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Panchikaranam

A small treatise on Vedanta

By Sri Sankaracharya

AUM. . The VIRAT is said to be the sum total of all the quintuplicated five elements and their effects. This is called the gross body of the Atman (soul).

Waking is that state, where the senses give rise to the knowledge of objects. The Atman, which identifies Itself with both the waking state and the gross body, is known as the VISHVA

These three (the gross body, the waking state and the VISHVA) together are represented by the first letter 'A' in the syllable 'AUM'.

[Note: 'Quintuplicated': A particular process by which the five elementary constituents of the universe are said to be compounded with one another to form grosser entities that serve as units in the composition of the physical universe.]

2. The five unquintuplicated rudimentary elements and their effect, the subtle body, both together constitute what is called the HIRANYAGARBHA. The material subtle body has seventeen parts, viz. the five vital forces, the ten organs of perception and action, the mind and the intellect. This is said to be the subtle body of the Atman (soul).

3. When the sense-organs are quiescent or withdrawn, the knowledge arising out of impressions of the waking state and the imaginary objects there perceived, are together called the dream state. The TAIJASA is the Atman which identifies Itself with both the dream state and the subtle body. These three, i.e. &endash; the subtle body, the dream state and the TAIJASA &endash; are represented by the second letter 'U' in 'AUM'.

4. Bound up with reflection of Pure-consciousness, the Nescience, which hides the Atman and is the cause of both the gross and the subtle bodies, is called the 'AVYAAKRTA' or undifferentiated. This is the causal body of the Atman. This is neither existent nor non-existent, nor even both existent and non-

existent; neither different from, nor identical with, nor both different from and identical with, the Atman. This Nescience is neither composite, nor non-composite, nor both composite and non-composite, but removable by the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and the Atman alone.

When all thoughts cease and the determinative intellect, too, lapses into its causal condition, the state of deep-sleep appears. The personality appropriating these two, i.e., the causal-body and the deep-sleep state is described as 'PRAJNA'.

These three (the causal-body Nescience, the deep-sleep state and the PRAJNA) are symbolised by the last letter 'M' in 'AUM'.

Now, 'A' the waking-personality, should be resolved into 'U', the dream-personality, and the 'U' into 'M' i.e., the deep-sleep personality. Again, the 'M' should be reduced into 'AUM' and the 'AUM' into 'I'. I am, the Atman, the Witness of all, the absolute of the nature of Pure Consciousness; I am neither Nescience nor even its effect but I am Brahman alone, Eternally Pure, Ever Enlightened, Eternally Free and Existence Absolute. I am the Bliss Absolute, One without a second and the Innermost Consciousness.

Remaining in this state of absolute identification is what is called 'SAMADHI' or the Super-conscious state.

'Thou art That', 'I am Brahman', 'Consciousness-Bliss is Brahman', 'This Self is Brahman', etc. – all these Srutis, i.e., the Upanisadic sayings (known as Mahavakyas or the great dictum) are direct evidences to the identity of the Atman, the individual soul, and Brahman. This is what is called 'PANCHKARANAM' or quintuplication.

Here ends the small treatise named 'PANCHIKARANAM' by Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya.

TOP < To top of this page

The Five Great Elements

Further elaboration of

PANCHIKARANAM

By Sri Suresvaracharya

Sri Sankaracharya's worthy disciple

1. AUM is the essence of all the Vedas and reveals the highest Truth. The method of concentration of mind through that AUM is hereby being expounded for the sake of the aspirants after liberation.

2. The Supreme Brahman (Supreme Reality), eternally free and immutable, existed alone. That owing to the superimposed identity with its own Maya became, as it were, the seed of the universe as the unformed and the unnamed.

[Note: 'Maya': It is the power of Brahman transforming itself into the universe and is the cause of all illusions. Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas are the three constituent essence of Maya. It is neither real nor unreal and hence inexplicable. It cannot be proved by reasoning which itself a product of ignorance or Maya. And with the knowledge of the identity of Jiva (Individual soul) and Brahman Maya disappears just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed when right knowledge reveals that a rope was mistaken for a snake. The illusory idea of snake was superimposed upon the rope.

'Seed': Brahman, the Pure, Unalloyed Consciousness is neither the cause nor the effect of anything. Only when it is associated with Its own power, Maya, It (Saguna-Brahma) is said to be Ishvara, the cause of the universe.]

(How the unconditioned Brahman appears to be the cause of the universe has been depicted in the preceding verse. Now the process of gradual superimposition of the so-called creation on It is being demonstrated.)

3. From That originated Space (akasha), which is characterised by sound. From Space, Air, having the characteristic of touch, came into existence. Thence again Light, characterised by form was produced. From Light arose Water, of the nature of taste. From Water came out Earth with its distinctive quality of smell.

[Note: The grosser the element the more are the qualities in it. Quality exclusive to each element, and also those retained by the succeeding elements from the preceding ones are being described here in a concise way.]

4. 5. & 6.

