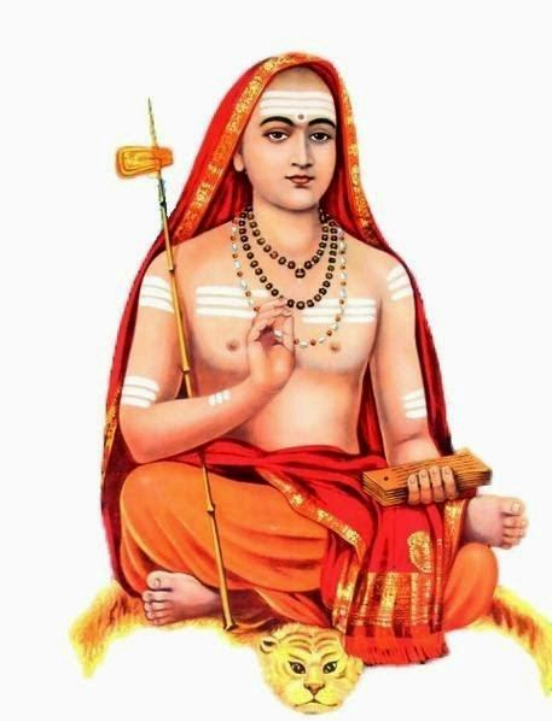
Brahma Bhāvanā - Viveka Chūḍāmaṇi

Contemplation on Brahman

‘Brahma Tat Tvam Asi Bhāvayātmani’



By Indiaspirituality Blog (Amrut)

Version: 1.1.0 | Created: 08-Dec-2022 | Revised on: 17-Dec-2022
Copy Left: This work is in Public Domain. CC0 1.0 Universal (CC0 1.0)
Indiaspirituality Blog | Understanding Advaita | Sanatan Dharma | indiaspirituality [at] gmail.com

Table of Contents

Contents

Table of Contents..... 1
Introduction..... 2
Sloka 255..... 3
Translation:..... 10
Sloka 256..... 11
Sloka 257..... 12
Sloka 258..... 15
Sloka 259..... 17
Sloka 260..... 18
Note:..... 19
Note:..... 21
Translation:..... 22
Sloka 261..... 23
Sloka 262..... 24
Sloka 263..... 26
Sloka 264..... 27
Sloka 265 – Phala Shruti..... 28
Next few sloka-s 266-268 in brief following by in-depth explanation of the process..... 29
Maharshi Patāñjalī's Aṣṭāṅga Yoga – Last four steps..... 31
Refutation of Śunya vāda - Zero state of nothingness..... 32
Misconception of a Yogī..... 32
Clearing the misconception..... 33
Pure Advaita Path..... 33
Jahad – ajahad lakshaṇa / Bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa..... 34
Sloka-s 266, 267 and 268..... 34
Sources:..... 37

Viveka Chudamani – Brahma Bhavana – Contemplation on Brahman - 254-263

Published on 08-Dec-2022 | Revision 01: Published on 17-12-2022

Current Version: 1.1.0

Corrections made. Earlier it there was an error in explanation on the order of eight parts of Yoga of **Ashṭānga Yoga**. Their meaning was also not accurate. They are now corrected. Apologies for the error

Introduction

Namaste,

There are many translations and commentaries available on Viveka Chudamani. Sanskrit commentary by Sringeri Sankaracharya Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati with English translation of both main sloka and commentary by P. Sankaranarayanan published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Other reputed translations are that by Chinmaya Mission or released as notes during a course or retreat like reflections by Swami Gurubhaktananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Gita Press, etc.

Viveka Chudamani is one of the most important Prakarana Grantha (text composed for beginners) and it is compulsory for those study Advaita. Out of many important topics discussed, we have picked up some slokas instructing one to contemplate on Brahman. Cultivating Brahma-bhāvanā i.e. negating what I am not and retaining the thought 'I am Brahman', thereby is a way of nididhyāsana (neti-neti) meaning '[I am] not this, [I am] not this'. These are slokas from 255-264. In some editions like the one published by Ramakrishna Mission i.e. Advaita Ashram, the slokas are 254-263. We will go by the sloka numbers as published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavans. In some editions the Brahma Bhāvanā starts from sloka 252-264, however we have taken up slokas 255-264.

All the slokas 255-264 are sung in Chanda Rathodvatā (छंद रथोद्वता).

Translation in simple words is given along with notes wherever necessary. Sanskrit words are retained so that it is easy to understand slokas.

It is always good to read shāstras into your native language. If translation in not available in your native language, please read translation in Hindi or any other language which is closest to your mother tongue. English should be the last choice the read and contemplate. Please translate the slokas, especially the meditation part into your mother tongue.

How to practice Brahma – bhāvanā?

First read and understand the translation. Then read the nididhyāsana (meditation) part. Reading both will help you a lot in generating Brahma – bhāvanā.

Few words on Contemplation and Meditation

Today, the word Meditation is used in a broad sense. It includes practicing Yogic Kriyā-s related to energy, energy body, Kuṇḍalini, chakra-s, practicing japa, being quiet and still and observing thoughts, etc. Contemplation is thinking on particular subject. Contemplation may or may not be spiritual, but meditation is spiritual in nature. The author Amrut feels that contemplation is the nearest word that describes the technical word nididhyāsana (निदिध्यासन). Nididhyāsana means to constantly think on Brahman using the approach 'Neti – Neti' i.e. Nā – iti, Nā – iti (नेति-नेति - ना-इति, ना-इति). It follows an approach known as sajātiya vṛtti pravāḥ vijātiya tiraskṛti (सजातीय वृत्ति प्रवाह: विजातीय तिरस्कृति). It means to focus on the thoughts on similar nature and reject thoughts that are of opposite nature. The thoughts like I am Brahman, I am infinite, I am peaceful, I am undivided, etc are thoughts of similar nature. They help sādhaka to fill the mind with thoughts which lead him to the Brahman. The opposite kind of thoughts are I am not this, not this, meaning I am not the body, I am not the mind, etc. In this way, mind will not give importance to thoughts of opposite nature, change one's approach towards the samsāra and turn inwards. Later one simply remains quiet as a witness and the introverted mind simply enters into it's source which is Brahman. This is known as nididhyāsana.

Meditation if we take in a traditional way i.e. japa of a mantra like OM, then it is does the same thing. It focuses on the mantra which dissolves all thoughts and emotions and merges into its source Brahman. However if we understand meditation as just being a witness to thoughts, then the job is only half done as the mind may calm down but it does not merge into the source. For this one has to focus on the source of everything and not the mantra itself. The mantra goes on by itself for an advanced sādhaka and consciousness remains detached.

For simplicity, both words are used interchangeably. One must take the appropriate meaning. This is not a meditation guide but only the pointer for meditation to give an idea to the new sādhaka-s.

Let us now begin to understand Brahma – Bhāvanā.

Sloka 255

जातिनीतिकुलगोत्रदूरगं
नामरूपगुणदोषवर्जितम् ।
देशकालविषयातिवर्ति यद्
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २५५॥

jātinītikulagotradūragaṃ

nāmarūpaguṇadoṣavarjitam |

deśakālaviṣayātivarti yad

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 255 ||

255. That [Brahman] which is beyond [and separate from] jāti (caste), nīti (established particular order or belief, creed), kula (family clan), gotra (lineage), which is free from the guṇa dosha (limitations / errors of qualities like) name and form; is beyond (desha and kāla) place and time and vishaya (viṣaya, objects of senses) – meditate on this Brahman in your mind (anataḥkaraṇa) implying the Mahāvākya tat-tvam-asi - you are that [Brahman] (Brahma bhāvanā)

Detailed explanation

Explanation of first sloka is given in detail and runs into many pages. This is done so as to make a new sādhaka gets acquainted with the path of neti-neti and instilling Brahma Bhāvanā. Once the seeker gets through this long explanation running many pages, then understanding other slokas will be much easier. Reading this explanation will also help understand the basic concept of advaita and the usefulness of Yoga for an advaitin vedantin.

First three lines of the sloka refer to everything that needs to be negated. So the question arise 'Who am I'. In the last line guru instructs sādhaka to meditate on 'I am Brahman' by reminding you of your true nature which is Brahman. The guru says 'You are That [Brahman], which is a Mahāvākya 'tat tvam asi'.

Jāti, nīti, kula, and gotra

Brahman is beyond jāti i.e. It is beyond both jāti and varṇa-s like Brahmaṇa (Brahmin) also. Nīti i.e. Moral and ethical practices that are established in society, kula, gotra etc are all related to the physical body, mind and other four subtle bodies . All types of identification like 'I am Brahmin', 'I belong to this and this illustrious lineage and clan like raghuvansha, etc', 'my gotra is such and such' – all such identifications induces a sense of pride. They are connected with physical body

and mind. The way of living effects the five kosha-s. Brahman is beyond all these types of identifications, five kosha-s and mind. So one has to move beyond jāti, nīti, kula, gotra, etc.

> ***Note:*** *Sringeri Shankaracharya Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati has explained Jāti as Brāhmaṇa, etc. Jāti is position assigned by birth or it is based on Occupation. The First meaning is mostly assigned to varṇa. Jāti is mostly occupation based. We the words in our day-to-day language that he is a carpenter by Jāta (or Jāti) [as he has his surname as mistrī (Mistry, मिस्त्री)] or he is a goldsmith [as his surname is Soni (सोनी)]. Often Jāti is interchangeably used with varṇa though both are different. Surnames are of both kind, mostly they are inclined to describe the occupation, sometimes it is used as a title like the knower of Jyotīsha (astronomy) is known as Joshi, the knower of shāstra-s is known a Shāstrī. Sometimes, surname is changed and the title given is assumed as surname like in case of Prime Minister Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose original Surname by birth was Srivastava and Kāyastha by Jāti who are kshatriyas and not Brahmins. Likewise, surnames like Vediya (वेदीय), Dvivedī (द्विवेदी), Trivedī (त्रिवेदी), Chaturvedī (चतुर्वेदी) are based on knowledge of 1, 2, 3, and 4 veda-s respectively.*

Names and Forms and Jīva Shṛishṭi

Names and forms contain qualities (guṇa). Brahman is beyond guṇa-s. Sri Swami Chandrashekhara Bharati ji (will be referred as āchārya) in his commentary says Guṇa-s is to be interpreted as ākāsha. Ākāsha is the subtlest of the panchamahābhuta-s (five great elements, earth, water, etc) and cannot be experienced by senses. Brahman is beyond ākāsha. By speaking of ākāsha, āchārya covers all other four elements. This way of teaching is known as Pratilakshaṇa. So, it indicates Brahman is beyond all five elements and so is beyond creation. Māyā has three Guṇa-s – sattva, rajasa and tamasa. Brahman is beyond creation, hence beyond Māyā. Brahman is beyond desha and kāla i.e. place and time [or say time and space (distance)]. This too indicates Brahman is beyond creation and is unaffected by it. Beyond desha / deśa or distance implies Brahman is omnipresent as anything that is within desha and kāla cannot be present at two place at a time. If any person is standing at point A and needs to reach to point B, then the person needs to travel distance to reach to point B and this requires him to travel for a particular time in order to reach point B. So if one is under desha, then one is also inside kāla and vice versa. Brahman is everywhere and so does not need to travel to any other point as it is already present as substratum of entire universe. Everything lies inside it. Hence Brahman is beyond desha and kāla.

