आत्माभोध
आदि शंकराचार्य कृत

Aatma Bodha by Aadi Shankaracharya
I bow at the lotus feet of the Guru, Shankara, whose function is to eliminate the alligator of delusion (moha) with all its branches.'

Atma Bodha, meaning self knowledge, was composed by Adi Shankara sometime in the 8th century.

To quote Sri Radhakrishnan ‘The Advaitism of Shankara is a system of great speculative daring and logical subtlety. Its austere intellectualism, its remorseless logic, which marches on indifferent to the hopes and beliefs of man, its relative freedom from theological obsessions, make it a great example of a purely philosophical scheme. It is impossible to read Shankara’s writings, packed as they are with serious and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a mind of a very fine penetration and profound spirituality. With his acute feeling of the immeasurable world, his stirring gaze into the abysmal mysteries of the spirit, his unswerving resolve to say neither more nor less than what could be proved, Shankara stands out as a heroic figure of the first rank in the somewhat motley crowd of the religious thinkers of medieval India ....

Shankara taught us to love Truth, respect reason and realize the purpose of life. Twelve centuries have passed, and yet his influence is visible.’

His influence on Indian philosophy is so enormous that most of the later philosophies that evolved in India had either to agree with him or disagree with him, quoting him nevertheless.

Shankara, in his indisputable style, allows a place for Karma and Bhakti while emphasising the prime necessity of jnAna for the realization of the Self. For example, while commenting on Bhagavadgita 18.45, he takes Bhakti to be identical to jnAna by quoting 7.16-18 of the Gita where Krishna says that a jnAni is one of His Bhaktas.

In Vivekachudamani, he goes on to say that Bhakti is one of the most conducive causes for liberation. Similarly, in the third verse of
atma bodha, he says that karma is not opposed to ignorance, though it can not destroy ignorance. Undoubtedly a great religious reformer and philosopher, Shankara embraces within his fold all pantheism while maintaining the principle of non-duality.

Though Shankara is famous for his commentaries (bhAshya-s) on the three major texts considered as ‘launching pad’ for liberation (prasthAnatrayI, the triple cannon), namely bhagavad gItA, brahmasUtra-s, and upaniShad-s, he has composed a large number of stotra-s (hymns in praise of various gods) and also brief expositions in prose and verse (prakaraNa-s). Atma Bodha falls into the last category. A rare but an excellent commentary of this work in Sanskrit has been provided by Swami kRiShNAnandAshramI and has been translated into English by Vidyaratna Menon. Other noteworthy translations of the text are by Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Nikhilananda, TMP Mahadevan, and Parthasarathy, to name a few.

The text of Atmabodha avoids the technicalities found in the vedas, but conveys the message of jnana yoga (the path of knowledge) to the layman. In a short compendium of sixty-eight stanzas, the knowledge of the Self is described in an unique and simple style. Shankara starts with the requirements of the aspirant, and goes on to explain the nature of world - Samsara, the embodiments of the soul, the influence of mAyA and the superimposition of Atman. He describes the meditation technique based on aphorism ‘I am Brahman,’ the supreme being, ‘Aham Brahmasmi’, and elucidates the fruits of Self-realization and the state of the jivanmukta (liberated soul).

Since the realization of the Self can not be had from books or scriptures, Shankara insists on the necessity of instruction by a Self-realized Guru (teacher). The intense desire to liberate and the effort required by the sAdhaka (aspirant) is emphasized. If there is no effort, there can not be a result. As Sri Radhakrishnan says ‘People in our society have resolved to renounce nothing, but wish to enjoy the fruit of renunciation.’ The vedanta kesari puts it ‘The goal we desire (should be) to reach the ideal society of the prophets, a society of just, peaceful, morally and intellectually progressive community of non-attached and responsible individuals, the means we adopt therefore must be worthy of the ends. Then only the real age of millennium will dawn wherein one feels that the whole world is one’s family of kith and kin, a place for nothing but love and fellow feeling, in short a vasudhaivakuTumbakam.h (universe as a family).’

Commenting on the first verse of Atma Bodha, the sanskrit commentator, Swami kRiShNAnandAshramI, remarks that Sri Shankaracharya composed the three great bhashyas (of the upaniShads, gItA, and brahma sUtra) for the guidance of people qualified by birth, environment, circumstances, and mental, moral and spiritual development. Out of great
compassion for the rest of the masses, Shankara composed Atmabodha for explaining the knowledge of the Self.

The treatise of the knowledge of self, Atmabodha, is meant for those whose sins have been destroyed by religious austerities, who are calm, devoid of attachment and are persons desirous of liberation (i.e. mumukShu-s desirous of mokSha).

The qualified are those who have the four fold requisites, 1. discrimination between real and unreal (viveka) 2. non-attachment (i.e indifferent to the results of one’s action) 3. desire for emancipation (mumukShu-s) and 4. the six fold qualities,

a. sAma (restraint of internal senses)

b. dAma (restraint of external senses)

c. uparati (control of senses, without jumping from one object to another)

d. samAdhAna (mind constantly on the Self)

e. titIkShA (indifferent endurance)

f. shraddhA (faith).

The rest of the sixty seven verses may be roughly classified in to the following subjects, means for emancipation (2-5), sa.nSara (6-12), various sharIra-s (embodiments) (13-19), adhyAsa (15-19), aha.nkAra (26-30), doctrine of neti-neti (31-36), sAdhanA (37-39), self-realization (40-46), vision of a j nAnI and characteristics of a jivanmukta (47-53), and finally the nature of Brahman (54-68).

May the great AchArya, one of the greatest persons to grace this planet, Shankara, make us aware of His grace.