Space (Akasha) has the quality of sound only. Air possesses the double qualities of sound and touch. Light or Fire is said to have the triple qualities, sound, touch and form. Water has got four qualities- sound, touch, form and taste, whereas Earth is endowed with five qualities, viz., sound, form, taste and smell. Out of all these subtle elements came into being the great, universal, all-pervading principle, called 'SUTRA'.

[Note: 'Sound only': The subtle, i.e. the rudimentary, uncompounded elements have got their own characteristic respective qualities of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell only.]

'SUTRA': The total vital force before manifestation, is the soul that pervades the universe like a thread passing through the beads of a garland. (The word 'sutra' means thread). It is also called 'PRANA' for having the power of activity. 'HIRANYAGARBHA' is its another name. The consciousness identifying itself with the aggregate of all subtle bodies is known as 'SUTRA' or 'HIRANYAGARBHA', whereas the consciousness associating itself with the individual subtle body is called 'TAIJASA'. In fact, the same principle viewed collectively and individually appears as the two.]

(Like the origin of the subtle bodies from the subtle elementary constituents, the creation of the gross elements and bodies through their quintuplication is now being described.)

7. Those subtle elements produced the gross ones, from which, again, the VIRAT- the Macrocosm or the objective totality- came into existence. The learned call the elements as gross only after their undergoing the process of quintuplication.

[Note: VIRAT or VAISHVANAR is the consciousness which identifies itself with all the gross bodies in the universe. The process of quintuplication is now being explained in the following three verses.]

1.

8. 9. & 10.

Each of the several elements, Earth etc., must be divided into two equal parts. One of these two parts should be further split into four equal parts. Now to one half of each element should be added one quarter of each of the other four halved elements towards the formation of one gross element. Thus

in Space (akasha) there will be five constituent parts. Half of it will be Space (akasha) and the other half will consist of the four parts contributed together by all the other four elements. Thus it is known in the case of the other four elements, like air, etc. This process is the fivefold combination according to the wise.

[Note: 'Fivefold etc.': i.e., quintuplication. The first originated five subtle un-compounded elements cannot produce the gross objects of the universe. They have to go through this fivefold combination in the above-mentioned proportion to do the same. So, according to this process, although every gross element has got some part of the other elements too, in it- still it retains its own name owing to the preponderance of its own part.]

(That the compounded elements go into the formation of the gross Universe is being stated here.)

11. .The gross elements are all compounded. These produce the VIRAT, i.e., the sum total of all the gross bodies. This is the gross body of the disembodied Atman (soul).

[Note: 'VIRAT': Here Virat means the aggregate of all the gross bodies. In fact, the Consciousness associated with those bodies is what the word 'Virat' or 'Vaishvanara' denotes. Because of its appearing as diverse in form It is called 'VIRAT'. Identifying Itself with all the individual souls It is known as 'VAISHVANARA'.]

(The whole creation which is a superimposition on the Atman (soul) is being shown in its threefold aspect.)

12. The one indivisible Brahman appears threefold through illusion and not in reality. These three forms are- 'the sphere of the gods', 'the sphere pertaining to the body', and 'the sphere of the elements'.

(That the respective gods associated with the particular senses set them in action is being stated here.)

13. The senses being stimulated by the respective gods give rise to the knowledge of objects. That knowledge coming through the apprehension of the external objects like sound etc. is called the waking state.

[Note: 'The senses':&endash; The organs of perception together with the organs of action.

'The respective gods': The Macrocosm (Brahmandam) is represented in miniature in the Microcosm (Pindandam). So the senses of knowledge and action do their work aided by the respective universal principles in the Macrocosm, called gods.]

(For the sake of clear understanding, the threefold division, mentioned previously, is being further illustrated in the following fifteen verses.)

14. The sense of hearing belongs to the body, whereas, what is heard, namely, sound, belongs to the sphere of the elements. And the quarters, in this connection, are said to be included in the sphere of gods.

[Note: 'The elements': (Adhibhuta) here means the objects of the respective sense. The sense-organs originate from the Sattwa quality of the subtle elements.

'And the quarters': i.e., the deities associated with them entered the ears in the form of the sense of hearing. (AitareyaUpanishad 2.4)]

15. The sense of touch, it is said, belongs to the body and what is touched, characterised by the sense of touch pertains to the sphere of elements. And the god of air is here the presiding deity.

[Note: 'God of air': Herbs and trees entered the skin in the form of the hairs (Aitareya Upanishad 1.4). Although cited in the Sruti (Scripture) as deities, herbs and trees are not known as such. So air, which dominates them, has been designated as the presiding deity here.]

16. The sense of vision belongs to the body. That which is seen, characterised by form, pertains to the sphere of elements and the Sun is the corresponding deity in the sphere of the gods.

[Note: 'The Sun': The Sun-god, in the form of the sense of seeing, entered the eyes. &endash; Aitareya Upanishad 2.4.]

17. The sense organ of taste belongs to the body and what is tasted by the tongue belongs to the sphere of elements. Varuna (water), the god, is the presiding deity in the tongue.

[Note: 'Varuna': Taste implies water which is dominated by the deity Varuna. That Varuna, too, is a deity, is evident from the Sruti (scripture) (Sham No Mitrah Sham Varunah) meaning May Mitra, the deity who owns Prana and Day; and Varuna, the deity who owns Apana and Night, bestow on us all happiness.- Taittiriya Upanishad 1.1.]

