

## *Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya – some excerpts<sup>1</sup>*

The principle of speech	2
1.1	2
From 1.1 vṛtti	2
1.4	11
1.4 vṛtti	11
1.5	12
From 1.5 vṛtti (first sentence)	13
1.8	13
1.9	13
1.10	14
Linguistic analysis	14
1.11	14
1.12	14
1.13	15
1.13 vṛtti	15
1.14	21
1.15	21
1.16	21
1.17	22
1.18	22
1.19	22
1.20	22
1.21	23
1.22	23
Overlying differences	23
1.86	23
1.86 vṛtti	24
Powers of speech	25
1.137	25
1.138	26
1.139	26
Learning from tradition	26
1.140	26
From 1.140 vṛtti (last sentence)	27
1.141	27
1.141 vṛtti (last sentence)	27
Levels of speech	28
1.142	28
From 1.142 vṛtti	28
From 1.142 vṛtti, āgama stanzas	31
Bhartrhari's view of language	33
Endnotes	37

## The principle of speech

### 1.1

an-ādi-nidhanam brahma  
śabda-tattvam yad akṣaram .

The changeless essence of the word  
is all there is. It has no start;  
nor does it stop or come to end.

an(not)-ādi(beginning)-nidhanam(stopping) brahma(all there is)  
śabda(word)-tattvam(essence) yad(that which) akṣaram(changeless) .

vivartate 'rtha-bhāvena  
prakriyā jagato yataḥ ..

It manifests transformed: through  
aims and objects, as they come to be.  
From it proceeds the changing world.

vivartate(manifests) artha(aims, objects)-bhāvena(through coming to be)  
prakriyā(the production, proceeding) jagataḥ(of the changing world) yataḥ(from it) ..

*From 1.1 vṛtti*

sarva-parikalpā- 'tīta-tattvam

What's really there is quite beyond  
all means by which it is described.

sarva(all)-parikalpa(representation)-atīta(quite beyond)-tattvam(what's really there)

bheda-saṁsarga-samatikrameṇa  
samāviṣṭam

It's entered into, all at once,  
by going fully past all taking  
things apart or joining them.

bheda(dividing)-saṁsarga(joining)-samatikrameṇa(going entirely beyond)  
samāviṣṭam(entered completely, all at once)

sarvābhiḥ śaktibhir

All powers are its instruments,  
which are made manifest with it.

sarvābhiḥ(with all powers) śaktibhiḥ(with all instruments)

vidyā-'vidyā-pravibhāga-rūpam

Its form appears to manifest  
through the distinction of true knowing  
from mistaken ignorance.

vidyā(knowledge)-avidyā(ignorance)-pravibhāga(distinction)-rūpam(form, appearance)

aprabhāgam

But in itself, just as it is,  
there's no distinction to be found.

aprabhāgam(without distinction)

kāla-bheda-darśanā-'bhyāsenā

By our habitual exercise  
of adding time-dependent differences  
to seeing in itself,

kāla(time)-bheda(difference)-darśana(seeing)-abhyāsenā(by habit of superimposing)

mūrti-vibhāga-bhāvanayā ca

and by imagining embodied  
forms made up from different parts,

mūrti(embodiment)-vibhāga(division)-bhāvanayā(by imagining) ca(and)

vyavahārā-’nupātibhir  
dharmā-’dharmaiḥ

it gets associated with  
the good and bad results of usage  
and transaction in the world.

vyavahāra(usage, transaction)-anupātibhir(with results)  
dharma(well-founded, good)-adharmaiḥ(with ill-founded, bad)

sarvāsv avastāsv  
an-āsritā-’di-nidhanam

But in all states, it’s always there:  
as that which never does depend  
on anything that starts or stops.

sarvāsu(in all) avastāsu(in states)  
an(not)-āsrita(depending on)-ādi(starting)-nidhanam(stopping)

brahme ’ti pratijñāyate .

That’s how what’s called ‘reality’  
is actually recognized.

brahma(complete reality) iti(thus called) pratijñāyate(is recognized) .

na hi

But here there is a negative.

na(not) hi(but)

kārya-kāraṇā-’tmakasya  
vibhaktā-’vibhaktasyai  
’kasya brahmaṇaḥ

Seen separate or joined, it is  
the one reality, the inmost  
self of all cause and effect.

kārya(effect)-kāraṇa(cause)-ātmakasya(self)  
vibhakta(divided)-avibhaktasya(undivided)  
ekasya(one) brahmaṇaḥ(complete reality)

[Note: In the above clause, each term is genitive, relating to ‘pravādeṣu’ in the following  
clause. ‘Pravādeṣu’ means ‘in discourses of’ and thus relates to these preceding genitives.]

sarva-pravādeṣv apūrvā-’pare

In all discourse that speaks of it,  
it is not found by precedent  
nor anything that is to come.

sarva(all)-pravādeṣu(in discourses) apūrvā(not in precedent)-apare(not in consequence)

pravṛtti-nivṛtti-koṭi

It is the peak, the highest point,  
of both activity and rest.

pravṛtti(activity)-nivṛtti(inactivity)-koṭi(peak, highest point)

parisaṁkyāyete ,

These are two ways of reck’ning it.

parisaṁkyāyete(two reckonings) ,

na cā ’syo ’rdhvam adhas tiryag

In it, there is no up or down,  
nor any angle in between.

na(not) ca(and) asya(of it) urdhvam(up) adhas(down) tiryag(transverse, across)

vā mūrta parivarta

Nor is it anything embodied,  
turning round from here to there.

vā(or) mūrta(embodied) parivarta(turning round, going to and fro)

praty-aṅgānām kkaacid  
avacchedo

Nor is it made of any parts;  
nor is it something found cut off.

prati-aṅgānām(of subdivisions) kacid(whatever)  
avacchedaḥ(divided up, cut off)

'bhyupagamyate .

It cannot thus be rightly found.

abhyupagamyate(arrived at, obtained) .

tat tu bhinna-rūpā-  
'bhimatānām api  
vikārānām  
prakṛty-anvayitvāc

It is just *that*, although appearing  
differently formed in fancies  
that arise transformed from  
nature's consequential functioning.

tat(that) tu(now) bhinna(different)-rūpa(form)-  
abhimatānām(from fancies) api(although)  
vikārānām(from transformations)  
prakṛti(nature)-anvayitvāt(from consequence)

chabdo-'pagrāhyatayā  
śabdo-'pagrāhitayā ca  
śabda-tattvam  
ity abhidhīyate .

As they take on expression and  
as they are meaningfully taken  
in, the truth of speech is theirs –  
for someone who reflects with care.

śabda(words, expression )-upagrāhyatayā(by taking on)  
śabda(words, expression)-upagrāhitayā(by being taken on) ca(and)  
śabda(words, speech)-tattvam(truth)  
iti(thus) abhidhīyate(for one who reflects with care) .

sthiti-pravṛtti-nivṛtti-vibhāgā  
hi śabdenā 'kriyante .

For all divisions that arise –  
of state, activity and rest –  
are mere expressions, formed by speech.

sthiti(state)-pravṛtti(activity)-nivṛtti(inactivity)-vibhāgā(divisions)  
hi(for) śabdena(by words, speech) akriyante(are formed) .

tac cā 'kṣara  
nimittatvād  
akṣaram ity ucyate .

But that itself remains unchanged.  
Because of its continuing  
causality, it is called 'akṣara'  
or 'that which does not change'.

tat(that) ca(and) akṣara(changeless)  
nimittatvāt(because of causality)  
akṣaram(changeless) iti(thus) ucyate(spoken of) .

pratyak-caitanye  
'ntaḥ-sanniveśitasya

In consciousness, reflected back  
into itself, is found that background  
which pervades through everything.

pratyak(turned back)-caitanye(consciousness)  
antaḥ(inner)-sanniveśitasya(of the all pervading)

para-sambodhanā-'rthā  
vyaktir abhiṣyandate .

Just for the sake of making that  
same background known, whatever is

evam hy āha –

made manifest keeps issuing  
and flowing on. Thus it is said:

para(across)-sambodhana(making known, communicating)-arthā(for the sake of)  
vyaktiḥ(manifestation) abhiṣyandate(oozes, flows on) .

evam(thus) hi(indeed) āha(it is said) –

sūkṣmām arthenā  
'pravibhakta-tattvām ekām  
vācām abhiṣyandamānām .

“The word is one, a subtle truth  
undifferentiated by  
objective meaning, as it keeps  
on being issued, flowed along.

sūkṣmām(subtle) arthena(by aim, objective, meaning)  
apravibhakta(differentiated forth)-tattvām(truth) ekām(one)  
vācām(speech, the word) abhiṣyandamānām(being issued forth, flowed along) .

utā 'nye vidur anyām  
iva ca enām nānā-rūpām  
ātmani sanniviṣṭām .. iti .

“It's also known as settled deep  
within the self: as though it were  
a thing apart, away from this  
apparent world of different forms.”

uta(even, also) anye(others) viduḥ(have known) anyām(other, alien, a thing apart)  
iva(like, as though) ca(and) enām(this, this world) nānā(many)-rūpām(formed)  
ātmani(in the self) sanniviṣṭām(pervaded deep, settled deep) .. iti(thus conceived) .

vivartate 'rtha-bhāvena .

Seen turning restless, to and fro,  
through aims and objects that arise,

vivartate(manifests) artha(aims, objects)-bhāvena(through coming to be) .

ekasya tattvād apracyutasya

the world starts out from truth,  
which is itself unmoved, at one.

ekasya(of the one) tattvāt(from truth) apracyutasya(unmoved)

bhedā-'nukāreṇā

Where seeming differences appear,  
they follow after seeming acts.

bheda(difference)-anukāreṇā(through apparent after-effects)

[Note: The instrumental 'through' in 'anukāreṇā' relates to the next clause.]

'satya-vibhaktā-'nya-rūpo  
'pagrāhitā  
vivartaḥ .

Through this unreal partitioning,  
extraneous forms seem taken on,  
thus showing objects of attention  
that keeps turning here and there.

asatya(unreal)-vibhakta(partitioning)-anya(extraneous)-rūpaḥ(form)

apagrāhitā(is taken on)

vivartaḥ(turning here and there) .

svapna-viṣaya-  
pratibhāsavat .

These objects are reflected shining –  
mere appearances of light  
reflecting back upon itself,  
like seeming objects in a dream.

svapna(dream)-viṣaya(object)-  
pratibhāsavat(shining reflected, appearing) .

uktaṁ ca –

And further, it has been said:

uktaṁ(it is said) ca(also) –

“ mūrṭti-kriyā-vivartau

“Embodiment and action are  
both manifest appearances.