Brahman is beyond names and forms. A name is associated with form and vice versa. For example, by recalling the name of your father or mother, their image erects in your mind. Similarly, if you see a form, say a ‘mango fruit’ at once you recall its name and identify the object as a ‘mango fruit’. Brahman is nameless and formless. Hence it is described in the shastra-s as ‘anirvachaniya’ i.e. ‘indescribable’. More important than names and forms is the attachment with them. If you do not dislike mango and is not your favourite fruit, then you are fine consuming it

or evening not consuming it. So mango's presence does not mind affect your mood. Emphasis here is on detachment.

Jīva shṛishṭi (world created by Jīva) is the samsāra that is created by an individual i.e. Jīva. For example, attachment with any person say friend or family member or relative or with any object like your property like car or house, gold, etc. It is the valuation that a mind gives to any object that makes it valuable or important. **Īshvara shṛishṭi** (world created by Īshvara / Īśvara) is that which is created by Īshvara like the rivers, mountains, stars, sun and the moon and so on. Īshvara shṛishṭi does not interfere or disturb once spiritual progress. It is the Jīva shṛishṭi that creates bonding. Hence by eliminating names and forms from mind, one begins to detach oneself from all relationships, all types of attachments to a person or object. So names and forms are to be negated in sādhanā. One must understand that the samsāra is not destroyed in Jñāna but is negated. This experience of not experiencing samsāra indicates moving beyond māyā.

So, one has to negate all the above mentioned identifications related to bodies, mind, five elements, all kinds of names of forms, time and space as Brahman is beyond and separate from them. Sloka further says, you are that Brahman. You should contemplate in your mind (antaḥkaraṇa) with such abheda bhāvanā. So think of your Self i.e. 'I' as Brahman which has nothing to do with all that is not-Self (anātmā).

'Tat tvam asi' is an upadeshaka mahāvākya i.e. Guru instructs disciple to meditate on the Brahman with non-dual understanding that I am not different from Brahman. For disciple, he or she contemplates on Brahman as Self 'I am Brahman' as the Guru has said ''I' is Brahman'' – the 'I' or consciousness is Brahman. 'Aham Brahmāsmi' (I am Brahman) is Mahāvākya for nididhyāsana i.e. for contemplation. It also reflects a state of Self Realisation.

Preparation for Contemplation:

A seeker of truth who wishes to know one's true nature must shape his or her mind in such a way that it can easily withdraw itself from all that is anātmān. When sitting in meditation and even after meditation is over i.e. throughout the day, a mumukshu (seeker of truth wishing for mukti) must practice Brahma Bhāvanā.

Attitude towards physical and other higher bodies:

A seeker following the path of advaita must dis-identify himself / herself from all the states through which physical body passes. In simple words, one must be neutral towards one's physical body and not try to keep it perfect. Leave the body to Ishvara or prakriti. Only when the pain is unbearable, then take medicines, else sādhaka (seeker) cannot meditate as the mind keeps shifting its attention towards body pain. When one leaves the attachment with one's physical

body and trusts it in the hands of Prakriti, then the sense of responsibility fades away with increase in surrender and detachment.

Similarly, a sādhaka must also disassociate oneself from other higher bodies known as kosha-s like Prāṇamaya kosha and manomaya kosha.

Physical body is known as **annamaya kosha** as it depends its survival upon 'anna' i.e. food. Food here is to be taken as 'aushadhi' i.e. 'medicine' to cure the disease known as 'hunger'. Do not eat food out of greed says Paramahamsa Hariharananda Giri ji. Food has not to be taken as a delicacy but as a necessity for sustenance of physical body. This body is also known as Sthuḷa sharira meaning gross body.

Prāṇamaya kosha (energy body, bio-plasmic body, the etheric double, aura) is known as such because it depends upon 'prāṇa' (energy) for its survival. Here Prāṇa is not physical breath i.e. air, but it is the energy that is present around us in the entire universe. This kosha has seven major chakras and many other minor chakras. Chakras, nāḍī-s and energy body are connected to physical body. Each organ has its own energy counterpart. When a person gets sick, its energy counterpart is also sick i.e. filled with used up energy or negative energy. A Yogī will identify this negative energy, remove it, and replace it with positive energy, thus accelerating the healing process. It is advised to an advaitin to stay detached from Prāṇamaya kosha too and surrender it to Īshvara or leave it to Prakriti. Prāṇamaya kosha is the link or bridge between Annamaya kosha (physical body) and Manomaya kosha (mental body).

Manomaya kosha is known as such it depends upon thoughts and emotions. 'Mana' or mind is nothing but continuous flow of thoughts. It also experiences various emotions like love, hatred, guilt, faith, forgiveness, etc. This kosha depends upon mind. It is not mind. Mind has dissatisfied desires in it too which manomaya kosha does not have. Mind is nothing but thoughts and emotions. Hence this kosha is known as 'manomaya' kosha.

> ***Note:*** *Theosophists have split the Manomaya kosha i.e. Mental Body into two – Astral Body and Metal Body. Astral Bosy is body of emotions and Mental body is the body of thoughts. When one touches a finger on any part of body say forearm, then only that part which the finger touches experiences sensation. However, full Astral body experiences the sensation of touch or feeling. When one is filled with emotions like heart vibrating with love or devotion and one exclaims – his whole body is vibrating with love, then the person is tuned into Astral Bosy. When one is doing concrete thinking like working in office or studying anything, then one's consciousness is tuned into Mental Body.*

Similarly, there are two higher kosha-s Vigyānamaya kosha (higher mental body) and Ānandamaya kosha (body of Bliss, body of ignorance). An advanced sādhaka may become aware of them. One must stay detached with them too.

Vigyānamaya / Vijñānamaya kosha has ego and other dissatisfied desires in it. It also has Buddhi (intellect). This kosha is connected with five senses form, touch, etc too. It is the cause if Jīva's continuous transmigration and so is the cause of Samsāra. (refer, Vivek Chudamani 186-187). This Kosha does not die until moksha as it has all dissatisfied desires. This kosha is known as higher mental body. The kosha is known as Vigyānamaya as one needs to know the ego and get rid of it via intellect. Intellect directs the mind and so is subtle than mind. To knowledge that I am not the doer detaches oneself from this kosha. This is the vigyāna – that which is known by experience. One has to be a witness in order to be detached from five senses, ego and also desires in meditation in order to move beyond this kosha.

The three kosha-s (containers or sheaths) Prāṇamaya, manomaya and Vijñānamaya / Vigyānamaya kosha are known as Sukshma sharīra meaning subtle body.

> ***Note:*** *Theosophists call it as Causal Body as it is the cause of samsāra. However, English translators do not translate this kosha as Causal Body as they translate Kāraṇa sharira as Causal Body which is Ānandamaya kosha.*

Ānandamaya kosha is the final kosha. It is known as Body of Bliss or Body of Ignorance. It is known as the kāraṇa sharira meaning causal body. Shāstra-s say that ignorance is the cause of samsāra or transmigration of a Jīva. This kosha is the final veil like clouds obstructing the vision of Sun. A highly advanced Yogī who is aware of this kosha constantly experiences Bliss of Brahman throughout the day, hence the name Ānandamaya kosha. Such a Yogī lives on intuitions and does not think much. One must detach from this kosha too so that one can realise one's true nature.

> ***Note:*** *Five kosha-s are categorized into three sharīra-s. Kosha is the container or sheath and sharīra is translated as body. In general the translators interchange the word body for both kosha and sharīra. In general, kosha-s are more often talked about like mental body, etc. It also sounds improper to call it mental sheath though it is technically correct.*

A sādhaka must be free from bondage of all the kosha-s. Since mind is also involved, and mind is attached to five senses (taste, smell, etc), hence one must be aware of mind and senses as witness and not get oneself dragged by them.

To sum up, a sādhaka must detach oneself from all kosha-s. The world we live in is known as samsāra, which is also known as Jīva shṛshṭi (shrishti), the one created by our own mind. All identification of a person like varṇa, kula, gotra, etc are attached to body and mind. Hence the sense of belonging to a particular varna-gotra, etc and pride associated with it must be renounced. You are not the body, but ātman (Ātmā).

Similarly, all names and forms are connected with samsāra and mind. So, they too must be renounced. What are the names and forms? A form is attached to a name and vice versa. By recalling the name of your wife or husband or father his / her image quickly stands in front of mind. So, one must disidentify with name and form as it too belong to Jīva shṛshṭi (shrishti) created by us.

Importance of Breath

How does one dis-identify or renounce samsāra? By not giving importance to it. This is the first step. Initially, one may not be able to achieve the state of being a witness. Until then mind needs to be controlled. How to control mind? Wise say, mind and breath are connected. Breath control is mind control. Breath mastery is mind mastery. When one is angry, one breaths fast. If one stays aware of breath, then within a few seconds breathing will slow down and so will the anger subside. Breath needs to be regulated and it is easy to do so. We all first learn to breath and until we breath, we live. Breath is our constant companion. Yet how many of us know our breath? Is inhalation longer or exhalation? Is your exhalation smooth or does it have jerks? Does it stop momentarily in between while exhaling? How deep does your breath go? Is it shallow? We don't know this. So first, one must learn to regulate the breath and know your breathing pattern.

On Renunciation

One must also not renounce the external world immediately as mind is not yet capable of implementing the teachings of vedanta in the strict sense. Whatever is compulsory needs to be done without procrastination. Whatever is optional can be renounced gradually. If some desires are very strong and mind is not ready to renounce them then let them be fulfilled. Our karma kāṇḍa is there for a reason. It is to stabilize the mind. When practiced properly, with the goal of mukti in mind, then while practicing one does good for the world, but in reality is doing good to himself. It is the mind and heart that are getting purified by doing good karma, by doing acts of kindness. One the extrovert mind turns introvert and one is capable of being a witness for atleast 45 minutes, then these instructions of Brahma – Bhāvanā are applicable. They need mind to be purified to a certain extend in order to practice Brahma – Bhāvanā. Unfortunately, today in the age of social media and internet boom, everything is tossed up is the wild wild web (www) citing high moral ground for free citing right to knowledge. The word unqualified hurts ego as the mind always goes for the best that is available. Unfortunately, the preliminary steps are skipped. Without a proper, solid foundation, one cannot build a runway for your plane to take off immediately.