18. The sense organ of smell is said to be belonging to the body. That which is smelt, possessed of the nature of smell, belongs to the sphere of the elements, and the earth-god is here the presiding deity.

[Note: 'Earth-god': The sense organ of smell is derived from the earth. So the Earth-god has been said here to be the presiding deity. In the Sruti (Vaayuhu Praano Bhootvaa Naasike Praavishat) meaning Air, in the form of Prana, entered the nostril &endash; Aitareya Upanishad 2.4. Air has been described as the deity of the organ of smell, still air-god should be understood as subsidiary to the Earth-god.]

19. The organ of speech is said to be belonging to the body, whereas, that which is spoke, of the nature of sound, belong to the sphere of elements. The Fire-god is the presiding deity.

[Note: 'Fire-god': The Fire-god, in the form of the organ of speech, entered the mouth. Aitareya Upanishad 2.4.]

(Like the five organs of perception, the five organs of action too, which originate from the 'Rajas' quality of the subtle elements, have got their respective deities.)

20. The organ of hands, it is said, belongs to the body. That which is handled is in the sphere of elements and the god Indra is there the presiding deity.

[Note: 'Indra': "Indra is the god of my strength". "Strength is considered to be contained in the arms". Such sentences in the scriptures describe Indra as the deity of the hands.]

21. The organ of feet is said to be pertaining to the body, whereas that, which is, in this connection, the object or place gone to, belongs to the realm of elements. God Vishnu is the presiding deity thereof.

22. The excretory organ is in the sphere of the body. Excrescence is of the sphere of the elements. The god of death is the corresponding presiding deity.

23. The generative organ belongs to the body. The objective source of pleasure is the corresponding factor in the sphere of the elements. God Prajapati is the corresponding deity.

[Note: 'Prajapati': "Water in the form of seminal fluid entered the generative organ" (Aitareya Upanishad 2.4.). Water has been observed as the deity, still it is to be understood that by the word 'water' there, Prajapati, the god of reproduction has been hinted at.]

24. The mind is said to be in the realm of the body. Whatever is thought of, belongs to the world of elements. The moon-god is the presiding deity of the mind.

25. The determinative intellect (buddhi) is in the sphere of the body, whereas whatever is subject to determinative intellection belongs to the sphere of the elements, and in the sphere of gods, Brhaspati stands as the presiding deity.

[Note: 'Brhaspati: From Agamas (Tantras) (Brhaspatiriva Budhya) meaning May I become like Brhaspati in intellect.]

26. Likewise, the sense of ego is in the bodily plane and all that concerning which the sense of ego is exercised belongs to the world of elements. The god Rudra, is the presiding deity.

27. The contemplative faculty (chittam) is said to be in the bodily realm and that which is the object of reasoning belongs to the sphere of the elements. The 'Kshetrajna' or the witnessing Consciousness is the corresponding deity in the sphere of the gods.

28. Ignorance (Tamah), it is said, belongs to the bodily sphere, whereas the mutations happening therein are in the sphere of the elements. The supreme "God-head" is the presiding deity.

[Note: 'Ignorance': The causal body./ 'God-head': Ishvara, the cause of the world who controls Maya. For more explanation see Pages "Nature of Reality" and "Maya"]

29. Thus by 'waking state' is meant the knowledge of the respective objects resulting from the operation of senses, both external and internal, aided by their corresponding deities.

(The first letter 'A' of the syllable 'AUM' represents the gross body, the waking state and the Consciousness called 'VISHVA' associated with them. Now the word 'VISHVA', of the text is being explained here.)

30. That which identifies Itself with both the waking state and the body, which is the seat of the senses, is described as the VISHVA.

[Note: 'The body': In the waking state, Consciousness identifies Itself with the gross body and in doing so, It evidently identifies Itself with the subtle body, which is contained by the former one. This has been hinted at by saying that the gross body is the seat of the senses (i.e., of the subtle body. The causal body, ignorance, the basis of the subtle body, too, comes into the picture and is identified with himself by Vishva. So, as a matter of fact, Vishva identifies Itself with all the three bodies. (Sukshmashariramaparityajya Stoolsharirapraveshtavaat Vishvah) meaning Consciousness having entered, as it were, the gross body without giving up Its identification with the subtle body is called VISHVA.]

(Vedanta always strives to establish the identity of the individual and the Universal Soul.)

(Continued below)

TOP < To top of this page

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In the preceding verse VISHVA has been said to be one with the gross body, and in verse 11 it has been stated that the compounded elements go to form the VIRAT. That this is possible only in case where the two are identical, is being described now.

This VISHVA (the individual Consciousness identifying Itself with the waking state and the gross body) must be looked upon as identical with VIRAT (the Microcosmic Consciousness) so that duality may be sublated.

In the following seven verses (31-37) the subtle body of the Atman (soul) is being expounded.)

31 to 34.

The sense organs of perception are five, viz., the organs of hearing, touch, vision, smell and taste. The organs of action, too, are five, namely, that of speech, the hands, the feet, and the organs of excretion and generation.