// आत्मबोधः //
.. AtmabodhaH ..
तपोभि: क्षीणपापानां शान्तानां वीतरागिणाम् ।
मुमुक्षुणामपेक्ष्योऽयात्मवृधो विधियते || १ ||
बोधोऽन्यसाधनेऽभ्यो हि साक्षात्मोऽक्षेपकाध्यायः ।
पाकप्रय वहन्नवज्जानं विना मोक्षो न सिध्यति || २ ||
अविरोधत्या कर्म नाविवाय विनिवर्ततेऽ ।
विवाहविवायं निह्न्येव तेजस्तिमिर्स्तञ्जवेऽ । || ३ ||
परिच्छेष्ठ इतात्मानात्माश्च सति केवलं: । var अवच्छेष्ठ
स्वयं प्रकाश्येत्वा मेधयोगेऽदुभानिवेऽ । || ४ ||
अज्ञानकलुषं जीवं ज्ञानायासाध्यविनिर्मलम् ।
कृत्वा जानं स्वयं नश्येवज्ञं कतकरेण्यज्ञः ॥ ४ ॥
संसारः स्वपन्तुल्यो हि रागोद्दासकं दक्षिण्यः ।
स्वकाले सत्यविन्दुहाति प्रतायो न सत्यसद्विवेतुः ॥ ६ ॥
तावत्तथे जागरणं शूकितकारप्रज्ञं यथा ।
यावश्य जायते ब्रह्म स्वरूपसङ्कल्पनमुभयः ॥ ७ ॥
उपादानद्वितियं जगन्नि परमेश्वरे ।
संस्थापनं लुभाय शनिं बुद्धानन्तर वारिणि ॥ ८ ॥
सचिवालयं नुवये नित्ये विषयं प्रकल्पितः ।
व्यक्तयो विविधा: सर्वं ज्ञातकं कुटाकिविष्ठ ॥ ९ ॥
उत्थकशाहो द्राक्षिं कुशो नानोपाधिगतो विभुः ।
तदवेदान्ताभद्विन्दुर्भति तपश्चेकवलो भवेत् ॥ १० ॥
नानोपाधिगतशायदं जातिविश्वासमायः ।
वरः जातिनामाधिगताः आमयारोपित्वस्तैः रस्त्वां संबंधते भेदप्रति ॥ ११ ॥
पंचवृत्तमधूमशस्य संवाचितम ।
शरीरं सुखुक्षनां भोगायतनमुच्यते ॥ १२ ॥
पंचवाणमनं बुद्धिसद्विन्द्रसमन्तन्त्रम ।
अपशुक्तमृतोत्त्वं सृष्टिमायं भोगसाधनम ॥ १३ ॥
अनादीविद्विन्दुवाच्यं कारणोपाधिगच्छति ।
उपाधिवत्त्वान्यमात्मानमवधारेयत् ॥ १४ ॥
पंचरूपादियां गोनं तत्त्वम् इव स्थित: ।
शुद्धात्मा नीलवस्त्रदियां गोनं स्फटिको यथा ॥ १४ ॥
वपवत्वाधिरि: कोशयुक्तकं युक्तवचातातIVAL: ।
आमान्तरं शुद्धं विविधायत्तुलं यथा ॥ १५ ॥
वरः विविधं विविधायत: आर्यालिङ्कः ।
benedictive विविधायत् सदावस्यात: न सवयावधायते ।
बुद्धान्तावाधासतं स्वच्छेषु प्रतिविष्कृतत्वम् ॥ १७ ॥
देहन्द्रययगनोबुद्धिश्रृंगृकृतिस्यो विलक्षणम ।
तदवृत्तिसाधिक्षणं विवाहात्मानं राजवल्लभं ॥ १८ ॥
व्यापयित्विन्द्रवाच्यात: व्यापारिवाविवेक्यनाम ।
दृश्ययोत्पत्तिः प्राच्यर्थ: प्राच्यविषयव: यथा श्री: ॥ १९ ॥
आमचवत्त्वान्यमाधिश्च देहन्द्रयमनोपिथाः ।
स्वक्षेत्येषु वर्तन्ते सूचितत्वों यथा जना: ॥ २० ॥
देहन्द्रयगुणान्तपास्यमले सचिवालामिनि ।
अभ्यस्वत् विवेकः कहे नीतत्वविन्दुः ॥ २१ ॥
आंत्यान्तिनासभायेः करुणावाहीन चाचामिनि ।
कल्याणेतर्म्यातं चन्द्र चलनाद यथाभस: ॥ २२ ॥

8
रागेच्छासुखद्: वादि बुद्धि सत्यां प्रवत्तिः।
सुपुर्णो नासि तपाः तस्मादुद्भद्भुतू नामानः॥ २३॥
प्रकाशोऽकस्य तोपस्य शैवम्वर्यायोऽितः।
स्वाभावः सचिवालयन्त्रिनिमंतऽश्यवाशमः॥ २४॥
आत्माः सचिवालयुड्धुःतिरिति द्रमम्।
संयोज्य चाविवेक्यन जानामीति प्रवत्तिः॥ २५॥
आत्माया विकिष्ठा नासि बुद्धिवोत्स न जालिव।
जीवः सर्वमल्य जाति इत्यति मुद्रिति॥ २६॥
रज्जुसंवदात्मानः जीवं जात्वा भयं बहुत्।
नाशं जीवः परामोजि जाति चेतन्येऽयं अवेत्॥ २७॥
आत्मामात्माये नाइन्ते बुद्धयादीनिन्दियाण्यपि।
दीपो घडादिव्यजस्यात्मा जोऽतेतेनवाभास्यते॥ २८॥
स्विद्ये नायवेप्यच्छा वाभुः पत्यात्मनः।
न दीपस्यान्यदीपेच्छा यथा स्वात्मप्रकाशने॥ २९॥
निषिध्य निषिद्धोपारभिः नैनीति वाक्यतः।
विद्याः कां महावाक्ये ज्ञातप्रायमत्मानः॥ ३०॥
आविवकं शरीराणि दृश्यं बुद्धवदन्त्थिः।
एतद्वित्ताक्षणा विद्याध्र ब्रह्मदीति निमित्तमः॥ ३१॥
देहायन्त्वायमेः जन्मजराकाशिलयादयः॥
श्वासिदविषयः: सध्वो निरिन्दितत्वतः न च॥ ३२॥
अमनस्त्वामेः नु: वरारोदन्तस्यायः॥
अप्राणो हुम्नः: शुभ इत्यादि भृतिशासनात्॥ ३३॥
( एतसंज्ञायते प्राणो नमः सविन्याणि च। ॥)
सं वापुश्च्योंिरिपाः पृथिवी विश्वस्य भारिणी ॥
निर्मुनो निर्मिको नरत्मो निर्मिकितं निर्मिजनः।
निरिवकारो निरराकारो नित्यमुक्तोस्य संस्कृतं:॥ ३४॥
अहमकाशवन्तः सर्विकर्णातोऽचुयतः।
सदा सर्वसमः सिद्धो निःस्वा निमर्लोकमः॥ ३५॥
नित्येच्छावपकृतवित्तमवादान्तमद्वयमः।
सत्यां धातमानं नत्त्वं बङ्गारोवन्त सतु॥ ३६॥
एवं निरत्ताभ्यासस्ता ब्रह्मवास्मीति वासना।
हर्मविद्याविश्वेनानि रोगमिवं रसायनमः॥ ३७॥
विद्याक्षेत्र आशीर्बाहो विरागो विजितस्यः।
भावेदकाशमानं तमन्तमन्तनन्यथीः॥ ३८॥
आत्मायेवाकिलं दृश्यं प्रविलाय्य धिया सुधीः।
भावेदकाशमानं निमःकाशवतः॥ ३९॥
रूपवर्णाविकं सर्वं विद्याय परमार्थवित्।
परिपूर्णं विद्यान्दनस्वरूपेणावातिचिते ॥ ४०॥
जातुव्याज्ञानेषु भप्रेण नात्मनि विद्यते।
विद्यान्नेत्रकुपत्वादीश्यते स्वभेदम तत् ॥ ४१॥ var विद्यम्।