“ mūrṭti(embodiment)-kriyā(action)-vivartau(two manifestations)

avidyā-śakti-pravṛtti-  
mātram ,

“They are the blind and driven  
functioning of brute, unknowing force.

avidyā(unknowing, blind)-śakti(force)-pravṛtti(functioning)-  
mātram(only) ,

tau vidyā-’tmani

“The truth of each is to be found  
in just that self which knows them both.

tau(the two) vidyā(knowing)-ātmani(in the self)

tattvā-’nyatvābhyām  
an-ākhye yau .

“And there, I do not know of them  
or speak of them through anything  
that is at all apart from truth.

tattva(truth)-anyatvābhyām(through the two alien things)  
an(not)-ākhye(I see, I speak) yau(through the two) .

etadd hi avidyāyā  
avidyātvam ” iti .

“For ignorance is just this state  
which comes about from knowing things  
through means that are inadequate,  
because they are apart from truth.”

etat(this) hi(indeed) avidyāyā(from the ignorant)  
avidyātvam(ignorance) ” iti(thus it is said) .

prakriyā jagato yataḥ .

From that, proceeds the changing world.

prakriyā(the production, proceeding) jagataḥ(of the changing world) yataḥ(from it) .

tata eva hi śabdā-’khyād  
upasaṁhṛta-kramād  
brahmaṇaḥ

What we call ‘speech’ is that itself.  
It is complete reality,  
where all succeeding happenings  
are comprehended, drawn back in.

tataḥ(from that) eva(itself) hi(indeed) śabda(speech)-ākhyāt(from what is called)  
upasaṁhṛta(taken in, comprehended)-kramāt(from where succession)  
brahmaṇaḥ(from complete reality)

sarva-vikāra-pratyasta-maye

Where it is found, all transformations  
are thrown back into their inmost  
nature: where they each arise,  
where each is still unmanifest.

sarva(all)-vikāra(transformations)-pratyasta(thrown back)-maye(in their underlying nature)

samvartād anākṛtāt  
It is the formless meeting point,  
where everything has been rolled up  
and all things are thus found dissolved.

samvartāt(from meeting, rolling up together) anākṛtāt(from the formless)

pūrvam  
Just that is prior to all else.

pūrvam(prior)

vikāra-granthi-  
rūpatvenā  
'vyapadeśyāj  
It can't be rightly signified  
by any transformations tied  
together into seeming form.

vikāra(transformation)-granthi(knotted, tied)-  
rūpatvena(by seeming form)

āvyapadeśyāt(from what is not signified, represented)

[Note: In the preceding clause, the ablative 'from' of the last word relates forward to the subsequent clause that follows next.]

jagad-ākhyā-vikārāḥ  
prakriyante .  
From it proceed the transformations  
that are jointly called the 'world'.

jagat(world)-ākhyā(called, known as)-vikārāḥ(transformations)  
prakriyante(proceed) .

tathā hy uktam –  
Accordingly, it has been said:

tathā(accordingly) hi(indeed) uktam(it has been said) –

yaḥ sarva-parikalpānām  
ābhāse 'py an-avasthitāḥ .  
“Although it's that which must belong  
to all descriptions and expression,  
it can never be confined  
in anything that may appear.

yaḥ(that which) sarva(all)-parikalpānām(of descriptions, representations, contrivances)  
ābhāse(in appearance) api(although) an(not)-avasthitāḥ(situated in, contained in) .

tarkā-'gamā-'numānena  
bahudhā parikalpitaḥ ..  
“Through argument, authority  
and inference, it gets to be  
described in many different ways.

tarka(argument)-āgama(authority)-anumānena(through inference)  
bahudhā(in many ways) parikalpitaḥ(described, represented) ..

vyatīto bheda-saṃsargau  
bhāvā-'bhāvau  
kramā-'kramau .  
satyā-'nṛte ca  
“It is beyond what's separate  
or mixed, what happens or does not,  
what follows on or what may not,  
what's right and true or false and wrong.

vyatītaḥ(gone beyond) bheda(separate)-saṃsargau(mixed)

bhāva(happening)-abhāvau(not happening)

krama(succeeding, following on)-akramau(not succeeding, not following on) .

satya(true, correct)-anṛte(wrong, false) ca(also)

viśvā-'tmā  
pravivekāt prakāśate ..

“As true discernment is attained,  
it shines, as everyone’s own self,  
illuminating everything.

viśva(universe, everyone)-ātmā(self)  
pravivekāt(from discernment) prakāśate(shines forth) ..

antar-yāmī  
sa bhūtānām

“It is the one support and guide,  
found in all beings in the world,  
controlling each from deep within.

antar(inner)-yāmī(support, controller, guide)  
sa(it) bhūtānām(of beings)

ārād dūre ca dṛśyate .

“It’s seen immediately here,  
yet far beyond all seeming things.

ārāt(near, immediate) dūre(far, in the distance) ca(also) dṛśyate(is seen) .

so 'tyanta-mukto  
mokṣāya mumukṣubhir  
upāsyate ..

“It is complete, unbroken freedom:  
sought by those who long for it,  
just for the sake of being free.

saḥ(it) atyanta(surpassing all, unbroken)-muktaḥ(free)  
mokṣāya(for freedom) mumukṣubhiḥ(by those wishing to be free)  
upāsyate(sought, heeded, reflected upon) ..

prakṛtitvam api  
prāptān vikārān  
ākaroti saḥ

“It is untutored naturalness,  
the ground of nature in itself,  
originating all the  
transformations that are reached thereby;

prakṛtitvam(naturalness, primal nature) api(also)  
prāptān(attained, reached) vikārān(transformations)  
ākaroti(creates, originates) saḥ(it)

ṛtu-dhāme 'va  
grīṣmā-'nte mahato  
megha-saṁplavān ..

“just as, at summer’s end, the season’s  
potency gives rise to massive  
cloud-formations in the sky.

ṛtu(season)-dhāma(innate potency) iva(like, just as)  
grīṣma(summer)-ante(at end) mahataḥ(great, massive)  
megha(cloud)-saṁplavān(formations) ..

tasyai 'kam api caitanyam  
bahudhā pravibhajyate .

“Thus consciousness, though one alone,  
seems differentiated forth  
in a variety of ways;

tasya(of it) ekam(one alone) api(though) caitanyam(consciousness)  
bahudhā(in many ways) pravibhajyate(is differentiated forth) .

aṅgārā-'nkitam  
utpāte vāri-rāśer  
ivo 'dakam ..

“just like the convoluted show  
induced by energy of heat,  
in water vapour seen arising  
from the ocean’s vast expanse.



aṅgāra(heat)-aṅkitam(bent, curved, convoluted)  
 utpāte(in rising up) vārirāṣeḥ(from ocean) [vāri(water, rain)-rāṣeḥ(from great mass)]  
 iva(like) udakam(water) ..

tasmād ākṛti-gotra-sthād “It’s that which stands, the inmost form,  
 the common, universal  
 principle of every different class.

tasmāt(from it) ākṛti(inner form, common principle)-gotra(class)-sthāt(from what stands)

vyakti-grāmā vikāriṇaḥ . “From it are born all kinds of  
 mārutād iva jāyante changeable particulars: as rainy  
 vṛṣṭimanto balāhakāḥ .. thunderclouds are born from air.

vyakti(manifest particular)-grāmā(multitudes, kinds) vikāriṇaḥ(changeables) .  
 mārutāt(from air) iva(like, just as) jāyante(are born)  
 vṛṣṭimantāḥ(rain-laden) balāhakāḥ(thunderclouds) ..

trayī-rupeṇa taj jyotiḥ “That highest light reflects through three  
 paramaṁ parivartate . apparent forms. It’s spoken of  
 pṛthak-tīrtha-pravādeṣu in different ways of reaching it,  
 dṛṣṭi-bedha-nibandhanam .. recording different points of view.

trayī(three)-rupeṇa(through forms) tat(that) jyotiḥ(light)  
 paramaṁ(highest) parivartate(turns round, goes back and forth) .  
 pṛthak(differently)-tīrtha(crossing over to, reaching)-pravādeṣu(in statements)  
 dṛṣṭi(views)-bedha(different)-nibandhanam(recording) ..

śānta-vidyā-’tmakaṁ “In its own nature, it is peace  
 of knowledge shining undisturbed.

śānta(peace)-vidyā(knowledge)-ātmaṁ(inner nature)

yo ’mśas tad u hai “But on the other hand, there is  
 ’tad avidyayā . this aspect where – though it is  
 tayā grastam ivā ’jasraṁ inexhaustible – it seems to have  
 yā nirvaktum na śakyate .. been swallowed up by ignorance,  
 which cannot ever be explained  
 with satisfying clarity.

yaḥ(which) amśaḥ(aspect) tat(that) u(on the other hand) ha(indeed)  
 etat(this) avidyayā(by ignorance) .  
 tayā(by that) grastam(swallowed) iva(like, seemingly) ajasraṁ(inexhaustible)  
 yā(which) nirvaktum(to explain clearly) na(not) śakyate(is possible) ..

sarvataḥ parivartānām “This ignorance is everywhere.  
 parimāṇam na vidyate . Of its transactions in the world,  
 tasyā yā there is no measure to be found.  
 labdha-saṁskārā But what it thus accomplishes  
 na svā-’tmany avatiṣṭhate .. does not exist, in one’s own self.

sarvataḥ(everywhere) parivartānām(of its transactions)  
 parimāṇam(measure) na(not) vidyate(is to be found) .  
 tasyā(of it) yā(which)

labdha(obtained)-saṁskārā(accomplishment)

na(not) sva(one's own)-ātmani(in self) avatiṣṭhate(exists) ..

yathā viśudham ākāśam

“The background of the sky itself  
is space alone that's pure and clear,  
pervading thus through everything.

yathā(just as) viśudham(pure, clear) ākāśam(sky, pervading background of space alone)

timiro-'papluto janaḥ .

“But someone born, who's overcome  
by patchily defective sight,

timira(patchy blindness)-upaplutaḥ(overcome) janaḥ(someone born) .

saṅkīrṇam iva mātrābhiś  
citrābhir abhimanyate ..

“may fancy that pure space confused  
with variegated elements  
that seem to show a picturing.

saṅkīrṇam(mixed up, confused) iva(seemingly) mātrābhiḥ(with elements)  
citrābhiḥ(with variegated, pictured) abhimanyate(imagines, fancies) ..

tathe 'dam amṛtam  
brahma nirvikāram

“It is just so with all of this  
entire world. It is itself  
reality, unlimited,  
which does not suffer change or death.

tathā(so also) idam(this [world]) amṛtam(deathless)  
brahma(unlimited reality) nirvikāram(changeless)

avidyayā .  
kaluṣatvam ivā 'pannam  
bheda-rūpaṁ vivartate ..