There are four internal organs, namely, the mind, the intellect, the ego and the apparatus of contemplation. The mind is that which considers the pros and cons of a subject, and the intellect is that faculty which determines. Likewise, the principle of ego is said to be of the nature of the sense of ownership, and Chitta or memory is that factor which remembers.

[Note: 'Internal organs': The inner organ (ANTAHKARANA) is called Manas (Mind), Buddhi (Intellect), Chitta (faculty of contemplation and memory), and Ahmkara (Ego) owing to its different functions. Manas (mind) when it cannot determine an object (doubting). Buddhi (intellect) when it is assured of the nature of the object (determines). The Chitta (memory) when it remembers. Ahmkara (ego) when it identifies with itself with the body as its own Self.

From Viveka Chudamani of Sankaracharya: verses 93/94: The inner organ (Antahkarana) is called Manas, Buddhi, Ahmkara or Chitta, according to their respective functions. Manas from its considering the pros and cons of a thing; Buddhi, from its property of determining the truth of objects. The Ahmkara (ego), from its identification with this body as one's own self. Chitta, from its function of remembering things it is interested in.

'Pros and cons': When a person cannot determine whether an object is this or that, and whether or not to perform a particular action, Manas or the mind is then said to be functioning .]

35. & 36.

The PRANA, APANA, VYANA, UDANA and SAMANA- all these are called the five vital forces. The subtle elements are also five in number, viz., space, air, fire, water and earth. All these five groups together with Nescience (ignorance of our real nature), Desire, and Action (also called or described as eight 'cities') go to form the LINGA body. This is the illusory subtle body of the innermost Self or Atman.

[Note: 'Prana': From Viveka Chudamani of Sri Sankaracharya: Verse 95: "One and the same Prana (vital force) becomes Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana according to their diversity of functions and modifications, like gold, water, etc." (Just as the same gold is fashioned into various ornaments, and as water takes the form of foam, waves etc.)].

'Prana': The same Prana, the vital force, is called the Prana while inhaling and exhaling; the Apana while excreting; Vyana while it pervades the entire body; Udana when it helps passing out from the body Samana when it assimilates food and drink. Prana is said to be seated at the tip of the nose, being directly felt there, Apana in the excretory organ, Vyana in the entire body, Udana in the throat (generally the subtle body passes out through this exit), and Samana in the middle part of the body.

'Nescience': Ignorance of our real nature as the blissful Self. This ignorance leads to desire, which pushes one into action, the cause of countless sufferings.

'The eight cities': 1. The five organs of perception. 2.The five organs of action. 3.The five vital forces. 4.The five subtle rudimentary elements. 5. The inner organ consisting of the mind, intellect, etc (Antahkarana), 6. Nescience (ignorance), 7.desire and 8.Action.

'Linga body': The subtle body. The word 'subtle body' may, in ordinary parlance, mean something like a spirit or ghost, so in Vedanta, 'Linga' body is a better term. It is formed out of the eight aforesaid constituents.

'Illusory': This indicates that this body is not real.

'Subtle body': Made up of the eight cities (see Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 2.3.5.6.)]

(The workings of the subtle body are being elaborated further in verses 37-38.)

37. & 38.

Dream is the state conditioned by the inactivity of the senses, the potency of the impressions of waking state and the functioning of consciousness in the role of both the subject and object. The ego, which has the sense of ownership in relation to both (the dream state and the subtle body), is called TAIJASA.

(The wise one should look upon this TAIJASA as identified with HIRANYAGARBHA, the subtle objective totality.)

(Thus explaining the subtle body, the dream state and the consciousness associated with them &endash; all these together representing the letter 'U'- the author now proceeds to show the causal body, the state through which it is endowed with experiences, and the consciousness combined with both, in order to explain the last letter 'M' of AUM. Verses 39-40.)

39. & 40.

Bound up with the reflection of Pure Consciousness, the Nescience of the Atman (soul), the cause of the gross and subtle bodies constitutes the Unmanifested, also called Undifferentiated (i.e., un-named and unformed). This is neither existent nor non-existent nor both existent and non-existent. It is neither different from, nor identical with the Atman.

[Note: 'Nescience': Maya, Avidya, Ajnana, Avyakta, Avyakrita, Nescience, Prakrti- these terms are often synonymously used.]

41. It (this Nescience), is neither made up of parts, nor is it non-composite, nor even both composite and non-composite. By virtue of its being unreal, it is liable to elimination by the comprehension of the identity of Brahman and Atman.

[Note: 'Unreal': Because it is wrongly imputed to the Atman (soul). All wrong imputations (Adhyaropa or superimposition) vanish at the dawn of the

knowledge of the real nature of the thing. As when in the dark, a rope is mistaken for a snake. The idea of a snake being superimposed upon the rope. The illusory idea of the snake vanishes the moment the true identity of the rope is realised. When the rope is known to be distinct from the snake (in a rope-snake superimposition), the snake then is said to be unreal. It is then neither in the rope nor elsewhere. The rope does not actually change into a snake, but only appears to be a snake, an illusion caused by ignorance.