एवमात्मार्यो ध्यामध्यन सत्तं कृते।
उदितववजिश्वाला सर्वाज्ञानथं वस्यत् ॥ ४२॥
अरुणेन बोधनं पूर्वं सन्ततमसं हुते।
तत् आविभिक्तथा स्वभेदवांशुमानिव ॥ ४३॥
आत्मा तु सत्तं भावात्वप्राप्तवं विद्यता।
तत् भावे प्राप्तवं भाज्ञात्वमं त्वक्षणाभरणं यथा ॥ ४४॥
स्थायो पुरुषवद्भान्तु सुकृतं ब्रह्मणि जीवता।
जीवस्य तात्विकं रूपं तत्मन्युष्टं निवेदते ॥ ४५॥
तत्वस्यां रुपानुभवं वातुवर्णं ज्ञानक्षमता।
अहं ममेति चाज्ञाना वाप्ते दिग्म्मादिवत् ॥ ४६॥
सम्परिवीकञ्जने स्वात्मानं सर्वमीक्षते ॥ ४७॥
एकं च सर्वमात्मानमीक्षते ज्ञानक्षमता ॥ ४७॥
आत्माकेषु जगत्स्वरमात्मसौन्यस्य विद्यते।
मूलो यद्वं विद्यवादिनि स्वात्मानं सर्वमीक्षते ॥ ४८॥
जीवनुकलस्तु तद्विक्षनवृत्तिपारिपुष्टिगुणान्तरायेत्।
सचिवालयनरपथं भवेदुप्रभुमरकोपश्वत् ॥ ४९॥
तीतयं मोहार्णं हुत्ता रागेद्विदिकरक्षसन।
योगी राज्यसमाप्तेन आत्मारामो विराजते ॥ ५०॥
वाद्यानित्यसुवाच्यसक्तं दिखाव्यासूतिनि विद्यमानसक्तिः।
घटन्धैर्यपवत्तवस्य स्वान्तरेय प्रकाशने ॥ ५१॥
var दीपवच्छादन्तरेष्व

उपाधियथापि तद्वसतत्त्वं त्वाघ्यमवस्नि:।
सर्वविन्दुवसत्त्वदस्यावरोपवतवरेत्। ॥ ५२॥
उपाधिविलयाद्वित्तिः निविद्यतं विश्बेदवस्नि:।
जले जलं वियव्दिमित्वं तेजस्तेजसिः वा यथा। ॥ ५३॥
यल्लभान्त्रपरं लक्ष्यं यत्सुशुश्रापरं सुखम्।
यज्ञानामापरं ज्ञानं तद्वसत्त्वविश्वरेत् ॥ ५४॥
यददृश्वा नापरं दृश्यं यदभूत्वा न पुनरंव:।
यज्ञात्वा नापरं ज्ञेयं तद्वसत्त्वविश्वरेत्। ॥ ५५॥
तिन्यमृगाधमभु: पूर्णसंचिवालयनस्मृतम्।
अन्तः निर्यमेकं यद्वसत्त्वविश्वरेत्। ॥ ५६॥
अत्वाद्यथपस्यं वेदान्ततैलस्तोद्वयम्। var विध्यम्।
References in introduction include notes from the translations by Swami Nikhilananda, TMP Mahadevan, Vidyaratna Menon, and the sanskrit commentary by Swami Krishnanandashrami. Transliteration is by Kim Poulsen (poulsen@dk-online.dk). Comments by Giridhar (giridhar@chemeng.Isc.ernet.in). Additional proofreading by Avinash Sathaye (sohum@ms.uky.edu), David Lyttle (dhlyttle@hotmail.com), and Sunder Hattangadi (sunderh@hotmail.com).

Please send corrections to sanskrit@cheerful.com
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1. I am composing the Atma-Bodha, this treatise of the Knowledge of the Self, for those who have purified themselves by austerities and are peaceful in heart and calm, who are free from cravings and are desirous of liberation.

2. Just as the fire is the direct cause for cooking, so without Knowledge no emancipation can be had. Compared with all other forms of discipline Knowledge of the Self is the one direct means for liberation.

3. Action cannot destroy ignorance, for it is not in conflict with or opposed to ignorance. Knowledge does verily destroy ignorance as light destroys deep darkness.

4. The Soul appears to be finite because of ignorance. When ignorance is destroyed the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity truly reveals itself by itself: like the Sun when the clouds pass away.

5. Constant practice of knowledge purifies the Self (‘Jivatman’), stained by ignorance and then disappears itself – as the powder of the ‘Kataka-nut’ settles down after it has cleansed the muddy water.

6. The world, which is full of attachments, aversions, etc., is like a dream. It appears to be real, as long as it continues but appears to be unreal when one is awake (i.e., when true wisdom dawns).

7. The Jagat appears to be true (Satyam) so long as Brahman, the substratum, the basis of all this creation, is not realized. It is like the illusion of silver in the mother-of pearl.

8. Like bubbles in the water, the worlds rise, exist and dissolve in the Supreme Self, which is the material cause and the prop of everything.

9. All the manifested world of things and beings are projected by imagination upon the substratum which is the Eternal All-pervading Vishnu, whose nature is Existence-Intelligence; just as the different ornaments are all made out of the same gold.

10. The All-pervading Akasa appears to be diverse on account of its association with various conditionings (Upadhis) which are different from each other. Space becomes one on the destruction of these limiting adjuncts: So also the Omnipresent Truth appears to be diverse on account of Its association with the various Upadhis and becomes one on the destruction of these Upadhis.
11. Because of Its association with different conditionings (Upadhis) such ideas as caste, colour and position are super-imposed upon the Atman, as flavour, colour, etc., are super-imposed on water.

12. Determined for each individual by his own past actions and made up of the Five elements – that have gone through the process of “five-fold self-division and mutual combination” (Pancheekarana) – are born the gross-body, the medium through which pleasure and pain are experienced, the tent-of-experiences.

