

Date: Sat, 29 Dec 2001 20:17:40 -0000

From: "satyan_c" <satyan_c@yahoo.com>

Subject: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Hari Om!

I have to admit that inspite of my best efforts, I had difficulty keeping track of the various sub-threads of discussion going on under the tile "My views on Nirvikalpa Samadhi and Advaita". Hence, for the particular issues I wanted to raise, i am starting a new thread.

The gist of the standpoint expressed by Sri AtmaChaitanyaji, I have understood as being:

- 1) Axiom: Vedanta Shastras are the pramana (means of knowledge) for gaining Knowledge of the NonDual Self
- 2) Being a pramana, its validity rests in itself. Hence, it doesn't need any other means of knowledge for further corroboration. This rules out the need for Nirvikalpa Samadhi etc, which is being discussed in the other thread.
- 3) By 1) and 2), It follows that it is sufficient to understand the Shastras to realize the Self.

This standpoint, expressed above, is not new and it cannot be lightly dismissed as being without substance. Although, I do not conform to this view completeley myself, I am open to it as possibly being a valid and self-consistent viewpoint. I must admit that I have been influenced by Swami Dayananda Saraswati's discourses on the same subject. I have some questions (possibly quite basic) regarding this viewpoint in particular and they are as follows:

- 1) Agreed that it may indeed be possible to gain Self Knowledge by truly understanding the import of the scriptures alone and not any other practice. However, this requires a great deal of 'purity' or quietitude of mind. Then alone the Knowledge is gained. How can we assert that the Self Knowledge was gained by the means of the scripture alone and not by the means of the pure mind? In a calm lake, the bottom is clearly seen. In the same way, in a pure mind, the Self is clearly reflected. In other words, could there not be an equally valid view that the 'Pure Mind is the Pramana'?
- 2) For most of us, sadhana and understanding go hand in hand. The understanding happens due to a quiet mind which in turn is the result of sadhana. The sadhana deepens understanding which deepens the sadhana which in turn helps the understanding which in turn deepens the sadhana and so on.....How can we assert that the 'final blow' of Self Knowledge was lent only by the Shastra and not by the years of sadhana that went to create the pure mind capable of grasping Self

Knowledge?

As an aside, we must have heard of the Zen story where a Zen master realized suddenly for seemingly no reason when he spilt some hot tea over himself. For a pure mind, a random insignificant event could be enough to 'trigger' Self Knowledge. The point I am trying to make is that can the Shastra take sole credit for being the means of 'Self Knowledge', particularly when the mind is already purified by years of sadhana?

In other words, couldn't there be another equally valid view that 'Sadhana is the Pramana'?

If I have made some fundamental errors here, I humbly request corrections and comments.

warmest regards,
--Satyan

Date: Sat, 29 Dec 2001 23:53:12 -0000

From: "srikrishna_ghadiyaram" <srikrishna_ghadiyaram@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Hari Om !!

Pramana does not mean .. "means of knowledge". It means .. "Proof or Adherence, or Ultimate Say"

With the modified definition, it would convey that For the declaration of existance of Brahman, Sruti is the only Pramana. Then by various sadhanas we can also experience it.

We may try Reason (yukti), and Anubhava (experience) as evidence for some declarations. When there is a controdiction, we resort to Sruti and say based on the declaration of Sruti, we accept it or reject it.

If just Listening was sufficient why would Sankara go to such length to explain "Sadhana Chatusthaya" ?

Also Sravana (Listening to Scriptures) itself is fulfilled by support of Shad Lingas i.e Upakrama-Upasamhara (prologue-epilogue), Abhyasa (repetition), Apurvata (speciality), Phala (result), Arthavada (eulogy), Upapatti (logic)

After that Manana, Nididhyasana are prescribed anyway.

Meditation need not mean sitting at one place with closed eyes any way. As long as mind sees only Brahman alone every where it is Samadhi. Possibly for an aspirant endowed with all the qualifications, the Sravana or declarations of Sruthi will be

sufficient to transport him to Samadhi.

I heard Swami Tejomayananda saying, "Samajdar ko ishara Kafi Hi" ..
for a smart person, pointer is enough.

Om Namō Narayanaya !!

Srikrishna

Date: Sun, 30 Dec 2001 07:43:43 -0000

From: "satyan_c" <satyan_c@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

--- In advaitin@y..., "srikrishna_ghadiyaram"

<srikrishna_ghadiyaram@y...> wrote:

> Hari Om !!

>

> Pramana does not mean .. "means of knowledge". It means .. "Proof or

> Adherence, or Ultimate Say"

Hari Om Srikrishna,

Thanks for your response. If you look at the following articles,
Pramana seems to be used in the sense of 'means of knowledge' as
opposed to 'Proof or Ultimate Say':

Swami Atmananda's article on the Six Pramanas:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/10395>

Swami Dayananda's 'Is Vedanta a School of Thought'

<http://www.arshavidya.org/vision/v1n2.htm>

You might also find the following article interesting

Are the Upanishads the only means to the knowledge of Atman?

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/11362>

and Sri Gurumulu Murthy's response:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/11482>

warmest regards,

--Satyan

Date: Sun, 30 Dec 2001 08:52:08 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Satyan,

When you say "Could there not be an equally valid view that the 'Pure Mind' is the pramana" or, "Sadhana and Understanding go hand and hand. The Sadhana deepens the Understanding and the Understanding deepens the Sadhana....", there seems to be a confusion as to what exactly a Pramana is, as well as the relation that exists between Sadhana and Understanding, I will try to very briefly outline the nature of the Vedantic Pramana, the Understanding (Direct Knowledge) that it produces, and the function of Sadhanas in relation to these two.

VEDANTIC TEXTS PURPORT TO TEACH ATMAN ALONE AS AN ENTITY

(Vedantic texts are Jnapakam (they make something-that can't be known by any other pramana-known)not Karakam (they don't prompt one to engage in any activity or Sadhana.)

That is to say , they merely negate all that is not really Atman's properties, and culminate in directly revealing the self-established Atman. There would remain nothing more to be done,nor any agent left to do it, after realizing the import of the texts.

(Various strange beliefs prevail among those that are not aware of this open secret. Some imagine that the Vedantic texts yield only 'Indirect Knowledge' of Atman. And hence AFTER the Indirect Knowledge: 1)That Knowledge must be repeated to a) make it 'strong', b)convert it into Direct Knowledge.(Prasankyana Vada) 2)One must merge the world of multiplicity in Atman by means of meditation(Prapancha Vilaya Vada),or, 3) meditate on the qualityless Brahman(Nirguna Brahman Upasana Vada), or, 4)Practice Patanjali Yoga for the attainment of Nirvikalpa (Chita Vriti Nirodha Vada,or, 5)the continued mental repetition of the syllable OM is required(Pranava Abhyasa Vada).

BRIEF DELIBERATION ON MOKSHA SADHANAS (ACCORDING TO SRI SHANKARA AND SURESWARA)

By the 'Direct Knowledge' of Atman that is born out of the Vedantic Sentences ALONE, Moksha is attained. In addition, once that 'Direct Knowledge' is attained there does not at all remain anything further to be done to attain Moksha. As Sureswaracharya puts it:

"By virtue of sentences such as TAT TVAM ASI (That Thou Art) etc. Knowledge accrues. Then one realizes that neither Ignorance nor its effect(the Universe) ever existed in the past, is not existing now, and will not be existing in the future also." (Sam. Vartica.183)

Since this Direct Knowledge -- that is produced only by the Vedantic Sentences -- accrues only to qualified aspirants, both Shankara(Sutra Bhasya 1-1-1) and Sureswara(Naishkarmya Siddhi 1-52)give the details as well as the steps by which one can become

endowed with the necessary qualifications for Vedantic Knowledge.
(i.e.: Vedantic Knowledge does not arise in every Tom, Dick and Harry that happens to hear the Vedantic Sentence Tat Tvam Asi). Here follows a rough outline of the process:

- 1) Give up all desire prompted actions (Kamya Karmas).
- 2) Give up all prohibited actions (Pratisheda Karmas).
- 3) By performing your daily responsibilities (Nitya karmas) without longing after the fruits, and as worship to the Supreme, one acquires merit (Punya) which in turn destroys sin (papa).
- 4) By virtue of the above, purification of the mind takes place. (A PURE MIND IS NOT A PRAMANA, PURITY AND QUIETUDE ARE THE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE BUT NOT ITS 'MEANS')
- 5) By virtue of a pure mind one is able to clearly see exactly what is the nature of this Samsara. (TEMPORARY, AND FILLED WITH DEFECTS)
- 6) Thereafter Dispassion (Vairagya) and an one pointed and all consuming desire for Moksha arises.
- 7) From this he gives up all other activities (Sarva Karma Sanyasa) and devotes himself exclusively to Hearing (Sravana), Reflecting (Manana), and contemplating (Nidihhyasana), on the Vedantic Sentences.
- 8) From these last three means, Hearing, Reflecting and Contemplating (the Direct Means---Sakshat Sadhanas) the aspirant comes to Know the meaning of the Sentences like 'Tat Tvam Asi' and thus destroys his Ignorance, and gets established in his own True Self alone.

There is then no more Sadhana needed OR POSSIBLE to 'deepen ones Understanding' nor an Understanding needed OR POSSIBLE to 'deepen ones Sadhana'.

THERE IS NO MORE SADHANA!!!!!! NO MORE UNDERSTANDER
ONLY THE ATMAN

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

Date: Mon, 31 Dec 2001 02:58:35 -0000

From: "satyan_c" <satyan_c@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Sri Atmachaitanyaji,

Thanks for your detailed response. That does clarify a few things.