Until then keep reading shastra-s. so that you can keep reminding your mind about the ultimate goal of life and also know the map i.e. the path and direction.

Qualified ones must keep ascertaining -

Brahman is free from body, mind and free of attachment with relatives and objects. It has nothing to do with your varṇa or jāti or kula. Brahman is beyond three guṇa-s of māyā, beyond space and time. With this firmly fixed in mind, one must meditate on Brahman with abheda-bhāvanā 'I am Brahman'. I am not different from Brahman. I am infinite. I am formless. I am pure consciousness.

In this way one must convince one's mind to ignore everything and contemplate only and only on Brahman. Nothing except Brahman must be given importance. This is the path of advaita which only few can walk as it demands renunciation of everything except Brahman especially Jīva shṛshṭi (shrishti) from the beginning. Stronger the renunciation, easier the path becomes.

Maharshi Patanjali's Ashṭānga Yoga

Maharshi Patanjali's Ashṭānga Yoga (Yoga with eight parts or steps) can also practiced by an advaitin, but only in the beginning. They are mentioned in the Yoga sutra-s in chapter 2 and 3 i.e. Sādhana-pāda and vibhūti-pāda from 2.28 – 3.3. The first four parts – Yama, Niyama, Āsana, and Prāṇāyama help purification of bodies and increase one's concentration. They are preparatory parts. They form a foundation for later four parts. Later four are internal parts directly dealing with the mind – Pratyāhāra (vairāgya, detachment from worldly objects and people), Dhrāraṇā (concentration), Dhyāna (prolonged concentration without any distraction), and Samādhi (complete absorption of mind in Self beyond observer and object of observation) are automatically practiced when one is following advaita. In old days, both Yoga and Advaita used to go hand in hand. Last four steps are constantly repeated until the mind is completely empty of any desires (Vāsanā-s) and there is nothing else to be detached, to be removed or to hold on to. It is then that the state of Samādhi becomes natural. Such a Jñānī is a Jīvana Mukta meaning has attained freedom from the cycle of birth and death while still leaving in the physical body. A Yogī or a Jñānī is the one who has experienced Nirvikalpa Samādhi but cannot remain steady in it. Mind becomes active again and then one has to practice Vairāgya until the focus on nididhyāsana or chanting OM becomes natural like a flicker less flame. This results into the retention of this state is Dhāraṇā (to retain mean to hold on to i.e. Dhāraṇa. Focus is achieved. It is a state of prolonged concentration. From Dhāra**ṇa** (धारण) comes Dhāra**ṇā** (धारणा)). Dhāraṇā results into Dhyāna (absorption of mind in Brahman). Dhyāna results into Samādhi.

Lets again have a look at the translation of this sloka -

Translation:

255. That [Brahman] which is beyond [and separate from] jāti (caste), nīti (established particular order or belief, creed), kula (family clan), gotra (lineage), which is free from the guṇa dosha (limitations / errors of qualities like) name and form; is beyond (desha and kāla) place and time

and vishaya (viṣaya, objects of senses) – meditate on this Brahman in your mind (anataḥkaraṇa) implying the Mahāvākya tat-tvam-asi - you are that [Brahman] (Brahma bhāvanā)

Simple Explanation:

255. Brahman is beyond caste, creed, kula and gotra etc. It is free from all kinds of defects that arise from the association with guṇa-s i.e. qualities of māyā – sattva, rajasa and tamasa. Brahman is free from qualities of tattva-s like ākāsha, etc. Brahman is not limited by time and space and so cannot be the object of observation – You are that Brahman – Meditate as such in your mind.

Contemplation:

Brahman, which is pure consciousness, do not have any varṇa, kula or gotra. I too must not associate myself with my varna, kula, gotra, etc as these identifications belong to body and mind. It gives me a false sense of pride and identity.

Brahman does not have any names and forms inside itself. Brahman is beyond Māyā. Right now, whatever I am seeing in nididhāsana (contemplation) has no relation with me, who is pure consciousness. Brahman is beyond the names and forms and so I must focus on the Brahman and not the names and forms that I am seeing in during my sādhanā. Similarly, Brahman is free from the dosha (defects) arising out of guṇa-s. Māyā has three guṇa-s and Brahman is beyond it. So, whatever I am seeing right now is nothing but my own mental creation which is within Māyā. However, Brahman is beyond Māyā. I am that Brahman. I consider the names and forms as defects that delude me and does not let me to experience Brahman. I will stay detached from all names and forms that I am seeing right now. I am their witness, I am not Jīva, the doer karma and enjoyer of its fruits, but I am Brahman, the pure consciousness.

Brahman is beyond time and space. So whatever movement I am experiencing is inside my mind, inside Māyā but there is no movement inside Brahman. Brahman does not need to move as it is omnipresent. Brahman is calm without any movement. Any movement that I am seeing or experiencing is due to my own mental projection. All is within Māyā. I am none of this. I am Brahman. Nothing exists within me. There is no Māyā in Nirguṇa Nirākāra Brahman. It is calm, it is peaceful, I am that Brahman.

With the background, let us understand other slokas and contemplate on them. Let us practice Brahma Bhāvanā. Brahma Bhāvanā is nididhyāsana. It is Neti-Neti (nā – iti, nā – iti) i.e. नेति-नेति i.e. ना-इति, ना-इति meaning ‘not this, not this’. By dis-identifying with what is anātmān, and ascertaining ‘I am not this, I am not this’, a sādhaka negates the anātmān. Then the question arises, ‘If I am not all these things, then who am I?’. The answer is ‘I am Brahman’. So, the path is

to disidentify oneself from all that is anātmān (non-Self) and identifying oneself with Brahman which is pure consciousness, calm and infinite in nature.

Sloka 256

यत्परं सकलवागगोचरं
गोचरं विमलबोधचक्षुषः ।
शुद्धचिद्घनमनादि वस्तु यद्
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २५६॥

yatparaṃ sakalavāgagocaraṃ

gocaraṃ vimalabodhacakṣuṣaḥ |

śuddhacidghanamanādi vastu yad

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 256 ||

256. That [Brahman] which is Supreme i.e. beyond Prakriti *(yat-param)*, which in spite of being beyond comprehension of speech i.e. it is indescribable, can be known with an eye of wisdom i.e. in the state of Jnāna (Self Realisation), that [Brahman] which is shuddha (pure), chidghana / Chetan-svarupa (most subtle) and is ananta i.e. infinite, you are that [Brahman] – contemplate like this in your mind.

Simple translation and explanation

Supreme Brahman is beyond Prakriti, it is indescribable but can be known in the state of Jnāna, is ever pure (shuddha) [and so is beyond defect (is nirdosha)], is the most subtle (chetana svarūpa), and is infinite (ananta). 'You are that [Brahman] - contemplate on this Brahman with the bhāvanā 'I am Brahman'.

Contemplation:

Brahman is beyond Prakriti and hence it cannot be known through five senses. Yet it can be known clearly when one attains the knowledge of the True Self. Brahman is ever pure, is the most subtle and is infinite. My true Self, Ātman, is not different than Brahman. I am that Brahman. Since Brahman is the most subtle, there is nothing, not even Māyā, that is beyond it. Brahman is the substratum of entire universe and it is formless as it is infinite. Any form as a limitation no matter however big it is, it will have a boundary, only that which has no form is truly infinite. I am that formless, infinite Brahman where there is no trace of Prakriti.

Sloka 257

षड्भिरूर्मिभिरयोगि योगिहृद्-
भावितं न करणैर्विभावितम् ।
बुद्ध्यवेद्यमनवद्यमस्ति यद्
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २५७॥

ṣaḍbhirūrmibhirayogi yogihṛd
bhāvitaṃ na karaṇairvibhāvitam |
buddhyavedyamanavadyamasti yad
brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 257 ||

257. That which is remains unaffected by six vikāra-s i.e. six contant changes [related to physical body (sthuḷa and sūkshma sharīra) and mind (kshudhā, tṛṣha, shoka, moha, jarā, mṛtyu i.e. Hunger, Thirst, Grief, Delusion, Old age and Death)] which the Yogī-s meditate upon in their hearts (mind), that which cannot be comprehended (known) by Jñānendrīya-s (five sense organs which gives one knowledge of any material objects – tongue (mouth), skin, tongue (mouth), eyes and nose. Their viṣaya-s / tanmātrā-s (functions) are shabda, sparsha, rūpa, rasa and ghandha (sense of hearing, touch (feeling), form or shape of object, taste and smell); which cannot be known by buddhi (intellect). That which is unimpeachable as it is nirdosha (nir-dosha) without any defects of guṇa-s i.e. qualities like sound, etc and three guṇa-s of māyā – 'You are That [Brahman]' – contemplate on Brahman with this abheda Bhāvanā (non-dual spiritual emotion) in your heart (mind).

Simple Translation with Explanation

Brahman is always free from the six types of changes that happens in the physical body like hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, old age and death. It does not undergo changes and hence it is changeless. Yogī-s meditate on this changeless Brahman in their heart. Since Brahman does not undergo changes that happen in mind like feeling emotions like Grief, being deluded, etc., it is beyond mind and so it cannot be comprehended or grasped with the help of five senses which help one know material objects. The five senses are tongue (mouth), skin, tongue (mouth), eyes and nose and one knows any material objects through perception of these senses - sense of hearing, touch (feeling), form or shape of object, taste and smell. Similarly, this Brahman is beyond the grasp of intellect too. Anything influenced by guṇa-s has defect or dosha. Brahman is beyond guṇa-s. Guṇa-s are qualities of objects like sound is that of ākāsha, etc or it can mean the three guṇa-s of Māyā. Hence Brahman is of flawless excellence.

One must contemplate upon this Brahman which is changeless, is beyond body, mind, intellect and five senses. It is ever free from any defect and unimpeachable (beyond doubt), is supreme with the bhāvanā 'I am Brahman' as the guru instructs disciple 'You are that [Brahman]' – 'Tat tvam asi'.

'Tat svam asi' is an upadeshaka mahāvākya i.e. Guru instructs disciple to meditate on the Brahman with non-dual understanding that I am not different from Brahman. For disciple, he or she contemplates on Brahman as Self 'I am Brahman' as the Guru has said ' 'I' is Brahman' ' – the 'I' or consciousness is Brahman. 'Aham Brahmāsmi' (I am Brahman) is Mahāvākya for nididhyāsana i.e. for contemplation.

Preparation for Contemplation:

Brahman is changeless. Changes occurring in the physical and subtle bodies, and in the mind do not exist in Brahman. It is upon this Brahman that the great Yogī-s contemplate in their hearts. Great Yogī-s leave their worldly belongings and do intense tapas in an isolated place. Surely this Brahman is worth knowing. I too will give importance to Brahman and nothing else. Self Realisation is the only goal of my life, rest all is secondary which I do it only for my survival. Surely Brahman is the only tattva that is worthy of worship, worthy of contemplation.