This is called the VIVARTA-VADA theory, the only pivot on which the structure of the ADVAITA VEDANTA philosophy stands. As a snake is the VIVARTA of a rope, so is the universe the VIVARTA of Brahman (the Supreme Reality). This illusion, consisting of only name and form, can be removed only by the knowledge of Brahman. The removal of the illusion is called APAVADA. Appearing as something else is called VIVARTA.]

(After expounding the nature of the causal body, the state of deep-sleep, associated with it is now being explained.)

42. On the analogy of the Banyan tree in the seed, when all thoughts vanish and when the determinative intellect merges into its causal condition, the state of deep-sleep dawns.

[Note: 'All thoughts vanish...': All thoughts vanish in the state of final liberation, and sometimes in the waking state, too, when the mind is free of all ideas, but that cannot be said to be the deep-sleep state. The mind etc., gets merged in the causal condition, i.e., ignorance, at the time of (or during the state of) deep-sleep, from which again, everything springs up during the waking and dream states.]

(Continued below)

TOP < To top of this page

(Continued)

43. The personality which appropriates these two (the deep-sleep state and the causal body) is described as PRAJNA. One should look upon this PRAJNA as one identical with the Great Cause of the universe, ISHVARA.

[Note: 'Prajna': Consciousness in a state of deep-sleep is termed Prajna. In the waking state the Self is called Vishva, in the dream state Taijasa. In deep-sleep, though the Prajna remains unified with Brahman (the Supreme Reality), owing to its being covered with ignorance, its knowledge is limited. TURIYA is beyond these three states, where the Soul, divested of all ignorance, becomes fully aware of its perpetual identity with Brahman.]

'Identical with the Great Cause of the universe': The knowledge of identity of the individual soul with the universal one is the only thing that Vedanta aims at.]

(That all these manifold divisions like Vishva, Taijasa, etc., being of illusory nature, do not actually mar the non-duality of the Absolute Self is being described now.)

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44. The Ultimate Reality which is of the nature of Pure Consciousness, though one, appears, through illusion as the multitude of Vishva, Taijasa, Prajna, Virat, Sutra (Hiranyagarbha) and Akshara forms.

[Note; 'Multitude': Duality appears only owing to the illusory limiting adjuncts.]

'Akshara': i.e. Ishvara, the Consciousness associated with the collective causal body.]

(In reality truth is only One and That, through illusion, appears as many. The way to attain this knowledge through the process of Apavada, i.e., sublation, is being shown now.)

45. The three forms, Vishva, Taijasa and Prajna, must be contemplated as identical with Virat, Sutratma and Akshara respectively, so that the non-existence of the difference of those entities may be established.

[Note: 'Apavada': It is the negation of the illusory super-imposition, consisting of only name and form, and the consequent discovery of Brahman, the underlying Reality.

'non-existence': The three individual forms of consciousness, after sublation, become identical with the three collective forms of Consciousness, and so only the latter three remain in place of six. How these three also are progressively reduced into One Pure Consciousness will be shown later.]

(Here the identity of words and their meanings are being shown so that by way of sublating the above three as described in the preceding verse, the words, too, will get merged in Pure Consciousness simultaneously.)

46. 'AUM' is the entire universe constituted by the three selves, Vishva, Taijasa and Prajna. This is so because there is no ultimate difference between the name and the named (entity) and also because the two are never cognized in mutual separation.

[Note: 'Entire universe': A = Vishva + individual gross body + waking state.

U = Taijasa + individual subtle body + dream state

M = Prajna + individual causal body + deep-sleep state

'Name and named': as leaves are covered by arteries, so all names are pervaded by AUM (Chandogya Upanishad 2.23.3). The modification being only a name arising from speech. (Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.4).

(The identity of AUM in general with the whole universe has been spoken of. Now the parts (A, U, M) are being shown as one with their respective meanings.)

(Continued below)

TOP < To top of this page

(Continued)

47. The constituent letter 'A' is Vishva and the letter 'U' is to be considered as Taijasa, while the last letter 'M' is one with Prajna. Thus the identity of these constituent parts of 'AUM' and the three selves must be comprehended in the proper order.

(So far contemplation preparatory to Samadhi (a state of absorption with the Ultimate Truth) has been described. Now the process which immediately leads to that state is being narrated.)

48. Even prior to the time of Samadhi contemplating on this Truth with great care, one should resolve all these progressively in the order of gross, subtle and causal states into the Supreme Atman (soul), which is of the nature of Pure Knowledge.

Note: 'Samadhi': The state of complete absorption in the Absolute and non-dual Brahman (Supreme Reality), arrived at as a result of discrimination and deep contemplation with the help of 'AUM' as stated here.

'With great care': Because such contemplation can be done by one with unswerving perseverance, patience, faith and renunciation only.

(How these are to be progressively merged into the Pure Consciousness, is being shown here.)

49. The waking personality of Vishva, symbolised by 'A' must be resolved into 'U' (i.e., the dream personality). The subtle radiant personality of dream, the Taijasa, symbolised by 'U' must be merged into 'M' (i.e., the personality of deep-sleep). Again, the Prajna, that deep-sleep Consciousness symbolised by 'M' and which is the causal personality, must be finally reduced to the Atman, of the nature of Pure Consciousness.