- > "By virtue of sentences such as TAT TVAM ASI (That Thou Art)
- > etc. Knowledge accrues. Then one realizes that neither Ignorance nor
- > its effect (the Universe) ever existed in the past, is not existing
- > now, and will not be existing in the future also." (Sam. Vartica. 183)

- > 8) From these last three means, Hearing, Reflecting and

- > Contemplating(the Direct Means---Sakshat Sadhanas) the aspirant comes
- > to Know the meaning of the Sentences like 'Tat Tvam Asi' and thus
- > destroys his Ignorance, and gets established in his own True Self
- > alone.

My understanding of the Nature of this Knowledge (obtained purely from contemplation on the scripture and no other pramana) when a Sadhaka attempts to understand the Mahavakya is:

(1) The scripture reveals clearly the Mithya nature of the 'Individual Entity' that the Sadhaka had taken himself to be all (so called) his (so called) life.

(2) The Sadhaka hence realizes with (a degree of) certainty that 'I am not the 'person' I have erroneously taken myself to be all my life.

(3) Having negated his current identity, now with the help of the Mahavakya, with Shraddha in it, The Sadhaka is 'convinced with (a degree of) certainty in the Intellect that 'I must be Bramhan because the scripture says so'

Here are a few questions:

A) Is this understanding of the 'Nature of Knowledge' correct or is it way off from what it is as Sankara/Sureshwara expound.

B) How does 'a degree of' certainty in (2/3) above change to 'absolute' certainty without any further Sadhana. Is it purely by 'more' and 'more' contemplation on the Mahavakya?

C) Does this understanding of the Mahavakya take place as a 'Vritti' in the intellect or does it also become 'Being Knowledge' immediately? Apparently you are referring to 'Being Knowledge', as you denied the need for any further understanding/seeking post the 'understanding' of the Mahavakya.

D) What is the process by which the understanding goes from the Vritti that 'I know I am not the Mithya Ego, Hence I could only be Bramhan because the scripture says so' to the wordless Being of 'I am undoubtedly Bramhan'.

If it is inconvenient to answer these questions one by one, I would appreciate it if you and other learned members could simply elaborate on the understanding of the Mahavakya in detail (with an eye on these questions, i.e understanding in the intellect as a vritti vs Being Knowledge etc) and hopefully my questions will be answered.

warmest regards,
--Satyan

Date: Mon, 31 Dec 2001 03:20:02 -0000

From: "srikrishna_ghadiyaram" <srikrishna_ghadiyaram@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Hari Om !!

We all appreciate that you enlisted your views more accurately this time.

It is well understood by all that some preparatory steps, or tuneup is required in our bosom to be able to realize our true nature.

At the time when I was in difficulty (probably right time), I heard the words of a teacher that I am not the Ego center, and God is within me. At this time I needed more understanding of what is being talked about. I read some books, listened to some lectures. I felt there was a prescription for happiness.

My quest brought me to enquire how can I reach that goal. Satsang, and reading brought some clarity to what is the goal. All processes said, Meditation is the only means, so I started on the journey. Ever since I am making adjustments in the world without and within.

I understand that at the time of cessation of the duality, I will know that "I am That".

I have not read "Nishkarma Siddi" yet. But, to know what I am, I do not need any external aids. That Knowledge is within me. I only need to reach out, and shed what I am not.

What you referred in point # 8 is what I (most others too) call Nirvikalpa Samadhi, whether you attribute a nomenclature to it or not. (Drig Drishya Viveka defines so).

contemplating (Nidihhyasana), on the Vedantic
> > Sentences.

Here again my meditation is not on Vedantic Sentences. I chose a method suitable for my temperamet which is also prescribed as other types of medation.

I was wondering if you would say (Nididhyasa)
Contemplation/Meditation is not necessary.

I am convinced beyond doubt that ---

Sravana does not mean reading or listening to Upanishads or Vartikas or Tikas from beginning to end. I would consider, an opportune moment wherein a blind, struggling, worldly man looking for a solution to

the riddle of life and its problems, is told "Tat Tvam Asi" from some source, is enough.

Beyond that one may spend his time reading more books or listening to more lectures, depending on how much preparation one needs.

Whether it be Patanjali Yoga or Bhakti or Karma or some other means, all of them bring the seeker to your point # 8, that single pointedness. A specific path may be more appealing based on one's temperament.

I along with all others appreciate your effort to convey us your views which helps us consolidate our own thoughts.

Om Namo Narayanaya !!

Srikrishna

Date: Sat, 05 Jan 2002 09:16:18 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Brian,

Let me attempt to clarify my position somewhat by addressing your 4 questions.

1) To begin with, your quotation from the Kena Upan. is somewhat mis-translated in that the Sanskrit words 'mimasmsyam eva' means "certainly to be deliberated on", or "certainly to be further analyzed", It has nothing to do with asking the disciple to restrain the activity of his mind and attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi, or for him to perform any activity whatsoever. The more accurate translation would run like this:

"(teacher) "If you think it (Brahman) is well known", then you have certainly known only the very little form it has as the human body and the very little form it has amongst the Gods. Therefore Brahman is still to be deliberated on by you" (disciple) "I think It (Brahman) is known." (Kena 2-1) see 'Eight Upanishads translated by Swami Gambirananda.

In the first section of the Kena Upanishad the question is asked, "Willed by who does the directed mind go towards its object?" The next eight verses state that it is Brahman that directs the mind, and that Brahman is beyond the senses, and that it has to be known as other than the 'known and the unknown'. And then goes on to say 'That which is not known by the mind, but that by which the mind itself is said to be known', Know that to be Brahman and not what people meditate on as an object."

Section two begins with a test from the teacher to see if the disciple has truly understood the traditional teaching of the Upanishad, or, has he reified Brahman into a 'Known Object' whereby he retains his own individual knowership. And the disciple replies that he has understood the teaching correctly and has not made Brahman into an object of meditation. Should you have any doubts about the correctness of this interpretation I encourage you to take the time to read Shukaras commentary on the sloka that you quoted as well as the whole context.(It shouldn't take more than ten minutes) I am confident that you will be convinced that there is no intention on the part of the Upanishad for the disciple to perform any activity or meditate on something, or attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

2) I can assure you that it is not 'my conjecture' that Patanjali believed in the reality of many Atmans, but rather, it is a recognized fact by everyone who is even slightly familiar with the different schools of Indian thought. Please allow me to present a small introduction to 'Indian Philosophy'101: There are six schools of Indian Philosophy that are considered 'Orthodox'(Astikas) in that they accepted the Veda as the Highest Authority,i.e.-Mimamsikas, Nyayikas, Vaisheshikas, Samkhyas, Yogis,and Advaita Vedantins.(And three schools that rejected the authority of the Vedas and were thus considered Heterodox(Nastikas)i,e Buddhist, Jain and Materialist.) Each of the Orthodox schools interpreted the Upanishads in their own distinctive manner, but only the Vedantins rejected the 'Truth of Duality' in every sense, and held that all that ever was, is, or will be is the eternally changeless Non-Dual Brahman.All the other schools upheld the 'truth of duality' in one way or another. Now the Dualistic schools of Kapilas' Samkhya Darshana and Patanjalis'Yoga Darshana basically share the same dualistic cosmology in which both agreed that the Selves(Purushas) were 'innumerable' in number, and each was 'real', and separate from each other, as well as different from Nature (Prakriti) which is also Real and Eternal. But unlike the plurality of Purushas, Prakriti is Unitary and made up of three Gunas.

The only significant difference between the Samkhyas and the Yogins was that the Yogins felt the need to add one more 'real principle into the mix:i.e, God, who is a Special Purusha, and who they felt was needed to explain the teleology found in Nature.This God(Isvara) is eternally different from all the other Purushas, in that He was never under the influence of Ignorance, while the other Purushas have been caught in the net of Ignorance from beginningless time.

The two most relevant Sutras with regard to this issue are as follows:

" Although ceasing to exist in relation to Him whose purpose is fulfilled. the Knowable(Prakriti) is not destroyed, because it is common to others." Sutra 2-23

Vyasa's commentary runs as follows:" Although having disappeared

(Prakriti) in relation to one Purusha, whose goal has been attained, it is not really destroyed, because it is common to other Purushas. (the Samkhya Sutra on this point is "Prakriti will always remain as it is now. It's total destruction is not possible")

Vacspati Mishra's famous commentary on this Aphorism is as follows:

"The plurality of Purusha and the Unitary nature of Prakriti has been referred to in this Sutra. "Purusha is not Unitary like Pradhana (Nature). The plurality of Purushas is established from the variety of individual selves, their birth and death, enjoyments of pleasure and pain, liberation and bondage".... "Since no spacio-temporal distinctions are applicable to the Seers, people argue that it is not proper to imagine that one Seer is present here and another Seer is at another place. But in reality the Sruti doesn't mention the Oneness of the Seer, but only refers to the Oneness of the Lord(Isvara)"

"Isvara is a special Purusha, unaffected by Afflictions, Deeds, Results of Actions or the Latent Impressions thereof." Sutra 1-24

Vyasa introduces this Sutra with a question " Now, who is this Isvara, who is different from the Purusha and Prakriti?" And explains the Sutra as follows:

"Afflictions like Ignorance etc. good or bad deed, and the results thereof as well as the impressions, though subsisting in the mind are imputed to the Purusha. That is why Purusha is said to be experiencing them.. The 'Special Purusha ,who, on account of his eternal Liberation, is unaffected by the touch of enjoyment or suffering, is called Isvara. There are many Purushas, and some have attained the state of Liberation, cutting asunder the threefold bondage. However, Isvara had no such bondage in the past nor will he have any in the future. Liberated Purushas are known to have had a previous state of bondage, but Isvara's case is not like that."