13. The five Pranas, the ten organs and the Manas and the Buddhi, formed from the rudimentary elements (Tanmatras) before their “five-fold division and mutual combination with one another” (Pancheekarana) and this is the subtle body, the instruments-of-experience (of the individual).

14. Avidya, which is indescribable and beginningless is the Causal Body. Know for certain that the Atman is other than these three conditioning bodies (Upadhis).

15. In its identification with the five-sheaths the Immaculate Atman appears to have borrowed their qualities upon itself; as in the case of a crystal which appears to gather unto itself colour of its vicinity (blue cloth, etc.,)

16. Through discriminative self-analysis and logical thinking one should separate the Pure self within from the sheaths as one separates the rice from the husk, bran, etc., that are covering it.

17. The Atman does not shine in everything although He is All-pervading. He is manifest only in the inner equipment, the intellect (Buddhi): just as the reflection in a clean mirror.

18. One should understand that the Atman is always like the King, distinct from the body, senses, mind and intellect, all of which constitute the matter (Prakriti); and is the witness of their functions.

19. The moon appears to be running when the clouds move in the sky. Likewise to the non-discriminating person the Atman appears to be active when It is observed through the functions of the sense-organs.

20. Depending upon the energy of vitality of Consciousness (Atma Chaitanya) the body, senses, mind and intellect engage themselves in their respective activities, just as men work depending upon the light of the Sun.

21. Fools, because they lack in their powers of discrimination superimpose on the Atman, the Absolute-Existence-Knowledge (Sat-Chit), all the varied functions of the body and the senses, just as they attribute blue colour and the like to the sky.

22. The tremblings that belong to the waters are attributed through ignorance to the reflected moon dancing on it: likewise agency of action, of enjoyment and of other limitations (which really belong to the mind) are delusively understood as the nature of the Self (Atman).

23. Attachment, desire, pleasure, pain, etc., are perceived to exist so long as Buddhi or mind functions. They are not perceived in deep sleep when the mind ceases to exist. Therefore they belong to the mind alone and not to the Atman.
24. Just as luminosity is the nature of the Sun, coolness of water and heat of fire, so too the nature of the Atman is Eternity, Purity, Reality, Consciousness and Bliss.

25. By the indiscriminate blending of the two – the Existence-Knowledge-aspect of the Self and the thought-wave of the intellect – there arises the notion of “I know”.

26. Atman never does anything and the intellect of its own accord has no capacity to experience ‘I know’. But the individuality in us delusorily thinks he is himself the seer and the knower.

27. Just as the person who regards a rope as a snake is overcome by fear, so also one considering oneself as the ego (Jiva) is overcome by fear. The ego-centric individuality in us regains fearlessness by realising that It is not a Jiva but is Itself the Supreme Soul.

28. Just as a lamp illumines a jar or a pot, so also the Atman illumines the mind and the sense organs, etc. These material-objects by themselves cannot illumine themselves because they are inert.

29. A lighted-lamp does not need another lamp to illumine its light. So too, Atman which is Knowledge itself needs no other knowledge to know it.

30. By a process of negation of the conditionings (Upadhis) through the help of the scriptural statement ‘It is not this, It is not this’, the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, as indicated by the great Mahavakyas, has to be realised.

31. The body, etc., up to the “Causal Body” – Ignorance – which are objects perceived, are as perishable as bubbles. Realize through discrimination that I am the ‘Pure Brahman’ ever completely separate from all these.

32. I am other than the body and so I am free from changes such as birth, wrinkling, senility, death, etc. I have nothing to do with the sense objects such as sound and taste, for I am without the sense-organs.

33. I am other than the mind and hence, I am free from sorrow, attachment, malice and fear, for “HE is without breath and without mind, Pure, etc.”, is the Commandment of the great scripture, the Upanishads.

34. I am without attributes and actions; Eternal (Nitya) without any desire and thought (Nirvikalpa), without any dirt (Niranjana), without any change (Nirvikara), without form (Nirakara), ever-liberated (Nitya Mukta) ever-pure (Nirmala).

35. Like the space I fill all things within and without. Changeless and the same in all, at all times I am pure, unattached, stainless and motionless.

36. I am verily that Supreme Brahman alone which is Eternal, Pure and Free, One, indivisible and non-dual and of the nature of Changeless-Knowledge-Infinite.

37. The impression “I am Brahman” thus created by constant practice destroys ignorance and the agitation caused by it, just as medicine or Rasayana destroys disease.

38. Sitting in a solitary place, freeing the mind from desires and controlling the senses, meditate with unswerving attention on the Atman which is One without-a-second.
39. The wise one should intelligently merge the entire world-of-objects in the Atman alone and constantly think of the Self ever as contaminated by anything as the sky.

40. He who has realised the Supreme, discards all his identification with the objects of names and forms. (Thereafter) he dwells as an embodiment of the Infinite Consciousness and Bliss. He becomes the Self.

41. There are no distinctions such as “Knower”, the “Knowledge” and the “Object of Knowledge” in the Supreme Self. On account of Its being of the nature of endless Bliss, It does not admit of such distinctions within Itself. It alone shines by Itself.

42. When this, the lower and the higher aspects of the Self are well churned together, the fire of knowledge is born from it, which in its mighty conflagration shall burn down all the fuel of ignorance in us.

43. The Lord of the early dawn (Aruna) himself has already looted away the thick darkness, when soon the sun rises. The Divine Consciousness of the Self rises when the right knowledge has already killed the darkness in the bosom.

44. Atman is an ever-present Reality. Yet, because of ignorance it is not realised. On the destruction of ignorance Atman is realised. It is like the missing ornament of one’s neck.

45. Brahman appears to be a ‘Jiva’ because of ignorance, just as a post appears to be a ghost. The ego-centric-individuality is destroyed when the real nature of the ‘Jiva’ is realised as the Self.

46. The ignorance characterised by the notions ‘I’ and ‘Mine’ is destroyed by the knowledge produced by the realisation of the true nature of the Self, just as right information removes the wrong notion about the directions.

47. The Yogi of perfect realisation and enlightenment sees through his “eye of wisdom” (Gyana Chakshush) the entire universe in his own Self and regards everything else as his own Self and nothing else.

48. Nothing whatever exists other than the Atman: the tangible universe is verily Atman. As pots and jars are verily made of clay and cannot be said to be anything but clay, so too, to the enlightened soul and that is perceived is the Self.

49. A liberated one, endowed with Self-knowledge, gives up the traits of his previously explained equipments (Upadhis) and because of his nature of Sat-chit-ananda, he verily becomes Brahman like (the worm that grows to be) a wasp.

50. After crossing the ocean of delusion and killing the monsters of likes and dislikes, the Yogi who is united with peace dwells in the glory of his own realised Self – as an Atmaram.

51. The self-abiding Jivan Mukta, relinquishing all his attachments to the illusory external happiness and satisfied with the bliss derived from the Atman, shines inwardly like a lamp placed inside a jar.

52. Though he lives in the conditionings (Upadhis), he, the contemplative one, remains ever unconcerned with anything or he may move about like the wind, perfectly unattached.
53. On the destruction of the Upadhis, the contemplative one is totally absorbed in 'Vishnu', the All-pervading Spirit, like water into water, space into space and light into light.

54. Realise That to be Brahman, the attainment of which leaves nothing more to be attained, the blessedness of which leaves no other blessing to be desired and the knowledge of which leaves nothing more to be known.

55. Realise that to be Brahman which, when seen, leaves nothing more to be seen, which having become one is not born again in this world and which, when knowing leaves nothing else to be known.

56. Realise that to be Brahman, which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute, which is Non-dual, Infinite, Eternal and One and which fills all the quarters – above and below and all that exists between.

57. Realise that to be Brahman which is Non-dual, Indivisible, One and Blissful and which is indicated in Vedanta as the Immutable Substratum, realised after the negation of all tangible objects.

58. Deities like Brahma and others taste only a particle, of the unlimited Bliss of Brahman and enjoy in proportion their share of that particle.

59. All objects are pervaded by Brahman. All actions are possible because of Brahman: therefore Brahman permeates everything as butter permeates milk.

60. Realise that to be Brahman which is neither subtle nor gross: neither short nor long: without birth or change: without form, qualities, colour and name.

61. That by the light of which the luminous, orbs like the Sun and the Moon are illuminated, but which is not illumined by their light, realise that to be Brahman.

62. Pervading the entire universe outwardly and inwardly the Supreme Brahman shines of Itself like the fire that permeates a red-hot iron-ball and glows by itself.

63. Brahman is other than this, the universe. There exists nothing that is not Brahman. If any object other than Brahman appears to exist, it is unreal like the mirage.

64. All that is perceived, or heard, is Brahman and nothing else. Attaining the knowledge of the Reality, one sees the Universe as the non-dual Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute.

65. Though Atman is Pure Consciousness and ever present everywhere, yet It is perceived by the eye-of-wisdom alone: but one whose vision is obscured by ignorance he does not see It; as the blind do not see the resplendent Sun.

66. The 'Jiva' free from impurities, being heated in the fire of knowledge kindled by hearing and so on, shines of itself like gold.

67. The Atman, the Sun of Knowledge that rises in the sky of the heart, destroys the darkness of the ignorance, pervades and sustains all and shines and makes everything to shine.
68. He who renouncing all activities, who is free of all the limitations of time, space and direction, worships his own Atman which is present everywhere, which is the destroyer of heat and cold, which is Bliss-Eternal and stainless, becomes All-knowing and All-pervading and attains thereafter Immortality.

Thus concludes Atma-Bodha.
ATMA BODHA
(A Treatise on the knowledge of Atma)
by
SRI ADI SANKARACHARYA
Text in Roman Script with English translation and Commentary
by
A.S.DEEKSHITULU
&
CH. SUNDARA RAMIAH
Sruti Smruti Puraanaanaam
Aalayam Karunaalayam
Namaami Bhagavatpaadam
Sankaram Loka Sankaram.

This book Atma Bodha or knowledge of Self (Atma) is an outcome of deep thinking about why we are born and living, influencing or getting influenced by every one around us, developing relations with them both physically and mentally, worrying for them and either losing them or leaving them temporarily due to life cycle and permanently by death. According to Bhagavatgeeta and Upanishads it is due to this Birth - Death Cycle.
For everyone this Birth Cycle is continuing. This is what worried the thinkers and philosophers. "How long should we dwell in these cycles? Is there no end.

Birth is the result of formation of organs of the Body and Mind. This is followed by the "I" feeling i.e., I am doing, I am successfull, I am suffering etc., This "I" feeling results in either ego and depression. This ego results in Karma which results in competition which results in worry. The worry results in disease. Disease results in Death which is followed by another birth. The cycle continues thus.
The great Jnanis worked hard to find out how to put an end to these cycles of birth and death though the ignorant kept on asking why should we bother when no one guarantees a rebirth or a birth known to us or a birth in which we do not remember any thing about this birth. Such ignorant lived for physical pleasures, suffered or enjoyed as a result of their works and died. This Atma Bodha is not for them. This is for thinkers who are really interested to acquire wisdom and attain liberation for the soul (Atma) from the birth cycle.

Atma Bodha (Knowledge of Self) is one of the works of Adi Sankaracharya. In this work he expounds clearly with the help of homely analogies the nature of the consciousness (Self) and the means of self realisation. The speciality of this Atma Bodha is that though each Sloka has one direct meaning the concept and inner meaning of each Sloka is really more thoughtful and enlightens the reader. An attempt made to explain the inner meaning also.

Is the following books on Atma Bodha were consulted in the preparation of this translation.
1. Self knowledge of Sri Sankaracharya by Swami Nikilananda of Sri Ramakrishna Mission.
ATMA BODHA
(Treatise of the knowledge of Atma)

1. Tapobhih Ksheenapaapaanaam
   Santanaam Veetaraginaam
   Mumukshoonaam Apekshyoyam
   Atmabodho Vidheeyate

   This Atma Bodha is designed for the benefit of those who got rid of sins by doing penance, those who have a peaceful mind, those who could overcome their cravings, and those who are desirous of moksha or liberation.
2. **Bodho anya-Sadhanebhyo Hi**  
**Sakshan-Moksha Eka Sadhanam**  
**Pakasya Vahnivat Jnanam**  
**Vina Moksho Na Sidhyati**

Though other articles such as rice, vegetables, water and pots are necessary, to cook a meal at is fire that actually cooks the meal. As fire is thus the direct cause of cooking, Knowledge of the Atma and not any other form of discipline i.e., practice of austerities and rituals, is the sole direct means to attain moksha or liberation. The purpose of austerities is purification of heart and creation of a mental condition to aid one's spiritual growth and render it fit for pursuing the path of knowledge (jnana marga)
Karma or Action cannot destroy ignorance as it is not opposed to it. Knowledge or Jnana alone destroys ignorance as dense darkness is destroyed by light. By means of action one fulfill his desires. Therefore action is in harmony with ignorance and cannot therefore directly destroy it.