Brahman cannot be comprehended by the five senses of knowledge and their functions i.e. Jñanendrīya-s and tanmātrā-s like eyes-form, nose-smell, etc. Hence, I too must not focus on them and stay detached from them. These senses and their functions cannot help me know Brahman, they cannot help me in knowing my true nature, hence I will ignore them all be their witness.

Senses drag mind extrovert and keep it extrovert. Kathopaniṣat (Katha Upanishad) says 'senses (īndriya-s) merge in mind, mind merge in intellect (buddhi) and buddhi merges in mahat tattva and mahat tattva merges in the peaceful Ātman'. Mahat tattva is the cosmic intelligence, the first tattva out of 24 main tattva-s that was created by Prakriti. Mahat tattva is subtler than individualized Buddhi (intellect). Intellect gives direction to mind and so it can control the mind. Mind is pulled by senses. Hence senses will withdraw from external sense objects. For this to happen, I have to make my mind understand that Brahman cannot be known through senses and cannot be found in external material objects to which these senses are always attracted to. If my mind does not give importance to external objects, then senses will be withdrawn in their source i.e. mind. I will not give any importance to any external object. I am the witness. Let senses merge in mind. I am not the mind. Let the mind merge in the intellect which is subtler than mind and gives it direction. Let the intellect stop giving directions to mind to remain extrovert. This intellect will direct mind to find its source and merge in it. So, the mind merges in intellect and intellect in mahat tattvɒ the subtlest tattva. Let my mind bypass all that is within Praktiti and merge in the Ātman which is very peaceful, it is very calm. This Ātman is Brahman, I am Ātman, I am Brahman.

By moving beyond Māyā, the Prakriti, one enters into a state that is free from the Guṇa-s of Māyā and so beyond any defects arising due to their influence. Brahman is beyond Māyā. I am the witness of everything. There is not a moment in which I am not a witness. I am witness to Prakriti too. I am that Brahman which is beyond Prakriti. I am Brahman. I AM.

Contemplation:

Brahman is changeless. Changes occurring in the physical and subtle bodies, and in the mind do not exist in Brahman. I am that Brahman.

Brahman cannot be comprehended by the five senses of knowledge and their functions i.e. Jñanendrīya-s and tanmātrā-s like eyes-form, nose-smell, etc. Hence, I too must not focus on them and stay detached from them. These senses and their functions cannot help me know Brahman, they cannot help me in knowing my true nature, hence I will ignore them all be their witness. I am that Brahman.

Brahman cannot be comprehended by intellect as it is beyond it. I am the witness of intellect. I am Brahman.

Brahman is from any dosha-s (defects). It is beyond māyā and so it is nirdosha or ever pure without any defects in it. I am that Brahman. I am beyond māyā which has three guṇa-s. I am beyond these guṇa-s too. I am Brahman. I am Brahman. I AM.

(Be aware of all thoughts, emotions, senses and the inner world created by mind. Be the witness of all of them and focus on the origin of all that is projected upon. The source of all is Brahman. I am not different from that Brahman. I am Brahman.)

Sloka 258

भ्रान्तिकल्पितजगत्कलाश्रयं
स्वाश्रयं च सदसद्विलक्षणम् ।
निष्कलं निरुपमानवद्धि यद् (var निरुपमानमृद्धिमत्)
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २५८॥

bhrāntikalpitajagatkalāśrayaṃ
svāśrayaṃ ca sadasadvilakṣaṇam |

niṣkalaṃ nirupamānavaddhi yad (var – nirupamānamṛddhimat)

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 258 ||

258. That which is the substratum of the entire universe, upon which entire universe is superimposed (on its part), that which is dependent upon itself [and no one else], which is distinct from Sat and Asat (truth and untruth), the one without any parts or divisions i.e. is undivided, which is incomparable and cannot be glorified as nothing is equal to or beyond it, it is magnificent (param aishvaryasampanna) – 'You are that [Brahman]', contemplate on this Brahman in your heart.

Explanation:

It is said in the Purusha Sūkta that the whole universe is created from the 1/4th part of Brahman. The 1/4th path is symbolic which indicates that the universe which looks like it is infinite is created from a part of Brahman.

Brahman is beyond Sat and Asat. By mentioning both Sat and Asat i.e. truth and untruth, the duality is addressed. In the world of duality there is always a pair of opposites. Hence both Sat and Asat are mentioned as pair. Hence the Truth mentioned here is relative reality and not absolute reality. Hence the truth in empirical sense has to be taken here. Brahman is beyond duality and hence it is beyond both empirical truth and empirical untruth.

Acharya in his commentary while explaining the word ṛddhimat (param aishvarya-sampanna) quotes Mandukya Up and Chandogya Up. Saying that 'He is Lord of All' and 'He whose purpose are achieved i.e. has no purpose to achieve', indicating Brahman is incomparable. The disciple must meditate on this Brahman as 'I am that Brahman'.

Preparation for Contemplation:

I must contemplate on the Brahman with following qualities –

Brahman is infinite and entire universe is born from a part of Brahman.

Brahman is itself independent. It is the substratum of entire universe but there is no substratum of Brahman. It is the last or say the first tattva that has independent existence and does not need any support or any other object for its survival or existence.

Brahman is beyond duality and hence it is beyond both empirical truth and empirical untruth.

Brahman is undivided. Even though it is said that the universe is created from Brahman it does not mean that Brahman is divided, as creation is true only from empirical view point. In the state

of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, no universe is experienced. Hence Brahman is without any parts. It is whole, continuous, unbroken and undivided.

Brahman cannot be comprehended and so cannot be described. Hence it cannot be adorned with any honorific title nor it can be glorified. It also cannot be compared and hence cannot be said that it is better than the second. Hence Brahman is free from glorification. Wise say, knower of Brahman is Brahman itself. There is no separate identity that is witness to Brahman. Brahman is pure existence. I am not different from that Brahman. This Ātman is Brahman.

Brahman is magnificent. It is said to be *param aishvarya-sampanna* meaning it has all the glory and power. This definition indicates that whatever you see or feel is due to the presence of Brahman. Nothing exists beyond Brahman. Everything exists inside Brahman. So nothing, no matter how much influential it may seem to be, cannot be compared with Brahman. In other words, Brahman has complete lordship and so nothing is as important as Brahman. So, I must focus on Brahman and Brahman alone as everything rests in it, so will my intellect merge in it too.

I meditate on this Brahman as myself i.e. 'I am Brahman', pure consciousness.

Contemplation (short):

Brahman is the substratum of the entire universe. It is the source of the entire universe which is super imposed upon it. In reality, there is no world within Brahman. There is no real creation. I am that Brahman. Within creation, there is always movement. Within me, there is no movement. I am immovable changeless Brahman.

Since Brahman is beyond creation, it is free from the pair of opposites like Sat and Asat, knowledge and ignorance. All exists inside Māyā and Brahman is beyond māyā and so free from comparison as there is nothing else with which it can be compared with. I am one without second. There is nothing that is equal to Brahman, there is no second. I am that Brahman. I am Brahman. I AM.

Sloka 259

जन्मवृद्धिपरिणत्यपक्षय-
    व्याधिनाशनविहीनमव्ययम् ।
विश्वसृष्ट्यवनघातकारणं (var विश्वसृष्ट्यवविघातकारणं)
    ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २५९॥

janmavṛddhipariṇatyapakṣaya
vyādhināśanavihīnamavyayam |

viśvasṛṣṭyavanaghātakāraṇam (var - viśvasṛṣṭyavavighātakāraṇaṃ)

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 258 ||

259. That which is free from the six defects of body – birth, growth, change, decay, disease and death, which is indestructible, is the cause of creation, preservation and dissolution of universe, you are that Brahman – contemplate as such in your heart.

Explanation:

Six defects like birth, growth, etc. are absent in Brahman. Brahman is free from disease. Since Brahman is beyond birth and death. It is unborn and it does not die i.e. it is indestructible. Hence Brahman is eternal. Brahman also does not undergo the changes that occur in universe like its creation, preservation and dissolution, hence Brahman is unaffected by whatever happens to the universe and so it is changeless. Brahman is the substratum of the entire universe and also the cause of creation, preservation and dissolution.

Brahman is free of defects, free of disease, is unborn, indestructible, eternal, cause of universe and is beyond the cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution of universe. Brahman exists independently of universe. Brahman is eternal and unaffected by bodily changes or changes in the universe. I am that Brahman. I must not pay attention to anything other than Brahman, the cause of everything and the source of everything. I seek the source of all that I am experiencing. I am witness and not the doer. I am Brahman. I AM. I exist. I AM.

Contemplation:

Brahman is changeless and is indestructible. It is free from the six defects of body like birth, growth, etc. Brahman is beyond creation, preservation and dissolution of universe and is their cause. I am that Brahman. Aham Brahmāsmi. I am Brahman. I AM.

Sloka 260

अस्तभेदमनपास्तलक्षणं
निस्तरङ्गजलराशिनिश्चलम् ।
नित्यमुक्तमविभक्तमूर्ति यद्
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २६०॥

astabhedamanapāstalakṣaṇaṃ

nistaraṅgajalarāśiniścalam |

nityamuktamavibhaktamūrti yad

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 260 ||

260. That Brahman, which is free from differentiation, which is never non-existent i.e. its existence cannot be discarded, that which is unmoving or is unmovable like an ocean without waves, which is ever free [from bondage], which is of undivided form – You are that Brahman – contemplate as such in your antaḥkaraṇa (mind).

Note:

Mind, heart and antaḥkaraṇa are used interchangeably. Bhāvanā (feeling or emotion) can only be done with the help of mind. Thoughts and emotions exist inside mind. Though Brahman is said to be beyond words, initially, in order to make the extrovert mind introvert and to focus on only and only on Brahman, Brahma – Bhāvanā is done. It includes both viveka and vairāgya. It is viveka–yukta vairāgya meaning dispassion as a result of proper understanding. Once the mind turns towards its source Brahman and stays as an unbroken witness, and one realizes oneself as unbroken infinite awareness, then rest will happen by itself. Some else is waiting for you for this state to arrive. Whatever is to be done is done by someone else and you, as an individual, have no role to play. So just be the witness and stay detached. Keep focusing on the source of all, the Brahman, and all thoughts of Brahma – Bhāvanā will also dissolve into calmness. There is only oneness. There is peace, there is Bliss. This state is presence only and nothing else. The 'I AM' state. This is your true state, the state of Nirvikapa Samādhi which the shastra-s describe and the wise say. It is the destination, the only goal of Yogī-s. Jñānī-s abide in this blissful state. Everything happens by itself, without any effort after the sādhaka cross a certain depth, a certain level or say attains certain state of awareness. Shāstras say until one attains sufficient inner purity. There is no mental effort to chant any mantra or chant OM or practice nididhyāsana. Everything begins to dissolve in its source, no question remains, no thought remains, no emotion remains. There is only calmness, there is only oneness. It is just existence, there is no second. This is Brahman. This is my true nature. I am that Brahman. I am pure consciousness. ***The state of being witness and later on being awareness itself cannot be discarded. This is not a blank state, this is no zero state as some proclaim. You cannot negate your own existence. Only the objects of observation can be negated and they dissolve in their source or simply vanish. The witness remains. But the witness or observer cannot be called as an observer if there is nothing to observe. What remains is your self. This witness is the 'I', the Ātman, the pure consciousness. You are pure infinite consciousness. Ātman is pure infinite consciousness. This Ātman is Brahman. I am Brahman.***

अपास्त = apāsta = discarded or that which is rejected.