To quote a modern, well known textbook: "According to Samkhya and Yoga the 'life-monad called Purusha, is the living entity concealed behind and within all the metamorphoses of our life in bondage. The number of the 'life monads(Purushas) in the Universe is supposed to be infinite, and their 'proper nature'(svarupa) is regarded as totally different from the lifeless 'matter' (Prakriti) in which they are engulfed... Moreover, according to Samkhya-Yoga, Prakriti, composed of the three gunas, is an absolutely indissoluble principle; so that the world, together with its tangible creatures, is understood to be UTTERLY REAL. It is not a mere production of nescience(avidya), as it is according to the orthodox Vedanta view. Besides, the Life-Monads (Purushas) are real, They are separate entities distinct from matter, and they are innumerable. This idea too is contrary to the Vedanta teaching." Philosophies of India by Heinrich Zimmer, Pg.306

3)a: Yoga is 'the Union of Atman and Brahman' according to Advaita

Vedanta (or more accurately, the 'oneness' of Atman and Brahman), But as I have tried to explain this is not the view of Yoga Darshana.

3)b: When the 'Nirodha of Chitta Vritti' has occurred the Prakriti(not Maya, for yoga Darshana Prakriti is not Maya, it is real) 'disappears', but it is not destroyed, that is why it appears again after the 'Vritis' return.

4) The 'Seedless Samadhi' merely refers to that state which is free from even 'concentration(Dharana), meditation(Dhyana), and Samadhi with an object.. To quote Vyasa: "Those three practices which were mentioned before as 'inner practices and in fact are external, as far as 'Seedless Samadhi' is concerned. because Seedlessness is attained when these three are also absent."sutra 3-8 Bhasya.

In my next post I will try to clarify the reasons people feel that liberation must be the result of attaining some new state, and why everyone thinks that by merely understanding the meaning of the Upanishadic sentences, no direct experience of the Self could ever be produced. I will approach this topic from a completely different standpoint, which I hope you, (and others who share your views), will find more understandable.

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

Date: Sun, 06 Jan 2002 20:22:05 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Satyan,

Please excuse my tardy response: I will try to briefly answer your questions,(without too much explanation, or scriptural and commentarial quotations at this time).

A)This understanding of the 'Nature of Knowledge' (as you presented it in your 3 part exposition) is "WAY OFF" from that which is expounded by Sri Shankara and Sureswaracharya.

Part One is correct but incomplete. The Scripture not only reveals the 'mithya nature' of the individual entity,but more importantly it reveals the 'Oneness' of the 'individual entity'with the Absolute Brahman,and that Brahman is Non-Dual(i.e.: That in Truth there never was, is, or will be a second thing other than Brahman that is a) different from it.b) the same as it, c)And within it there are no distinctions).

Parts 2 and 3 are totally wrong. There is no question of 'degrees of certainty'.The most important point that must be appreciated here is that the 'Knower of Brahman IS Brahman (BRAHMAVID BRAHMA BHAVATI). FOR ONE WHO HAS UNDERSTOOD THE PURPORT OF THE UPANISHADIC TEACHING, THERE IS NO MORE 'SADHAKA,the threefold distinction of 'knower ,known and knowledge are gone for the Jnani ("But for him (the Jnani) when all has become the Self alone, then

what will he see and with what? What will he know and with what?"Bridharanyaka Up.).This text clearly says that for the wise man there is no more Duality. He has no convictions about the 'nature of Reality', he has no degrees of certainty, he has no Sradha in the Scriptures, there are no 'vrittis' that have to be converted into 'being knowledge' He is Brahman. In Vedanta 'Knowing means Being'. It doesn't mean 'I am a knower, before I didn't know Brahman, now I know Brahman', whereby the same Knowership remains, and now a new thing, which was not known before , is now known by me. Vedantic Knowledge means the complete absence of all Pramana,Prameya,Pramatru Vyvahara(all empirical dealings of being a knower, using the 'means of knowledge,and an object known).That is why it is called the ANTYAM PRAMANAM (THE FINAL MEANS OF KNOWLEDGE). Because,(unlike the other Pramans,whereby after they have revealed their objects,they continue to exist, and the 'knower' remains), the Vedantic Pramana, upon revealing its 'object', (Brahman),it ceases to be a Pramana,and the 'knower' also is gone.

B) Of course if you have understood what was said above, you can certainly understand the impossibility of one who has understood the 'Mahavakyas' being able 'to do more and more contemplation of the Mahavakyas, so as to change a "certain degree' of certainty into 'absolute certainty'.

c) The knowledge of Brahman has absolutely nothing to do with any 'vrittis'.The whole discussion of "Vritti Vyapti and Phala Vyapti" was introduced by Vedantic thinkers out side the Tradition of Shankara and Sureswara. You will not find one hint of it in all their writings! (This is a point that Swami Dayananda is confussed about, and should be ignored).

d)Therefore, there is no "process by which the understanding goes from the 'Vriti' to the Wordless Being." Vriti Jnana (Conceptual Knowledge), no matter how many times repeated,can never lead to the Direct Knowledge of the Self.

Dear Satyan I realize that the question still remains "how then can the mere understanding of a text bring about 'Direct Knowledge of Brahman? But my purpose here is only to disabuse you of false notions with regard to this subject and I will try explain more clearly how in fact the Vedanta Teachings are the ONLY means to Know Brahman in future posts.

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

--- In advaitin@y..., "satyan_c" <satyan_c@y...> wrote:

> Sri Atmachaitanyaji,

>

> Thanks for your detailed response. That does clarify a few things.

>

>> "By virtue of sentences such as TAT TVAM ASI (That Thou Art)

>> etc. Knowledge accrues. Then one realizes that neither Ignorance

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>> its effect(the Universe) ever existed in the past, is not existing
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> 'absolute' certainty without any further Sadhana. Is it purely by
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> C) Does this understanding of the Mahavakya take place as a 'Vritti'
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immediately?

> Apparently you are referring to 'Being Knowledge', as you denied the
> need for any further understanding/seeking post the 'understanding'
of

> the Mahavakya.
>
> D) What is the process by which the understanding goes from the
Vritti
> that 'I know I am not the Mithya Ego, Hence I could only be Bramhan
> because the scripture says so' to the wordless Being of 'I am
> undoubtedly Bramhan'.
>
> If it is inconvenient to answer these questions one by one, I would
> appreciate it if you and other learned members could simply
elaborate
> on the understanding of the Mahavakya in detail (with an eye on
these
> questions, i.e understanding in the intellect as a vritti vs Being
> Knowledge etc) and hopefully my questions will be answered.
>
> warmest regards,
> --Satyan

Date: Mon, 07 Jan 2002 05:30:19 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Brian,

With regard to your question, "BTW, do you know anyone who claims to have achieved enlightenment by only studying Vedanta?" My answer is no. It is not merely the study of Vedanta that results in enlightenment, but rather the understanding of the meaning of the Vedantic sentences that results in Enlightenment. And yes, I know at least three people who make this claim. Guadapada, Shankara and Sureswara.

1) Guadapada- "This Self is seen by those Munis devoted to the asertainment of the purort of the Vedas" Karika 2-35

2) Shankara "When by a most gracious teacher, who has himself realized the Truth that is the meaning of the Upanishadic sentences, he, the individual, is DIRECTLY AWAKENED THROUGH THE TEACHING: 'Thou art not a bundle of causes and effects, but 'THOU ART THAT' Then the individual realizes the bithless, Non Dual Turiya as his own Self," Karika Bhasya 1-16

3)Sureswara " OBJection by the Logicians: Ignorance is the false knowledge ,attaching itself fast,that the body senses, mind and intellect, which are not the Self , are the Self. From that arises the association of the Self with manifold evils. When this Ignorance is got rid of through rational discrimination itself,there is no matter to be conveyed by the Scriptual proposition, 'That thou art'. Therefore the glory of the proposition would lie merely in the discrimination of the Self and the Non-Self. In refutation of this objection the following is stated:

" This discriminative knowledge is apprehension of difference; but in the Witness there is no difference. Apprehension of difference is the effect of ignorance. The words of the Scripture set

it aside by focusing of the Self of the nature of Pure Consciousness...After discarding all that is Non-Self on the ground that it is subject to origin and cessation, the proposition 'That Thou Art' destroys in the Self its darkness... Let the words be properly taken and let their meanings be properly understood through rational discrimination and usage in the world. Then the final import of the proposition is rightly grasped...Now is pointed out that coming after the discrimination between the Self and the Non-Self, THE PROPOSITION ITSELF DESTROYS THE IGNORANCE AND BY THAT ESTABLISHES THE ASPIRANT AFTER LIBERATION IN THE SUPREME KINGDOM OF SELF-SOVERIGNTY."

.."That the mind etc. is not the Self can be ascertained by reason also. But they are not finally eliminated thereby.FOR EFFECTING THEIR ELIMINATION THE ONLY RECOURSE IS TO THE VEDANTIC PROPOSITION."...One who subsists on mere reason, does not only fail to achieve the disired goal but also land in evil. This is brought out now:

"The Buddhists disregarded the Sruti in delusion and were given to darkness as a consequence. They, being guided solely by reasoning, landed in the Unreality of the Self!"...

"In fact there is no ground for such disregard. In all cases where such a procedure is legitimate, the knowledge in question must be simply re-affirming what is ascertained through another source of knowledge, or it must be affirming what is contradicted by another source of knowledge, or it must be indeterminate in itself, or it must fail to convey any knowledge whatever. In the present case, none of these reasons hold good. therefore it is said:

"On what grounds can the Sruti, which reveals the Real Self, free from misery and inaccessible to any other sources of knowledge, be judged as not being a source of valid Knowledge?" (Naiskarmasiddhi 3-6, 3-31 to 35)

And yes, I will try to explain more clearly how in fact the Vedantic Teachings are the ONLY means to know Brahman in future posts.

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

- >> I will try explain more clearly how
- >> in fact the Vedanta Teachings are the ONLY means to Know Brahman in
- >> future posts.
- >>
- >> Hari Om
- >> Atmachaitanya
- >
- > If you can achieve this, then I, for one, will beat a path to your door.
- >
- > (BTW, do you know anyone that claims to have achieved enlightenment by only studying Vedanta?)
- >

> Regards
>
> Brian

Date: Mon, 7 Jan 2002 22:43:44 -0000
From: Brian Milnes <b.milnes@btinternet.com>
Subject: RE: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Atmachaitanya

Experiential knowledge is, in this as in everything, paramount to our development and understanding. Will your description of a glass of ice cold water quench the thirst of a dehydrated man?

" He who knows not the eternal syllable of the Veda, the highest point upon which all the Gods repose, what business has he with the Veda? Only its knowers sit here in peace and concord."
- Rig Veda I, 164, 39

The usefulness of Vedanta is that it is "needed to confirm the experience and establish it fully".

Did Christ, or Buddha become enlightened through study of the Upanishads?
Guadapada was probably a Buddhist himself [A History of Indian Philosophy Volume I, Chapter X, Surendranath Dasgupta]. (Try Christ - baptism accompanied by John the Baptist, Buddha - under the Banyan tree.)

Let me quote extensively from the iskon web site
(<http://www.iskcon.org/main/twohk/philo/roots/systems/vedanta.htm>)

Shankara and Buddhism

Sometimes Shankara's advaita Vedanta commentary is presented in books about Hinduism as if it is the original and only Vedanta philosophy. But a closer look at the advaita doctrine shows it to be in opposition to many of the fundamental tenets of the Vedanta-sutra. In his landmark work "The Brahmasutras and Their Principal Commentaries" the eminent Indian scholar B.N.K. Sharma chronicles how Shankara and his followers go so far as to "openly rebuff" Vyasadeva for his wording of the original text of the Vedanta-sutra. The advaitists are not shy about overturning the original sense of the text in order to push through their own impersonal philosophy. That Shankara's philosophy is more akin to Buddhism than Vedanta is widely acknowledged. A Japanese Buddhist professor of Sanskrit, Hajime Nakamura, has presented strong historical evidence that the ancient pre-Shankara Vedantists were purusa-vadins (purusa = "person", vadin = "philosopher"). Purusavadins understood the goal of Vedanta philosophy to be personal and termed God the mahapurusa (Greatest Person). Bhavya, an Indian Buddhist author who lived centuries before Shankara, wrote in the Madhyamika-hrdaya-karika that the Vedantists of his time were adherents of the doctrine of bhedabheda (simultaneous oneness and difference), which is personalistic. Another Indian Buddhist writer, Bhartrhari, who lived at the same time as Shankara, stated that although Shankara was a brahmana scholar of the

Vedas, his impersonal teachings resembled Buddhism. This is admitted by the followers of Shankara themselves. Professor Dr. Rajmani Tigunait of the Himalayan Institute of Yoga is a present-day exponent of advaita Vedanta; he writes that the ideas of the Buddhist sunyavada (voidist) philosophers are "very close" to Shankara's. Sunyavada is one of four important schools of Buddhism that developed in India before Shankara's time. The word sunya (void) refers to the impersonal emptiness that the Buddhists believe pervades all things. When one attains the Buddha-consciousness, the forms of the world fade away like dreams and only emptiness remains. In his Vedanta commentary, Shankara maintained the same idea of ultimate emptiness, substituting the Upanisadic word brahman (the Absolute) for sunya. Because Shankara argued that all names, forms, qualities, activities and relationships are maya (illusion), even divine names and forms, his philosophy is called mayavada (the doctrine of illusion).

But it is not that Shankara himself is utterly disrespected by the Vedantists of other sampradayas. Shankara's purpose was to revive an interest in Vedanta philosophy in an India that had largely rejected the Vedas in favor of Buddhism. This task he accomplished brilliantly, albeit by artificially incorporating Buddhist ideas into his commentary so as to make it acceptable to the intellectuals of his time. It became the task of later Vedantists in other sampradayas to rid Vedanta philosophy of the last vestiges of Buddhism. Though they attacked the mayavadi conception as non-Vedic, they owed Shankara a debt for having brought Vedanta to the forefront of Indian philosophical discussion.

Regards

Brian

Date: Tue, 08 Jan 2002 04:39:22 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Brian,

You ask "Did Christ or the Buddha become enlightened through the study of the Upanishads?", and my answer is no. They neither studied the Upanishads nor were they enlightened!

The Upanishadic teaching that Reality is Non Dual in the following threefold radical sense:

- 1) Other than that Non-Dual Reality, there is no other Reality that is the same as it (Na Sajati Beda).
- 2) Other than that Non-Dual Reality, there is no other Reality that is different from it (Na Vijati Beda).
- 3) Within that Non-Dual Reality, there are no distinctions whatsoever (Na Svagati Beda)

is the unique teaching of the Upanishads, the Asadarana Dharma. This was not taught by the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, or any other

theologian,mystic,or logician.It is found only in the Upanishads.

Now as far as your claims, or rather the claims of so-called 'scholars' like Nakamura, Das Gupta, B.N.K.Sharma, as well as 'followers of Shankara' like Dr Rajmani Tigunait, as well as Swami Baktivedantas', Iscon site,that:

- 1)Gaudapada was probably a Buddhist
- 2)Shankara was a hidden Buddhhist
- 3)Shankara was the founder of 'Impersonal Vedanta' and before him Vedanta was 'Personalistic'
- 4)Shankaras concept of Reality was the 'same as' or 'very close' to the Emptiness concept of the Buddhists

are very serious charges, and all those who claim to be Advaita Vedantins, and all those who claim to be follow Shankaras Tradition, shoud either provide a response to these charges or begin studying Nargarjuna and Chandrakirti, for they are the true representatives of Sunya Vada.

I await the rebuttle of these charges by the other learned members of this site, dedicated to a Discussion of 'Shankaras Advaita'. I might add that if these charges cant be refuted, then maybe we should forget about studying Shankaras Vivekachudamani, and join Brian at the Hare Rama,Hare Krishna web site,in as much as the Dualistic Vaishnava Acaryas would then become the 'true representatives' of the ancient Vedantic Tradition.

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

Date: Tue, 08 Jan 2002 08:09:11 -0000

From: "satyan_c" <satyan_c@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Sri Atmachaitanyaji,

First of all, let me thank you again for taking the time to respond. You made several profound points and I see that even the 'knowership' shouldn't remain. If the 'knowership' remains, then the Mahavakya has not been understood! I am reminded of a quotation by Swami Krishnananda here: "If That is everywhere, then you are nowhere!". Indeed, we do acknowledge that Bramhan is all pervading. If that is truly understood, then what room is there for me, a separate knower, apart from Bramhan? I thank you again for bringing this point out so well.

I will look forward to your postings on how "understanding can bring about direct knowledge".

I don't mean to stifle any discussion but regarding the speculations recently made about Sankara, Gaudapada etc, I am not sure if we need

to bring down the level of our discussions in this newsgroup to refuting such claims. I have heard similar issues raised before by the same not so well informed groups in the past and I would just refer the interested to study Swami Nikhilananda's (Ramakrishna Mission) Preface to the commentary on the Mandukya Upanisad and Gaudapada's Karikas. The Swami goes to great lengths to present the flaws in the analysis of these esteemed scholars including Prof Dasgupta. He concludes by saying: "The estimate of Gaudapada and his Karika as given by Prof. Das Gupta in his History of Indian Philosophy, does not indicate the high water-mark of unbiased judgement".

I hope that the moderators can compile a list of such rebuttals already published and available so that the interested can simply refer to them. In this manner, I am hoping that we can continue to focus our energies on more constructive dialogues.

warmest regards,
--Satyan

Date: Tue, 8 Jan 2002 10:33:39 +0100

From: "Madhava K. Turumella" <madhava@forsa.de>
Subject: AW: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

> -----Ursprungliche Nachricht-----

> Von: atmachaitanya108 [mailto:stadri@attglobal.net]

> Now as far as your claims, or rather the claims of so-called

> 'scholars' like Nakamura, Das Gupta, B.N.K.Sharma, as well as

> 'followers of Shankara' like Dr Rajmani Tigunait, as well as Swami

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> close' to the Emptiness concept of the Buddhists

>

> are very serious charges, and all those who claim to be Advaita

> Vedantins, and all those who claim to be follow Shankaras Tradition,

> shoud either provide a response to these charges or begin studying

> Nargarjuna and Chandrakirti, for they are the true representatives of

> Sunya Vada.

> I await the rebuttle of these charges by the other learned

> members of this site, dedicated to a Discussion of 'Shankaras

> Advaita'.

Yes I agree that those are very serious charges!

I am not a scholar but I agree that I have studied a bit by the grace of my teacher. Now I remember my own uncle (my father's own brother) who had

renounced his life for ISCON and came back again to this world, used to fiercely debate that all of us -- i.e. our family who follow Sri Adishankara with utmost faith --- are "mayaavadis". We used to have debates when I was 19 years old! When I say all that is there is Brahman --- he used to say "Still.... beyond all this consciousness there is my beautiful Krishna" :-)

It has created interest in me on why we are labelled as Mayavadis. Fortunately, my home town Guntur is literally 1 hour away from the place where the greatest Mayavada buddhism exponents Acharya Nagarjuna had once lived, where he did set up a great Buddhistic University! I had access to some books, so I had studied Nagarjuna's mayavada... and it is not, in what ever I understood from my study, what Sri Adishankara advocates!

1. Neither our guru Sri Shankara nor Gaudapada are Buddhists. I think it is a mistake which we are making by reading *too much* in-between the lines of their teachings. And such approach to study their teachings will yield no results. Those who are deluded will always see deluded meanings in wisemens words.

I can understand it... clearly! For example, I am born as a Hindu. I feel proud that I am allowed with free thinking in my religion. In our religion, we are taught to treat all beings and non-beings equally... And I have studied Islam with pure acadamic interest for 4 years, while living at the heart where Islam has started (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia). Can somebody lable me as a Muslim in coming history for my sympathy for the followers of that religion? My own parents, being orthodox brahmins, always celebrate Christmas saying that the world has been blessed with one of the greatest saints! Does that make the future historians label my parents as Christians?

We have to understand that the times when Sri Shankara lived, Buddhism is the most popular religion. Just like the English language.... If I write in English many people will understand... If I write in my mother tongue Telugu how many will be able to understand? So what Shankara did is the same. He tried to make those followers of Buddha understand in their own terms!

2. Sri Adishankara has clearly stated that Brahman alone is *real*. He did not say Brahman is also Maya! Saying that he replaced the word "sunya" for "Brahman" is like comparing apples with orranges! Brahman is not Sunya. If at all there was something in our Shankara's vision, that was pure sympathy towards Buddhists. That does not make him a hidden buddhist!

Hari Om.

Yours,
Madhava

Date: Tue, 8 Jan 2002 10:39:40 +0100

From: "Madhava K. Turumella" <madhava@forsa.de>

Subject: AW: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Sorry, please understand Mayavada buddhism as Sunyavada Buddhism. My thoughts always suggest me that Sunya is nothing but maya. So they have overlapped.

Date: Tue, 08 Jan 2002 18:06:51 -0000

From: "atmachaitanya108" <stadri@attglobal.net>

Subject: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Brian

When you say "I accept quite freely that "All is Brahman",..but it is 'preposterous' to say the Buddha was not enlightened", I respectfully submit that there is a fundamental misconception about the teachings of the Buddha, and the teachings of Advaita Vedanta.

In order to clarify my assertion, please allow me to present a brief introduction into 'Buddha Dharma 101':

The teachings of Lord Buddha were not written down until at least 150-200 years after his death. The first formulation of his doctrine was that of Hinayana Buddhism (which consisted of two subdivisions Sarvasti Vadins and Sautantrika) It was a realistic doctrine which rejected the reality of a true Self, but accepted the reality of 'Ultimate Existents'. In about 100 AD.Nargarguna rejected not only the reality of a true Self but also the reality of 'Ultimate Existents' and proclaimed the 'Emptiness' of all phenomena, both Self and Non-Self,ie; everything is 'Empty of Inherent Existence'. This was the begining of Mahayana Buddhism. In the fourth century Asanga and Vasubanda rejected Nargarjunas' Sunya Vada, and put forth the doctrine that everything is the Mind alone (Chittamatra). The Mind is continuous and momentary (Santani Kshnika Vijnana Vada). These are the three main schools of Buddhism that were existing at the time of Shankara.(I might add that in the 9th century a new school of Buddhism made it appearence known as 'Dzog Chen', which held that the Absolute reality was Pure Intrinsic Awareness, but unlike the Advaitins , they said that this Intrinsic awareness was "Dynamic", and its very nature was to be constantly changeing.)

Shankara has examined these three main schools of Buddhism and refuted them in his Sutra Bhasya. If you agree with his refutation then you are an 'Advaitin, "All is Brahman alone", and the Buddha,which ever school he actually upheld, was not an'enlightened' sage.

If you think that the Buddha did teach that "All is Brahman", or that any school of Buddhism, or any writer on Buddhism, held such a view, then I kindly ask you to provide me one shred of evidence

supporting that fact. No Buddhist ever put forth the view that your true Self is Brahman and that Brahman is the Non-Dual Reality. That teaching is only found in the Upanishads.(The Asadarna Dharma-The Unique teaching of Vedanta).

Hari Om
Atmachaitanya

Date: Wed, 9 Jan 2002 12:13:56 -0000

From: Brian Milnes <b.milnes@btinternet.com>

Subject: RE: Re: Vedanta Shastra Pramana

Dear Atmachaitanya

I bring Sri Ramana Maharshi to the debate:

The mind is a unique power (sakti) in the Atman, whereby thoughts occur to one. On scrutiny as to what remains after eliminating all thoughts, it will be found that there is no such thing as mind apart from thought. So then, thoughts themselves constitute the mind. // Just as the spider draws out the thread of the cobweb from within itself and withdraws it again into itself, in the same way the mind projects the world out of itself and absorbs it back into itself.

//

If in this manner the mind becomes absorbed in the Heart, the ego or 'I', which is the center of the multitude of thoughts, finally vanishes and pure Consciousness or Self, which subsists during all the states of the mind, alone remains resplendent. It is this state, where there is not the slightest trace of the 'I'-thought, that is the true Being of oneself.

//

All scriptures without any exception proclaim that for attaining Salvation the mind should be subdued; and once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim it is futile to make an interminable study of them. What is required for such control is actual enquiry into oneself by self-interrogation: 'Who am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made merely by means of a study of the scriptures?

One should realize the Self by the Eye of Wisdom. Does Rama need a mirror to recognize himself as Rama? That to which the 'I' refers is within the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, knowledge-experience, and bliss), whereas the scriptures are outside them. Therefore, it is futile to seek by means of the study of scriptures the Self that has to be realized by summarily rejecting even the five sheaths.

To enquire 'Who am I that is in bondage?' and to know one's real nature is alone Liberation. To keep the mind constantly turned within, and to abide thus in the Self is alone Atma-vichara (Self enquiry), whereas dhyana (meditation) consists in fervent contemplation of the Self as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Indeed, at some time, one will have to forget everything that has been learnt.

And of course I will highlight by repetition the following phrases:

"once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim it is futile to make an interminable study of [the scriptures]"

"'Who am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made merely by means of a study of the scriptures?"

"Therefore, it is futile to seek by means of the study of scriptures the Self that has to be realized..."

Regards

Brian

Date: Thu, 10 Jan 2002 13:16:34 -0000

From: "ramvchandran" <rchandran@cox.rr.com>

Subject: Re: Who is God?

Namaste:

Here is my understanding of Who is God?

God is Wisdom. Man with wisdom becomes the God. Wisdom is matured knowledge or ultimate knowledge! The seeker with this ultimate knowledge will realize that he/she has nothing to seek. When the seeker gets this wisdom, he/she reaches the state of Samadhi - the state with eternal peace and happiness or bliss.

The scriptures make clear distinctions between knowledge and wisdom. knowledge is 'apara vidya' and wisdom is 'para vidya.' The scriptures also state that the knowledge of scriptures fall into the category of 'apara vidya.' All those who are masters of the scriptures possess the theoretical knowledge of 'who is God?' but do not necessarily have the 'wisdom' to experience the God. The scriptures only present the road map and provide the guidance for attaining the 'wisdom.' But road map and guidance at the most can provide only the 'knowledge' but not the 'wisdom.' The transformation of 'knowledge' to 'wisdom' is mystic and happens internally without our efforts with His Grace. The scriptures also state that only with God's grace, we can transform the theoretical knowledge into wisdom. Only persons who is spiritually matured knows the formula of this transformation. This formula is not available in any books or tapes or home pages.

At the same time, it should be also pointed out that 'Wisdom is always present and our problem is the failure to recognize and exercise.' We have the lack of wisdom to understand the above fact.

With wisdom, we should be able to recognize that 'knowledge of the scriptures' is only 'apara vidya.' Unfortunately the 'wisdom of the scriptures' is well stated through unwritten pages and unspoken voices. Only with wisdom, 'apara vidya' has the potential to become 'para vidya.'

During our recent discussions on the thread, "Vedanta Shastra Pramana" most of us exposed our theoretical knowledge of the subject matter. Sometime, we exposed our theoretical knowledge unwisely exposing our stupidity. Had we exercised the wisdom (buried deep beneath our ego) we could have avoided confusion, conflicts, confrontations, insults and our dignity. But error is human and our discussions clearly expressed our weakness.

Hopefully, our wisdom will prevail and we should take time to contemplate and seek His Grace before posting our messages so that we feel happy and inject happiness to everyone around us. The Tamil Sage and Poet, Thiruvalluvar beautifully states the following: "No one

should speak (and or write) bitter and unpleasant words because plenty of pleasant words are always available in all dictionaries. Aren't we always choose to eat the ripened and sweet fruits and throw away the bitter and unripened ones?"

Warmest regards,

Ram Chandran

Date: Fri, 11 Jan 2002 21:01:15 -0000

From: Brian Milnes <b.milnes@btinternet.com>

Subject: RE: deep-sleep and samAdhi

I would like to make some observations about the questions in this thread.

1) There is a fundamental question over the value (or lack of it) associated with Samadhi.

In my experience and opinion, the attainment of (various levels) and then subsequent, permanently established states of samadhi are indications of spiritual growth and awareness.

The practice of meditation, referred to in various Upanishads, and as taught by Sri Ramana Maharshi (although he doesn't call it that), or by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, or by the teachers of Sahaj Marg, all induce refinement of the senses, quietening of the mind and an experience of transcendental (or bliss) consciousness, possibly at the level at which all thoughts become absent. (To which Patanjali refers in the earliest of his sutras, in a bija form of the later, expounded practices and states:

2. Yoga comes from transcending the processes of individual consciousness [ie. mind - chitta],

3. then is one absorbed in the essence of the inner witness.)

So Patanjali, Ramana Maharshi, Mahesh Yogi, most of the Upanishads and other teachers concur:

13. Steady effort in that (citta-vritti-nirodhah) is practice

14. which becomes firmly rooted by being correctly done, uninterrupted, over a long time.

So achievement of Samadhi is not a goal, but a consequence of good practice. Once one has had experience of this state, or has repeatedly practiced Self-enquiry, or quietening the mind, the truth of the Scriptures starts to shine through. The story of eating strawberries and vanilla ice cream on a warm summer's day comes really alive only to one who has had that same experience...

Reading the scriptures validates and puts into context one's experience (as will the guidance of a competent Guru), and for example, ensures that we do not become attached to the experience, which would, ironically, be contrary to likelihood of repeating it.

So to me, there is no contradiction, Upanishads (and the rest of the Veda, and many other Holy Scriptures, especially eg. Gospel of St. John) support the spiritual aspirant and are a source of Pramaana.

But, these are not the ONLY source. Patanjali points out:

1.7 PRATYAKSANUMANAGAMAH PRAMANANI

True understanding comes from direct experience, inference or reliable testimony.

So does Samadhi equate to a direct experience (of Atman) and therefore qualify as Pramaana? I think this depends on one's interpretation of Pramaana, and in this respect may be a blind alley in which to enter.

2. Are Samadhi and Nidraa equivalent?

No, and Sri Harsha covered this point in his last posting. Samadhi reveals Atman with awareness. There is no awareness in deep sleep.

3. Can Samadhi be induced by another?

Yes. The reason for mentioning Sahaj Marg (Natural Way) is that one of that teaching's fundamental propositions is "cleaning" (removal of samskaras) and pranahuti (transmission of grace) from the Guru via a preceptor. I can attest to the capability of this process to passively induce an experience of transcendental consciousness.

There are countless stories of Shaktipat being dispensed by Saints. But I have never heard of such dispensation establishing a permanent state of Samadhi.

4. Must one practice Yama and Niyama (are they pre-requisites)?

A fundamental flaw, I believe, is that the Ashtanga are sequential, or a serial process. Whereas my belief is that they are a more bounded system of "practices and effects". So practicing the asanas and pranyama will (as Sri Ramana points out) induce a physical quietening, which will in turn lead to mental subsidence, but meditation will also lead to these effects (and, using a proper system, far more directly than the former practices).

Once regularly practicing such meditation, yama and niyama follow, as does ahimsa. In the same way that performing the asanas and pranyama accentuate spiritual growth, so will attention to good living.

Jai Guru Dev

Brian

Date: Sat, 19 Jan 2002 06:26:38 -0000

From: "svenkat52" <venkat52@satyam.net.in>

Subject: To Atamachaitanyaji with love and reverence

The subject heading of this post should convey everything about the attitude with which I am addressing this mail to you; so I don't repeat it here. Sir, I have two questions and a request to make to you:

Question 1 : Sir, you concluded your Introduction (#msg 11977) with a statement that, 'I am merely a vedantic scholar, and make no claims to any spiritual realisation of my own'. Yet, sir, you have been arguing with great erudition backed by the authority of quotations from shankara Bhashyas, that 'Sabda' or the scriptures are the only 'Pramana' for the Self. I have come across not many in my life who are as knowledgeable about the scriptures as you. And yet you say you make no claims to self-realisation. If this statement is factual and not out of humility, then we have a paradox here. How do we resolve it?

Question 2 : Recently Gabriele quoted the following from Mundaka Upanishad -

Not through discourse , not through intellect,
Not even through study of the scriptures
Can the Self be realized . The Self reveals
Himself to the one who longs for the Self.

Those who long for the Self with all their heart
Are chosen by the Self as his own.

Mundaka Upanishad , part 3,2.3.

I am aware that scriptural texts cannot be interpreted in isolation and that there are well laid rules (like what is said in the beginning, what in the end, what is most often repeated and emphasised ... 6 such rules called, if I remember right, 'shadlingas'). In this light how would you interpret the above scriptural passage?

Date: Sat, 19 Jan 2002 13:21:56 -0000

From: Brian Milnes <b.milnes@btinternet.com>

Subject: Shastra pramana - the sole route to Moksha?

We see in a number of posts a clear distinction between those who state that Moksha can be attained exclusively by study of Vedanta, and those (of whom I am one) who state that such study is an important part of sadhana, but is only of value with "experience" of the absolute. (Classical vs. Modern Vedanta)

Atmachaitanya, a clearly learned scholar whose knowledge I respect and appreciate, takes the former stance, and has offered to provide irrefutable proof that this "Classical" view point is the only way to know Brahman:

"I will try explain more clearly how in fact the Vedanta Teachings are the ONLY means to Know Brahman in future posts" (I am still awaiting to see such irrefutability...)

Clarifying his position, he states: "It is not merely the study of Vedanta that results in enlightenment, but rather the understanding of the meaning of the Vedantic sentences that results in Enlightenment." He also points out that one also needs a "qualified" Guru: "The final awakening to Truth can only occur through the communication of the supreme Upanishadic texts by a qualified teacher to a qualified pupil."

Strangely, then, Atmachaitanya also states "I am merely a Vedantic scholar and make no claims to any 'Spiritual Realization'." So in 30 years of studying Vedanta, the ONLY route to Moksha, what value have his studies been in this regard?

By contrast, within a short time of having learnt TM in the mid-seventies, I had the privilege of some "direct experience" of the absolute, leading me to a understanding of the words of the Shastra because of such "experience". Since then the continuity and regularity of my practice has been poor, but, there have been moments of note. One that comes to mind was during an Ayur-Veda Panchakarma treatment (in a TM centre, by a TM practitioner). At one point, the massage, the masseur and myself became unseperable, indistinguishable. Having had that "experience" means that I not only have intellectual understanding of the teachings' reference to unity of 'knower, known and knowing', but I have directly witnessed it.

So, putting aside the semantics of phrases such as "direct experience", which can be misleading and, in this case refers to a lifting of the veil of Maya, bypassing ego so that we realize our true nature. Can anyone address the following questions:

- 1) Where does Krishna fit in to the Classical Advaita Vedanta view?
- 2) Who, in the litany of Saints, Avatars and others, in addition to Gaudapada, Shankara and Sureswara, have claimed or are accepted to have achieved Moksha?
- 3) In reference to this, what was the source and vehicle for the four Vedas?
- 4) Was Vyasa (aka Badarayana) liberated?
- 5) Who teaches Shankara's true teaching, where is it available in the world? How would we judge a teacher's qualification. (Or our own?)

One final and important point. I noted an objection to meditation as it is an "action", and therefore must have some result. This is a common misunderstanding of the process, and I would like to offer some elucidation.

Meditation is a process of sense refinement that leads to a withdrawal of the senses, a quietening of the physiology (breathing, heart rate etc.) and to a transcendence of the processes of the mind, revealing the true nature of Atman.

The initial object of meditation can be any of the five sense objects. If sound or sight are used the terms Mantra and Yantra are given to the object. There are many Bija mantras as well as AUM which are commonly used in sound meditation, but the importance is the process, not the value of the mantra.

Here's the difficult bit. To be effective, meditation has to be effortless (then it becomes actionless). It is a contradiction to try to be effortless. But we still have to give the mind some impetus - by starting to repeat the mantra (japa) we have to then let go, let the mind automate the "sounding" of the mantra, which then (sometimes) leads to a dissolution of all thoughts, leaving pure awareness alone.

This process could be described as:

Senses and Thoughts > Senses, Thoughts, and Mantra > less Senses, Thoughts and Mantra > few Senses, less Thoughts, Mantra > no Senses, few Thoughts, Mantra > no Senses, no Thoughts, just Mantra > nothing but Self awareness

In Ramana Maharshi's perspective, replace "Who am I?" with Mantra, and you have the same fundamental process.

In his and Maharshi Mahesh Yogi's teaching, if other thoughts arise, let them but then return to the Mantra (or the question "Who am I?").

It's that process that Patanjali describes. Through it's regular and repeated practice over a long period of time, liberation will occur.

It's available to anyone, anywhere, no qualifications needed.

Best regards

Brian

Date: Sat, 19 Jan 2002 16:39:22 -0000

From: "svenkat52" <venkat52@satyam.net.in>

Subject: Re: Shastra pramana - the sole route to Moksha?

--- In advaitin@y..., Brian Milnes <b.milnes@b...> wrote:

> In Ramana Maharshi's perspective, replace "Who am I?" with Mantra, and you have the same fundamental process.

>

> In his and Maharshi Mahesh Yogi's teaching, if other thoughts arise, let them but then return to the Mantra (or the question "Who am I?").

>

Namaste Brian,

In the first sentence above, I think you meant to say, 'In Ramana Maharshi's perspective, replace Mantra with "who am I?" and inadvertently typed the other way around. Or did I not understand you.

two more observations:

- I thought Ramana did not want "who am I?" to be repeated as a mantra. He only wanted the question to be asked once to get to the source of I.

- Also if thoughts intervened, he wanted us to get to the root of the thoughts by asking "to who is this thought occurring?".

My own experience is(and I am not an expert in this matter) Ramana's technique is fundamentally different from TM or the Mantra method you describe. Besides your own comments on my observations, I would also request Gabriele who is a list member and a Ramana devotee, to share his views on this subject. Ofcourse other members can also join in on this discussion. Regards,

Venkat

Date: Sat, 19 Jan 2002 17:54:42 -0000

From: Brian Milnes <b.milnes@btinternet.com>

Subject: RE: Re: Shastra pramana - the sole route to Moksha?

Venkat wrote:

| Namaste Brian,

|

| In the first sentence above, I think you meant to say, 'In Ramana Maharshi's perspective, replace Mantra with "who am I?" and inadvertently typed the other way around. Or did I not

| understand you.

Ooops! (You're right, of course!)

| two more observations:

|
| - I thought Ramana did not want "who am I?" to be repeated as a
| mantra. He only wanted the question to be asked once to get to the
| source of I.

Yes and no. For yes, see this quote, from "Who am I?", where you can see that he accepts repetition of a thought as a route to the Self:

"If one inquires whence the 'I'-thought in the body arises in the first instance, it will be found that it is from hrdayam (literally 'I am the Heart'), or the Heart. That is the source and stay of the mind. Or again, even if one merely continuously repeats to oneself inwardly 'I-I' with the entire mind fixed thereon, that also leads one to the same source."

But more normally we associate his "technique" as described shortly after the above quote:

"Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the 'I'-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry 'Who am I?' that the mind subsides. Moreover, the integral 'I'-thought, implicit in such enquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, gets itself destroyed or consumed, just as the stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed.

"Even when extraneous thoughts sprout up during such enquiry, do not seek to complete the rising thought, but instead, deeply enquire within, 'To who has this thought occurred?' No matter how many thoughts thus occur to you, if you would with acute vigilance enquire immediately as and when each individual thought arises to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to 'me'. If then you enquire 'Who am I?' the mind gets introverted and the rising thought also subsides. In this manner as you persevere more and more in the practice of Self-enquiry, the mind acquires increasing strength and power to abide in its Source."

So although you may see marked differences, I see striking similarities. The important thing is that by these methods, we are able to transcend the processes of mind, to reveal the source - the Self.

Many of the arguments that we see about Patanjali's sutras stems from those translations that translate nirodha as "suppression" or "restraint" - thus implying a wilful act. Whereas, what I hope to have shown is that nirodha has to be passive (Ramana's "mind subsiding").

regards

Brian

Date: Sun, 20 Jan 2002 00:28:22

From: "Kuntimaddi Sadananda" <k_sadananda@hotmail.com>

Subject: Shastra pramana and related topics

Here is my understanding on the related topics –

Why, where and when Shaastra is pramaaNa?

>From: Brian Milnes b.milnes@btinternet.com

>We see in a number of posts a clear distinction between those who state
>that Moksha can be attained exclusively by study of Vedanta, and those (of
>whom I am one) who state that such study is an important part of sadhana,
>but is only of value with "experience" of the absolute. (Classical vs.
>Modern Vedanta)

Why and where shaastra as pramaaNa – Role of a qualified guru – Experience versus knowledge – and others questions Brian raised.

Here is my understanding.

Shaastra as pramaaNa comes only because we cannot establish that the existent 'I' is the same as brahman – the total 'I' if one wants to call it. We do not need any shaastra to establish 'I' exists and 'I' is consciousness. That is I am sat and I am chit. No one in the right mind is looking of oneself or consider oneself as unconscious entity. What everybody is longing for is 'ananda' aspect. But what shaastra tries to point out is that what we are longing for we are already. If we are already then it does not make any sense why we are longing for that we already have or are. – Hence Vedanta points out the cause if 'ignorance' – As a human being with highly grown intellect, we are able to know 2/3 of ourselves – that is sat and chit aspect and we need to recognize we are puurNam or complete or unlimited and limitless is the state free from all limitations and hence true absolute 'ananda' that we are longing for – which is same as Brahman – that is infiniteness – anatama eva anandaH - for that shaastra is the pramaaNa. It tries to pointout that the I that we think is not the complete nature of I but it is the same as Brahman –

Hence Shankara declares – na yogena na saankhyena karamanna nona vidyayaa, brahmaastmaika bodhena mokshaH sidyati na anyathaa|| neither by yoga, nor by saankhya (or logical analysis) nor by action nor by studies one gains liberation or freedom from limitations – only by the knowledge of the identification of the oneself with the total self is the liberation. Notice even yoga is included in this.

Now a word about experience versus knowledge. I think I wrote about this some time ago – any way here is the gist.

Experience is not knowledge.

We experience Brahman all the time – but mistake it as either the world or myself (when I identify that this body is me or mind is me or intellect is me – etc.)

Knowledge can contradict experience

Knowledge can resolve contradictory experiences

Knowledge cannot be contradicted.

Knowledge of the absolute transcends the knowledge of the relative.

Self-knowledge involves not only knowing that I am sat and chit but I am Brahman as well which become knowledge of the absolute that transcends all knowledge – Hence Krishna declares – sarva bhuutastam aatmaanam sarvabhootani ca aatmani – one who sees one self in all and all in oneself. That is the nature of the self and that is the knowledge of the self – And that exactly what is pointed out by Shaastra.

Experince of any body cannot itself become a pramaaNa because it becomes subjective and no one other than oneself can confirm that the experience is out of the knowledge of the total.

Hence we cannot go by any sage – however great a sage may be as the authority unless his experience is supported by Shaastra – Hence shaastra becomes unquestionable authority or pramaaNaa in these matters. Hence even Krishna declares – R^ishibhiH bahudda giitam chadobhiH vividaiH pr^ithak – that what am revealing is not some thing new that I have invented but what the great R^ishes have sung in many ways in Veda-s(in upanishads).

About meditation: Meditation is not an action. It is not a verb but it is a noun. What mind does is contemplation – and there is difference. One cannot do (underline do) meditation. What one does is contemplation with the mind – that is the enquiry. – Who am I is an enquiry not a japa mantra.

Japa is – a single thought repeated again and again – part of the mind remains in the enquiry mood while part of the mind chants – what is what Bhagavaana Ramana as well as all other mahatmaas have emphasized – inquiry of the mind by the mind – dyaanena aatmanii pasyanti aatmaana aatmaanam – says Krishna – one sees oneself by oneself through oneself during dhyana – dhyana is contemplation at the thought or japa level (where kartaa is there) and meditation at the absolute level when kartaa realizes he is akartaa.

Now some questions Brian raised:

>. Can anyone address the following questions:

Again from my understanding:

>

>1) Where does Krishna fit in to the Classical Advaita Vedanta view?

Discussion of Avatara-s is provided by Shankara – One is borne not only due to ones vasana-s but due to samashhTi vasana-s – because other's vasana-s crystallizes Brahman to descend into a form that they can identify and take the help of. –Krishna says – I am born to uplift the good and to punish the vicked and to establish the righteousness. That is called avataara – descending down from the highest state but with complete knowledge. That is what Krishna is or was. Jesus also says I came to fulfill the scriptures.

>2) Who, in the litany of Saints, Avatars and others, in addition to

>Gaudapada, Shankara and Sureswara, have claimed or are accepted to have

>achieved Moksha?

There are many many – read the autobiography of a yogi – by pramahamsa yogananda – We have Ramakrishna-s, yoganandas- Vivekananda-s, Ramathirtha-s, Ramana maharshi-s, ammachi-s, various baba-s, Nisargadatta maharaj, etc, etc. examples are unlimited. It all boils down whom you are going to judge one is realized or not. Hence for that reason only we need an independent norm – that is why shaastra becomes unquestionable pramaaNaa in these matters. Vedanta is the pramaana only because it is where it is unequivally declared that the nature of the reality by four mahavaakya-s –

Praj-naanam brahma, tat tvam asi, ayam aatma brahma and aham brahma asmi.

>3) In reference to this, what was the source and vehicle for the four

>Vedas?

Veda-s are considered as apaurusheyam-s that is not authored by human – in fact this applies any knowledge – what the word Veda means – and Vedaanta – the ultimate knowledge has to be – it is revealed to the men of meditation and passed it by word of mouth and recorded and edited by vyaasa. Shaastra pramaaNaa involves a inherent faith in the shaastra that what it says it true and correct – that faith is called shradda and is considered as a required qualification for Brahman inquiry.

>4) Was Vyasa (aka Badarayana) liberated?

Yes – now the ball is in your court to prove that he was not!

>5) Who teaches Shankara's true teaching, where is it available in the

>world? How would we judge a teacher's qualification. (Or our own?)

You cannot judge anybody's qualifications leave alone the teacher – this is more so in the aadhyaatma vidya. Hence it is declared – manushyatvam, mumukshatvam, mahaapurusha saagatyam – the birth as a human being, desire for liberation and the right type of teacher who can help all these three are very difficult to get and one gets only due to the grace of God – it is a graceful way of saying that one has to earn by ones samskaara.

The rest is discussed in one form or the other.

Hari Om!
Sadananda

Date: Sun, 20 Jan 2002 03:12:54 -0000

From: "srikrishna_ghadiyaram" <srikrishna_ghadiyaram@yahoo.com>

Subject: Re: Shastra pramana and related topics

--- In advaitin@y..., "Kuntimaddi Sadananda" <k_sadananda@h...> wrote:

>

> Shaastra as pramaaN comes only because we cannot establish that the

> existent 'I' is the same as brahman – the total 'I' if one wants to call it.

> We do not need any shaastra to establish 'I' exists and 'I' is consciousness. That is I am sat and I am chit. No one in the right mind is

> looking of oneself or consider oneself as unconscious entity. What everybody is longing for is 'ananda' aspect.

This observation is not correct or complete: I know that 'I' exist 'NOW'. The SAT aspect refers to ETERNAL nature. That is what this present 'I' can not comprehend. This 'I' thinks it will DIE and so it suffers. At the same time this 'I' feels it is conscious of only a few things or this 'I' is knowledgeable of only a few things. It is not Omniscient. This 'I' has joys and bliss. But they are conditioned by objects and it is not dpermanent. So, it will be more apt to say that we are interested in realizing our own Sat-Chit-Ananda swarupa, not merely 'Ananda' aspect.

>But what shaastra tries to

> point out is that what we are longing for we are already. If we are already

> then it does not make any sense why we are longing for that we already have

> or are. – Hence Vedanta points out the cause if 'ignorance' – As a human

> being with highly grown intellect, we are able to know 2/3 of ourselves –

> that is sat and chit aspect and we need to recognize we are puurNam or

> complete or unlimited and limitless is the state free from all

limitations

> and hence true absolute 'ananda' that we are longing for – which is same as

> Brahman – that is infiniteness – anatama eva anandaH - for that shaastra is

> the pramaana.

Here again there is a mis-interpretation. There is nothing called knowing 2/3 of ourselves. Sat-Chit-Ananda are not three parts of Brahman. Brahman is 'Akhandakarasa' i.e devoid of parts. So, SAT is CHIT. CHIT is ANANDA. ANANDA is CHIT. Just like fire is red, bright and hot. It is one and the same. So, if one knows that one is SAT, it means that one knows the same to be CHIT and ANANDA. There are books explaining this in detail. I learnt it from Laghu Vasudeva Mananam.

>nor by action nor by studies one gains

> liberation or freedom from limitations – only by the knowledge of the

> identification of the oneself with the total self is the liberation. Notice

> even yoga is included in this.

> Now a word about experience versus knowledge.

Here is a contradiction. Just in the previous paragraph it is said that

> anatama eva anandaH - for that shaastra is

> the pramaana.

In this paragraph it is mentioned .

>only by the knowledge of the

> identification of the oneself with the total self is the

>liberation.

It is obvious that 'Aparoksha Anubhuthi' is the only means of 'Knowledge'. Sastra stands as a Pramaana, meaning that Sastra says authoritatively that "Aparoksha Anubhuthi" is the only way of Realization of the identity of 'Jiva' and 'Brahman'

>I think I wrote about this

> some time ago – any way here is the gist.

>

> Experience is not knowledge.

> We experience Brahman all the time – but mistake it as either the world or

> myself (when I identify that this body is me or mind is me or intellect is

> me – etc.)

- > Knowledge can contradict experience
- > Knowledge can resolve contradictory experiences
- > Knowledge cannot be contradicted.
- > Knowledge of the absolute transcends the knowledge of the relative.
- >

It is not correct to say that we experience 'Brahman' all the time. What we experience is the projection caused by 'Maya' or 'Avidya'. Brahman is Nirguna. This Jiva, Jagat, Isvara are superimpositions on the Brahman. So, we experience all these three.

It is incorrect to say > Experience is not knowledge.

But it is more accurate to say that what is experienced in all the three states is 'Knowledge Absolute'.

Also, 'Knowledge' can not contradict Experience. If it does so, it is not 'Knowledge Absolute'.

- > Experience of any body cannot itself become a pramaana because it becomes
 - > subjective and no one other than oneself can confirm that the experience is
 - > out of the knowledge of the total. Hence we cannot go by any sage – however
 - > great a sage may be as the authority unless his experience is supported by
 - > Shaastra – Hence shaastra becomes unquestionable authority or pramaana in
 - > these matters.

I believe this is incorrect. If Sastra says some thing which is against 'Realisation', it need not be accepted. Ofcourse, we are not making statements without following the complete course of 'Realisation' suggested by Sastra. Yes, only by its time tested prescription Sastra becomes a Authority or PramaNa, when ever doubts arise.

- >Hence even KrishNa declares – R^ishibhiH bahudda giitam
- > chadobhiH vividaiH pr^ithak – that what am revealing is not some thing new
- > that I have invented but what the great R^ishes have sung in many ways in
- > Veda-s(in upanishads).
- >

Here is a correction offered, it says 'Rishis have sung in many ways'. Rishis have sung of their own experiences.(Aparoksha Anubhuthi)

- > Now some questions Brian raised:

- >
- >>. Can anyone address the following questions:
- >
- > Again from my understanding:
- >>
- >>1) Where does Krishna fit in to the Classical Advaita Vedanta view?
- >
- > Discussion of Avatara-s is provided by Shankara – One is borne not only due
- > to ones vasana-s but due to samashhTi vasana-s – because other's vasana-s
- > crystallizes Brahman to descend into a form that they can identify and take
- > the help of. –Krishna says – I am born to uplift the good and to punish the
- > vicked and to establish the righteousness. That is called avataara –
- > descending down from the highest state but with complete knowledge. That is
- > what Krishna is or was. Jesus also says I came to fulfill the scriptures.
- >>2) Who, in the litany of Saints, Avatars and others, in addition to
- >>Gaudapada, Shankara and Sureswara, have claimed or are accepted to have
- >>achieved Moksha?
- > There are many many – read the autobiography of a yogi – by pramahansa
- > yogananda – We have Ramakrishna-s, yoganandas- Vivekananda-s,
- > Ramathirtha-s, Ramana maharshi-s, ammachi-s, various baba-s, Nisargadatta
- > maharaj, etc, etc. examples are unlimited. It all boils down whom you are
- > going to judge one is realized or not. Hence for that reason only we need
- > an independent norm – that is why shaastra becomes unquestionable pramaana
- > in these matters. Vedanta is the pramana only because it is where it is
- > unequivally declared that the nature of the reality by four mahavaakya-s –
- > Praj~naanam brahma, tat tvam asi, ayam aatma brahma and aham brahma asmi.
- >
- >>3) In reference to this, what was the source and vehicle for the four

>>Vedas?

>

> Veda-s are considered as apaurusheyam-s that is not authored by human – in

> fact this applies any knowledge – what the word Veda means – and Vedaanta –

> the ultimate knowledge has to be – it is revealed to the men of meditation

> and passed it by word of mouth and recorded and edited by vyaasa. Shaastra

> pramaaNa involves a inherent faith in the shaastra that what it says it true

> and correct – that faith is called shradda and is considered as a required

> qualification for Brahman inquiry.

>

This is called Apta Vakya or Sabda PramaNa, the word or a Apta (imprecise translation Well wisher, or Realised person, who will not mislead by selfish motive etc.)

Vedas were not recored and edited by Vyasa. Vyasa means one who Classified.

>>4) Was Vyasa (aka Badarayana) liberated?

>

> Yes – now the ball is in your court to prove that he was not!

>

It may be ignorant to think otherwise, without him we would have been in trouble without knowing how to get out of this misery of life.

>>5) Who teaches Shankara's true teaching, where is it available in the

>>world? How would we judge a teacher's qualification. (Or our own?)

>

> You cannot judge anybody's qualifications leave alone the teacher – this is

> more so in the aadhyaatma vidya. Hence it is declared – manushyatvam,

> mumukshatvam, mahaapurusha saagatyam – the birth as a human being, desire

> for liberation and the right type of teacher who can help all these three

> are very difficult to get and one gets only due to the grace of God – it is

> a graceful way of saying that one has to earn by ones samskaara.

All the teachers of Sankara Sampradaya practice Sankara's teachings. But, all such Practitioners can not be teachers. Vivekachoodamani says 'Srotriyam Brahmanishta' alone can be a teacher i.e who has listened to Sastra from a Guru and who by himself sits in Brahman.

Verse 33 & 34 say: "He who is well versed in the scriptures, sinless, unafflicted by desires, a full knower of the Supreme, who has retired into the Supreme, who is as calm as the fire that has burnt up his fuel, who is a boundless ocean of mercy that needs no cause for its expression and who is an intimate friend of those who have surrendered unto him.

Worshipping the Guru with deep devotion, when he is pleased with your surrender, humility and service, approach him and ask him to explain what you must know.

So, based on the following description it is not hard to identify a true Guru.

The trouble is to mistake any other robed Swami to be a Guru of 'THAT' imagination. I read some where that 'Sanyasi' does not mean one who 'Knows THAT'. Initially it is 'Sadhana Sanyasi'; and later it is 'Jnani Sanyasi'. We are not being Judgmental here, but following how to and whom to revere as a GURU based on Sankara's teachings. Ofcourse we will not insult others. But all of their actions will not be our inspiration of imitation.

Om Namo Narayanaya !!

Srikrishna