Here ignorance does not mean illiteracy or absence of book knowledge. According to Vedanta the knowledge of the nonduality of Brahma and Atma is the only true knowledge; all else is ignorance (Ajnana or Avidya). Such jnana alone removes the ignorance as dense darkness is destroyed by light.
Due to Ajnana or ignorance, one imposes limits to Atma. When this Ajnana is destroyed, Atma can be visualised just as sun appears emerging when dark clouds are dispersed.

As the true nature of sun is hidden by a cloud, so the true nature of the eternal and self-luminous Atma is hidden by ignorance. On account of this ignorance the all pervading Atma seems to be a physical a finite being. Such ignorance is destroyed by means of contemplation and realisation of the truth contained in the vedic mahavakyas like Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma) and Prajnanam Brahma (Brahma is pure consciousness).
5. **Ajnana Kalusham Jeevam**  

**Jnanaabhyasat Vinirmalam**  

**Krutwa Jnanam Swayam Nasyet**  

**Jalam Katakarenuvat.**

The embodied soul. Jivatma, rendered dirty by ignorance is purified by knowledge through long and uninterrupted meditation on Brahma, and then itself disappears as the powder of Kataka nut (cleaning nut) precipitates itself after precipitating impurities suspended in muddy water.

The jivatma is rendered dirty by illusory ideas of birth and death, happiness and unhappiness which are superimposed upon the self due to ignorance. Long and uninterrupted meditation on Brahma firmly stamps a man's consciousness with the knowledge of his true divine nature and such self knowledge makes a man realise that he is not the doer or an experiencer but the all
pervading Brahma, Existance, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute (Satchit Anand). After having thus sublimated the mind, knowledge itself disappears like the powder of kataka nut which disappears after cleansing muddy water.

6. **Samsarah Swapnatulyo hi**

*Ragadweshadi Samkulah*

*Swakaale Satyavatbhati*

*Prabodhe sati Asadbhavet.*

The world, which is filled with attachments, or aversions, love or hate pain or pleasure and other dual experiences, is like a dream. It appears to be really happening as long as the dream continues, but appears unreal, when one is awake. Similarly one's dual experiments in this world appear illusory when one attains self-knowledge through contemplation of such vedic statements as Tatwamasi (Thou art that) and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahma)
When we look into an oyster shell, it appears like silver. But it is only a silvery shining. Similarly till we know the indivisible and Supreme Self which is called Brahma, all this creation appears to be real and permanent.

Actually every thing we see, hear and feel is creation of Brahma. Whereas Brahma is indivisible, unique and permanent, his creation appears to be different beings which is nothing but illusion. Because of the effect of this Maya or ignorance, this world reflects itself as different beings and things. Once we know Brahma the ignorance is dispelled. The world that appeared to be real ceases to delude us.
As bubbles are developed in water, the whole world is created, developed and destroyed by the Brahma and exists because of the very Brahma.

The interesting thing is that Brahma is in the form of Pure Satchidananda and is like pure water. The bubble is this world which appears to have emanated from Brahma. But it has limited time of existence. As water bubble blows off to become absorbed in water, this world which is very very temporary remains for some time and is destroyed and absorbed in Brahma only.
All gold ornaments have different names but are basically of gold only. Similarly all the manifested world of things with different names are basically forms of the all pervading Vishnu, whose nature is Existence Intelligence (Satchit Atma).

When we take any gold ornament to a jeweller, he fixes its rate or value as gold only but not as that particular ornament. Similarly the man with Adhyatma outlook sees everything in this creation as Brahma but not as beings with dissimilar names.
Just as the all pervading Akasa appears to be diverse an account of its association with various conditionings (upadhis) which are different from each other, the omnipresent truth appears to be diverse on account of its association with the various "Upadhis". The omnipresent truth becomes one after the various upadhis are destroyed.

Whatever is above earth is sky. Then what is in a house is also sky though we are distinguishing the house as drawing room, bedroom, kitchen and bath room, or by constructing walls. The walls are man made and due to worldly reasoning keeping us in a belief that they are all different rooms though they are actually sky. Once the walls are removed, there is no room and no house.
What is left there is sky. Similarly if man-made reasoning can be ignored, then we can see Parmatma in every being. Here just thinking is not enough but one must be able to feel and believe this concept whole heartedly.

11 Naanopaadhi Vasaadeva

Jaati Varnaasra maadayah

Atmya aropitah thoye

Rasa Varnadi Bhedavat

Ideas such as caste, colour and position are imposed upon the Atman on account of its association with different upadhis, just as flavour, colour etc., are imposed upon water.

Pure water is same everywhere and has no colour, taste and smell. Only when subjected to human reasoning, we feel colour or taste or smell. Similarly because of faulty reasoning we feel Pure Atma as different body
beings, different races and of different origins. Even great scholars are influenced by the Maya of Paramatma so much that Atma is overshadowed by Anatma and we distinguish human being as man or woman of a particular race and particular religion.

If one can look beyond this faulty reasoning, the Pure Atma in every being can be visualised.

12 Pancheekruta Mahaabhoota

\[ \text{Sambhavam Karma Sanchitam} \]

\[ \text{Sareeram Sukha-Dukhanaam} \]

\[ \text{Bhogaayatanam Uchyate.} \]

Due to a particular formulation of five elements of Nature (Pancha Bhootas) which are Earth, Fire, Sky, Water and Air, the human body is made. This is called Sthoola Sareera (gross body) the medium through which the Atma experiences and pleasure and pain. This
is given by Paramatma on the basis of Karma done by it in its previous births.

The process of such formulation of the five elements is called Panchikarana where one half of each of the five elements mixes with one of the other four.

Modern science concepts are worked in a different way but basically it is the nature's five elements that make human body. Science says it is made up of cells. A cell is made of organic matter which is called by our ancient Jnanis as earth.

Science agrees that Air and Water are there in the body. The Sky is actually anything empty. There is a lot of empty space in our body which is Sky. There is fire in in our body though we cannot see it. Modern Science calls it acidic reactions which are vital for digestion.
So the conclusion that human body is made up of just organic matter is only half the story. Jnanis consider that the main part of the formation of the human body has to do with sanchita karma i.e., the vast store of past actions the fruits of which have not been reaped.

13 Panchapraana Mano Buddhi

Dasendriya Samanvitam

Apancheekruta Bhootottham

Sookshmaangam Bhogasaadhanam.

The five Pranas are Prana, Apana, Vyna, Udana and Samana. Ten Organs are: five organs of perception - Eyes, Ears, Tongue, Nose and Skin and five organs of activity - Speech (Mouth), Hands, Legs and organs of excretion)

The Sookshma Sareera, subtle body is a combination of seventeen ingredients, five Pranas, ten Organs, Mind and Intellect, the instruments with which we experience pain pleasure.
The Sthoola Sareera gross body, is the one that gets old, diseased and dies. Sookshma Sareera leaves the gross body at the time of death and gets rebirth. It is not Atma that gets rebirth, according to Adwaita Doctrine. Atma is nothing but a form of Paramatma. It monifests itself in Sookshma Sareera and gets involved in the ties of human relations and gets elations and sorrows. It also does various Karmas both good and bad. Naturally the results follow and the Sookshma Sareera gets the rewards called good births and punishments called mean births. This process of rebirths stops only if in any birth this Sookshma Sareera gets out of Maya and understands the Atma in its body and gives up all worldly attachments and starts leading a life that befits Paramatma. Then it will join Paramatma which is called Moksha. Till it is attained this worldly pleasures and sorrows will be hunting it in every birth.
14 Anaadyavidya Anirvaachyaa
Kaaranopaadhi ruchyate
Upaadhi Tritayaadanyam
Atmaanam Avadhaarayet.

Avidya, ignorance, has no beginning and also quite difficult to define. This is also called Karana Sareera (Causal Body). So every living body has three farms of sareera viz., Sthoola (gross body), Sookshma (subtle body) and Karana (causal body). The gross body and subtle body are products of Avidya and therefore Avidya is called the causal body. Known for certain that Atma is none of these. It is the witness to their three bodies and never to be identified with them. Atma or self luminous consciousness, illumines the acitivites of the gross and subtle bodies. It is itself detached from all the bodies. Because of ignorance we think and attribute all the qualities of the three Sareeras to Atma.
Panchakosaadi Yogena

Tat Tanmaya Iva Sthitah

Suddhaatma Neelavastraadi

Yogena Sphatiko Yathaa.

When covered by a blue cloth, a pure colourless crystal looks like a blue crystal. Similarly because of the union with the Five Kosas, the pure Atma appears to have borrowed their qualities upon itself.

The Five Kosas (sheaths) are: Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnana Maya and Ananda Maya.

The details of all these Kosas are well described in the second chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad.

Annamaya Kosa is the physical body. Pranamaya Kosa is the one that has Five Pranas that breathes life into this physical body. Manomaya Kosa is responsible for our twin feelings like happiness and sorrow. It
controls our mind Vijnanamaya Kosa controls our intellect. These three constitute the Sookshma Sareera.

The Anandamaya Kosa which belongs to our Karana Sareera and controls our emotions is not real Ananda. Real and Saswata Ananda belongs to Atma. It is therefore established that none of the three sareeras is Atma.

16 Vapus Tushadibhih Kosaih
Yuktam Yuktya Avaghaatatah
Atmanam Antaram Suddham
Vivichyaat Tandulam Yatha.

Just as rice is obtained by pounding paddy and separating the husk, bran etc., we can separate Pure Atma within from the encircling of Five Kosas through careful discrimination. When one clearly realises the soul to be distinct from the Kosas, he becomes detached from them. This detachment is followed by knowledge of the self.
17 Sada Sarvagato Apyatmaa
 Na Sarvatra Avabhaasate
 Buddhhaaveva Avabhaaseta
 Swaccheshu Pratibimbavat

Atma pervades every where. But it will not shine in every thing. It will manifest only in the purest form of Buddhi. As a perfect image is reflected in a perfect mirror, Atma can shine only in the purest form of Buddhi or intellect which is an integral part of Sookshma Sareera.

18 Dehendriya Mano Buddhī
 Prakrutibhyo Vilakshanam
 Tadvrutti Sakshinam Vidya
 Atmaanam Raajavat Sada

As a king observes the entertainment in his court hall without being a participant, Atma is distinct from the body, senses, mind and intellect and is the witness of their functions.
An ignorant person thinks that the moon is moving whereas it is the clouds that are really moving. Similarly to the non-discriminating people, the Atma appears to be active when it is observed through the functions of the sense organs.

As men do their own work in the light of sun, the body, organs, Manas and Buddhi do their own work in Atma Chaitanya or consciousness.
When the sun shines we do so many acts both good and bad in sunlight though the sun is in no way responsible other than giving light.

Similarly for the actions of body organs, Manas or Buddhi, Atma is not to be held responsible.

21 Dehendriya Gunaan Karmaani
   Amale Satchidatmani
   Adhyasyanti avivekena
   Gagane Neelataadivat.

As one believes the sky is blue, all the deeds and characteristics of body and organs are attributed to blemishless Atma due to lack of power of discrimination.

Pure Atma is blemishless and it has both Sat and Chit. It has no birth, age, death, achievements or failures. It is not therefore possible to characterise it.
Body and organs do both good and bad deeds. Their result will go to Sookshma Sareera but not to Pure Atma. That is why Adisankara argues that Pure Atma is the light within but not Jeevatma which is forced to take births till it attains purity and becomes Pure Atma or Brahma. The deeds done by body and organs are like illusions as far as Pure Atma is concerned. It is like the deeds of a character in a play or drama which do not affect the person donning the role.

22 Ajnaanat maanasopadheh
   Kartrutwaadeeni cha Atmani
   Kalpyyante Ambugate Chandre
   Chalanadi Yatha Ambhasah.

The reflection of moon in water that is not still gives an impression that the moon is moving because of ignorance. Similarly due to ignorance, the deeds, feelings and responsibilities are attributed to Atma though they belong to Sookshma Sareera.
When we say some person has done a good or bad deed or his thinking is evil or noble or he is enjoying or suffering, every time we mean his body but not his pure Atma.

23  
Raageechaa Sukha Duhkhaadi
Buddhow Satyaam Pravartate
Sushuptow Naasti Tannaase
Tasmaad Buddhesti Naatmanah.

Attachment, desire, happiness, pain and such other feelings are perceived to exist so long as mind or intellect functions. They are not perceived in deep sleep (sushupti) when the mind ceases to exist. Therefore they belong to the mind alone and not to Atma.

24  
Prakaaso Arkasya Toyasya
Saityam Agneryathoshnataa
Swabhaavah Satchidananda
Nitya Nirmalata Atmanah.
Brightness is sun's nature, coolness is water's nature, heat fire's nature. Similarly the nature of Atma is Sath (Absolute Existence), Chith (Absolute Knowledge) Ananda (Absolute Bliss), Permanence and Purity.