[Note: 'Finally reduced': This sort of meditation is called Laya Upasana or Ahamgraha Upasana- meditation with the help of the sacred AUM.]

(It has been said how the whole universe has to be reduced to the Supreme Atman (Soul) which is of the nature of Pure Consciousness. Now by way of showing the process of attaining the 'SAMPRAJNATA SAMADHI', the essential characteristics of the Atman are being presented here. Verses 50-51)

50. & 51.

I am the Atman, the Pure Consciousness, eternally pure and Intelligence Absolute, ever free and One without a second. I am the Bliss Infinite. I am Vasudeva, the all-pervading Supreme Spirit and I am 'AUM'. Thus comprehending, the contemplative faculty must also be merged into that Witness, the Absolute Atman.

[Note: 'Bliss Infinite': All enjoyments culminate in Brahman which is of the nature of Supreme Bliss. (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 4.3.32). The Avyakta or the

Aksharatma is, as it were, a part of Brahman through the limiting adjunct ignorance; the Sutratma or the cosmic mind is again a part of that Avyakta, and the Virat, i.e., the Cosmic Soul identified with the gross universe is considered to be a fraction of the Sutratma. Even the bliss of the Virat-hood is something beyond the comprehension of the finite minds of ours. So Brahman is Bliss Infinite.

'Vasudeva': From Vishnu Purana: "As He (the Supreme Spirit) evenly pervades everything, so the wise ones call Him Vasudeva".

'The comprehending': Here the process of attaining ASAMPRAJNYAAT SAMADHI or Nirvikalpa Samadhi is being described. This comprehending- i.e., after practising the Savikalpa Samadhi for long. Savikalpa Samadhi is that state where the mind assumes the form of Brahman (Supreme Spirit) and rests on it with the distinction between the subject and object still persisting. When with the deepening of that state the duality of subject and object vanishes altogether, and the aspirant becomes one with Brahman, the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is said to have been achieved. So the former kind of Samadhi culminates into this.

'Contemplative faculty': The faculty involving the threefold divisions of meditation, meditator and the meditated.

'Witness': Because it directly illumines everything superimposed on it without the mediacy of any modification of the mind – it is called the Witness.

(The state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is being narrated now)

52. When the contemplative mind is merged into the Atman (Soul), the Pure Consciousness, then it should not be disturbed. One should then remain as that Infinite Consciousness like the full and motionless ocean.

[Note: 'One should then remain': From Mandukya Karika 3.44.: Shamapraaptam Na Chaalayet etc. When the mind, free from all obstacles, is controlled, do not distract it any more. Do not linger on the bliss that comes from the Savikalpa Samadhi but be unattached through discrimination.]

(Constant practice of this Samadhi gradually culminates in realisation.)

53. Thus attaining perfect absorption through constant practice, an aspirant, endowed with faith and devotion, and having overcome the senses and anger, perceives (realises) the Atman; the One without a second.

[Note: 'Endowed with faith and devotion': These virtues have to be constantly and most reverentially practised for long till realisation dawns. From Yoga Sutra 1.14: "Sa Tu Deerghakala Nairantarya Satkaarsevito Drdhabhoomihi-meaning : Firmness of the ground is achieved through long and constant practice with love.]

(It may be argued that such constant practice is not possible in the presence of mundane duties. In reply it is being brought to our notice that renunciation of, or aversion to, all perishable objects, the most important pre-requisite for an aspirant, has to be developed firmly right through the period of that practice.)

54. This empirical world, as a whole, is of the nature of sorrow in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. Therefore, after renouncing everything an aspirant should steadfastly be establish in Truth.

[Note: 'Nature of sorrow': From Gita 13.8. : Reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain- all these produce sorrows. Indifference to sense objects is born of this reflection and gradually one turns towards the Atman for attaining freedom from all sorrows.

'In the beginning': From Panchadasi 7.139 Wealth is hard to acquire. Its protection entails lots of worries. When lost or spent, it becomes the cause of untold sorrows. Fie on such wealth! Panchdasi 7.140.141: In this way everything has to be discriminated.

'After renouncing': From Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12. : Not by rituals, not by progeny or wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality has to be achieved. / Arriving at the conclusion through reasoning that the worlds, acquired by rituals, are impermanent, a Brahmin (an aspirant) in a spirit of dispassion, renounces everything, knowing those rituals full well as not conducive to the attainment of Brahman (Supreme Spirit). For the Knowledge of Brahman the aspirant must go with wood-fuel in his hand (or some flowers etc. as offerings, in a spirit of service and humility) to the teacher (Guru) who is endowed with Vedic learning and thoroughly merged in Brahman. (This knowledge does not come without being taught by a teacher.)

(Perfect satiety is the due outcome of realisation.)

55. For him, who sees the all-pervading Atman, of the nature of supreme peace and bliss and the sole reality, there remains nothing more to be attained and nothing more to be known.

[Note: 'Nothing more to be attained': All enjoyments or joys being included in the Bliss of Brahman, nothing more achievable is left behind. So a man of Knowledge is free from all duties, and he is no longer bound by any injunctions.