“Through an apparent ignorance,  
as it turns manifested here  
and there, it seems degraded,  
into an affected turbulence  
of differentiated forms.

avidyayā(through ignorance) .

kaluṣatvam(affectation, turbulence) iva(seemingly) āpannam(fallen to, afflicted, degraded)  
bheda(differentiated)-rūpaṁ(form) vivartate(turns here and there, manifests) ..

brahme 'dam

“This manifested universe  
is in itself reality.

brahma(reality) idam(this [manifested world])

śabda-nirmāṇam

“It's a construction measured out  
and fabricated out of speech.

śabda(speech)-nirmāṇam(measuring out, construction out)

śabda-śakti-nibandhanam .

“It's nothing but the power of speech  
recording what it manifests.

śabda(speech)-śakti(power)-nibandhanam(tying down, recording) .

vivṛttaṁ śabda-mātrābhyas

“Its manifesting is made up  
of spoken elements alone.  
It is just them and nothing else.

vivṛttaṁ(manifesting) śabda(speech)-mātrābhyas(from elements, from nothing else)

tāsv eva pravilīyate ..

“In each of them, it merges back,  
into unmixed reality.”

tāsu(in those) eva(indeed) pravilīyate(it merges, is dissolved) ..

#### 1.4

ekasya sarva-bījasya  
yasya ce 'yam anekadhā .

It's that which is just one, the seed  
of everything. To it, this  
multiplicity of world belongs.

ekasya(of the one) sarva(everything)-bījasya(of the seed)  
yasya(of that) ca(also) iyam(this [world]) anekadhā(multiplicity) .

bhoktr-bhoktavya-rūpeṇa<sup>2</sup>  
bhoga-rūpeṇa ca sthitiḥ ..

It is what stays, remaining present  
through all forms of life's enjoyment –  
through all difference of enjoyers  
and what's sought to be enjoyed.

bhoktr(enjoyer)-bhoktavya(enjoyed)-rūpeṇa(through form)  
bhoga(enjoyment)-rūpeṇa(through form) ca(also) sthitiḥ(what stays, remains) ..

#### 1.4 vṛtti

ekasya hi brahmaṇas

All that exists is one alone.

ekasya(of the one) hi(indeed) brahmaṇas(of all that exists)

[Note: The genitive 'of' here implies a sense of belonging to what is described as 'eka' or the 'one' that is being described in the genitive case. Thus it refers forward to other genitives that are similarly used in this sentence and the following sentence, as noted below. In these two sentences, 'eka' or the 'one' is repeatedly described in the genitive case, with the implication that the rest of the description speaks of a 'many-ness' that belongs to the one.]

tattvā-'nyatvābhyām  
sattvā-'sattvābhyām cā  
'niruktā-'virodhi-śaktya-  
upagrāhyasyā  
'satya-rūpa-pravibhāgasya

By pairing truth with otherness  
and that which is with what is not,  
an energy that's undefined  
and unopposed is taken on,  
thus differentiating forth  
into unreal, seeming forms.

tattva-nyatvābhyām(by truth [tattva] and otherness [anyatva])  
sattva-asattvābhyām(by what is [sattva] and what is not [asattva]) ca(also)  
anirukta(undefined)-avirodhi(not conflicting, unopposed)-śakti(energy)-  
upagrāhyasya(of that [one] which has taken on)

asatya(unreal)-rūpa(forms)-pravibhāgasya(of that [one] which has differentiated forth)

[Note: The genitive 'of', which occurs twice immediately above, relates back to the genitive 'ekasya' ('of the one') in the first clause, as has been noted there.]

svapna-vijñāna-puruṣavad-  
abahiḥ-tattvāḥ

These are not truly outside things,  
but only forms of knowledge dreamt  
within each personality.

svapna(dream)-vijñāna(knowledge)-puruṣavat(with persons)-  
abahiḥ(not outside)-tattvāḥ(truths, realities)

paraspara-vilakṣaṇā  
bhoktr-bhoktavya-bhoga-  
granthayo vivartante .

Appearing mutually distinct,  
they manifest as tied-up knots  
produced by the enjoyer, the  
enjoyed and the enjoyment – each  
of which shows only that one single  
thing to which all things belong.

paraspara(mutually)-vilakṣaṇāḥ(distinct)  
bhoktr(enjoyer)-bhoktavya(enjoyed)-bhoga(enjoyment)-  
granthayaḥ(knots) vivartante(are manifested) .

[Note: The sense of belonging to the single ‘one’ is here implied by the repeated description of the ‘one’ in the genitive case, as noted above. This repeated genitive description continues into the next sentence.]

tasya ca granthy-antara-  
rūpa-samatikrameṇa

By going inwards, quite beyond  
all tied-up knots of seeming form,  
that one reality is found.

tasya(of it [the one]) ca(also) granthi(knots)-antara(inward, beyond)-  
rūpa(form)-samatikrameṇa(by going entirely beyond)

vivṛtta-granthi-  
paricchedasye

It’s that which is seen limited  
in manifesting knots of form.

vivṛtta(manifested)-granthi(knots)-  
paricchedasya(of that which is cut off, limited)

[Note: In this sentence again, the genitive ‘of’ (in the preceding ‘paricchedasya’) refers forward to what follows in the next clause (where it is translated by the phrase ‘To it belongs...’).]

’yam anekadhā loke  
vyavahāra-vyavasthā  
prakalpate .

To it belongs this multiplicity  
of difference and transaction  
in the manifested world.

iyam(this) anekadhā(in many ways) loke(in the world)  
vyavahāra(transaction)-vyavasthā(respective difference)  
prakalpate(conceives forth, manifests) .

### 1.5

prāpty-upāyo ’nukāraś ca  
tasya vedo

To it belong the vedic texts  
as means by which it may be found.

prāpti(attainment)-upāyaḥ(means) anukāraḥ(reflecting) ca(and)  
tasya(of it, to it belong) vedaḥ(the vedic texts)

maharṣibhiḥ .  
eko 'py aneka-vartme  
'va samāmnātaḥ  
pṛthak pṛthak ..

Though it is one, it is approached  
in many ways – by those great seers  
from whom traditions are passed down,  
each one of them in its own way.

maharṣibhiḥ(by great seers) .  
ekaḥ(one) api(though) aneka(many)-vartmaḥ(paths)  
iva(seemingly, as though) samāmnātaḥ(handed down by recitation)  
pṛthak pṛthak(each separately) ..

*From 1.5 vṛtti (first sentence)*

mamā 'ham ity  
ahaṅkāra-granthi-  
samatikrama-mātraṁ  
brahmaṇaḥ prāpti . ...

False ego is a tangled knot  
tied up in claims of 'I' and 'mine'.  
It's only where this knot of ego  
is transcended utterly  
that true reality is found....

mama(mine) aham(I) iti(thus saying)  
ahaṅkāra(ego)-granthi(knot)-  
samatikrama(transcending utterly)-mātraṁ(only)  
brahmaṇaḥ(of true reality) prāpti(attainment) . ...

1.8

tasyā 'rtha-vāda-rūpāṇi  
niśritāḥ sva-vikalpa-jāḥ .

But that same truth has many forms  
of argument that lead to it,  
each argument depending on  
the way in which it is conceived.

tasya(of it) artha(aim, goal)-vāda(argument)-rūpāṇi(forms)  
niśritāḥ(depending) sva(each its own)-vikalpa(conceiving)-jāḥ(born forth) .

ekatvinām dvaitinām ca  
pravādā bahudhā matāḥ<sup>3</sup> ..

Thus, there are differing ideas –  
of monists and of dualists,  
each putting their opinions forth.

ekatvinām(monists) dvaitinām(dualists) ca(also)  
pravādāḥ(expositions) bahudhā(in many ways) matāḥ(thoughts, opinions) ..

1.9

satyā viśuddhis tatro 'ktā  
vidyai 'vai 'ka-padā-'gamā .  
yuktā praṇava-rūpeṇa  
sarva-vādā 'virodhinā ..

Where unmixed truth is spoken of,  
it is there knowledge in itself.  
The one-word mantra 'om' joins there,  
back into its own origin –  
not contradicting any way  
in which its truth may be explained.

satyā(truth) viśuddhiḥ(pure, unmixed) tatra(there) uktā(is uttered, spoken of)  
vidyā(knowledge) eva(in itself) eka(one)-pada(word)-āgamā(authentic expression, mantra) .

yuktā(joined) praṇava(the humming sound ‘om’)-rūpeṇa(through its [reflective] form)  
sarva(all)-vādā(expositions) avirodhinā(not contradicting) ..

### 1.10

vidhātus tasya lokānām  
aṅgo-’pāṅga-nibandhanāḥ .  
vidyā-’bhedāḥ

From it all worlds are given out.  
To it belong all fields of knowledge –  
which record it partially,  
in different parts then further  
subdivided into smaller parts.

vidhātuḥ(from [that] giver out) tasya(of it, to it belong) lokānām(of [its] worlds)  
aṅga(divisions)-upāṅga(subdivisions)-nibandhanāḥ(recordings) .  
vidyā(fields of knowledge)-bhedāḥ(differentiated)

pratāyante  
jñāna-saṁskāra-hetavaḥ ..

All motives to learn knowledge and  
accomplish things are its extensions,  
which express it in the world.

pratāyante(are extended)  
jñāna(knowledge)-saṁskāra(accomplishment)-hetavaḥ(motives) ..

## Linguistic analysis

### 1.11

āsannaṁ brahmaṇas tasya  
tapasām uttamaṁ tapaḥ .  
prathamaṁ chandasām aṅgam  
āhur vyākaraṇaṁ budhāḥ ..

For those who are intelligent,  
the foremost of the sciences  
and also the best discipline –  
established in reality –  
is the analysis of speech.

āsannaṁ(seated back, established) brahmaṇaḥ(of reality) tasya(of that)  
tapasām(of strivings, of disciplines) uttamaṁ(the best) tapaḥ(striving, discipline) .  
prathamaṁ(the foremost) chandasām(of the vedic sciences) aṅgam(branch)  
āhuḥ(they say) vyākaraṇaṁ(analysis of speech) budhāḥ(those who are intelligent) ..

### 1.12

prāpta-rūpa-vibhāḡāyā  
yo vācaḥ paramo rasaḥ .  
yat tat puṇyatamaṁ jyotis  
tasya mārgo ’yam āñjasaḥ ..

This is a direct path to that  
same light which is at once the  
purest virtue and the final essence  
of all speech. This path proceeds  
by trying to achieve correct  
distinctions in the forms of speech.

prāpta(attained)-rūpa(forms)-vibhāḡāyā(of distinctions)  
yaḥ(which) vācaḥ(of speech) paramaḥ(final) rasaḥ(essence) .  
yat(which) tat(that) puṇyatamaṁ(purest virtue) jyotiḥ(light)  
tasya(of it) mārgaḥ(path) ayam(this) āñjasaḥ(direct) ..

## 1.13

artha-pravṛtti-tattvānām  
śabdā eva nibandhanam .

All tying down of truths perceived,  
in objects and their functioning,  
consists of words expressed in speech.

artha(objects)-pravṛtti(functioning)-tattvānām(of truths)  
śabdāḥ(words) eva(alone) nibandhanam(tying down) .

tattvā- 'vabodhaḥ  
śabdānām nā 'sti  
vyākaraṇād ṛte ..

But we don't clearly recognize  
the truth of words, without recourse  
to the analysis of speech.

tattva(truth)-avabodhaḥ(clear recognition)  
śabdānām(of words) na(not) asti(there is)  
vyākaraṇāt(from analysis of speech) ṛte(apart [from], without [recourse to]) ..

## 1.13 vṛtti

arthasya

For any aim or object that  
gets meaningfully signified,

arthasya(of aim, object, meaning)

pravṛtti-tattvaṁ  
vivakṣā ,

its principle of functioning  
is just the wish to say what's meant.

pravṛtti(functioning)-tattvaṁ(principle)  
vivakṣā(the wish to speak) ,

na tu vastu-svarūpatayā  
sattvaṁ-asattvaṁ vā .

But this is neither what it is  
nor what it isn't in itself,  
in its own true reality.

na(not) tu(but) vastu(thing in itself)-svarūpatayā(by its own nature)  
sattvaṁ(existing, true)-asattvaṁ(not existing, false) vā(or) .

vivakṣā hi  
yogya-śabda-nibandhanā .

Indeed, this urge towards expression  
must imply that it may be  
recorded in appropriate words.

vivakṣā(urge towards expression) hi(indeed)  
yogya(appropriate)-śabda(words)-nibandhanā(recording) .

yogyaṁ hi śabdaṁ  
prayuktā vivakṣā-prāpita-  
sannidhāneṣv abhidheyeṣu  
pratyartham upādatte .

As meanings are brought forth together,  
by the wish to say what's meant,  
a speaker must make use of words,  
each suited to its rightful place.

yogyaṁ(suitable, apt) hi(indeed) śabdaṁ(speech, words)  
prayuktā(speaker) vivakṣā(wish to express)-prāpita(led into, caused to attain)-  
sannidhāneṣu(in those laid down together) abhidheyeṣu(in meanings)  
pratyartham(in each case) upādatte(takes on, acquires, uses) .

tad yatho 'palipsamānaḥ  
prati-viṣayaṃ  
yogyam eve 'ndriyam  
upalabdḥau praṇidhatte .

It is like wishing to perceive.  
For every object to be seen,  
the wish puts forward just that  
faculty which is appropriate.  
Both are attained together thus –  
the object and its faculty.

tat(that) yatha(just as, like) upalipsamānaḥ(wishing to grasp, perceive)  
prati(each)-viṣayaṃ(object)  
yogyam(appropriate) eva(only, just) indriyam(faculty)  
upalabdḥau(both obtained) praṇidhatte(puts forth) .

apara āha –

*Another point of view declares:*

apara(someone else) āha(says) –

arthasya pravṛttau  
tattvam vyavahāre  
yan nimittam .

In all the functioning of objects  
and in their transacted use,  
there is a basic principle  
which goes into the make of each.  
It is their inner source and ground.

arthasya(of an object) pravṛttau(in functioning)  
tattvam(basic principle) vyavahāre(in transaction, use)  
yat(which) nimittam(instrumental cause, motivation, ground) .

yadā hi nimittān nimittavatsv  
artheṣu nimitta-svarūpaḥ  
pratyaya utpadyate ,

When from that ground, a firm conviction  
of its own true nature rises  
into objects made of it,

yadā(when) hi(indeed) nimittāt(from the ground) nimittavatsu(in those made of the ground)  
artheṣu(in objects) nimitta(ground)-svarūpaḥ(own true nature)  
pratyaya(conviction) utpadyate(is arisen) ,

tadā 'rthena  
vyavahartuṃ śakyate ,

then through each object it may enter  
into a transacted use.

tadā(then) arthena(through [each] object)  
vyavahartuṃ(to be transacted) śakyate(is able, is capable) ,

na tu saṃsagi-rūpā-'ntara-  
viveke kaivalya-viṣayo  
vyavahāro vidyate .

But if an object is discerned  
apart from all related form,  
then such an isolated thing  
quite clearly can't be found in use.

na(not) tu(but) saṃsagi(?connected, related)-rūpā(form)-antara(absent, apart from)-  
viveke(in discernment) kaivalya(isolated)-viṣayaḥ(object, thing)  
vyavahāraḥ(usage) vidyate(is found) .

tad evam  
jātiṣu  
prāpta-svarūpatvād  
abhidhānānām sāmānyasya

It is just that which stands alone  
in various different kinds of things  
denoted by generic names.  
They come from its inherent nature,



thus attained [by finding it  
distinct from any other thing].

tat(that) evam(thus)  
jātiṣu(in classes, kinds of things)  
prāpta(attained)-svarūpatvāt(from inherent nature)  
abhidhānānām(of names) sāmānyasya(of generic)

śabda-nibandhanatvam āsthīyate . On it are based all names and all  
the concreteness that speech records.

śabda(words)-nibandhanatvam(tied-down-ness, concreteness, recording) āsthīyate(is based) .

vyavahāre vā Or it may be considered that  
tattvaṃ saṃsargaḥ . in the transacted use of things,  
the basic principle lies in  
connecting and combining them.

vyavahāre(in transacted usage) vā(or)  
tattvaṃ(the basic principle) saṃsargaḥ(connecting, combining) .

vicchinna-rūpeṣv ivā Though words appear in separate forms,  
'tyanta-saṃṣṛṭeṣu padā-'rtheṣu their meanings are brought forth connected  
pratyavabhāsamāneṣu and are taken thus combined.

vicchinna(separated)-rūpeṣu(forms) iva(seemingly)  
atyanta(uninterruptedly)-saṃṣṛṭeṣu(created together) pada(word)-artheṣu(meanings)  
pratyavabhāsamāneṣu(reflected shinings, appearances)  
[Note: All the terms here are in the locative plural. Accordingly, they form a clause that collectively refers forward to the next word 'vyavahāraḥ' or 'transacted usage'. The clause describes connected meanings that appear in the separated forms of words. And the sense conveyed is that our 'vyavahāraḥ' or 'transacted usage' must reside locatively *in* these connected meanings.]

vyavahāro It is in these connected meanings  
that our usage must transact,

vyavahāraḥ(transacted usage)

vākya-nibandhanaḥ . as a statement makes a record  
that determines what is said.

vākya(statement)-nibandhanaḥ(tying down, recording) .

na hi saṃsarga-darśana- Where combination and connection  
pratyasta-maye kiñ-cid are no longer seen at all,  
api padā-'rtha-gata- nor there can any use of words  
vyavahāro vyavatiṣṭate . or signs or meaning still remain.

na(not) hi(indeed) saṃsarga(combination, connection)-darśana(seeing)-  
pratyasta(thrown off)-maye(in the nature of such a case) kiñ-cid(whatever)  
api(also) pada(words, signs)-artha(meanings)-gata(reached)-  
vyavahāraḥ(usage) vyavatiṣṭate(remains) .

aparo 'rthaḥ – Another explanation says:

aparaḥ(another) arthaḥ(meaning) –

kevalam vastu  
tyad-ādīnām  
vastu-’palakṣaṇānām  
viṣaya-mātram .

Reality, all by itself,  
is signified by names like ‘that’.  
They point to that reality.  
It is the object in itself,  
with nothing added onto it.

kevalam(all by itself) vastu(reality)  
tyad-ādīnām(of ‘tyad’ [‘that’] and other such [names])  
vastu(reality)-upalakṣaṇānām(of pointers, indicators)  
viṣaya(object)-mātram(alone, unmixed) .

tasya pravṛtti-tattvam  
saṁsargaḥ .

To it belongs the principle  
of functioning – connecting and  
combining all activities.

tasya(of it, belonging to it) pravṛtti(functioning)-tattvam(principle)  
saṁsargaḥ(connecting, combining) .

saṁsṛṣṭo hi kriyāsu  
guṇa-bhāvena  
pradhāna-bhāvena  
co ’pādīyate .

Whatever is connected thus  
belongs to actions that take place.  
Such actions may work through the mode  
of what’s already qualified,  
and also through the primal mode  
[arising from the primal ground  
that is itself unqualified].

saṁsṛṣṭah(created together, connected) hi(indeed) kriyāsu(in actions)  
guṇa(quality)-bhāvena(through the mode)  
pradhāna(primal mode)-bhāvena(through the mode)  
ca(also) upādīyate(is included) .

athavā

*Alternately, it may be said:*

athavā(alternately)

pravṛttir  
janmādi-kriyā  
’kyāta-pada-nibandhanā .

The functioning of nature forth  
consists of action that begins  
with being born. As words are said,  
a grounding back into their source  
is what each one of them records.

pravṛtṭiḥ(functioning forth)  
janmādi(beginning [ādi] with birth [janma])-kriyā(action)  
ākṛyāta(spoken, verb)-pada(words)-nibandhanā(tying back, grounding, recording) .

tasyāḥ pravṛttir ity  
samākhātāyās tattvam

In what is thus called ‘functioning’  
there is a basic principle  
found by proceeding through four states:

tasyāḥ(of that) pravṛtṭiḥ(functioning) iti(thus said)  
samākhātāyāḥ(of that declared to be) tattvam(basic principle)

sādhyatvaṃ	First, there's a state of something sought – of something to be striven for.
sādhyatvaṃ(state of something to be accomplished)	
sādhana- 'kāṅkṣatā	Next comes a state of expectation, which prepares requirements and means towards accomplishment.
sādhana(striving)-ākāṅkṣatā(state of expectation)	
krama-rūpo- 'pagrahaḥ	Third comes a state of transformation, taking on succeeding forms along the way towards the goal.
krama(succession)-rūpa(forms)-upagrahaḥ(taking on)	
kālā- 'bhivyakti-hetutvaṃ .	And fourth, there is a causal state, of turning back towards the source of manifested differences shown in the course of changing time.
kāla(time)-abhivyakti(manifestation, differentiation)-hetutvaṃ(state of cause, causality) .	
aparāś tv arthaḥ sattva-mātraṃ	But there, the aim is unmixed being all alone, with nothing found additional to follow on as any kind of consequence.
aparāḥ(with nothing beyond) tu(but) arthaḥ(object, aim) sattva(being)-mātraṃ(pure, unmixed)	
triṣv api kāleṣu	At all times, conceived as passed or present now or yet to come,
triṣu(in the three) api(also) kāleṣu(in the [three] times)	
svabhāva siddham	it is established in itself – in its own nature, as it is.
svabhāva(its own nature) siddham(established)	
abhidheyatvena	It's found through the significance of anything found meaningful.
abhidheyatvena(by significance)	
pratyasta-mita- krama-rūpaṃ	There, all succession is thrown off. No passing forms of mind appear to limit it successively.
pratyasta(thrown off)-mita(measured, limited)- krama(successive)-rūpaṃ(form)	
nāma-pada-nibandham .	On it, each name and word is based. It is what all of them record – just that alone, and nothing else.

nāma(name)-pada(word)-nibandham(tying back, grounding, recording) .

athavā

*Or yet again, it may be asked:*

athavā(alternately)

'rtha-pravṛtteḥ

What is the basic principle  
of all objective functioning?

kiṁ tattvam –

artha(object)-pravṛtteḥ(of functioning)

kiṁ(what) tattvam(principle) –

artha-rūpā-'kāraḥ

It is a self which is believed  
to be an object of perception,  
made of form that is perceived.

pratyayā-'tmā

artha(object)-rūpa(apparent form)-ākāraḥ(inner, originating form)

pratyaya(accepted belief)-ātmā(self)

bāhyeṣu vastuṣu pratyastaḥ .

It is this seeming sense of self  
projected into outside things.

bāhyeṣu(in outside) vastuṣu(in things) pratyastaḥ(thrown off, projected) .

sa ca śabda-nibandhanaḥ .

And that is just what words record,  
their grounding thus made manifest.

sa(that) ca(and) śabda(words)-nibandhanaḥ(tying back, grounding, recording) .

tattvā-'vabodhaḥ

To words belong their basic  
principle – their principle of truth.

śabdānām .

tattva(principle, truth)-avabodhaḥ(clearly recognized)

śabdānām(of words, to words belong) .

śabdasya tattvam

That truth of words can't be imperfect.  
It must be completely free  
from any sense of lack or want.

a-vaikalyam .

śabdasya(of words) tattvam(truth)

a(without)-vaikalyam(deficiency) .

an-apagata-saṁskāraṁ

That is the true accomplishment  
of uncorrupted speech, its own  
inherent nature unconstrained,  
as it is rightly in itself.

sādhu-svarūpam .

an(not)-apagata(corrupted)-saṁskāraṁ(accomplishment)

sādhu(correct, straight)-svarūpam.(its own nature)

tad hy asyā 'vikalāṁ rūpam .

Just that is its own proper form,  
where its perfection is complete.

tat(that) hi(indeed) asya(its) avikalāṁ(not deficient, perfect) rūpam(form) .

anye tu tat prayuyukṣayā

But other forms, through wants that  
motivate their use, may be imperfect

prayujyamānā vikalāḥ

syur apabhraṁśā iti .

in the ways that they are used.  
Such usages are called ‘corrupt’.

anye(others) tu(but) tat(that) prayuyukṣayā(through the wish to speak)  
prayujyamānā(being used) vikalāḥ(deficient, imperfect)  
syuḥ(thet may be) apabhraṁśāḥ(corrupt) iti(thus called) .

#### 1.14

tad dvāram apavargasya  
vān-malānām cikitsitam .  
pavitram sarva-vidyānām  
adhividyam prakāśate ..

Linguistics is a passageway  
to freedom in all disciplines.  
Wherever learning is concerned,  
linguistics there appears: as that  
investigative therapy  
which may be used to clear away  
the taints of speech in what is said.

tat(it [linguistics]) dvāram(door, passageway) apavargasya(of freedom)  
vāk(speech)-malānām(taints) cikitsitam(investigative therapy [derived from ‘cit’]) .  
pavitram(means of purifying) sarva(all)-vidyānām(of disciplines)  
adhividyam(concerning science, learning) prakāśate(shines forth, appears) ..

#### 1.15

yathā ’rtha-jātayaḥ sarvāḥ  
śabdā-’kr̥ti-nibandhanāḥ .

All classes of the things we see  
are tied back to generic names.

yathā(just as) artha(object)-jātayaḥ(classes) sarvāḥ(all)  
śabda(word)-ākṛti(generic)-nibandhanāḥ(tied back) .

tathai ’va loke vidyānām  
eṣā vidyā parāyaṇam ..

So too, among all disciplines,  
on this that analyses speech  
the others can be seen to start.

tathā(so too) eva(indeed) loke(in the world) vidyānām(of disciplines)  
eṣā(this) vidyā(discipline) parāyaṇam(final basis) ..

#### 1.16

idam ādyaṁ pada-sthānam  
siddhi-sopāna-parvaṇām .

It is the starting place on which  
the staircase of achievement stands,  
from which all steps achieved arise.

idam(this) ādyaṁ(primary, starting) pada(step)-sthānam(stand, place)  
siddhi(achievement)-sopāna(staircase)-parvaṇām(of the steps) .

iyam sā mokṣamāṇānām  
ajihmā rāja-paddhatiḥ ..

It is the direct, royal path  
for those intent on being freed.

iyam(this, it) sā(the) mokṣamāṇānām(for those intent on being freed)  
ajihmā(direct) rāja(royal)-paddhatiḥ(path) ..

## 1.17

atra atīta viparyāsaḥ  
kevalām anupaśyati .

Here, that which is beyond all error  
sees the unmixed absolute.

atra(here) atīta(beyond) viparyāsaḥ(overturning, illusion, error)  
kevalām(the unmixed absolute) anupaśyati(sees)

chandasyaś chandasām  
yonim ātmā  
chando-mayīm tanum ..

The self that's fit to speak the chants  
here sees the source from which they come.  
It sees that source for what it is –  
as the true nature of the chants,  
in all their finer subtlety.

chandasyaḥ(fit for the chants) chandasām(of the chants)  
yonim(source) ātmā(the self)  
chandaḥ(chant)-mayīm(true nature) tanum(fine, subtle, accomplished) ..

## 1.18

pratyastamita-bhedāyā  
yad vāco rūpam uttamam .

That is the highest form of speech  
where differences are given up,  
reflected back to where they rise.

pratyastamita(reflected back)-bhedāyā(of difference)  
yat(which) vācaḥ(of speech) rūpam(form) uttamam(highest) .

yad asminn eva tamasi  
jyotiḥ śuddham vivartate ..

It is pure light, seen manifested  
only where it seems obscured.

yat(which) asmin(in this) eva(only) tamasi(in obscurity)  
jyotiḥ(light) śuddham(pure) vivartate(manifested) ..

## 1.19

vaikṛtaṁ samatīkrāntā  
mūrti-vyāpāra-darśanam .  
vyatītyā loka-tamasī  
prakāśam yam upāsate ..

The sight of bodies doing things  
is modified and changeable.  
Those who transcend it go beyond  
the world's confused obscurity.  
They are intent on light itself,  
and it is there that they abide.

vaikṛtaṁ(modified, changeable) samatīkrāntāḥ(those who have transcended)  
mūrti(embodiment, bodies)-vyāpāra(transacting)-darśanam(seeing, sight) .  
vyatītyāḥ(have gone beyond) loka(world)-tamasī(obscurity)  
prakāśam(light) yam(which) upāsate(they meditate on, are intent on, abide in) ..

## 1.20

yatra vāco nimittāni  
cīhnāni 'vā 'kṣara-smṛteḥ .  
śabda-pūrveṇa yogena  
bhāsante pratibimbavat ..

Speech calls to mind what does not change.  
Speech-signs appear in harness to  
an underlying unity  
that's prior to all speech.

And they are nothing but reflection  
shining in the light of speech.

yatra(where) vācaḥ(of speech) nimittāni(the instruments)  
cihnāni(signs) iva(seemingly) akṣara(changeless)-smṛteḥ(of [speech] which calls to mind) .  
śabda(speech)-pūrveṇa(through what is prior) yogena(through harnessing to [prior] unity)  
bhāsante(they shine) pratibimbavat(made up of reflection, nothing but reflection) ..

### 1.21

atharvaṇām aṅgirasām  
sāmnām ṛg-yajuṣasya ca .  
yasminn uccā vacā varṇāḥ  
pṛthak-sthiti<sup>4</sup>-parigrahāḥ ..

The vedic chants – atharvan, sāman  
ṛg and yajur – are made up  
from various elements of sound.  
It's in the light of speech that  
every element stands chanted  
separately, while also taking outside  
circumstances into count.

atharvaṇām(of the atharvan) aṅgirasām(of the aṅgirasān[included in the atharva-veda])  
sāmnām(of the sāman) ṛg-yajuṣasya(of the ṛg and yajur) ca(and) .  
yasmin(in which) uccāḥ(emphatically pronounced) vacāḥ(speakings) varṇāḥ(sound elements)  
pṛthak(separately)-sthiti(stand)-parigrahāḥ(comprehending the surrounding context) ..

### 1.22

yad ekaṁ prakriyā-bhedair  
bahudhā pravibhajyate .

That light is one – although it's seen  
divided forth in different ways,  
through different ways of reaching it.

yat(which) ekaṁ(one) prakriyā(procedures, approaches)-bhedaḥ(through different)  
bahudhā(in many ways, differently, manifold) pravibhajyate(divided forth) .

tad vyākaraṇam āgamyā  
paraṁ brahmā 'dhigamyate ..

It's that which is to be attained  
as ultimate reality.  
Linguistics is a means to that.

tat(that) vyākaraṇam(linguistics) āgamyā(to be attained)  
paraṁ(ultimate) brahma(reality) dhigamyate(is approached) ..

## Overlying differences

### 1.86

bhedā-'nukāro  
jñānasya vācaś co  
'paplavo dhruvaḥ .

The show of seeming differences,  
displayed in knowledge and in speech,  
is always just an overlay  
of affectation floating by.

bheda(differences)-anukāraḥ(semblance, show)  
jñānasya(of knowledge) vācaḥ(of speech) ca(and)  
upaplavāḥ(floating overlay, affliction, affectation) dhruvaḥ(certainly) .

kramo-’pasrṣṭa-rūpā vāg	Thus speech is overlaid by forms that are produced successively, affected by successive change.
krama(succession)-upasrṣṭa(poured upon, overlaid, affected by)-rūpā(form) vāk(speech)	
jñānam jñeya-vyapāśrayam ..	And knowledge then seems to depend on objects that are to be known.
jñānam(knowledge) jñeya(to be known [objects])-vyapāśrayam(dependent on) ..	
<i>1.86 vṛtti</i>	
abhinnam api jñānam arūpaṁ	In knowledge as it is itself, there is no difference, no form.
abhinnam(undivided, undifferentiated) api(also) jñānam(knowledge) arūpaṁ(formless)	
sarva-jñeya-rūpo- ’pagrāhitvād	All forms of things that may be known are taken on, extraneously. They are additional to it.
sarva(all)-jñeya(to be known, knowable)-rūpa(form)- upagrāhitvāt(from adding on, taking on)	
bheda-rūpatayā pratyavabhāsate –	Hence it appears, with its own light reflected back, by the formation of apparent differences.
bheda(difference)-rūpatayā(by the formation) pratyavabhāsate(shines reflected, appears) –	
pañca vṛkṣāḥ , viṁsatir gāva iti .	It’s in this way that we can speak of twenty cattle or five trees.
pañca(five) vṛkṣāḥ(trees) , viṁsatir(twenty) gāva(cattle) iti(thus saying) .	
samhṛta sarva-bījaś cā ’yam āntaraḥ śabdā-’tmā	The self that speaks contains withdrawn – assimilated at its depth within – all seeds, all potencies.
samhṛta(drawn in, collected, assimilated) sarva(all)-bījaḥ(seeds, potencies) ca(and) ayam(this) āntaraḥ(inner, within) śabda(speech)-ātmā(self)	
vyañjaka-dhvani-bheda- kramā-’nukāreṇā ’virbhāva- kāle pratyavabhāsate .	That self appears through a successive show of different sounds, each one made manifest at its own time.
vyañjaka(manifesting)-dhvani(sounds)-bheda(different)- krama(succession)-anukāreṇa(through a semblance, show) āvirbhāva(manifesting)- kāle(at the time) pratyavabhāsate(appears) .	
tena cā ’nya-bheda- rūpo-’pagraheṇo	Through that, by taking on extraneous differences of seeming form,



'paplutam  
śabda-tattvam eve the truth of speech gets overlaid  
by affectation passing by.

tena(through that) ca(also) anya(extraneous)-bheda(differences)-  
rūpa(seeming form)-upagraheṇa(by taking on)  
upaplutam(overlaid, affected)  
śabda(speech)-tattvam(truth) eva(itself)

'dam vāñ-manas ākhyam This is what we know as the speaking  
avibhāgam anyathā of our minds. Though partless, it  
pratīyate iti . it is taken to be otherwise.

idaṁ vāk(speaking)-manas(mind) ākhyam(known as, called)  
avibhāgam(partless) anyathā(otherwise)  
pratīyate(is taken to be, believed to be) iti(thus conceived) .

evam hy āha – Accordingly, it has been said:

evam(accordingly) hy(indeed) āha(it has been said) –

jñeyena na vinā jñānam “Without an object to be known,  
vyavahāre 'vatiṣṭhate . pure knowledge does not enter use.

jñeyena(through [an object] to be known) na(not) vinā(except, without) jñānam(knowledge)  
vyavahāre(into transacted use) avatiṣṭhate(enters) .

nā 'labdha-kramayā “Unless succession is obtained,  
vācā kaścīd artho speech cannot aim at anything  
'bhidhīyate .. for anyone to think about.”

na(not) alabdha(not obtaining)-kramayā(by succession)  
vācā(by speech) kaścīd(whatever) arthaḥ(aim, object)  
abhidhīyate(for one who thinks, considers) ..

## Powers of speech

1.137

śabdānām eva sā śaktis All arguments and inference  
tarko yaḥ puruṣā-'śrayaḥ . depend upon intelligence.  
They're nothing but the power of words.

śabdānām(of words) eva(only, nothing but) sā(that) śaktiḥ(power)  
tarkaḥ(argument, inference) yaḥ(which) puruṣa(intelligence)-āśrayaḥ(dependent) .

śabdā-'nugato<sup>5</sup> nyāyo Where formal logic blindly follows  
'nāgameṣv a-nibandhanaḥ .. words expressed in outward speech,  
it's just a verbal mimicking  
that ties no concrete meaning down.  
It cannot record anything.  
Such logic is not found in texts  
of genuine authority.

śabda(speech)-anugataḥ(following, imitating, mimicking) nyāyaḥ(formal logic)  
anāgameṣu(not in authentic texts) a-nibandhanaḥ(not tying down, not recording) ..

1.138

rūpā-'dayo yathā dr̥ṣṭāḥ  
pratyarthaṁ yata-śaktayaḥ .

As shapes and forms and colours seen  
and other sights have, each of them,  
their special capabilities,

rūpā(forms, appearances)-ādayaḥ(and so on) yathā(just as) dr̥ṣṭāḥ(seen)  
pratyarthaṁ(in each case) yata(inherent, special)-śaktayaḥ(capabilities) .

śabdās tathai 'va dr̥śyante  
viṣā-'paharaṇā-'diṣu ..

so also words are each perceived  
to have their own particular  
effects, like the elimination  
of contaminating waste.

śabdāḥ(words) tathā(so) eva(also) dr̥śyante(are seen)  
viṣa(contaminating waste)-apaharaṇa(elimination)-ādiṣu(in such things) ..

1.139

yathāi 'śām tatra sāmartyaṁ  
dharma 'py evaṁ pratīyatām .

Just as these words accord with virtue  
so they also lead to it.

yathā(just as) eśām(of these [words]) tatra(there) sāmartyaṁ(accordance)  
dharma(in virtue) api(also) evaṁ(thus) pratīyatām(of these [words] leading into) .

sādhūnām sādhubhis tasmād  
vācyam abhyudaya-'rthinām ..

They are the words of honest people,  
to be spoken by good people  
aiming to improve their state.

sādhūnām(of honest people) sādhubhiḥ(by good people) tasmāt(from that, therefore)  
vācyam(to be spoken) abhyudaya(uplifting, improvement)-arthinām(of those aiming for) ..

## Learning from tradition

1.140

sarvo 'dr̥ṣṭa-phalān arthān  
āgamāt pratipadyate .  
viparītaṁ ca sarvatra  
śakyate vaktum āgame ..

It's commonly acknowledged that  
unseen effects may be achieved  
by chanting from the sacred texts.  
But it is always possible  
to say conflicting things about  
what's in the texts and what they mean.

sarvaḥ(everyone [in common]) adr̥ṣṭa(unseen)-phalān(effects) arthān(are achieved)  
āgamāt(from sacred texts) pratipadyate(acknowledges) .  
viparītaṁ(the contrary) ca(also) sarvatra(always)  
śakyate(one is able) vaktum(to speak of) āgame(in the sacred texts) ..

*From 1.140 vṛtti (last sentence)*

tasmād āgamam kiñcit  
pramāṇī-kṛtya vyavasthite  
tasmin yā kācid upapattir  
ucyamānā pratipattāv  
upodbalakatvam labhate .

Therefore, some sacred text is made authentic, and a settled standpoint is established. There, according to whatever reason may determine to be fit and proper, confirmation is obtained.

tasmāt(therefore) āgamam(sacred text) kiñcit(whatever, some)  
pramāṇī(authoritative standard)-kṛtya(having made) vyavasthite(a stand is taken on)  
tasmin(on that) yā(that which) kācid(whatever) upapattiḥ(conclusive reasoning)  
ucyamānā(fit, proper) pratipattau(in reaching, coming to)  
upodbalakatvam(confirmation) labhate(is obtained) .

*1.141*

sādhutva-jñāna-viṣayā  
sai 'śā<sup>6</sup> vyākaraṇa-smṛtiḥ .

Linguistics is a discipline whose aim is knowledge, clarified from errors of mistaken use.

sādhutva(straightness, correctness)-jñāna(knowledge)-viṣayā(object, aim)  
sa(that) eṣā(this) vyākaraṇa(linguistics)-smṛtiḥ(tradition, discipline) .

avicchedena śiṣṭānām  
idaṁ smṛti-nibandhanam ..

It is recorded through an uncut continuity – of learning that is called to mind, by those who've learned it well and hand it down.

avicchedena(through an uncut [continuity]) śiṣṭānām(of learned people, successful learners)  
idaṁ(this) smṛti(calling to mind, remembered learning)-nibandhanam(recording) ..

*1.141 vṛtti (last sentence)*

smṛto hy arthaḥ  
paramāryād avicchedena  
punaḥ punar nibandhyate ,

Passed down through a succession that remains unbroken, the intent remembered is reconstituted, over and over again.

smṛtaḥ(remembered) hi(indeed) arthaḥ(aim, intent)  
paramāryāt(succession) avicchedena(unbroken)  
punaḥ(again) punaḥ(again) nibandhyate(is tied down, recorded, reconstituted) ,

prasidha-samācārāyām  
smṛtāv anibandhana-śabdāyām

Where a tradition of established common practice carries on without recording it in words,

prasidha(established)-samācārāyām(of common practice)  
smṛtau(in a remembered tradition) anibandhana(not recorded)-śabdāyām(in words)

śiṣṭa-samācārā-'vicchedenai  
'va smaryate .

what gets to be remembered is no more than the unbroken practice of successful practitioners.

śiṣṭa(successful practitioners)-samācāra(practice)-avicchedena(unbroken)  
eva(only, no more than) smaryate(is remembered) .

## Levels of speech

### 1.142

vaikharyā madhyamāyāś ca  
paśyantyāś cai 'tad adbhutam .  
aneka-tīrtha-bhedāyās  
trayyā vācaḥ param padam ..

The word that's spoken is threefold.  
It consists of 'vaikharī',  
of 'madhyamā' and 'paśyantī'.  
And it has many different ways  
of crossing over differences.  
But where it ultimately stands  
must be amazing to the mind.  
[It's only reached where mind, confounded,  
has completely disappeared.]

vaikharyāḥ(of 'vaikharī') madhyamāyāḥ(of 'madhyamā') ca(and)  
paśyantyāḥ(of 'paśyantī') ca(and) etat(this) adbhutam(amazing, confounding) .  
aneka(many)-tīrtha(crossing over)-bhedaḥ(of difference)  
trayyā(of threefold) vācaḥ(of word) param(ultimate) padam(standing place, standpoint) ..

From 1.142 vṛtti

paraiḥ samvedyam yasyāḥ  
śrotra-viśayatvena  
pratiniyatam śruti-rūpaṁ  
sā vaikharī .

'Elaborated' speech, called 'vaikharī'  
is jointly known, concertedly  
with others who are listening.  
It is the form that's heard  
through its objective sound –  
particular, restricted to each case.

paraiḥ(with others) samvedyam(jointly known) yasyāḥ(of which)  
śrotra(hearing)-viśayatvena(by objectivity)  
pratiniyatam(restricted to each case) śruti(heard)-rūpaṁ(form)  
sā(that) vaikharī('vaikharī', 'elaborated') .