अनपास्त = anapāsta = that which cannot be discarded.

Explanation:

Brahman is free from any differentiation as there is no other one i.e., there is no separate observer to witness or experience Brahman other than itself. Brahman is non-dual and hence only Brahman can experience Brahman, just like a drop merges in the ocean and then loses its identity and it is no more identified as a drop but is ocean itself as it is now inseparable from ocean losing its individual identity, 'I' which is initially taken as Jīva and later on understood to be Atman is none other than Brahman. All shruti-s teach us to know our true nature which is Brahman. All this is Ātman. Hence Brahman is free from any differentiation.

Brahman is never non-existent. Brahman is also the 'I', the real 'I' and not the small 'i' which represents ego. This 'I' is Brahman. **While in the entire process of sādhanā one can negate everything that is non-Self or that which is not 'I' but cannot negate the 'I' i.e., itself. You cannot negate your own existence. Whatever is experienced is due to the fact that you, as an individual, are conscious of it.** If a person is daydreaming with open eyes and if someone passes in front of him, then even though eyes are open, still mind does not register the presence of the individual as the consciousness is in the dream state. **You cannot experience which you are not conscious of. Advaita state is the final state up to which one's consciousness can ever go. Only 'I' exists after negating everything else. Hence you cannot negate Brahman, it cannot be discarded.**

Āchārya in his commentary has explained the phrase '*anapasta-lakṣaṇam'* as having nature of sat, chit, and ānanda as its inseparable marks or qualities or attributes lakṣaṇa (lakshana) always. **These attributes of sat, chit and ānanda are its svarūpa lakṣaṇa (lakshana) and so are inseparable. Svarūpa lakṣaṇa is the inherent nature or essential nature. They are inseparable. If you attain any one of the three attributes, then you already are Brahman. The other two are already present in you. Brahman is 'sat' as it is the 'truth'. There can be only one truth. 'Sat' also means existence; that which exists in all three – past, present and future. This is also the non-dual state. Brahman is 'chit' meaning Chaitanya meaning is consciousness itself and ānanda meaning where there is no dukkha.** The subtle of all is only one tattva. It is caitanya. It is of non-dual nature. There are no two equally subtle tattva-s. So **Chaitanya is non-dual or one.** Similarly, the ānanda is the pure ānanda and it does not arise due to gaining any thing or achieving something. It is absence of sorrow and so this state represents a state beyond duality. Dukkha nivṛitti is known as sukha (Removal / absence of sorrow is known as happiness). The ānanda represents a state which is from fear. Wise say duality gives rise to fear as if you are strong, then there will be someone who will be stronger than you. Even the mighty Īndradeva feared for his throne. In non-duality, there is no other, hence there is neither dukkha (sorrow), nor bhaya (fear), hence this state is ānanda (Bliss). Yogī-s call it as nijānanda. **This ānanda is not the viṣarananda (viṣaya – ānanda) meaning pleasure gained from sense objects, but it is your very nature; nija-ānanda (Bliss of your own self). It is non-dual state.** Thus, Brahman and its svarūpa lakṣaṇa sat, chit and ānanda are inseparable. They are not experienced separately, but are taught to sādhaka so that he can imagine what it is like. A Yogī does experience the constant flow of Bliss during meditation and throughout the day, but such a Yogī still in duality as he is a

witness to the experience of Bliss. Eye can see other objects but eye cannot see itself, eye cannot see eye. The process of observation happens only within space and time and so is bound by it. 'I', Ātman or Brahman is beyond space and time and so there is no one else to observe, no one else to experience anything. **It is just a way of explanation a veiled attempt to describe the indescribable.**

Ocean is a symbol of that which is infinite. The waves of ocean indicate movement resembling birth and death of body of Jīva. It also explains the unending cycle of creation, preservation and destruction. Wave is created, it increases for a short time and then it collapses, then a new wave is formed. Between high-tide and low-tide, there is a period which does not have any tide. For a short period one can say that the ocean is calm. In this sense, Brahman is equated with this calm waveless ocean in which there is no movement (of high-tide or low-tide) and there are no waves representing creation, preservation and destruction. Initially mind stabilizes and so there is no tide high or low. Then there are no waves, no thoughts, no desires. There is no movement of mind. Mind is still as flicker-less flame. This practice later ends up in Samādhi. I am that Brahman which is unending and in which there is no movement. Non movement also indicates omnipresence. If you wish to move from point A to point B, then you will have to travel distance from A to B. This indicates you were absent at point B. However, Brahman is everywhere and so it does not need to 'move' or 'cover a distance'. It is already present everywhere. This was mentioned in the earlier slokas.

Brahman is ever free. It was never bonded by Māyā or her creation. Brahman appears to be deluded under the influence of māyā. **Wise say ignorance of one's true nature is the reason of bondage. Everything that is experienced in the phenomenal world falls under vyavahārika satya which is only true under ignorance. Brahman is Pārmārthika satya. In the state of Jñāna a Yogī or Jñanī does not experience Māyā or saṃsāra. Brahman is ever free from any kind of bondage.**

Since Brahman is one, there is no second, hence it is undivided. Even during creation, Brahman is not divided as creation is accepted only as vyavahārika satya under ignorance and not under Pārmārthika satya. Saṃsāra is mithyā. Mithyā is that which is neither real nor unreal meaning it is experienced in day-to-day life and is said to be unborn but it ends in the non-dual state of Jñāna. Due to the absence of māyā in the nirvikapla samādhi this anirvachaniya anādi (inexplainable, unborn) māyā is not considered as 'real'. As per Bhagavad Gītā (BG 2.16) truth has no nonexistence while untruth has no existence. Ādi Śankara says all that is in-between i.e. appears to be true and is experienced in day-to-day life is mithyā. Jagat is mithyā is reiterated in Nirālambopaniṣat 28 and Yogashikhā Upanishad 4.4. Please refer to Mithyā on the website 'Understanding Advaita'. Two levels of truth can also be found on the same page after article on 'mithyā'.

Note:

A thing can be defined in three ways:

1. *By distinguishing it from others (Vyavartaka Lakshana);*

2. *By pointing out its apparent attributes (Tatastha Lakshana); and*
3. *By describing its essential nature (Svrupa Lakshana).*

For example a particular house may be defined:

1. *It is to the north of another house.*
2. *That is the house wherein the crow is just perching on.*
3. *That is the house which has four storeys.*

Similarly the Self or Brahman or Atman may be described as:

1. *The Atman is distinct from Anatman (not-self) (Vyavartaka Lakshana).*
2. *The Atman is the seeming substratum of the phenomenal universe (Tatastha Lakshana).*
3. *Atman is essentially Satchidananda (Svarupa Lakshana).*

Atman can again be described in another manner:

1. *Atman can be defined as –*
    a. *(a) Atman is distinct from the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal).*
    b. *(b) Atman is distinct from the Pancha Koshas or five sheaths, viz., Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya (Vyavartaka Lakshana).*
2. *Atman is the seeming witness of the three states, viz,, waking state, dreaming state and deep sleep state.*
3. *Atman is essentially Satchidananda.*

Source: https://www.sivanandaonline.org/?cmd=displaysection&section_id=745

Let's again have a look at the translation of this sloka -

Translation:

260. That Brahman which is free from differentiation, which is never non-existent i.e. its existence cannot be discarded, that which is unmoving or is unmovable like an ocean without waves, which is ever free, which is of undivided form – You are that Brahman – contemplate as such in your antaḥkaraṇa (mind).

Contemplation:

Brahman is non-dual and so free from any kind of differentiation. Brahman is always present. It cannot be negated and is of the nature of sat-chit-ānanda. It is free from fear and sorrow. Brahman is immovable as it is present everywhere like infinite ocean without waves it is calm, it is

peaceful. Brahman is ever free from Māyā and duality and so it is always undivided. Brahman is ever free from any kind of bondage. Brahman is ever free infinite undivided consciousness. I am that Brahman.

I am non-dual, of the nature of sat-chit-ānanda. I am immovable, and omnipresent. Everything lies inside me all thoughts and emotions lie inside me. All the mental creation, the inner mental world lies inside me. I, the Ātman, am the subtlest and so is spread everywhere (vyāpta), inside everything (sūkshma). I am also infinite and so everything is inside me. I am ever free. I am undivided consciousness. I am Brahman.

Whatever I see or experience, the inner mental world, it is inside my mind and mind is inside the infinite Brahman. I am the witness of mind. I am Ātman. This Ātman is not different from Brahman. I am Brahman. I am Brahman. Aham Brahmāsmi. I am Brahman. I AM. I am existence. I AM.

Sloka 261

एकमेव सदनेककारणं
कारणान्तरनिरास्यकारणम् ।
कार्यकारणविलक्षणं स्वयं
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २६१॥

ekameva sadanekakāraṇaṃ
kāraṇāntaranirāsyakāraṇam |
kāryakāraṇavilakṣaṇaṃ svayaṃ
brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 261 ||

261. That which itself being one yet is the cause of multiplicity, that which is ultimate cause of all but is itself devoid of any cause; it is distinct from cause and effect as it exists by itself, you are that Brahman – contemplate on this in the depths of your mind.

Simple Explanation:

Brahman is one, yet it is the cause of multiplicity i.e. creation of universe which has multiplicity. Brahman is the cause of all but it itself does not have any cause i.e. it is unborn (not created, it exists in past, present and future). Brahman is distinct from cause-effect relationship as it is not involved in the process or karma of creation-preservation-dissolution as these acts are

superimposed upon it and are only true from standpoint of vyavahārika satya (empirical reality) and not pārmārthika satya (absolute reality). Brahman exists by itself i.e. is independent and does not depends upon māyā for its existence. You are that Brahman O disciple. Contemplate as such in the depth of your mind as 'I am Brahman'.

Contemplation:

Brahman is one without second, yet it is the substratum of entire universe. It is its cause. Hence this world is not as important as its source. In my seeking about myself - 'Who Am I', the world is not important but it's cause Brahman. This Brahman exists independently and so it can exist without the saṃsāra or jagat. I must focus on this Brahman which is the cause of all.

Since this phenomenal world is superimposed upon Brahman, creation is not real, not eternal. It will end its existence in its source, Brahman. Brahman is free from cause-effect relationship hence it cannot be blamed for whatever is happening to me. I alone am responsible for whatever situation I am; no one can change it and so no one can help me on the path of sādhanā except Brahman and my Gurudev who is the personified form of Brahman itself. I will contemplate on this Brahman which is not different from 'I'. 'I am Brahman'. This 'I' is neither body, nor mind, nor intellect. It is neither Jīva, it is Brahman, pure consciousness which is infinite and causeless. I am that Brahman. I am Brahman. I am Existence. I AM.

(Just be aware of whatever is going on in nididhyāsana. A matured mind will turn inwards towards its source and merge in it, the thoughtless state.)

Sloka 262

निर्विकल्पकमनल्पमक्षरं
यत्क्षराक्षरविलक्षणं परम् ।
नित्यमव्ययसुखं निरञ्जनं
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २६२॥

nirvikalpakamanalpamakṣaraṃ

yatkṣarākṣaravilakṣaṇaṃ param |

nityamavyayasukhaṃ nirañjanaṃ

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 262 ||

nirvikalpa, निर्विकल्प = in which there are no vikalpa i.e. thoughts.

analpam, अनल्पम = which is not finite (alpa, अल्प = limited) i.e. one that is infinite.

262. That which is beyond thoughts (nirvikalpa, निर्विकल्प) i.e. non-dual, infinite (analpam, अनल्पम), that which is beyond and higher than kshara क्षर (perishable world) and akshara अक्षर (imperishable = māyā or jīva), that is eternal, indivisible and untainted Bliss; taintless, devoid of darkness (of ajñāna – ignorance), you are that Brahman – contemplate as such in the depths of your mind.

Simple Explanation:

There are no thoughts in Brahman. It is beyond mind. It is non-dual and infinite and is beyond the saṃsāra and māyā. It is neither Jīva who is assumes doership and so undergoes constant transmigration. It is eternal and indivisible. It is of the nature of constant Bliss as it is non-dual and so it is free from sorrow and fear. Bliss of Brahman is not vishayānanda which is the happiness or pleasure derived from gaining material objects or from the company of any person. Bliss is the inherent nature, it is nijānanda – ānanda experienced as a result of detachment from non-Self.

Since Brahman is knowledge itself, there cannot be any ignorance (avidyā) in it, as it is the knowledge itself, it is the source of everything. One cannot experience darkness if one moves closer to the Sun. Darkness is not the nature of Sun, giving light is the nature of Sun. You cannot imagine Sun without sunrays. Similarly, Brahman is Prakāshavat or like Prakash (of the nature of light). Just like light has the quality of revealing knowledge while darkness hides the object, similarly, it is this consciousness which is responsible for revealing worldly knowledge and knowledge of Self.

Brahman is knowledge itself, it is pure consciousness. You are that Brahman – meditate as such in the depths of your mind.

Contemplation:

There are no thoughts in Brahman as it is beyond mind. I will not get involved in any kinds of thoughts that this mind is generating to distract me and drag me into saṃsāra. I am not thoughts or emotions. I will also not get involved in the outer world and the inner mental world. It is the mind that erects the inner world during meditation. Since I am not a doer, but a witness, I am not Jīva and so I am infinite.

Brahman is non-dual and so am I. There is no fear or sorrow in me. This consciousness which is the witness (sākshi) is 'I'. I am that Brahman which is knowledge itself. It is due to the consciousness that everything gets illuminated like light illuminates objects by removing darkness. I am pure consciousness, and it is due to this consciousness which is responsible for illuminating the mind and intellect who are responsible for any experience. It is the source of power of mind and intellect. Everything merges in this consciousness. This consciousness never dies, it cannot be negated, it is never absent at any point of time. It is non-dual, I am non-dual, I am infinite. I am Ātman. This Ātman is Brahman. I am Brahman. Aham Brahmāsmi. I am Brahman. I am Existence. I AM.

Sloka 263

यद्विभाति सदनेकधा भ्रमा-
न्नामरूपगुणविक्रियात्मना ।
हेमवत्स्वयमविक्रियं सदा
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २६३॥

yadvibhāti sadanekadhā bhramān

nāmarūpaguṇavikriyātmanā |

hemavatsvayamavikriyaṃ sadā

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 263 ||

263. That which is one reality, but appears as many assuming name, form, quality and action as a part of changing nature; yet it itself remains unchanged like gold [appearing as many in various ornaments like bracelets, earrings, etc] – know this to be the Brahman. You are that Brahman – contemplate as such in the depths of your mind.

Simple Explanation:

Brahman is one [and only reality], yet it appears to have undergone modifications and assuming different names, forms, qualities and actions. Brahman is changeless like gold is always present as the material in gold bracelets, earrings, etc. Jewelry made up of pure gold though they look different due to different shapes like bracelets, earrings, but in reality, it is gold only. Similarly, Brahman though appearing as many and assuming many different characteristics appears to be having different names and forms and looks like it has undergone transformation under the influence of Māyā, still it is Brahman only as the modifications and assuming of different qualities, names and forms and their characteristics are nothing but superimposition on formless, changeless Brahman and are true only from empirical viewpoint i.e., it is within Vyavahārika Satya. From absolute standpoint i.e., from Pārmārthika Satya, Brahman never undergoes any kind

of modification, never it assumes any qualities (guṇa-s of māyā) nor does it assume any properties of any material. From the standpoint of Pārmārthika Satya, Brahman was, is and always will be formless (Nirākāra), changeless and attributeless (without qualities i.e. Nirguṇa). I am that Nirguṇa Nirākāra Brahman – Meditate as such in the depths of your mind.

Contemplation:

Brahman is one without a second. It is the substratum of entire universe. Even though right now in nididhyāsana (contemplation), whatever world I am seeing and experiencing appears to be the modification of Brahman, it is not real. This world is a reflection of the external world that I experience in daily life. Both waking and dream state, and the inner mental world that I experience are not present together, if one is present other two are absent. Similarly, everything is absent in deep sleep too. All these states are not eternal and so not real. Brahman is unaffected by them just like whatever is projected on a cinema screen never in reality changes the screen be it a rainy scene or a bloody scene, once the projector is switched off, there is no trace of rain or blood on the screen. Screen is the Brahman, and the projector is the mind. I am that Brahman. Just like Golden jewelry like bracelet can be remelted and created in new shape like earring, but the constant thing in both is always Gold, the raw material. It is gold that is appearing as bracelets, earrings, etc. Anything created of Gold has Gold in it, or it is Gold but perceived in different names and forms. Similarly, I must focus on and be aware of the substratum upon which this mind projector is projecting inner mental world or different scenes. Just like Gold is the essence, the substratum of all the articles made up of Gold, similarly, I will focus on Brahman and not the thoughts, emotions and inner mental world that is created and projected by mind. I am neglecting the projections, the shapes, thoughts and emotions by being their witness and being aware of Brahman, their substratum. No thoughts or emotions or inner mental has strength to pull me in it and make me involve in the scene. I am one without a second, I am nirguṇa and nirākāra, I am one without a second. I am that changeless Brahman and not the ever-changing thoughts and scenes that I am seeing right now. I am witness. I am that Brahman. The witness is pure consciousness, it is neither mind, nor intellect nor Jīva. I am Ātman, the one without second. Ātman is infinite and it cannot be many. There is only one Ātman. This Ātman is Brahman. I am Brahman. In me there is absence of any kind of movement or inner mental creation. There are no Guṇa-s in me. I am Nirguṇa Nirākāra Brahman, I am Nirguṇa Nirākāra Brahman. I am pure existence, one without a second. Only I exist and nothing else. I am Brahman. I am existence. I AM.

Sloka 264

यच्चकास्त्यनपरं परात्परं
प्रत्यगेकरसमात्मलक्षणम् ।
सत्यचित्सुखमनन्तमव्ययं
ब्रह्म तत्त्वमसि भावयात्मनि ॥ २६४॥

yaccakāstyanaparaṃ parātparaṃ

pratyagekarasamātmalakṣaṇam |

satyacitsukhamanantamavyayaṃ

brahma tattvamasi bhāvayātmani || 263 ||

264. That Brahman beyond which there is nothing, which is superior than the supreme, that which is Pratyagātmā, the inner most Self, and is of non-dual nature, that which is known as the Ātman of all, the Sat-Chit-Ānanda svarūpa, infinite and which does not undergo any change i.e. the changeless one, that which shines above Māyā [by itself] and shines every other thing [as is source] – You are that Brahman – contemplate as such in the depths of your mind.

Simple Explanation:

That Brahman with is beyond cause and effect and so nothing is beyond it. It is superior then the supreme. Āchārya says this 'supreme' tattva is Hiraṇyagarbha. Hiraṇyagarbha is the collection of entire Jīva-s. Upon dissolution, Brahmājī enters into the formless state and pulls all Jīva-s within itself. Then during the new creation this Hiraṇyagarbha opens up thus releasing all the Jīva-s who incarnate in various bodies and complete their spiritual journey until they realise their true non-dual nature and merge back into Brahman. Brahman is beyond Hiraṇyagharbha indicates Brahman is beyond creation and is it uncreated. It is beyond Jīva-s. It exists at all times. The word 'superior tattva' can also be taken as 'beyond ajñāna'. Here ajñāna indicates the world we leave in or Māyā. Brahman is beyond Māyā. It is the inner most Self known as Pratyagātmā which resides in the heart of all beings (as all Jīva-s are inside it. Brahman exists by itself even after dissolution). It is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ānanda. This Brahman shines everything as it is their source of everything but nothing shines or illuminates or powers it or reveals it as there is no other source of Brahman. Brahman is Self-effulgent. It is consciousness itself, it is knowledge itself. Brahman is beyond Māyā and only Brahman can reveal itself – You are that Brahman – contemplate as such in the depths of your mind.

Contemplation:

I am that Brahman which is beyond creation, beyond Māyā and is in itself causeless. Nothing including Māyā illuminates it. Mind does not illuminates it. In fact whatever we see is projected by mind, but who makes this gross mind Chetana or active so that it can project in meditation? Who gives the power to the mind to become active. What is its source? It is the Brahman. I am that Brahman. I am that Brahman which resides in the hearts of everyone, as Pratyagātmā, the inner most Self. It is not Jīva, it is subtler than Jīva. All Jīva-s exist in me. I am not doer. I am free from karma and its fruits. I am not a Jīva. I am eternal, infinite Brahman, I am the substratum of entire universe. I am the inner most Self which illuminates all including mind. Brahman is the

source from where mind gets its power, Brahman is the source of mind and intellect. This mind will calm down and merge in its source, the Brahman. I am that Brahman, I am that Brahman the witness of all, non-dual; I am infinite, there is no movement in me, I am present everywhere. I am presence. I am existence. I am the truth. I am Brahman, Aham Brahmāsmi, Aham Brahmāsmi, Aham, I AM …

Sloka 265 – Phala Shruti

उक्तमर्थमिममात्मनि स्वयं

भावयेत्प्रथितयुक्तिभिर्धिया ।

संशयादिरहितं कराम्बुवत्

तेन तत्त्वनिगमो भविष्यति ॥ २६४ ॥

uktamarthamimamātmani svayaṃ

bhāvayetprathitayuktibhirdhiyā |

saṃśayādirahitaṃ karāmbuvat

tena tattvanigamo bhaviṣyati || 264 ||

264. On the Truth, inculcated above [in earlier slokas], one must oneself meditate in one's mind, through the intellect, by means of the recognised arguments. By that means one will realise the truth free from doubt etc., like water in the palm of one's hand.

Notes: Inculcated above—in the ten preceding Slokas.

Recognized arguments—that are in harmony with the Vedas.

Simple Explanation:

264. A disciple must meditate in his mind (antaḥkaraṇa) on the truth taught above by his Guru, through the intellect with proper reasoning as explained in the śāstra-s (shastras). By that means, of proper reasoning, one will realise the truth free from any doubt like [clear] water in one's palm meaning the knowledge of Self, which is the truth will be clearly and easily realised by direct experience.

Notes:

It is a tradition to give the fruits at the end of any instruction or stuti as it encourages sincere seeker to practice Brahma – Bhāvanā diligently

Thus ends the series of sloka-s relating to Brahma – Bhāvanā.

Next few sloka-s 266-268 in brief following by in-depth explanation of the process

In the next sloka 266, Guru gives instruction to contemplate on Brahman and implies that once you (the disciple) becomes a Jñānī, he always remains a Jñānī. So he asks disciple to stay firmly established in your own Self, Brahman and remain forever firmly established in it. In sloka 267, Guru says that one who is firmly established in Brahman, the connection with the body drops and consciousness does not return back to the body. This statement has two meanings. First is that after one is Self Realised, one stays in this state for some time and then the connection with the body drops completely and there is no return in the body again. One remains merged in Brahman and permanently loses its individual identity. The second meaning that is inferred is that such a Jñānī never feels attached to the body again and the ego dies completely. However, in order to retain the body for some divine purpose, a pseudo ego is created which loosely binds consciousness with the body in order for body to function. In other words, the attachment with the body does not happen.

Maharshi Patānjalī's Aṣṭānga Yoga – Last four steps

Note: Article updated to give proper meaning and explanation of Dhāraṇa (concentration) and Dhyāna (complete concentration without distraction).

Eight parts or limbs can be found in Yoga sūtra-s in chapter 2 and 3 i.e. Sādhana-pāda and vibhūti-pāda from 2.28 – 3.3.

The next sloka 268 is very important. There is a confusion among sādhaka-s especially those following Patānjalī's Aṣṭānga Yoga (yoga with eight parts), that after one attains Samādhi, the state is permanent. A Yogī believes that the last four steps of Yoga – Pratyāhāra (vairāgya, dispassion in samsāra), Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. Let's understand these last four steps. First one is Vairāgya meaning Dispassion in Samsāra. Dispassion makes the mind introvert as it is no more interested in the worldly matters. So, the concentration on Paramātmā (Paramatman) becomes easy as mind does not get distracted in external or internal stimuli or sensations. Concentration on Paramātmā or Īśvara is easily achieved. This state is known as 'Dhāraṇā'. To retain means to hold on to meaning 'Dhāraṇa' (धारण) and the state is known as 'Dhāraṇā' (Dhaaranaa, धारणा). As a result of concentration (Dhāraṇā), one enters into the state of Dhyāna prolonged concentration. This state of concentration is like a flickerless flame of Dīyā (lamp). There is no distraction of any kind. Yogī finally enters Samādhi which is Blissful, breathless, pulseless, non-dual state. This state is beyond concentration as there is no object to concentrate upon. The object and subject merge. What remains is pure consciousness. This is the last state up to which consciousness can go. The process of being a witness or observer dissolves into oneness. If I hold on to a pen in my hand in front of my eyes, I can say that pen is object of observation and I am the Observer. Now remove the pen. What remains is just you, the observer, but an observer is a relative term. One is called an observer as one observes something. But when there is nothing to observe then who sees whom? There is only one thing – You. This 'I' is nothing but pure consciousness. It is the best that one can imagine or even logically arrive at the conclusion. One can go no more further than this state of non-duality. It is the state of peace and existence.

> *Note: It is Dhyāna that is translated into Meditation. Dhyāna is Meditation. However, the word meditation is used quite broadly. Here the Dhāraṇa and Dhyāna can be on Sākāra or Nirākāra Īśvara (Īshvara). Dhāraṇā can be also done on a flame of candle and one can achieve one-pointed focus without any distraction. However, this must be done in under the guidance of a Yogī who has already practised this discipline. This exercise i.e. candle gazing helps increase concentration but it cannot be practised for long time while gazing on the form of Īśvara (Īshvara) either to an external image or internal mental image is very fruitful.*
>
> ***Pratyāhāra is achieved if there is Dhāraṇā and Dhāraṇā is achieved perfectly if there is Pratyāhāra (vairāgya , dispassion in worldly matters).*** *Usually, mind gets distracted in the worldly thoughts, on unfinished issues. However, if there is dispassion for worldly issues, then Dhāraṇā becomes very easy. In simple words concentration is achieved. So, developing Vairāgya has to be developed in the beginning. It also helps in Yama and*

Niyama (Inner purification and discipline). In order to discipline the mind, vairāgya is important and so Advaita stresses on it from the beginning of one's spiritual journey.

Refutation of Śunya vāda - Zero state of nothingness

If one argues that one can go one step further by saying that beyond one there is zero, nothingness. This state is the zero state i.e. śunya sthiti, then this argument is refuted by stating the fact that one cannot, in any case, negate oneself. The first person 'I' always exists. This is the experience of Jñānī-s too. Who says that the state is zero or nothingness? Who is experiencing this śunya sthiti or Śunya avasthā (zero state)? The experiencer of this Śunya avasthā is the truth, it is the first person, 'I' which is eternal Brahman and not the zero state itself. The zero state or the experience of śunya avasthā is in fact a step lower as one is experiences this zero state. Just like when one is experiencing oneness with all creation, then one is still 'experiencing'. The observer remains and so there has to be something that can be observed or experienced. It can be argued upon experience that the śunya avasthā (zero state) is the absence of Māyā and the entire creation. It denotes absence of all your bodies, mind, intellect and ego. It is not absence of your very own Self. It is not negation of 'I' the first person. Brahman, the first tattva (entity) simply cannot be negated. The experiencer of Zero state is you, Brahman. Non-dual state is the final state there is nothing beyond it as it is stated in our śāstra-s (shastra-s) and experienced by Jñānī-s too that there is nothing beyond it. There is no creation, but there is always you, and you are that Brahman. So the Ātman is not nothingness, neither it is nonexistence. Ātman exists, it is eternal and non-dual.

Now, let us come back to the topic.

Misconception of a Yogī

Yogī-s believe that once one enters into the Blissful state of Samādhi, there is no returning back. So, the moment one enters into Samādhi for the very first time this state is permanent. This presupposition is due to the belief that until the state of Dhyāna i.e. Pratyāhāra (vairāgya), Dhāraṇā and Dhyāna the steps gets repeated many times until the mind is completely empty. There are no dissatisfied desires left to be burnt out, to be uprooted. There is no mind without thoughts and desires and there is no trace of ego left. Without mind there cannot be ego and if there is no ego, then there is no mind. Mind of Jñānī is consciousness itself, it is Brahman says Sri Ramana Maharshi. So, during intense sādhanā, there comes a state when a Yogī can no longer is able to retain the state of concentration, Dhyāna is not possible, this results in the weaking of Dhāraṇā too as the mind again starts to creates various objects as the old dis-satisfied desires become active (which were until now dormant) and so a Yogī has to stay detached by Vairāgya. By the power of detachment, desires fade away, they dissolve and Dhāraṇā (concentration) is again achieved and soon it becomes flickerless turning into Dhyāna. After sometime, another desire or thoughts activates the mind and the retention is broken and the cycle continues. After years of intense Tapas, finally a moment comes when there is no more desire to be uprooted. There are no more thoughts. Mind is completely empty. Now, the mind merges back into it

source. This merging back into its source is known as 'Yoga'. It is explained (for the sake of convenience) as the union of Ātman and Paramātmā or merging of Jīva into Brahman. Once this state is achieved, the mind never arises its head again, never. So this state, once achieved, is permanent and there is no returning back.

Clearing the misconception

In order to clear this misconception, our Āchārya Ādi Śankara Bhagavapāda, out of compassion, has cleared this misconception in this prakaraṇa grantha speaking through his own direct experience with utmost clarity. In simple words Ādi Śankara implies that all four steps are repeated i.e a sādhaka enters into samādhi but cannot remain in this state for long as mind is not destroyed. In the words of Sri Ramana Maharshi, there is mano-laya (resting of mind in Brahman) and not mano–nāśa (destruction of mind). A mind that is sleeping / resting can awaken as it is not destroyed. So from Vairāgya to Samādhi all steps are repeated again and again and a time comes when there is nothing that is left to be emptied. The mind is finally destroyed and so what remains is only you, the Ātman which is none other than Brahman. Ādi Sankara says, even after Ātman is known (by experience and through knowledge of śāstra-s), the past impressions are very strong and so one must make strong effort to completely turn inwards and by wholly abiding in the non-dual state.

Pure Advaita Path

Stating independently without taking into the Aṣṭāngā Yoga into account, in pure advaita path, first, one knows Ātman through śāstra-s and explanation given by Guru. Next, he disciple practices reasoning i.e. nididhyāsana and starts to have glimpses of Samādhi but cannot stay in it. Such person still has to practice reasoning i.e. nididhyāsana and finally after repeated attempts a Jñānī firmly and permanently abides in Self.

In Pure Advaita path, one has to note that if there is Strong Vairāgya there is perfect detachment. Sri Ramana Maharshi says that, thoughts arise in Sahasrāra and subside in Sahasrāra and you are completely detached from this process. With strong vairāgya one can remain witness even to one's own thoughts. For an advanced sādhaka, the process of nididhyāsana or changing any mantra or chanting OM is different which is not discussed here.

Since this explanation was very important, it is added to the sloka-s of Brahman Bhāvanā.

Later sloka-s further gives direction on how to avoid being trapped in samsāra. They are said with the word of caution, as Ādi Śankara wishes that the disciple should not be over confident and start to be careless and procrastinate. Sloka-s 252-255, which are sloka-s before the sloka-s instructing Brahma Bhāvanā, may be studied, they teach disciple discrimination between real, unreal and mithyā. Still earlier sloka-s 239-251 when understood with commentary explain us

how non-duality between Ātman and Brahman is established in Mahāvākya 'You are That' (Tat Tvam Asi) by applying Jahad-ajahad-lakshaṇa. It is in this sloka-s that Jīva – Brahman aikya (Jīva and Brahman are one is established). Ātman and Jīva are different. Ātman or Ātmā is one and is omnipresent, it is the 'I' our very own real Self, it is not a doer but witness. Jīva-s are many and a Jīva assumes doership of karma and so is the enjoyer of fruits of karma. A jīva has limited knowledge and is not omnipresent. Jīva as per advaita is only a bhāva or a filing and not a real thing. While meditating, it is experienced that one is witness to all. Even after meditation advanced sādhaka experience detachment and experience that one is witness and not the doer. In this way the doership is eliminated.

Jahad – ajahad lakshaṇa / Bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa

Jahad – ajahad lakshaṇa (जहद-अजहद-लक्षण) is popularly known as Bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa (भाग-त्याग-लक्षण) means to accept one part and reject the other part. 'Bhāga' (भाग) means 'part'

Īśvara / Īshvara is Brahman + Vidyā Māyā – Is omnipresent and controller of universe.

Jīva = Brahman + Avidyā Māyā – Is not omnipresent and assumes doership.

If we remove the Vidyā Māyā from Īśvara and avidyā Māyā from Jīva, what is left is Brahman. Why Māyā is to be rejected? Because it is Upādhi (attribute) which has its own Guṇa-s which bring dośa (dosha) defect. Hence Māyā (both Vidyā and Avidyā) are to be rejected from the point of view of nididhyāsana.

In this context of Bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa 'Tat Tvam Asi' (तत् त्वम् असि) is to be understood. It translated into 'That You Are' means 'That [Brahman] you are' or in simple words 'You are that Brahman'. The word 'Asi' (असि) indicates union of the two – Brahman and 'I' or Atman. How is Brahman and Ātman same? Apply Bhāga – tyāga lakshaṇa. (Refer sloka 249 and 250-251 with commentary of Āchārya Chandraśekhara Bhāratī of Sringeri.

> *Note: As far as worldly matters are concerned and until one is still bound, māyā needs to be respected in order for proper functioning of society and dealing with relationships. Advaita is therefore more suitable for a sanyāsī or a renunciate. A householder may practice advaita but it is very rare and has to be practiced under the guidance of a competent guru. Hence Panchāyatna Pūjā is prescribed worshipping of Five forms of Īśvara – Gaṇeśa, Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya and Viṣṇu*

Now, the sloka-s 266-268 with translation are given. No detailed explanation is given as attempt is made to explain the whole process up to Samādhi in detail.

Sloka-s 266, 267 and 268

(छंद उपजाति)

स्वं बोधमात्रं परिशुद्धतत्त्वं var सम्बोधमात्रं

विज्ञाय सङ्घे नृपवच्च सैन्ये ।

तदात्मनैवात्मनि सर्वदा स्थितो var तदाश्रयः स्वात्मनि

विलापय ब्रह्मणि दृश्यजातम् var विश्वजातम् ॥ २६६॥

(Chhanda Upajāti)

svaṃ bodhamātraṃ pariśuddhatattvaṃ var sambodhamātraṃ

vijñāya saṅghe nṛpavacca sainye .

tadātmanaivātmani sarvadā sthito var tadāśrayaḥ svātmani

vilāpaya brahmaṇi dṛśyajātam var viśvajātam || 265 ||

265. Like a king in the center of Amry, know yourself to be in the middle of assemblage [of body, sense organs, ahaṃkāra, form, panchakosha-s, panchamahābhūta-s, etc], know yourself as pure intelligence, Self effulgent, free from ignorance and its effects, be ever established in your own Self, merge everything that is seen (the entire universe and inner mental world) in Brahman.

(छंद उपजाति)

बुद्धौ गुहायां सदसद्विलक्षणं

ब्रह्मास्ति सत्यं परमद्वितीयम् ।

तदात्मना योऽत्र वसेद्गुहायां

पुनर्न तस्याङ्गगुहाप्रवेशः ॥ २६७॥

(Chhanda Upajāti)

buddhau guhāyāṃ sadasadvilakṣaṇaṃ

brahmāsti satyaṃ paramadvitīyam .

tadātmanā yo'tra vasedguhāyāṃ

punarna tasyāṅgaguhāpraveśaḥ || 267 ||

267. In the cave of Buddhi, there is non-dual Brahman distinct from Sat and Asat (truth and untruth), the ultimate truth. For the one who realizes that Brahman as his own Self (Ātman), lives in this cave as that Brahman (Ātman), there is no more entry for him in the cave of body.

Explanation:

Distinct from Sat and Asat – Sat is truth and Asat is untruth

It could mean – perceivable and non-perceivable, gross and subtle or beyond duality. The truth here is empirical truth and not absolute truth. By saying Sat and Asat in pair, duality is indicated

Cave: Cave is just an analogy. It means of being in the core or heart. Cave is also the prison of five sheaths (panchakosha-s, annamaya, prāṇmaya, etc)

No more entry in the cave of body: No return on consciousness back into the prison of physical body or it could mean no more entry in mother's womb indicating no more rebirth – freedom from cycle of birth and death – attain mukti. In first case after staying instate of Self Realisation, consciousness never returns back to body and so the body drops permanently. In second case, it indicates Jīvana mukti.

Here the instruction ends. Next series of sloka-s explain that destruction of (vāsanā s) desires / impressions is moksha. Only one sloka is presented here as it is relevant as it talks about Jñānī still having residue of ahaṃkāra (ego) and still has not got rid of assumption of doership. For this to happen, one must be vigilant and stay detached so as to let the desires and ego burn until nothing remains. The meditation is quite effortless in this case as one already knows by experience that one is infinite and not the body or mind or ego.

(छंद मंदाक्रांता)

ज्ञाते वस्तुन्यपि बलवती वासनाऽनादिरेषा

कर्ता भोक्ताप्यहमिति दृढा याऽस्य संसारहेतुः ।

प्रत्यग्दृष्ट्याऽऽत्मनि निवसता सापनेया प्रयत्ना-

न्मुक्तिं प्राहुस्तदिह मुनयो वासनातानवं यत् ॥ २६८॥

(Chhanda Mandākrāntā)

jñāte vastunyapi balavatī vāsanā'nādireṣā

kartā bhoktāpyahamiti dṛḍhā yā'sya saṃsārahetuḥ .

pratyagdṛṣṭyā''tmani nivasatā sāpaneyā prayatnā-

nmuktiṃ prāhustadiha munayo vāsanātānavaṃ yat || 268 ||

268. Even after Ātman is known [by direct experience], these vāsanā-s (desires / impressions) like I am the doer (kartā), I am enjoyer (Bhoktā), etc [and ego] which are cultivated since anādi kāla (very long time, infinite time) still remains strong in one's mind which are the cause of samsāra and so by constantly staying in the state of Jñāna (pratyak dṛṣṭi) with conscious effort [of being aware i.e. being completely detached]. The wise muni-s (sages) say - one must renounce (let go) all vāsanā-s (desires) as destruction / renunciation of desires is nothing but mukti (liberation).

Explanation: After attaining the state of Jñāna, the journey is not complete. It is mano laya and not mano nāśa (nasha) meaning the mind becomes dormant but is not destroyed. Mind is nothing but collection of thoughts, emotions and dis-satisfied desires. Hence when desires are renounced i.e. they are uprooted then the mind becomes empty. One the other hand a Jñānī does not let any new thoughts or desires to enter into the mind. So the mind is completely destroyed. When one attains this state, wise sages say this to be mukti and one becomes a Jīvana mukta. Now there is no more need to meditate to 'enter' into Samādhi. Samadhi is your natural state.

For many the life journey ends here and after staying in this blissful state for some time, one permanently drops the body while in other cases if the consciousness comes down to dual plane, then the mind arises again, but this mind experiences Brahman everywhere. There is a small pseudo ego necessary to keep a loose connection / bonding with physical body, else body will not survive without consciousness. Wise also say that after one becomes Jīvana mukta and attains sahaja Samādhi, the prārabhdha (pre-determined destiny) with which one is born does not get destroyed as it is the fruit of karma already in action and so until the prārabhdha exhaust. No new karma is added to Jñānī and whatever karma he does is done with nishkāma bhāva or also akarma bhāva. After this Prārabhdha is exhausted, the body drops and there is no rebirth. So it is said that for a Jñānī there is no death and present birth is his last birth. In Ātma bodha it is said that all three karma-s are destroyed indicating even Prārabhdha too is destroyed and so one is free to quit the body if one wishes too. The first opinion is the popular one as it explains why Jñānī-s fall sick and undergo suffering, whereas with the power of Yoga it is possible to leave the body too. Whatever may be the case, there is no difference in the state of Jñāna while living in body or after dropping the body says Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Thus ends one's life's journey, free from cycle of rebirths.

|| Hari OM Tat Sat ||

Sources:

[1] Vivek Chudamani – Gujarati Translation by Swami Tadrupanand, pages 441-458. Google Drive Link | Archive.org Part 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 - – *Has word by word translation and commentary in Gujarati.*

Note: In Archive.org: Part 1: Title Page Missing, Part 2, Page 405 cross and 406 missing. All three have been added in the google drive. File size has been reduced.

[2] Vivek Chudamani – English Translation of commentary by Śrī Chandraśekhara Bhāratī of Sṛṇgeri Matha (Sringeri Matha) – Pages 269-278. *Has English Translation of main slokas and English Translation of Sringeri Sankarāchārya by P. Sankaranarayanan, Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.*

[3] Vivek Chudamani – Hindi Translation by Gita Press, Pages 71-74 (pages in pdf file 68-71)

[4] Vivek Chudamani by Swami Madhavananda of Advaita Ashram – English Translation, Pages 115-119 (pages in pdf file 120-124)

[5] Vivek Chudamani by Swami Madhavananda of Advaita Ashram on Wisdomlib (FULL list of slokas), from Sloka 254 – English Translation. *Has transliteration in IAST of slokas in English.*

[6] Vivek Chudamani on Shlokam.org (FULL – *has transliteration in IAST of slokas in English*) (slokas 254-266)

[7] Reflections by Swami Gurubhaktananda of Chinmaya mission on Vivek Chudamani *(has word by word translation. See part four titled '11.4 Part 4 Nididhyasa - The Theory' for relevant slokas. Page NO # 35 on pdf file). Last sloka 268 is in the fifth part.* Other reflections of Swami Gurubhaktananda *- unique precise translation.*

[8] Vivek Chudamani in Sanskrit on sanskritdocuments.org (PDF, html – sanskrit slokas are copied from this page due to its credibility, Full list – search vivekachUDAmaNiH)

|| Hari OM Tat Sat ||