'Nothing more to be known': Because by knowing Him everything becomes known. Brahman alone, and nothing else, really exists. So when Brahman is known, nothing more remains to be known.]

(The state of perfection (where nothing more remains to be achieved or known) is further elucidated.)

56. A wise one attains the acme of life having nothing more to be achieved, and thus becomes eternally free although still living. With the whole of his mind and heart thoroughly filled with the Atman, he does not perceive this world.

[Note: 'Eternally free': During the time of Samadhi as well as when he is busy with outward activities.

'Still living': This is called Jivanmukti. When the knowledge of the Self-Brahman is attained, one is said to be liberated. But the body has to work out its pre-destined term of existence due to Prarabdha. So till the Prarabdha is exhausted through experience, such a man is called liberated while still living (Jivanmukta). After the fall of the body, the same is said to be Videhamukta (i.e., one who has attained disembodied or absolute freedom).

Prarabdha : There are three kinds of actions.

1. Sanchita-i.e., those accumulated in previous countless births (lives).

2. Agami ‐ Those that have yet to come i.e.those that are done in this life after the attainment of knowledge.

3. Prarabdha. Part of the accumulated results of the past actions (i.e., Sanchita) which has started bearing fruit by giving birth to the present body is called Prarabdha. The knowledge of Brahman destroys all the results of the past accumulated actions (Sanchita) and makes impotent those that are done after attainment of Knowledge (Agami), for, the realised man is not at all touched by them. But the Prarabdha persists and runs its own course by producing various experiences till death. This is the state of Jivanmukti. When the Prarabdha exhausts itself, the body of the liberated man falls and he attains the state of Videha-mukti i.e., disembodied or Absolute liberation. (Brahma sutras 4.1.13.19)

'Does not perceive': Although he may perceive the appearance of the world comprising name and form, still that has no reality for him and he is always fully conscious of Supreme Atman, for him and he is always fully conscious of Supreme Atman, his real nature, the substratum of all illusory imputations.]

(That an emancipated soul is always free even while engaged in worldly activities is now being explained.)

57. Sometimes even when he perceives duality in the ordinary course of life, he does not really perceive it as different from the Ever-Conscious Atman, for Consciousness runs in and through all.

[Note: 'Sometimes': When not in the state of Samadhi. An ignorant man always sees duality as real and is attached to it. To a man of knowledge, the world of name and form appears, no doubt, but that has no reality for him and he is also not lured by it.

'Does not really perceive it': Because whatever he perceives is just a false appearance. This false appearance of name and form is due to Prarabdha which has got to be exhausted through experience.

A man of knowledge does only what is good and beneficial for mankind. Although not bound by any law, the good habits, which he practised for long till the attainment of knowledge, persist, and he never transgresses the time honoured customs and the sanctions of the scriptures. Sri Sureshvaracharya says in his immortal book 'Naishkarmya-Siddhihi' : "If a man who has realised the non-dual Truth, goes out of bounds, then as regards consuming impure and forbidden things, what makes the difference between him and a dog?" 4-62.

"All qualities like non-violence etc., (Gita Ch.12, Shlokas 13 to20), attend a man of realisation automatically and they have not to be practiced with effort." 4-69.

Gita Ch.12/ 13 to 20 :

13. He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving.

14. Ever content, steady in meditation, possessed of firm conviction, self-controlled, with the mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

15. He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, and who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety- he is dear to Me.

16. He who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, and untroubled, renouncing all undertakings or commencements- he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

17. He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, and who is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

18. He who is the same to foe and friend, and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment. (Honour and dishonour indicates at the level of the intellect; cold and heat indicates at the physical level; pleasure and pain indicates at the level of the mind or the emotional sphere of the mind)

19. He to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, of a steady mind, and full of devotion – that man is dear to Me.

20. They verily who follow this immortal Dharma (doctrine or law) as described above, endowed with faith, regarding Me as their supreme goal, they, the devotees, are exceedingly dear to Me.

(It has been said that wise one never accepts duality as anything real. Now his angle of vision is being explained further.)

Moreover, a man of perfection perceives the world of duality as unreal even as one may see two moons and mistake directions though fully knowing the correct stand all the time. The illusion of his body lingers away to the liquidation of his Prarabdha.

[Note: 'Two moons': Like wise the One Brahman (Supreme Reality) appears as many due to various limiting adjuncts arising out of ignorance.

'Mistake directions': The Supreme Atman, similarly, is mistaken as the universe.

'Lingers away': Because false appearance cannot in any way contradict Knowledge and liberation.]

(What has been said in the previous verse is now being corroborated with the authority of the scriptures.)

59. The Upanishad says, "As long as the Prarabdha lasts" etc. The persistence of the Prarabdha in the case of the liberated one sustains only the appearance of the body etc., with no deluding potency.