śliṣṭā

Connected, it thus touches upon  
other things, which make it  
liable to be interpreted.

śliṣṭā(clinging, attached, connected, of double meaning, liable to interpretation)

vyakta-varṇa-samuccāraṇā  
prasiddha-sādhu-bhāvā  
bhraṣṭa-saṁskārā ca .

It is articulated variously,  
through varied syllables  
and other ways that colour its  
expression – both in well-established  
modes and in formations that  
have come to be degenerate.

vyakta(manifest)-varṇa(varied syllables, colouring)-samuccāraṇā(articulation, pronouncing)  
prasiddha(established)-sādhu(correct)-bhāvā(mode)  
bhraṣṭa(corrupt, degenerate)-saṁskārā(formation) ca(also) .

tathā yā 'kṣe  
yā dundubhau  
yā veṇau  
[yā] vīṇāyām

That is the case when it is  
manifested in an axle spinning  
round, or in a drum, or in  
in a flute or a stringed instrument.

tathā(thus, that is the case) yā(that which) akṣe(in an axle)  
yā(that which) dundubhau(in a drum)  
yā(that which) veṇau(in a flute)  
[yā(that which)] vīṇāyām(in a vīṇā [a kind of stringed instrument])

ity aparimāṇa-bhedā .

Its differentiation thus  
is spoken of as infinite –  
beyond all measure and compare.

iti(thus called, spoken of as) aparimāṇa(immeasurably)-bhedā(differentiated) .

madyamā tv antaḥ  
saṁniveśinī

But there's another form of speech,  
called 'madyamā' or 'in between'.  
Its sitting place is back within.

madyamā('madyamā', 'in between') tu(but) antaḥ(inside, within)  
saṁniveśinī(seated back or down together)

parigrhīta-krame 'va  
buddhi-mātro-'pādānā .

As it appears, it's a succession  
of replacing states – with each  
restricted to a passing moment,  
and the whole successive process  
made of nothing else but mind.

parigrhīta(caught up in)-krama(replacing succession) iva(seemingly, as it appears)  
buddhi(mind)-mātra(alone)-upādānā(made of) .

sā tu sūkṣma-prāṇa-  
vṛtty-anugatā

However, that must go together  
with the subtle functioning  
of energy that is expressed  
in all activities of life.

sā(that) tu(however) sūkṣma(subtle)-prāṇa(living energy)-  
vṛtti(functioning, activity)-anugatā(following, accompanying)

krama-saṁhāra-bhāve 'pi

And here, there is a mode in which  
succession gets to be withdrawn.

krama(succession)-saṁhāra(withdrawn)-bhāve(in mode) api(besides)

vyakta-krama-  
parigrahai 'va

For, as succession manifests,  
it's just a wrapping that's put on.

vyakta(manifest)-krama(succession)-  
parigraha(wrapping) eva(only)

keṣāñcit .

This is what some would say of it.

keṣāñcit(of some [what they would say]) .

pratisamhṛta-kramā  
sati apy  
abhede

But where succession is withdrawn  
what there remains is being, in  
the absence of all differences.

pratisamhṛta(taken back in, withdrawn)-kramā(succession)  
sati(being) api(but)  
abhede(in the absence of difference)

samāviṣṭa-krama-  
śaktiḥ paśyantī .

There, all succession is contained,  
at rest, in the unmanifested  
potency of ‘*paśyantī*’ –  
the principle of ‘*seeing*’ that  
is manifested in all speech.

samāviṣṭa(entered into together, contained at rest)-krama(succession)-  
śaktiḥ(potency) paśyantī(‘paśyantī’, ‘seeing’).

sā calācalā  
pratilabdha-samādhānā cā

That is continual activity –  
found in complete absorption  
where it stands, returned within.

sā(that) calācalā(ever moving, continual activity)  
pratilabdha(received back, returned within)-samādhānā(absorption) ca()

’vṛtā  
viśuddhā ca ,

It is just that which is obscured,  
in itself completely pure.

āvṛtā(covered, obscured)  
viśuddhā(completely pure) ca(also) ,

sanniviṣṭa-jñeyā-’kārā  
pratilīnā-’kārā  
nirākārā ca ,

In it, all form is known contained,  
all form is utterly dissolved.  
No made-up form can there appear.

sanniviṣṭa(entered back together, contained)-jñeya(known, to be known)-ākārā(form)  
pratilīnā(dissolved back)-ākārā(form)  
nirākārā(formless) ca(also) ,

parichinnā-’rtha-pratyavabhāsā  
saṃsrṣṭā-’rtha-pratyavabhāsā  
praśanta-sarvā-’rtha-  
pratyavabhāsā ce

It comes into appearance by  
dividing objects from each other,  
by connecting them together,  
and at last when each of them  
has come to peace in which they all  
are finally and utterly dissolved.

parichinna(cutting off, dividing)-artha(objects)-pratyavabhāsā(appearing)  
saṃsrṣṭa(issuing together, connecting)-artha(objects)-pratyavabhāsā(appearing)  
praśanta(peace)-sarva(all)-artha()objects-  
pratyavabhāsā(appearing) ca(also)

’ty aparimāṇa-bhedā .

It’s thus that it may be described –  
seen differentiated forth,  
beyond all measure and compare.

iti(thus called, spoken of as) aparimāṇa(immeasurably)-bhedā(differentiated) .

tatra  
vyāvahārikīṣu sarvāsu  
vāg-avasthāsu  
vyavasthitaḥ sādhu-  
asādhu-pravibhāgaḥ  
puruṣa-saṁskāra-hetur  
ekeṣāṁ .

Concerning this variety,  
in all transacted usages  
and states of manifesting speech,  
there is an established distinction  
of right use from wrong. As some  
would say, that is the motivating  
force which drives our human  
cultivation and development.

tatra(there, in this matter)  
vyāvahārikīṣu(in transacted usages) sarvāsu(in all)  
vāk(speech)-avasthāsu(in states)  
vyavasthitaḥ(established) sādhu(correct, right)-  
asādhu(incorrect, wrong)-pravibhāgaḥ(analysis, distinction)  
puruṣa(human)-saṁskāra(cultivation, development)-hetuḥ(motivation)  
ekeṣāṁ(of some, as some would say) .

parantu  
paśyantī-rūpam  
anapabhraṁśam  
asaṁkīrṇam  
loka-vyavahāra-’tītam .

But here it must be understood  
that *paśyantī* – in its own seeing  
mode – is utterly unmixed  
and unconfused, untouched by all  
corrupted use. It is itself  
beyond all usage in the world.

parantu(but)  
paśyantī(‘paśyanti’, ‘seeing’)-rūpam(form [its own])  
anapabhraṁśam(uncorrupted)  
asaṁkīrṇam(unmixed)  
loka(world)-vyavahāra(usage)-atītam(beyond) .

tasyā eva vāco vyākaraṇena  
sādhutva-jnyāna-labhyena vā  
śabda-pūrveṇa yogenā  
’dhigamyata

Just what it is may be approached  
through the analysis of speech,  
attaining to the truth of knowing.  
Or through yoga, joining back  
into the primal source of speech.

tasyā(of that) eva(indeed) vācaḥ(speech) vyākaraṇena(through analysis)  
sādhutva(correctness, truth)-jnyāna(knowing)-labhyena(through attaining) vā(or)  
śabda(speech)-pūrveṇa(through that which is prior) yogena(through yoga, joining)  
adhigamyata(approached)

ity ekeṣāṁ āgamaḥ . ...

It is thus spoken of by some  
who follow what has come from it....

iti(thus spoken) ekeṣāṁ(of some) āgamaḥ(what has come [from it], tradition followed) . ...

*From 1.142 vṛtti, quoting some āgama stanzas*

sthāneṣu vidhṛte vayau  
kṛta-varṇa-parigrahā .

“Arranged in their respective places,  
different elements of speech  
are carried, spoken, in the air.





vaikharī(elaborated) sattva(being)-mātrā(only, pure) iva(seemingly)  
 guṇaiḥ(by qualities) na(not) vyavakīryate(scattered, dispersed, intermixed, affected) .. ...

### Note on Bhartṛhari's view of language

In a way, Bhartṛhari's view of language is summarized in the above four stanzas that are quoted in the *vṛtti* commentary on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*, 1.142. Traditionally, this commentary is said to be by Bhartṛhari himself; and he is quoting here from some more ancient text. We do not know quite what that text was, but the commentary quotes it as authoritative (āgama). In the Sanskrit tradition, Bhartṛhari himself is regarded as something of an authority, on the philosophy of language.

As with many ancient Sanskrit authors, we are not sure when Bhartṛhari lived and composed his works. But it was before the seventh century CE, when the Chinese traveller I-tsing reports that the *Vākyapadīya* was already established in the classical curriculum of learning. Along with other Hindu classics, it was among the works that Buddhist students were taught at the great monastery of Nālandā.<sup>7</sup>

So, the four stanzas here quoted were already ancient in the seventh century CE. Like the rest of the text in the *Vākyapadīya* and its *vṛtti* commentary, they come down from old ways of thought that were rather different from what we are used to now. In translating them (as also the other passages excerpted above), their meaning has been interpreted and then retold in modern terms, which explain things a little more than the condensed expression of the Sanskrit originals.

This note takes a further look at these four stanzas, asking what they tell us about Bhartṛhari's view of language and how his ideas may be interpreted in modern terms..

sthāneṣu vidhṛte vayau  
 kṛta-varṇa-parigrahā .

Arranged in their respective places,  
 different elements of speech  
 are carried, spoken, in the air.

vaikharī vāk prayoktṛṇām  
 prāṇa-vṛtti-nibandhanā ..

That forms *elaborated* speech.  
 It's a recording, carried out  
 through acts of living energy  
 that functions forth from those who speak.

This first stanza describes 'vaikharī vāk' or 'elaborated speech'. The elaboration takes place through an articulation of spoken elements (phonemes, syllables etc.), which are carried in 'vāyu' or 'air'.

However, that 'air' is not just physical. As 'vāyu', it is the fourth of five cosmic elements,<sup>8</sup> in our experience of the physical and mental world. It is the 'atmospheric' element of qualitative conditioning: which can be 'felt, but not seen'. It conditions space and time, with a pervading climate of influencing qualities that are intuitively felt, through inner judgement and evaluation. These qualities are not seen as gross objects, through outward sense and intellect. Instead, they are more subtly felt, as their conditioning surrounds and pervades the grosser objects of the world. It is through this climate, of physical and mental conditioning, that speech gets articulated, into complex structures.

Moreover, as words are spoken, they express a living meaning, in the structures that they form. This expression is conceived through the Sanskrit word 'prāṇa'. Physically, the word is associated with the flow of breath in our bodies. As air is

breathed, in and out, it refreshes our living functions. And it gets vibrated from within, producing sounds that show a living consciousness, expressed in various changing forms and names and qualities of speech. Prāṇa is the energy of this expression. It is not a physical energy that acts from one object to another. Instead, it is a *living energy* that rises up from consciousness, which it expresses in the flow of meaningful activity.

Like the energy of modern physics, prāṇa acts through subtle vibrations in the conditioning of space and time; and objects are thus interconnected patterns of its dynamic activity. But prāṇa is an energy that's understood biologically, through considerations of living purpose, meaning and value that are specifically excluded from modern physics. Where modern physics is applied externally, through calculation and engineering, the living energy of prāṇa is investigated reflectively, through education and intensive discipline.

As words express their meaning, they record a knowledge that continues from the past. This '*recording*' is called '*nibandhana*'. Literally, it means 'tying back' or 'tying down'. '*Nibandhana*' is what ties words to the concrete meaning that supports them. It is the grounding of words, in the underlying knowledge that they record.

Here, it is not conceived that a passing knowledge is made to last, by tying it down to material records like written documents. In fact, the conception is just the opposite. Where knowledge is genuine, it is inherently alive and unchanging, in itself. Material records are inherently dead and decaying. They come to life only when their meaning is interpreted afresh, by living speakers, on the basis of a living energy whose functioning grounds words in lasting knowledge.

This is the root meaning of the English word 'record'. The prefix 're-' means 'back'; and 'cord' comes from the Latin 'cor', which means 'heart'. Thus, the word 'record' implies a return to heart, and hence a recalling and a fresh visiting of knowledge that continues in the heart. Material records are only a degraded and decaying means of that living recall.

kevalam buddhy upādānā  
krama-rūpā-'nupātini .

Mind in itself is made of forms  
that follow on successively,  
replacing what has gone before.

prāṇā-'vṛttim atikramya  
madhyamā vāk pravartate ..

The functioning of living energy  
is thereby left behind,  
as *mediating* speech goes on  
with its continued functioning.

This second stanza describes '*madhyamā vāk*' or '*mediating speech*'. The mediation takes place through mind, and it is of two kinds.

One kind of mediation is called '*krama*' or '*succession*'. Here, mind is a process that takes place in time, mediating between the past and the future. At each moment of time, a state of mind appears, replacing previous states. Each state displays a momentary form of mind, which has been formed by transformation from the past, in a continuing process of perception, thought and feeling. The mind is thus a passing stream of apparent forms, each form a momentary display of the entire process.

But, as these forms succeed each other in our minds, meaning is expressed in them, through our living functioning. That functioning is called '*vṛtti*' or '*turning*'. It is of course the functioning of prāṇa's living energy. It functions by turning back and

forth: between the objects mind perceives, and the consciousness that knows the changing stream of perception in the mind. Here, there is a revolving cycle: as consciousness is expressed in the mind's perception of objects, and as each perception is assimilated back through mind into consciousness again.

By thus going out to perceived objects and then reflecting back within, the mind keeps mediating between a world of changing things and a consciousness that carries on beneath. This is another kind of mediation, which does not stay in passing time. Instead, it repeatedly returns into a timeless consciousness: which knows all changes from beneath.

Each time a perception is absorbed into that consciousness, there is a timeless interval, where mind subsides and disappears. There, mind's living energy has come to rest. Its time-bound functioning is left behind, before new states of mind appear. That's how the mind proceeds from state to state. It keeps going on beyond, to where it is dissolved, transcending its own time-affected functioning.

avibhāgā tu paśyantī  
sarvataḥ samhṛta-kramā .

But *seeing* is that partless essence  
always present, everywhere.  
In it, succession is absorbed.

svarūpa-jyotir evā 'ntaḥ  
sūkṣmā vāg anapāyinī ..

There's only light in its true nature,  
as it is itself, within.  
That is a subtle speaking where  
no disappearance can be found.

This third stanza describes '*paśyantī*' or '*seeing*'. That seeing is not a changing action of body, sense or mind. Instead, it is a changeless presence, staying present everywhere, through all experiences. As different appearances succeed each other in our minds, it is their common principle of consciousness, which witnesses them all. Its witnessing takes each of them into itself, where all succession is absorbed.

To describe it in itself, it is called '*svarūpa-jyoti*' or the '*true nature of light*'. 'Jyoti' means 'light' and 'svarūpa' means 'true nature'. A 'rūpa' is an apparent form, modified by changeable perception. 'Sva-' is a prefix that means 'inherent' or 'one's own'. So the svarūpa of something is its inherent essence, beneath the changing forms that modify its appearances from different points of view. When something is known from within, as it is in itself, there its svarūpa is realized. That is not a looking from outside, taking one of many points of view in the external world. Instead, it is a knowing in identity. It requires that one stands identical with what is known.

So, when seeing is described as the svarūpa of light, it is a seeing that knows itself, from within, as self-illuminating light. And it is realized by reflecting back to it, as one's own knowing self, from where all mind and world are illuminated.

From there, it speaks unceasingly, as it is expressed through all experience of the physical and mental world. That speaking is called '*sūkṣma vāk*' or '*subtle speech*'. It is too subtle to be heard through outward faculties of sense and mind, whose attention is distracted by the noisy clamour of apparent change and its competing differences. That subtle speaking thus remains unheard and unperceived, by our outward faculties. From outside, it seems dark and silent; even though its nature is pure light, which sees everything and keeps on speaking everywhere.

prāpto-’parāga-rūpā sā  
viplavair anuṣaṅgibhiḥ .

It reaches its conditioned form  
by mixing it, with a variety  
of differing disturbances  
that seem to float on it.

vaikharī sattva-mātre ’va  
guṇair na vyavakīryate ..

But that, which seems elaborated,  
is pure being in itself.  
It is untouched, quite unaffected  
by its show of qualities.

Here, there is a description of what came to be called ‘*parā*’ or ‘*beyond*’. In Bhartrhari’s *Vākyapadīya* and its *vṛtti* commentary, this term ‘*parā*’ is not used to denote a fourth level of speech. Bhartrhari says that speech is threefold; and he treats the third level of *paśyantī* as ultimate. It’s later on in the tradition that the name ‘*parā*’ appears, referring to a fourth level. As a result, there came to be a fourfold division of levels, which was used extensively, in connection with Shaivite theology. Then, *paśyantī* was treated in a slightly degraded way: not as consciousness itself, but as the silent witnessing through which consciousness illuminates and inspires the changing world.

In this fourth stanza (quoted from the *vṛtti* commentary), consciousness is described as unconditioned, beyond the conditioned differences that are superimposed upon it. This superimposition is called ‘*viplava*’. ‘*Plava*’ means ‘floating’, and the prefix ‘*vi-*’ implies ‘distinction’ and ‘difference’. So *viplava* is a *floating overlay of difference and disturbing change*.

As consciousness appears, it seems thus mixed with a floating overlay, which confuses our understanding. To correct the confusion, consciousness must be distinguished from all the changing and conditioned things that are perceived through mind. When the distinction is complete, consciousness turns out to be pure being, completely unaffected by the limited appearances that are superimposed by partial mind and senses.

That *pure being* is called ‘*sattva-mātra*’. It is the one reality of everything that’s known, throughout the entire universe. Thus, by distinguishing consciousness as that which knows, it turns out to be identical with all reality, where all distinctions are dissolved. By fully separating that which knows from what is known, the duality between them is completed, and a non-dual unity is realized.

This conclusion may seem mystical, but Bhartrhari approaches it through a reasoned analysis of common experience. He is very much a linguistic philosopher, who is looking for clarity, by analysing the meaning of common words. As he says in the *Vākyapadīya*, 1.13-14: <sup>9</sup>

All tying down of truths perceived,  
in objects and their functioning,  
consists of words expressed in speech.

But we don’t clearly recognize  
the truth of words, in due respect  
to the analysis of speech.

1.13

Linguistics is a passageway  
to freedom in all disciplines.

Wherever learning is concerned,  
 linguistics there appears: as that  
 investigative therapy  
 which may be used to clear away  
 the taints of speech in what is said.

1.14

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit text has been transliterated from *Vākyapadīyam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Varanasi 1976. In interpreting the text, the following translations have been consulted: (a) K.A. Subramania Iyer, *The Vākyapadīya of Bhartr̥hari with the vṛtti, Chapter I English Translation*, Deccan College, Pune, India 1965; (b) K. Raghavan Pillai, *The Vākyapadīya, Critical Text of Cantos I and II (with English Translation, Summary of Ideas and Notes)*, Motital Banarsidass, Delhi 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Here 'rūpeṇa' ('through form') has alternative 'bhedena' ('through difference'), in K. Raghavan Pillai, *The Vākyapadīya*, (as in endnote 1 above) Motital Banarsidass, Delhi 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Here 'matāḥ' has alternative 'gatāḥ', in Yves Ramseier's e-text <<http://hin.osaka-gaidai.ac.jp/~ramseier>> and in e-text based on Wilhelm Rau edition, Wiesbaden 1977 <[http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene\\_1/fiindolo/gretil/1\\_sanskr/6\\_sastra/1\\_gram/vakyp\\_pu.htm](http://www.sub.uni-goettingen.de/ebene_1/fiindolo/gretil/1_sanskr/6_sastra/1_gram/vakyp_pu.htm)>.

<sup>4</sup> Here 'sthiti' has alternative 'sthita', in the same text versions as in endnote 3.

<sup>5</sup> Here 'śabdā-'nugato' is preceded by an additional 'sa', in the same text versions as in endnote 3.

<sup>6</sup> Here 'sai 'ṣā' has alternative 'se 'yam', in the same text versions as in endnote 3.

<sup>7</sup> See Harold G. Coward: *Bhartr̥hari*, start of chapter 2, Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1976; and R.C. Majumdar, Ed.: *The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol 3, The Classical Age*, chapter 21, §4, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> The five elements are: 'pṛthivī' or 'earth' (gross matter, separated into objects), 'āpas' or 'water' (transforming energy, which flows in dynamic patterns of activity), 'tejas' or 'fire' (illuminating information, throwing light through meaningful representations), 'vāyu' or 'air' (qualitative conditioning, which influences tendencies of character), and 'ākāśa' or 'ether' (connecting continuity, which settles conflicts and harmonizes differences).

<sup>9</sup> Transliteration of original Sanskrit is on page 15 above for 1.13, and page 21 above for 1.14.