nature is imperishable, while the body is destroyed. Thus, it says, ‘*antavantaḥ.*’ All of these bodies that you see are subject to destruction. Then it says, ‘*iti uktaḥ.*’ This is said, by who? By *vivekis*, those endowed with discrimination. ‘*Ityarthaḥ.*’ That is the meaning.

Then the *bhāṣyā* continues, ‘*nityasya anāśīnaḥ iti na punaruktaṁ.*’ The *śloka* says that the Self is Eternal (*nitya*) and Imperishable (*anāśī*). Some may say that this causes the defect of redundancy. This is when a person makes a statement and then repeats that same statement. In spiritual discussion, this rule of repetition does not apply, but in general conversation, this repetition is a defect. So, isn’t this redundancy? Isn’t it a waste to say the same things again? However, it says, ‘*nityasya anāśīnaḥ iti na punaruktaṁ.*’ This *punarukti* does not occur here. Why is that? It says, ‘*nityatvasya dvividatvāt loke.*’ This means that there are two kinds of imperishability in the world. To refute the idea that the Self belongs to one of these, the word ‘*anāśīnaḥ*’ is also included in the *śloka*.

In other words, there are two kinds of imperishability. There are also two kinds of destruction. How is that? This is explained. It says, ‘*yathā dehaḥ bhasmībhūtaḥ adarśanam gataḥ naṣṭaḥ uchyate.*’ We can take the body as an example. ‘*dehaḥ bhasmībhūtaḥ.*’ Suppose the body is cremated into ashes. ‘*Adarśanam gataḥ.*’ Then it is impossible to be seen. Therefore, what do we say? ‘*Naṣṭaḥ uchyate.*’ We say that the body is destroyed. This is one kind of destruction. Then there is another kind of destruction. How is that?

It says, ‘*Vidyamānopi yathā anyathā pariṇataḥ vyādhyādiyuktaḥ jātaḥ naṣṭaḥ uchyate.*’ So suppose that the body still exists. ‘*Vidyamānopi.*’ The body exists, but it says, ‘*anyathā pariṇataḥ,*’ The body is transforming in a different way. How? ‘*Vyādhyādiyuktaḥ,*’ through the connection of disease, etc., ‘*jātaḥ naṣṭaḥ uchyate,*’ this is called destruction as well. This is another kind of destruction.

In this way, there are two kinds of destruction for objects in the universe. First is the destruction of the object, by which one can no longer see it. The other is when one can see the object, but it undergoes transformation. Then its form changes. Then the *bhashya* continues, ‘*Tatra ‘nityasya’ ‘anāśinah’ iti dvividhena api nāśena asam̐baddhasya ityārthaḥ.*’

When a *Jiva* becomes identified with the physical body through the mind, he starts to think about his destruction. He realizes, ‘I will be destroyed.’ Because he sees other bodies being destroyed, he imposes destruction onto his own body, and thinks, ‘I will be destroyed.’ This is due to the identification with the body.

On the other hand, when the *Jiva* sees other bodies decaying, he thinks, ‘I am also undergoing decay.’ Without understanding that this happens to the body, he thinks, ‘I am decaying.’ This is what happens. However, imposing of destruction, decay, and transformation onto the Self is only related to the body. These changes do not occur for the Self. That is why it says, ‘*tasya nityasya anaashinah iti.*’ These two words, ‘eternal’ and ‘indestructible,’ are used to show Arjuna that these two kinds of destruction happen to the body, and not to the Self. That is why Krishna says this.

Then the *bhashya* says, ‘*anyathā pṛthivyādivat api nityatvam̐ syāt ātmanaḥ.*’ We said that the Self is eternal. When we say this, we mean that it is

not connected to transformation. The Earth is eternal in transformation. The Earth doesn't just mean mud. It also means stones, plants, and our bodies, everything in this Nature. This is also considered to be Eternal. How is this? This is because the Earth is created at the beginning of the creative cycle (*kalpa*) and is dissolved in the end of the *kalpa*. Then in the beginning of the next *kalpa*, this Earth is again manifested. Therefore, this *Prithivi* is eternally in transformation. It continues through transformation. Because of this, we can also say that Nature is Eternal. This *Prithivi* has a relative eternity.

For example, when our bodies are destroyed, their components merge with the Earth, and this forms another body. Thus, in the form of the Earth, this body will continue to exist. Therefore, it is eternal. However, this eternity of nature exists through transformation. This transformation begins at the beginning of the creative cycle and continues till its end. Again it is remanifested at the next *kalpa*. The philosophy of *Sāṅkhya* and other philosophies say that *Prakriti* (Nature) is eternally in transformation (*pariṇāmanīyam*). This is indicated here.

It says, '*Anyathā Pṛthivyādivat*' like Nature, and all elements, '*apī nīyatvaṁ syāt.*' This means that Nature is also Eternal. Then it says, '*ātmanaḥ tat mā bhūt.*' This means that this kind of eternal nature is not relevant. That is why it says, '*iti 'nītyasya' 'anāśinaḥ' ityāha.*' This is why the Lord uses both the words Eternal and Indestructible. The use of these words does not cause a defect of repetition.

Then the *bhāṣyā* continues. It says, '*aprameyasya na prameyasya,*' that which is immeasurable, '*pratyakṣādīpramāṇaiḥ aparicchedyasya ityarthāḥ.*' In the *śloka*, it says that the Self is '*aprameya,*' immeasurable. The word '*prameyam*' means, 'that which is made an object through *prama*. *Prama* is true experience. Here I know this book. I know the book exactly as it is, as a book. The knowledge within me is *prama*, because I know the book truly. When that happens, this *prama* has an object. Whatever object is known is the object of *prama*. We have discussed these matters. Whatever object is known to us is really the object of knowledge. The object of knowledge is called '*prameyam.*' This means the object of '*prama,*' true experience.

Whatever object we have a true experience of, that object is known as ‘*prameyam*.’ Whenever the *Jiva* obtains true knowledge of an object, that object is ‘*prameyam*.’ And what about the Self? It is ‘*aprameyam*.’ The *Jiva*’s true knowledge of worldly objects comes from *prama*, and the knowledge that is imagined is called ‘*aprama*.’ When a book is seen clearly as it is, then that is ‘*prama*,’ true knowledge. If the book is mistaken for something else, then that knowledge is called ‘*aprama*.’ An example of this is seeing a snake in the rope.

Therefore, the Self cannot be the object of individual’s correct worldly knowledge, or *prama*. Therefore, the Self is called ‘*aprameyam*.’ The *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*aprameyasya na prameyasya*.’ How is this? ‘*Pratyakṣādi pramāṇaiḥ*.’ This is explained. This means that the *Ātman* does not become an object of *prama* through the instruments of knowledge, such as the senses. Here it speaks about three things; *prama*, *pramāṇam*, and *prameyam*. *Pramāṇam* is the instrument by which the *Jiva* gains true knowledge of an object (*prama*). *Pramāṇa* is the instrument by which the *Jiva* values the truth of an object. In this way, it becomes an instrument for *prama*, correct worldly knowledge. Therefore, from *prama*, correct knowledge, comes *pramāṇam*, the tool for gaining this knowledge. The object of the *pramanam* is called *prameyam*. So we should understand the meaning of these three words.

In the same way that we use a pen as an instrument to write, this *pramāṇa* is what we used to determine the truth of an object. For gaining true experience of the world, this *pramāṇa* is necessary. Through the *pramāṇa*, we gain *prama*, true knowledge of worldly objects. The ordinary meaning of *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* means the knowledge gained through direct experience. For example, I can see this book in front of me. Because of this, I have knowledge of the book. Therefore, in this case, the eye is the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*, the direct instrument of knowledge. If something is heard, then the ear becomes the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*. If something is smelled, the nose becomes a direct *pramāṇa*, and if something is tasted, the tongue becomes a direct *pramāṇa*.

In this way, the senses are direct *pramāṇas*. Normally, *Advaita* accepts that the word *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* (direct perception) refers to the 5 senses. So, when the senses grasp external objects, what happens? There, the senses are the instruments of perception (*pramāṇa*) and through these correct knowledge

(*prama*) is gained within of the objects. These external objects then become the objects of correct knowledge (*prama*). Because they become the object of correct knowledge (*prama*), these objects are called *prameyam*. These are sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell. These are the most important *prameyas*.

The *jiva* experiences all of these. These 5 *prameyas* are connected to each object that is known to the *Jiva*. In this way, the qualities of sound, sight, taste, touch, and smell are the *prameyas*, and the senses such as the eye, ears, tongue, skin, and nose are the instruments of direct perception (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa*). All *Jivas* know these objects, and so the *Jiva* is called the *Pramātav*.

So we can understand all of these words; *pramātav*, *prameyam*, *pramāṇam*, and *prama*. In the translations of Śaṅkara's works these words have been given special 'definitions', but here we should understand the direct meaning. The *bhāṣyā* says, '*na prameyasya*.' This means that the Self is not born of the instruments of perception. We said that the *pramāṇas* are the instruments of attaining *prama*, and the *prameya* objects are born from the *pramāṇas*. Therefore, the Self is not a product of the *pramāṇas* (instruments of perception). The reason I am explaining this in so much detail is because if you read the Malayalam commentaries, you will just get confused. That is why am reinforcing the understanding of this through repetition. You must be very careful when you read in Malayalam.

So the *bhāṣyā* says, '*pratyakṣādipramāṇaiḥ*,' by the *pramāṇas* such as through the senses (*pratyakṣa*). This means that there are *pramāṇas* other than that through the senses. There is *pratyakṣa*, *anumanam*, *upamanam*, *śabdām*, *arthāpatti*, *anupalabdhi*, etc. These kinds of *pramāṇas* are also discussed. These different types of *pramāṇam* are not just discussed in *Advaita*. They are all discussed in the *Pūrva Mīmamsa* philosophy, as well as the *Nyāya* Philosophy. These scriptures discuss the meanings of these *pramāṇas* with great seriousness. Because of the amount of technicalities in these descriptions, it is difficult to understand the true meanings of these *pramāṇas*.

There are deep discussions of each *pramāṇa*. What is the nature of each *pramāṇa*? How do they create *prama*, correct knowledge? This is contained in various scriptures. We will not enter that kind of discussion this here. It says, '*pratyakṣādi*.' The *pramāṇas*, such as those through the senses. Everyone

accepts the senses as instruments of correct knowledge. Materialists and other philosophies accept the senses as a *pramāṇa*. This is because we see with our eyes. No one has a difference of opinion about this. When we see something, we have the correct experience of that object. We know the object. This knowledge is *prama*, correct knowledge. This concept is nothing that is disagreed upon. The object of these *pramāṇas* is the *prameyam*, the worldly object. No one disagrees with those matters.

So, an individual can attain correct knowledge (*prama*) of an object in the mind through the use of *pramāṇa* (instrument of perception). When that happens, what is said? It says that *prama* is attained through the *pramāṇa* of the object, and the object becomes determined (*parichedyate*). When something becomes an object of *prama*, that object becomes determined. This means that it we know the object. However, instead of saying that, why is the word ‘*parichedyate*’ used? The word ‘*chedyate*’ means to be cut into pieces. Therefore, the verb ‘*parichedyate*’ means to become limited, to be contained.

When we know an object through *pramāṇa*, that object becomes limited (*parichedyam*). It comes under the control of knowledge. That knowledge contains the object. Or you can say that the object becomes limited by being controlled by knowledge. Because it is limited, it is contained by knowledge. That object becomes insignificant to the knowledge because it is under the control of knowledge. That is how knowledge contains the object. The object becomes contained within knowledge.

However, it is not possible to limit the *Ātman* like this. It cannot be controlled by knowledge. It cannot be limited or divided by knowledge. That is why it says, ‘*aparichedyasya*,’ that which cannot be limited, the Self. The Self cannot be limited by the *prama* gained by *pramāṇas* such as the senses. Thus, it says, ‘*aparichedyasya ityarthah.*’ This is the use of the word ‘*aparichedyasya.*’

Then there is a question from a seeker to the *Siddhānti*. It says, ‘*Nanu āgamena ātmā paricchidyate, pratyakṣādinā cha pūrvam.*’ So, a person asks, ‘*āgamena*,’ through the scriptures, the *āgamas*, the *Vedas*, isn’t the *ātman* made an object of knowledge? Don’t the scriptures indicate the Self? There are the phrases ‘*tattvamasi*,’ etc. in the *Vedas*. Don’t these indicate the Self? Something

that is unknown is indicated. That is the mark of a *pramāṇa*. It is said, ‘*ajñāta jñāpakam.*’ A *pramāṇa* is what indicates something that is unknown.

We said before that the five senses (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa*) are only one form of *pramāṇa*. Another form of *pramāṇa* is *āgama*, the *Vedas*. These are actually considered to be the ultimate *pramāṇa*. The most powerful form of *pramāṇa* is the *Vedas* (*śruti*). It is even more powerful than the *pramāṇas* such as the senses. Why is that? This is because the *Vedas* indicate objects that cannot be grasped by the other *pramanas*. The *Vedas* are the only *pramāṇa* to indicate the correct knowledge of *yagnas* (sacrifices) and heaven. Therefore, it is the most powerful form of *pramāṇa*.

It is said, ‘*aupaniṣadam puruṣam.*’ This means that the *Puruṣa*, the Self is indicated through the *pramāṇa* of the *Upaniṣads*. This is said in the *Vedas* itself. Therefore, the *Ātman* is indicated through the *pramāṇa* of the *Vedas*. Even though the Self is not indicated through the *pramāṇa* of the senses, isn’t It determined by the *pramāṇa* of *āgama*? Through the *Vedas*, a person gains awareness, knowledge of the Self. Therefore, can’t we say that the Self becomes an object of *prama*, correct knowledge? In that case, the *Ātman* becomes limited, determined.

This is said because *Agama* is the most primary *pramāṇa*. That’s not all. It continues, ‘*pratyakṣādinā cha pūrvam.*’ This means that it is not wrong to say that the Self becomes the object of other *pramāṇas*, such as through the senses. In other words, the Self is not something that is unknown. If an object is completely unknown, then there is no *pramāṇa* to gain knowledge of that object. We simply don’t know the object. This is complete ignorance of the object. In that case, *pramāṇa* cannot be used. A person cannot even try to use *pramāṇa* to know that object.

Therefore, some form of incomplete knowledge at least is needed. In that case, *pramāṇa* can be used. This can be for anything. There are some who say that the Self is *pratyakṣa*, objectified through the senses. Why is this? The Self is ‘I.’ Everyone knows who they are. Everyone constantly thinks ‘I, I, I.’ Therefore, the Self is known to everyone. Then isn’t the Self an object of the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*? One can know about the Self through the mind, and can It be inferred. How can we infer? The body and senses function, so there must be

a person behind these, making them function. That is the *Ātman*. In this way, a person can know their true nature. So, some followers of the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy say that the *Ātman* is an object of *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*, the knowledge of the senses. Through the experience of ‘*aham*,’ the *Ātman* is directly experienced. That’s not all.

Also, if we accept that the Self is an object of the *pramāṇa* of the *Vedas*, we can say that we use *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* to hear the *Vedas*. This is because the *Vedas* are transmitted through sound. For hearing sound, the *pramāṇa* of the ear is needed. The *Vedas* are known by hearing through the ears, grasping the meaning of the words, and then contemplating in the mind. So the *Vedas* are the most important *pramāṇa*. If we must know the *Vedas*, then we need the help of the ear-organ. Therefore, because we gain knowledge about the Self through the organ of the ear, through hearing, this Self becomes an object of *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* (the perception through the senses), even if this isn’t direct. This can be said.

First, one hears the *Vedas*. Through the hearing, we gain knowledge about the words. From that comes awareness of the meaning. From that, we know the *Ātman*. So, the *Vedas* depend on *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*. No matter how we look at it, it says that the Self is known through these *pramāṇas*, whether it is *Agama* or *Pratyakṣa*. So because the *Pūrva Pakṣa* says that the Self can be known by *pramāṇas* other than the senses, the *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*pratyakṣādīnā*,’ by *pramāṇas* such as *pratyakṣam*.

This is then refuted by the *siddhānti*. It says, ‘*Na*.’ This means, ‘no, that is not correct. The *Ātman* can never be indicated by any kind of *pramāṇa*, such as the *Vedas*.’ Why is that? This is because that is not necessary. It is not necessary to indicate the Self through any kind of *pramāṇa*. Why is that? It says, ‘*Ātmanaḥ Svataḥ siddhatvāt*.’ The Self is only One, and known by itself in Its true nature. This *Ātman* does not depend on any kind of *pramāṇa* for its existence, whether it is the *Vedas* and the senses. It doesn’t depend on any of these.

Instead, what happens? These *pramāṇas* depend on the Self. It is only because of the presence of the Self that these *pramāṇas* are able to gain correct knowledge (*prama*) of objects. However, these are not necessary for the Self.

Why? It says, ‘*svataḥ siddatvāt.*’ The Self is self-experienced. Therefore, the perfectness, or knowledge of the Self does not depend on anything else. The completeness of other objects depends on these *pramāṇas*. We said before, ‘I see this book in front of me, therefore, I know that the book exists. I know its existence. This happens because of the functioning of the eye organ. This creates knowledge of the book in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, and the book shines within knowledge. Here, the book exists only by depending on this knowledge. It exists relying on knowledge. The *siddhi*, or existence of the book depends on something else. However, the Self is ‘*svataḥ siddha.*’ This means that the Self is self-luminous.

When this is said, we mean that when any other external, worldly light is grasped by the senses, another form of light is needed. How is that? We know that the external light is shining. If we must grasp that external light, there must be the light within us. It is only possible to grasp the external light if the eyes are open. Even if the external light does not depend another external form of light, it depends on the light of the Self. This is the inner light, the light of the mind. This is light is manifested through the eye. Through this internal light, all of the external lights, such as the sun, moon, etc., are grasped. However, the light of the Self is self-luminous.

There is no need for the light of the Self to rely on any other form of light, whether it is worldly light or spiritual light. These are not necessary. Why is this? This is because when we use the term ‘light’ usually, this refers to inert light (*jada prakasham*). Instead, the light of the Self is Consciousness, Experience, and Knowledge. That is why the Self is said to be self-luminous.

The *Ātman* is itself the true nature of Experience. It is self-experienced. Because of that, it is not necessary to experience the Self. There is no need to try to experience the Self. Why is that? It is because the Self is experience itself. The true nature of experience cannot be experienced. We previously discussed the concept of ‘*Ātmaśreydoṣam.*’ This means that it is not possible to face oneself in oneself. If we say that one experiences the nature of experience, this creates the defect discussed earlier. In the bhashya, about this it said, ‘*svātmani kriyāvirodhāt.*’ This said that it is not possible for a person to act within his

own self. So because the Self is the true nature of Experience, it cannot become an object of experience.

For something to become an object of experience, a *pramana* is needed. Wherever something becomes an object of experience, such as this book, it becomes an object of *pramāṇa*. A *pramāṇa*, the eye, is needed. At the same time, what about the *Ātman*? Because the *Ātman* is the true nature of experience, it cannot become an object of experience. A *pramāṇa* is not needed for the Self. This means that the Self cannot be objectified in the way that external, worldly objects are. That is the meaning.

If the Self cannot be objectified in this manner, we cannot say that the Self is a *prameyam*, something qualified by a *pramāṇa*. This is further explained in the *bhashya*. It says, '*siddhe hi ātmani pramātari pramitsoḥ pramāṇānveṣanā bhavati.*'

What is said here? It says, '*Pramātari,*' within the '*Pramātav,*' the one who experiences *prama*. When the *Jiva* experiences an external object, we said that he uses the *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* of the eye or another sense organ. Through these, he knows the object, such as a book. This process is called '*pramātṛtvam.*' Thus, the person who grasps objects through the *pramāṇas* of the five senses is called the '*pramatā.*' This means a person who experiences true knowledge of objects. That is the '*pramatā.*' The 7th conjugation of the this word '*pramātav*' is '*pramātari,*' 'within the *pramātav.*'

Then there is the word '*pramitsu,*' which is conjugated to the word '*pramitsoh.*' We said that the word '*pramatā*' is a person with true knowledge of external objects. The word '*pramitā*' is the same meaning. Therefore, '*pramitsu,*' is a person who desires this true knowledge. A '*pramitsu*' is a person who desires the correct and true knowledge of objects. From this word, comes the 6th conjugation, '*pramitsoh.*'

Who is this *pramatā*? It is the Self, the *Jiva* itself. This same *Jiva* exists as the *Pramitsu*, one who desires true knowledge of objects. The *Jiva* is the one who possesses true knowledge as well as the one who desires this true knowledge. When that *Jiva* possesses true knowledge of objects, he is called the '*Pramatā.*' When the *Jiva* desires this true knowledge of objects, he is called '*Pramitsu.*' What is this? When we see an object that we have seen before, we have the

thought, 'what is this?' This is a desire for the true knowledge of the object. Then what does the *Jiva* become? He becomes the *Pramitsu*. The object that is being grasped by the *Jiva* is called the *Prameyam*. Thus, the book is the *prameyam*.

Thus there are three things here; the *Pramitsu*, the *pramāṇa*, and the *Prameyam*. The object that is before me, the *Pramitsu*, is the *prameyam*, which I desire to know. And who obtains the *siddhi* of this knowledge? I obtain this knowledge. Here, the word '*siddhi*' means knowledge. That is why the word '*pramitsoh*,' for one who desires true knowledge of an object,' is used. So the *bhashya* says, '*prameyam siddhe*,' when the object of perception becomes known, '*ātmani*,' in oneself, the *Pramatāv*, '*pramāṇānveṣanā bhavati*.' The search for *pramāṇa* occurs. In other words, how can this object be known? How can I gain correct knowledge of the object? Through what *pramāṇa* can I gain true knowledge of the object?' This is the search for *pramāṇa*.

For example, once a person heard about a *yaga* (sacrifice). Someone was talking and mentioned about a *yāga*. At that point, the *yāga* becomes a *prameyam* for that person. After hearing about the sacrifice, it becomes a *prameya*, an object of knowledge (*prama*). A person told him about the sacrifice, so he holds that information to be true. Then, where is that knowledge gained? It is gained within the *jiva*. Thus, the *Jiva* is called the *Pramatav*. The *prameyam* of the sacrifice is obtained within the *Jiva*, so he is the *Pramātav*.

Then what does he do? How does he gain true knowledge of the *yaga*? He becomes a '*pramitsu*.' This means that he desires the correct knowledge of the *yaga*. At that time, he goes from being the *Pramātav* to being a *Pramitsu*, one who desires the correct knowledge of the object. When he becomes a *Pramitsu*, he searches for *pramāṇa*. 'How can I truly know about the *yaga*?' The *pramāṇa* for a *yaga* is the *Vedas* (*shruti*). Thus, he searches for *pramāṇa*. Only through a *pramāṇa* can he have correct knowledge of the object.

Therefore, he studies the *Vedas*. That is the search for *pramāṇa* (*pramāṇa anveṣanam*). This is what happens with ordinary objects. Whenever we have some knowledge about an object, we try to gain correct knowledge about that object. That is the meaning. That is what happens with ordinary objects. And

what happens with the Self? This is said next in the *bhāṣyā*. ‘*Na hi pūrvam ‘ittham aham’ iti apramāya paśchāt prameya paricchedāya pravartate. Na hi ātmā nāma kasyachit aprasiddho bhavati.*’

A person does not become a *pramitsu* in relation to the Self. There is also no need for a search for *pramāṇa* in regards the *Ātman*. That is the meaning. That is what was said. The *Ātman* has no need for *pramāṇa*. This means that there is no need of any kind of *pramāṇa* for the *Ātman* to be known. Why is this? It is because the Self is never an unknown (*aprasiddha*) object. The Self is not an object that is fully unknown. How is that? The *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*na hi pūrvam ‘ittham aham’ iti ātmānam apramāya.*’ What is the *Ātman*? It is one’s own Self, one’s true nature. So, it says, ‘*ittham aham.*’ This is the knowledge ‘I am.’ Then, ‘*iti apramāya,*’ without the knowledge, ‘*paśchāt,*’ then, ‘*prameya paricchedāya,*’ no one tries to make the Self perceived as a *prameya*.

This means that a person does not know the Self previously and then try to again know what the Self is. This is how it is with ordinary objects. There, a person doesn’t know about them and tries to gain knowledge, or one can have partial knowledge and try to gain more complete knowledge of the object. These two things can happen. One can know something partially and try to gain complete knowledge, or one can have no knowledge of an object and try to gain correct knowledge of that object.

The Self is not like that. For the Self to be unknown previously to a person, it means that one must not know oneself. However, each person constantly experiences, ‘I am.’ There is no one who isn’t aware of this knowledge ‘I am.’ It is not possible to say ‘I have no knowledge about myself,’ because the awareness of ‘I am’ exists even in that statement. And what is this awareness, ‘I am?’ That is the *Ātman*. What is the meaning of the word *Ātman*? It means one’s true nature (*svarūpam*). Thus, the *Ātman* is one’s own self.

Therefore, the Self is constantly known through the experience of everyone. That is why the *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*na hi pūrvam ‘ittham aham.*’ This means that no one can say that they don’t have the knowledge ‘I am.’ We cannot call that knowledge as delusion. Everyone constantly knows, ‘I, I, I.’ Then it says, ‘*paśchāt,*’ then, having not known this, ‘*prameya paricchedāya,*’

nobody strives to know the Atman. Why is this? It says, '*na hi ātmā nāma aprasiddho bhavati.*'

So what is the Self? It is the experience 'I.' This experience is never unknown to anyone. It is never *aprasiddha*, unknown. Something that reveals what is unknown is a *pramāṇa*. A *pramāṇa* reveals the knowledge of an object. However, the *Ātman* is not something that is ever unknown. It is called, '*svataḥ siddha*,' 'Self-known. The *Ātman* is self-luminous. The *Ātman* exists in the form of Experience. Therefore, there is no need at all to make the Self known through an instrument of perception (*pramāṇa*).

Then what is the importance of the *Vedas*, the scriptures, and the *Upaniṣads*? This is said next. What did we say till now? We said that the *Ātman* is self-known, through the experience 'I am.' The Self is not a separate object that we can know or study about. Therefore, the knowledge 'I' is never absent from our experience. We constantly have the knowledge, 'I, I, I.' This itself is the *Ātman*. That by which we constantly know, 'I, I, I,' is the *Ātman*. Therefore, we cannot say that the Self is unknown. The Self cannot be hidden from us. It cannot be veiled.

Wherever there is the effulgence of awareness (*bodha sphurana*), there the *Ātman* is known. If there is no effulgence of awareness, then you can say this. However, it's not possible for us to think about the absence of the effulgence of awareness. Why is that? This is because wherever there is thought, there is this effulgence of awareness. We can think of any object we want, but it is not possible to think of the absence of knowledge. Why is this? This is because wherever there is thought, there is knowledge.

That state, the absence of knowledge, is the state of unmanifestation, or emptiness (*śūnyata*). Therefore, that state can never become an object of man's intellect. The intellect cannot imagine that state. This is because wherever there is imagination, there cannot be emptiness (*śūnyata*). If a person tries to imagine emptiness, there is not the emptiness, but the imagination. Therefore, a person is never unaware of his Self. The Self is never non-existent to one. Everyone constantly knows themselves. Only if something is unknown to us do we need to search for *pramāṇa*. Then what is the importance of the *Vedas*? This is said next. It says,

‘śāstram̐ tvantyaṁ

*pramāṇamataddarmādhyaropaṇamātranivartakatvena
pramāṇatvamātmani pratipadyate na tvajñātārthajñāpakatvena. Tathā
cha śrutih̐ – yatsākṣādaparokṣābrahma ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ’ iti.
Yasmādevaṁ nityo/vikriyaśchā/tmā tasmāduddyasva yuddhāduparam̐
mā kārṣīrityarthaḥ. Na hyatra yuddhakartavyatā vidhīyate. Yuddhe
pravṛtta eva hyasau śokamohapratibaddhastūṣṇīmāste tasya
kartavyapratibandhāpanayanamātraṁ bhagavatā kriyate.
Tasmādyudhyasvetyanuvādamātraṁ na vidhīḥ. 2.19.*

Here an important matter is said. Why are the scriptures, the *Upanishads*, and the Guru’s instructions meaningful, important? It says here, ‘*śāstram̐ tu antyaṁ pramāṇam̐.*’ The scriptures, the *Upanishads*, are the final *pramāṇa*. The *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, which are known through the organ of hearing, the ear, are the ultimate instrument of correct knowledge. The scriptures are the only *pramāṇa* that can truly indicate the Self. Only through a *pramāṇa* can correct knowledge (*prama*) be gained about an object. Without the scriptures, there can be no awareness about the Self. Therefore, the scriptures are called ‘*antyaṁ pramāṇam̐,*’ the ultimate instrument of correct knowledge.

The *pramāṇa* of the scriptures is more authoritative than any other kind of *pramāṇa*, such as through the senses (*pratyaksha*). The rule we said was that if correct knowledge (*prama*) must be obtained, a *pramāṇa* is needed. No one can change this rule. If correct knowledge (*prama*) is needed about the Self, then a *pramāṇa* will be necessary. And what is the *pramāṇa* of the *Ātman*? It says that the scriptures are this *pramāṇa*. These are the ultimate *pramāṇa*.

But how is this? The scriptures are not like any other kind of *pramāṇa*. It says this in the *bhashya*. ‘*Ataddharmaadhyaropanaamaatra nivartakatvena.*’ We can analyze this part. It says, ‘*tat dharmam,*’ the *dharmam* of the Self, or the true nature of the Self, which is Consciousness-Existence-Bliss. In truth, there is no *dharmam*, or quality for the Self, but a *dharmam* is imagined. Because the *Ātman* in truth has no *dharmam*, it doesn’t say, ‘*tad dharmam.*’ Instead it says,

‘*ataddharma*,’ indicating that the Self has no *dharma*. However, what does one do? One imagines qualities to the Self. We think, ‘I,’ ‘my body,’ ‘my mind,’ ‘my intellect.’ All of these are superimpositions onto the Self. These are all imposed on the Self. This happens in our ordinary life constantly.

When we wake up, the mind superimposes these *dharmas* onto the Self. We think, ‘I am happy.’ ‘I am sad.’ ‘I have a body.’ ‘I have a mind.’ That is why the *bhashya* says, ‘*ataddharma adhyaropanam*.’ This means that the mind becomes identified with qualities that don’t belong to the Self. That is the meaning. So what happens? In truth, these qualities do not belong to the Self, so it says, ‘*ataddharma adhyaropanam*,’ the acceptance of qualities that do not belong to the Self. Then, it says, ‘*maatranivartakatvena*.’ This means that the scriptures do not make the Self an object of *prama* like the other *pramāṇa*, such as through the senses. The scriptures do not this ability. However, the scriptures are still a *pramāṇa*.

So, it can be said that the scriptures are a *pramāṇa* of the Self, and also that they are not a *pramāṇa* of the Self. What was said before? We said that the scriptures are not a *pramāṇa* of the Self. Why is this? This is because the *pramāṇa* of the scriptures cannot make the Self an object of *prama* (correct knowledge). Therefore, it is said that the scriptures are not a *pramāṇa* of the Self.

Another group says that the scriptures are a *pramāṇa* of the Self. How is that? It says, ‘*ataddharma adhyaropanam mātranivartakatvena*.’ The scriptures help one to eliminate whatever false imaginations are superimposed onto the Self. We think, ‘I am the body.’ The scriptures instruct, ‘you are not the body.’ Arjuna thought, ‘I am sorrowful.’ The scripture replies to this, saying, ‘you are not meant to be sorrowful.’ So what is the meaning of ‘*ataddharma adhyaropanam*?’ This is when Arjuna thinks, ‘I am this body.’ ‘I am sorrowful.’ This is superimposition onto the Self. Then it says, ‘*mātram*.’ This means that the scriptures refute these feelings. Then it says, ‘*nivartakatvena*.’ This means the scriptures eliminate these feelings. That is what the scriptures do. That is what makes them a *pramāṇa*. Therefore, the *bhāṣyā* says next, ‘*ātmānam prāmānyam pratipadyate*.’ The scriptures become a *pramāṇa* of the *Ātman*.

Then it says, ‘*na tu ajñātārthajñāpakatvena.*’ This means that the Self is not an object that is unknown. Here, the book was unknown, and became known through the *pramāṇa* eye. It was unknown and becomes known. Here it is different. The *Ātman* is not something that is ever unknown. It is always known. This means that no one can ever not know oneself. This experience of ‘I am’ is constantly known (*siddha*). The light of the Self effulges through the experience of ‘I.’ Or else you can say that in the condition of ignorance, the light of the Self effulges as the feeling ‘I.’

The effulgent state of the *Ātman* in this condition is not unknown. It is not an object that is not known to us. Therefore, there is no need for the scriptures to indicate the Self. The Self cannot become a limited object. The *Ātman* cannot be limited in the way that a book can be limited by *prama* (correct knowledge). This *prama* cannot contain the *Ātman*. Instead, this *prama* depends on the *Ātman* when it exists in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. This *prama* is that which is born. Therefore, it is also destroyed. It is born within the mind. Therefore, it never possible for the unlimited Self to be limited.

Then what can the scriptures do? They can remove the false impositions that we place onto the Self, along with the cause of these, which is Ignorance. That is why it says the scriptures are the ultimate *pramāṇa*. They are the most important *pramāṇa*. This scriptures are a *pramāṇa* of the Self, but this does not make the Self an object.

The *bhāṣyā* says, ‘*ataddharma adhyaropaṇam mātranivartakatvena.*’ What happens when a person rejects the identification with the body and gains awareness of the Self through the aid of the scriptures? Before the effulgence of that awareness, he had thought, ‘I am the body. I experience pain and happiness.’ Through the scriptures, these false superimpositions are destroyed. The word for these false ideas is ‘*adhyaropaṇam.*’ The *Jiva* imagines these. Thus, the scriptures destroy these and their cause.

Then the *bhāṣyā* continues, ‘*pramāṇatvam ātmanaḥ pratipadyate.*’ In this way, it is said that the scriptures are a *pramāṇa* of the Self. This can be viewed in two different ways. We can either say that the scriptures are a *pramāṇa* of the Self, or that they are not. Both views are acceptable. However, we cannot say that the scriptures can make the Self an object of correct knowledge (*prama*) in

the way that objects are grasped by the other *pramāṇas*. The scriptures are not powerful enough to do that. Therefore, it can be said that the scriptures are not a *pramāṇa* of the Self.

Because of this, what is said in the instructions of many *mahātmas*? It isn't possible to grasp the *Ātman* through the *śāstras*. That in which this is said is itself *śāstra*. That instruction itself is called *śāstra*. It is never possible to grasp the Self through the *śāstras*. This instruction is *śāstra*. That refers to true awareness of the *Ātman*. One can never gain true awareness of the nature of the *Ātman* through the *śāstras*. Hearing this, we reject the *śāstras*. What do we do first, when we renounce the *śāstras*? We reject that instruction.

Then how is it that we know the *Ātman*? Then how do the *śāstras* help? It helps to reject the qualities that don't belong to the *Ātman*. It isn't that they reveal the Self. Because the *śāstras* don't have the ability to reveal the Self, *Achāryas* refute the *śāstras*. 'The *śāstras* are not enough.' Now, is there any other means other than the *śāstras* for making one aware of the *Ātman*? No. There is not another means. Besides the *śāstras*, there is nothing else to help the *Jiva* become aware of the *Ātman*. That is why *śāstra* is called 'antya *pramāṇa*,' the ultimate *pramāṇa*. This is the last refuge of all of the *pramāṇas*. If a person must have true awareness of the Self, then there is only way available; through the scriptures (*śāstra*). There is no other way.

Then how do the scriptures indicate the Self? The *bhashya* says, 'ataddharma adhyaropaṇam mātranivartakatvena.' One's intellect should grasp this. This should shine clearly within. By refuting the qualities that don't belong to the *Ātman*, the scriptures become a *pramāṇa*. Even in that, there is no other means, besides the *śāstra*. There is not a single other means. This is the only means. What is that? *Śāstra*. What does that do? It refutes the *dharma*s that don't belong to the *Ātman*. That is the meaning.

A doubt will come to our mind. What is this? We may think, 'but there are many other means to the Self. There is *mantra japa*, meditation, *kirtan*, and other *sādhanas*. What do all of these means do?' They help in gaining this awareness. What is *śāstra*? In their gross form, they exist as words. However, in their subtle form, they exist as the *Ātmakara vṛtti* (modification in the form of the Self), 'Brahmākāra vṛtti'. They exist as direct knowledge of the Self (*aparokṣa*

jñāna) and Self-realization (*ātma sakṣātkāram*). This Realization and Direct Knowledge are the subtlest essence of the scriptures. This is an experience. What does that experience do? This experience removes all of the false impositions placed by the *Jīva* on the Self. That is the meaning.

That is why the Vedas are called *śruti* (what is heard). What is the ultimate experience of the *Vedas*? The final state of the *Vedas* is the experience of the Self (*Ātmānubhavaṁ*). Externally, the *Vedas* are in the form of words and internally, they exist as Experience. That is what is called ‘*śāstra*,’ the scriptures. That is the supreme meaning of the *śāstras*.

The *śāstras* are in the form of ‘*charama vṛtti*.’ That is the *śāstra*. That is the *Guru’s upadeśa*. We discussed that in the first class. How does the Guru’s instruction enter the disciple? How does the Guru’s instruction and the disciple’s experience become one? We discussed these matters previously. That instruction of the Guru is *śāstra*. That is the Guru’s experience. That also becomes the disciple’s experience. That is called by names such as ‘*aparokṣānubhūti*’- direct experience of the Self. Through that alone, is it possible to remove these *dharma*s that don’t belong to the Self.

What is our main misinterpretation of the meaning of ‘*śāstra*’ (scripture)? When we hear about the scriptures, we think of a book. Our view is that the scriptures are composed of script (*lipi*). For us, the letters written in a book are ‘*śāstra*.’ That is what causes a disinterest in the scriptures among people. Because we are lazy in reading, this causes a disinterestedness in *śāstra*. That exists in childhood. That isn’t easy to change.

In truth, this is not *śāstra*. Instead, what is it? It says here the definition. ‘*Ataddharma adhyaropaṇaṁ mātranirvartakatvena*.’ That is *śāstra*. How does the *śāstra* remove the false *dharma*s imposed on the Self? It is through *Aparokṣa Sakṣātkāram* (direct Realization of the Self), or ‘*charama sakṣātkāram*.’ That is why *śāstra* is considered the ultimate *pramāṇā*. Then what are we saying? *Śāstra* is the beginning, and the end. What is the end? It is this *śāstra* itself. In that way, the *śāstra* becomes a *pramāṇa* to the *Ātman*.

It says, ‘*pramāṇatvaṁ ātmanaḥ pratipadyate*.’ However, *śāstra* doesn’t function like other forms of *pramāṇa*. That is ‘*na tu ajñātārthajñāpakatvena*.’ The *śāstra* doesn’t indicate something that is unknown. Then it says, ‘*tathā cha*

śrutih- ‘This is also spoken of in the *śrutis*. *Śaṅkara* is saying, ‘none of this is my imagination. This isn’t something I formulated in the mind. This is said in the *śrutis*, which are a *pramāṇa*.’

The followers of *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy don’t accept this kind of *Ātman*. For them, the *Ātman* is like an instrument, an object. The *Ātman* is something like this chair or table. Therefore, they haven’t gone forward and thought this much. For them, the *Ātman* is an object, and they say, ‘I know that.’ For them, they haven’t gone forward in thinking of the *Ātman*. They are mainly thinkers of worldly objects. They think about ‘*padārthas*,’ worldly objects. They divide the universe into categories, such as *dravyam*, *guṇa*, *karma*, *sāmānyam*, *viśeṣat*, *samvayam*, *abhāvam*. They think about divisions of objects, such as ‘smell, taste, sight, hearing, touch, etc.’ They think like this. For them, the *Ātman* isn’t the primary subject of discussion. Instead of the *Ātman*, they think more about the worldly objects.

‘One can know the *Ātman* by thinking about worldly objects like that.’ That is a different path. This kind of thinking doesn’t exist there. Even if they accept things such as *mokṣa*, they are not people who think about the *Ātman* in the way described here. Because of that, for them, the *Ātman* is an object, a thing. ‘I know that.’ That is their thought.

‘*Tathā cha śrutih.*’ The *śrutis* also express this idea. What is that? It says, ‘*yat sākṣāt aparokṣād brahma ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ.*’ ‘*Yat*,’ what, ‘*sākṣāt*,’ directly. This means that the object is seen directly. What does ‘directly’ mean? It means without depending on anything else. What is ‘*Brahman*?’ Without the support of anything else, ‘*aparokṣāt*,’ in the form of experience, is ‘*brahma*.’ Without depending on anything, *Brahman* shines forth in the form of experience.

We previously discussed the words ‘*prama*, *pramāṇa*, and *prameyam*.’ This *Brahman* cannot be contained in this process. If I must know about this book, if the knowledge of the book must effulge within me, I need the *pramāṇa* of my eye. This is a *pratyakṣa* experience, grasped through the senses. To gain knowledge of something that is being said, all I need is the organ of hearing, the ear. Without these, I can also use the *pramāṇa* of inference (*anumanam*) through the mind. I can infer that this is a class, because of the time and the

book that is here. So, if I want to know something through the senses, I must also recognize that object with the mind. Therefore, the knowledge isn't direct. In that case, the object is not devoid of support.

However, what is *Brahman*? It is one's true nature. It is known directly, without any support, in the form of Experience. This is what the *śruti* is saying. The quotation is '*ya Ātma.*' That itself is the *Ātman*. When we think about '*Brahman*,' we think it is something big, something to be searched for and found, something to be discovered in *tapas*. To remove that thought, it says here that this *Ātma* is your own true nature. That is your true nature. However, it isn't just your true nature. It says, '*sarvāntarah.*' This is said in the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. That exists within everyone, in the form of direct effulgence. It exists in the form of direct experience (*aparokṣānubhavaṃ*).

This *Ātman* is situated in all objects. '*Iti.*' This is a very important subject that we are discussing. This is that the Self is '*aprameyam.*' The Self can never become an object of *prama*, correct knowledge. The *śāstra* is never sufficient to make one aware of the *Ātman*. Still, without the aid of *śāstra*, Self-Realization cannot be attained. We explained how *śāstra* helps the *sādhak*. This was the section, '*ataddharma adhyaropaṇaṃ mātranivartakatvena.*' This means that the scriptures will remove all of the false thoughts of the *Ātman* in the state of *Ajñāna* in the mind of the *sādhak*. When these superimpositions are removed, the *Ātman* exists self-effulgent. Then there are no obstacles. Before there were obstacles to this self-effulgence, but once the impositions are removed, there are no more obstacles.

Then the *Ātman* is Self-effulgent. This is what is called *aparokṣānubhavam*, direct Experience of the Self. In this way, the scriptures do not help directly, but indirectly to the attainment of Self-Realization. They are unable to help directly. After this, the *bhāṣyā* continues, '*yasmāt evaṃ nityaḥ avikriyaḥ cha ātmā tasmāt yuddhasva, yuddhāt uparamaṃ mā kārsiḥ ityarthaḥ.*'

It says, '*yasmāt,*' because of which, '*evaṃ nityaḥ*' the *Ātman* is eternal. *Bhīṣma*, *Droṇa* and the others are not destroyed in their nature as the *Ātman*. '*Avikriyaścha,*' They aren't destroyed in the death of the body. Weapons don't wound them. They are *avikriyā*, devoid of modification. Therefore, '*Yuddhasva.*' This means, 'do not withdraw from your *svadharma* because of

your thoughts of death and destruction.’ ‘*Yuddhyasva.*’ That is not an order. The meaning is not ‘you fight!’ Many *pandits* have commentated in this way, or in other ways that are quite comical. However, this word ‘*yuddhyasva,*’ does not mean to fight. Shanakra explains a slight difference in this. What is that? It says, ‘*yuddhaat uparamam maa kaarshih.*’ This means that the Lord is not giving Arjuna an order to fight. This is because there is no special reason for the Lord to request Arjuna to fight. Instead, what is enough to be said?

It is enough to say, ‘*yuddhāt uparamam mā karṣīḥ.*’ ‘Don’t retreat from the war.’ This is because Arjuna is already in the midst of the war. Arjuna had already had the feeling of doership in thoughts such as ‘I must fight this war. I am going to fight this war.’ Having said these things, Arjuna had prepared himself for the war.

There is no point in Krishna forcing Arjuna to act, who had already prepared himself to fight. In truth, if the Lord had tried to convince Arjuna to withdraw from the war, he still would have fought. This is because the *kṣatriya* nature and quality of *rajas* within Arjuna would’ve made him fought. Therefore, in the parts where Krishna says, ‘Fight, Fight Arjuna!’, even though the literal meaning is to fight, what is meaning of the Lord? The Lord means, ‘don’t retreat from the war.’ That is the meaning.

This is further explained. The *bhasya* says, ‘*Na hi atra yuddhakartavyatā vidhīyate.*’ Here is an important subject. It speaks about ‘*yuddha kartavyam,*’ the duty of war.’ The *bhāṣyā* says that the Lord didn’t ordain that Arjuna must fight. If the Lord had ordained the fighting of a war, the Lord would attain the defect of making Arjuna perform a cruel and horrible deed. Therefore, this kind of ordinance is not correct, is it? This is because we have the thought, ‘Arjuna did not wish to fight in the war, and the Lord made him fight.’

We think, ‘Arjuna was not ready to fight, and the Lord prepared him.’ We think like this. However, one shouldn’t think that meaning in this section. The Lord did not ordain that Arjuna must fight the war. Instead, it says, ‘*yuddhe pravṛttaḥ eva hi asau śokamohapratibaddhaḥ tūṣṇīm āste.*’ So, first it says, ‘*yuddhe pravṛttaḥ eva.*’ Arjuna was prepared to fight. The 1st chapter said, ‘*Senayor ubhayor madhye.*’ Arjuna and Krishna were between the two armies. Arjuna said to Krishna, ‘*Ratham Sthāpaya Me ‘chyuta.*’ ‘*Krishna,* place my

chariot in between both armies.’ What does this mean? It means that the war had begun.

So, the *bhashya* says, ‘*yuddhe pravṛttaḥ eva hi.*’ The war was in progress. Then what did Arjuna do? It says, ‘*śokmoha pratibandhaḥ.*’ We discussed this earlier. There became an obstacle (*pratibandham*) to Arjuna’s *dharma*. These are ‘*śoka*’ and ‘*moha*,’ grief and delusion. Then it says, ‘*tūṣṇīm āste,*’ Arjuna became silent. In this condition of silence, the war was in progress within Arjuna. This means that the war had already begun by Arjuna. This is within Arjuna. The external war did not begin yet, but the *rajas guṇa* was forcing Arjuna to fight from within. Because of that, there is no need to particularly ordain Arjuna to fight. ‘*Ataḥ,*’ therefore, ‘*tasya kartavya pratibandhāpanayanamātram bhagavatā kriyate.*’

So what does the Lord do? It says, ‘*tasya kartavya pratibandha apanayana mātram.*’ The Lord removes the obstacle to the performance of Arjuna’s duty. The word ‘*sva kartavyam,*’ means ‘*svadharma.*’ Thus, the Lord merely removes the obstacles of Arjuna’s grief (*śoka*) and delusion (*moha*). That is all that the Lord does. Many people debate this subject. How is that? One group says, ‘the Lord forced Arjuna to fight.’ Another group says, ‘The Lord did not force Arjuna to act.’ Therefore, the answer is given here. It says, ‘*tasmāt yuddhyasva’ iti anuvādamātram na viddhiḥ.*’ This instruction of the Lord is merely an allowance (*anuvādam*). There is a difference between giving permission and giving an order.

Suppose a Guru instructs a disciple, ‘you should do this, for attaining mental purity.’ ‘You should do *karma, sevā.*’ That becomes a *viddhi*, an ordinance. The disciple doesn’t know what he should do. Therefore, the Guru says this. When the Guru says, ‘do this,’ this becomes an ordinance. By performing the instruction, the disciple may attain purity of mind.

Instead, what if the disciple already makes up his mind? The disciple may think, ‘I don’t need the *ashram.*’ He has already decided. He approaches the Guru and says, ‘I desire to leave the *ashram.* What should I do?’ The Guru says, ‘ok, then go.’ That is permission (*anuvādam*). What is that? This is the acceptance of the decision already made by the disciple. In that situation, the disciple has already decided. He thinks, ‘This Guru is not right for me. I think

I'll find another place.' He decides in this way. At that point, the Guru has nothing in particular to say, because the disciple has already decided. So, the Guru simply says, 'fine, then go.'

That is *anuvadam*. This is the difference between permission and ordinance (*vidhi*). If the Guru understands that the disciple is not suitable for the *ashram* and asks him to leave, then that is an ordinance (*vidhi*). It is an order. However, this is not like that. The disciple decides, 'this is not right for me.' There, the Guru merely gives permission. He says, 'may it be as you wish.' That is the difference between *anuvadam* and *vidhi*.

So, after this disciple leaves the *ashram*, can we say that it was the order of the Guru? No we cannot. It was the disciple's decision. So here, what did Arjuna decide? Arjuna decided to fight, by himself. This was not just an intentional decision by Arjuna. Instead, the *rajasic* quality lying within Arjuna made him make this decision. That quality made Arjuna act. Therefore, there is no need to ordain Arjuna to fight. Then what does the Guru do? The Guru removes the obstacles of grief and delusion. After removing the grief and delusion from within Arjuna, Arjuna acted by himself.

What does that mean? This means that the Lord never prompted Arjuna to fight. This never happened. How can we describe this? Take the flow of a river. There is an obstacle to the river's flow. The nature of water is to flow, but because of the obstacle, it is stopped. Then a person removes the obstacle, and the water flows of its own accord. Because movement is the very nature of water, the water flows. The person merely removes the obstacle. This person becomes an instrument to the flowing of the water, though this is indirect. This happens through a series of events. This concept is accepted by the Lord Himself in the Gita. How? The Lord says to Arjuna, '*nimittam matram*.' You are merely an instrument.'

When the Lord reveals to Arjuna His Universal Form (*Viśvarūpa Darśana*), *Krishna* tells *Arjuna*, 'In truth, I am the One who is killing of the warriors here. You are merely an instrument.' There what happens? No one can take away the responsibility of the Lord, who this Inner Controller of all Creation. It is He who does everything and makes do. In that way, the Lord prompts Arjuna. To say this is correct. One can also say that the Lord doesn't

prompt Arjuna. This is in two levels. By removing the obstacles, that helps become a kind of prompting for Arjuna. This is because Arjuna arose and removed his grief and delusion. However, the full responsibility of the action is Arjuna's, because he had previously prepared for this act.

Because of this, what is the level of the Lord? The Lord is detached (*asaṅgam*). That is the supreme Truth. However, in the worldly level, we can say that the Lord encouraged Arjuna to act. By removing the obstacles of grief and delusion, this becomes an encouragement. In another sense, we can say that Arjuna acted of his own accord. Here, both of these are combined. So for the performance of one's *svadharma*, both of these are needed. First, one needs the permission (*anuvādam*) of the Lord. Then, one needs the natural functioning of the inner qualities (*guṇas*). When both of these are combined, this *svadharma* (inherent duty) occurs.

That is what happens with Arjuna. Therefore, there is no relevance of such a debate. This debate happens without understanding the meaning there. What is that? 'Did the Lord encourage Arjuna to fight or not?' That kind of argument isn't our subject. This matter is made clear by Śaṅkara. He says that the quality (*guna*) within Arjuna is what makes him act in the war as *svadharma*. The allowance (*Anuvādam*) of the Lord is what removes all of the obstacles to this. When these two combine, what does Arjuna do? He acts in his inherent duty (*svadharma*).

So, this 'war' is someone we must discuss and understand. This 'war' is called '*yudhe samprahāre*.' The imperative conjugation of the word '*yuddham*,' (war), is '*yuddhyasva*.' This means 'fight.' Though this is the ordinary meaning, the meaning changes when it applies to *svadharma*. We will continue to discuss the difference of these meanings. Here, the commentator makes very clear that this is an *anuvādam*, not a *viddhi*. In this way, the *bhāṣyā* says, '*iti anuvādamātram, na viddhi*.' 'This is merely a permission, not an ordinance.' Now we can look at the *śloka*.

We can understand the meaning. It says, '*yuddhyasva*,' fight, 'he *bhārata*,' O Arjuna. '*Nityasya*,' the eternal, '*anāśinaḥ*,' indestructible, '*aprameyasya*,' immeasurable, which can never be an object of *prama*,

‘*śarīriṇaḥ*,’ of the *ātman*, ‘*ime dehāḥ*,’ all of these bodies, ‘*antavantaḥ*,’ are subject to destruction, ‘*bhārata*.’ He Arjuna.

The name ‘*bhārata*’ means someone born in the dynasty of king *Bharata*. There is one famous commentary that says the name ‘*Bhārata*’ means ‘son of India.’ Those who have read this will understand. There is no doubt that the dynasty of *Bharata* was in India, but the name ‘*Bhārata*’ does not mean, ‘son of India.’ ‘*Bhārata Yuddhasva*,’ Arjuna, you should fight!’