[Note: 'As long as': Ignorance (Maya) is said to have two powers viz., the veiling power (Aavarana Shakti) and the power of projection (Vikshep Shakti). The former conceals the real nature of Brahman (Supreme Reality) and the latter gives rise to the illusion of name and form. The Knowledge of Brahman negates and completely destroys the veiling power, but the power of projection, although negated, i.e., known as false, persists till the exhaustion of the Prarabdha and gives rise to the appearances of name and form for that duration. A man of Knowledge has to deal with these names and forms till death but he has no sense of reality in them. Even after (the identity of) the rope is known, it may resemble a snake, but the sense of reality in the snake is gone for ever. Similarly, the appearance of the body and the world may persist but the balanced mind of a liberated man is not adversely affected by it.

Compare from Chandogya Upanishad 8.12.1 "O Indra, this body is mortal, always held by death. It is the abode of the Self, which is immortal and

incorporeal. The embodied self is the victim of pleasure and pain. So long as one is identified with the body, there is no cessation of pleasure and pain. But neither pleasure nor pain touches one who is not identified with the body.]

(A man of Knowledge never accepts the appearance of duality presented by his Prarabdha as real, because one who has known the truth is always free i.e., not merely after the fall of the body but even when living; not merely when in Samadhi but even when engaged in outward activities. The moment one attains Knowledge one verily becomes Brahman: (Brahma Ved Brahmavaiva Bhavati) from Mundaka Upanishad 3.2.9. and so, in spite of the persisting appearance of the body etc., due to Prarabdha, such a person is not at all affected by them.

After his Prarabdha is exhausted through experience the enlightened one attains disembodied liberation.)

60. 61.& 62.

After the residual Prarabdha has been gone through, the enlightened one attains that status of Vishnu, the Supreme Reality, attains that, which is free from the darkness of Nescience and divested of all appearances, which is of the nature of stainless consciousness and absolute purity, which transcends mind and speech and the distinctions of name and the named, which is neither to be shunned nor to be accepted, and which is of the nature of self-luminous Consciousness and Bliss.

[Note: 'Gone through': i.e., after the dissolution of his body.]

'Vishnu': The all-pervading Brahman, one without a second.

'Divested etc.': This is the state of disembodied liberation where name and form no longer appear at all.

'Stainless': Having no connection with ignorance or its effects.

'To be shunned': There being nothing apart from Atman with whom the liberated soul is completely identified.]

(For the benefit of the seekers after liberation, the pre-requisites, i.e., the absolutely necessary conditions for going through this course of Sadhana (training) are being enumerated now.)

63. This treatise must be studied and properly understood under men of God-realisation. One must bring to bear on the study proper dispositions like humility, loving service, etc., to the teacher.

[Note: 'Treatise': This "Varttika-Prakarana" is generally a collection of explanatory verses where things, spoken of in the main composition, are elucidated; things not spoken of, are illustrated, and things imperfectly stated, are clearly shown. 'Prakarana' is a small work which deals concisely with the main theme, avoiding detailed consideration of the subject.

'Under men of God-realisation': An aspirant must go a spiritual guide (guru), a realised soul, for enlightenment.

Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya in his commentary on the Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12. says "One though well versed in the scriptures should not search independently after the knowledge of Brahman. Compare Chandogya Upanishad 6.14.12. A man who has accepted a teacher attains true Knowledge.

'Humility etc.': The reference is to the twenty virtues enumerated in the Gita, Ch.13, verses 7 to 11.

Gita Ch.13

1. Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control.

2. Indifference to the objects of the senses and also absence of egoism, perception of (or reflection on) the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

3. Non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable.

4. Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men.

5. Constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge- this declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

'Service etc.': From Gita, 4.34. "Know that by prostrating thyself, by questions and by service, the wise who have realised the Truth will instruct thee in that Knowledge".

The disciple must be well equipped with all these qualifications and then the teacher, too, should instruct such a disciple properly. Sri Sankaracharya, in his commentary on Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.13. says: on the part of the teacher, too, it is obligatory that he should instruct a disciple properly equipped with all the virtues as enumerated in the scriptures, and thus help him to cross the ocean of ignorance.]

(After having learnt the true purport of this book under the guidance of efficient and realised teachers one should devote one's life and soul to the practice of the grand theme, dealt with herein.)

64. One striving earnestly for union with the Supreme, possessing excellence of understanding, and detachment from pleasures of both earthly and heavenly character, must practice this science thoroughly and with determined efforts during twilights, all his life.

[Note: 'Possessing etc': One who has done Hearing (Shravanam), and Reasoning (Mananam) for a considerable length of time and has thus qualified himself for contemplation (Nididhyasanam) on the Atman.

'Detachment etc.': Detachment means Vairagyam or the renunciation of both the earthly and heavenly enjoyments.

'With determined efforts': Avoiding all social formalities, giving up the ideas of decorating the body, and abandoning too much studies of the scriptures, try, to totally remove the superimposition that has come upon you.

-viveka-Chudamani 270.(Sri Sankaracharya)

'Twilights': During twilights one should repeat, too, this treatise, with proper understanding.

'All his life': It becomes firmly grounded by long, constant practice with great love (for the goal to be attained). Yoga Sutra 1.14. Also from Gita 18.52: Success does not come in a day, but by long continued practice.

Here ends the 'Varttika' composed by Sri Suresvaracharya on 'Panchikaranam' of Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya.