



Affirm Truth

The quintessence of *Advaita Vedanta* is to affirm the truth and the reality of your essential, eternal, Divine identity, and to resolutely reject the error of thinking yourself as a finite human creature having a name and form, beginning and end, and subject to changes. Resolutely rejecting this error and simultaneously affirming your eternal unchangeable Divine identity is the centre of *Advaita Vedanta sadhana*. They call it affirming and rejecting – *pushtikarana and nirakarana*, “*neti neti*”

Sankara’s most popular work *Viveka-chudamani* is a call to discriminate between the Self and Non-Self, *Atma-Anatma Viveka*. *Atma* is *Sat* (Existence absolute). *Anatma* is appearance only – temporary in time, limited in space, perishable. *Atma* is *akshara Purusha* (Imperishable Being). “*Ajo Nityah Shashvato Yum Purano Na Hanyate Hanyamane Sarire – Atma* is unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed” [Gita 2.20]. As you discriminate between the Self and the Non-Self, you can free yourself from the veil of delusion. And then, to be rooted in the Reality, to be fixed in it firmly, to be able to think, reflect and meditate upon it and awaken the correct awareness within your consciousness, a thorough study of “what the Self is” is of great importance and value. To that end Sankara’s second book *Atma-Bodha* can be the way, so that God can answer your prayer “*Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya – From darkness lead me unto Light.*” And “*Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat – May He illuminate our intellects.*”

We think the world is outside us. But by and large the world or *samsara* is within us. What is within us that makes us regard *prapancha* to be real and get attached to it, get bound by it? That has to be rooted out first. Thus the study of *avidya* or *maya* within us is the key to freeing ourselves from delusion and rising from darkness to Light.

Gurudev again and again reiterated, “Thou art immortal Soul. Thou art not this Body, nor this mind.” They are *upadhis*, limiting adjuncts temporarily added onto you; they are there as part of your lesser personality. But you are a divine personality far beyond them, transcending them, untouched by time and space, not bothered by pain, sorrow and suffering. This is to be heard, reflected upon and meditated upon.

May the grace of the Lord grant you success in this *sadhana* of being what you really are and of resisting the pull of the mind to make you imagine that you are something other than this Reality!

May God Bless You All!

■ *Swami Chidananda*