Atmanah Satchidamsascha
Buddheh vruttiriti Dwayam
Samyojya cha Avivekena
Jaanaameeti Pravartate.

Due to the indiscriminate blending of (1) the existence knowledge aspect of Atma and (2) the thought wave of the Budhi or Intellect, there arises the notion of 'I know'.

Atma's nature is Sath and Chith which is absolute without Time and Space. The mind's behaviour is always limited to Time and Space.

When we get Atma Jnana there is only Jnana but no learner and nothing to learn. Pure Atma does not have any of the
weaknesses of Manas. That is why it is does not think "I know". It is the mind's weakness like Ego that causes ignorance and makes one think "I know".

26 **Atmano Vikriyaa naasti**

**Buddherbodhohna Jaatwiti**

**Jeevah Sarvam Alam Jnatwa**

**Jnataa Drusteti Muhyati.**

Atma never does anything. It is eternal. It is knowledge itself and is not affected by the mental thoughts and physical actions. Buddhi or Intellect has no capacity to experience "I know". But the individuality (Jeeva) in us in its ignorance of its true nature falsely identifies itself with the Body - Mind and Intellect and thinks out of delusion that himself is the see and the knower.
27 Rajju Sarpavad Aatmaanam  
Jeevam Jnatvaa Bhayam Vaheth  
Naaham Jeevah Paraatmeti  
Jnateschet Nirbhayo Bhaveth.

Just as one regards a mere rope as a snake and is overcome by fear because of illusion and fears to touch it, the Jiva due to thinking that he is a human being but not Paramatma itself is overcome by fear. But when he learns with definite Jnana that he is Brahma himself he will be above all such reactions and never fears of anything.

28 Atma Avabhasayatyeko  
Buddhyadeen Indriyaanyapi  
Deepo Ghataadi vat Swaatmaa  
Jadai Stair Na Avabhasyate.

Just as a lamp illumines a pot or a jar, the Atma illumines the mind and the sense
organs also. These material objects like pot cannot illumine themselves because they are inert and have no chaitanya. The Atma in us is the one illuminating factor, the Pure consciousness, which alone illumines the mind (Buddhi) and sense organs.

29 Swabodhe Naanya Bodhecchaa
Bodha Rupataya Atmanah
Na Deepasya Anya Deepecchaa
Yadhaa Swatma Prakaasane.

Atma which is knowledge itself does not require other knowledge to know it, just as a lighted lamp does not need another lamp to illumine its light.

Atma as explained earlier is itself the illuminating one. What else can illuminate it? The only requirement is removal of ignorance. Then automatically the illumination of Atma comes out.
The oneness of the individual soul (Jeevatma) and the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) as indicated by the Vedic aphorisms (Mahavakyas) has to be realised by a process of negation of the conditionings (upadhis) through the help of spiritual statements, "It is not this", "It is not this". (Neti Neti)

The Vedic apporisms (Maha Vakyas) are:
1) Rigveda : 'Prajnanaam Brahma' meaning consciousness itself is Brahma.
2) Yajurveda : "Aham Brahmasmi" meaning I am Brahma.
3) Sama Veda : "Tathwamasi" meaning 'That one is you'.
4) Adharwa Veda : "Ayamatma Brahma" meaning This Atma itself is Brahma.
If one understands the Maha Vakyas in all the vedas he can start realising that Atma is not Manas. Likewise by discriminating and eliminating one by one, we can find out Jivatma is nothing but Paramatma.

31 Aavidyakam Sareeraadi Drusyam
   Budbudavat Ksharam
   Etat Vilakshanam Vidyaat
   Aham Brahmeti Niramalam

The forms of all three Sareeras viz' the gross (sthoola), the subtle (sookshma) and the causal (karana) are time bound like bubbles in water. Atma is none of these and is Pure Brahma itself.

Once any one realises through discrimination that he is nothing but Pure Brahma, he will not identify himself with any
of the Sareeras and is immune to all dualities and feelings.

32 **Deha Anyatvat Na me Janma**  
*Jara Kaarsya Layaadayah*  
*Sabdaadi Vishayaih Sango*  
*Nireendriya tayaa Na Cha.*

The following meditation (slokas 32 to 36) is suggested in order to strengthen the knowledge of the soul's oneness with Brahma.

"I am not the body that has time bound existence, birth, old age, weakness and death. I have nothing to do with the sense objects such as sound and taste, for I am without the sense organs."

We are talking about Pure Atma. For a Brahma Jnani, only Atma is the concern. All the organs and body that constitute the three forms of Sareera are of no relevance to him.
He will not get attached to any of them. So for him there are no births, no attachments and no interest in the pleasures and pains caused by sense organs. By getting detachment from them, he is able to get Eternal Bliss.

As explained earlier, the process of discrimination is taking place by confirming one by one that 'I' is not this and this. First it is confirmed that, 'I' is not body or organs.

33 Amanastwaat Na me
Dukha Raaga Dwesha Bhayaadayah
Apraano Hi Amanaassubhra
Ityaadi Sruti saasanaat

"I am not Manas and hence I am not having sorrow, attachment, malice and fear". The commandment of the upanishads is that Atma is without breath and without mind and is pure. The atma does not have any features of the mind (manas).
Manas only experiences happiness and sorrow. When we are indeep sleep, we are not experiencing any of the features of Manas. But Atma exists ever in deep sleep. Hence Atma is not Manas (mind).

34  *Nirguno Nishkriyo Nityo*

*Nirvikalpo Niranjanah*

*Nirvikaaro Niraakaaro*

*Nitya Muktosmi Nirmalah.*

Atma is without attributes and actions. It is eternal, without any desire or thought, without any vasanas, without any change, without form, ever liberated and ever pure.

Here Atma's nature is described. It is Eternal because it has no limits time and space. It is free from any attachment because it has nothing to do with mind. It has no actions because it has nothing to do with the body or organs.
"Like the space (Akasa). I fill all things within and without. I am changeless and the same in all. I am Pure, unattached, stainless and motionless."

"I alone an the supreme Brahma which is pure, eternal and free and which is indivisible, non-dual and changeless in all the periods of time. It is knowledge itself and is infinite."

These slokas 32-36 there is a discussion of Brahma as defined in
Upanishads like Taittiriya. So for a better understanding the reader is advised to go through the Upanishad.

37   Evam Nirantara Abhyastaa  
     Brahmaiva asmeeti Vaasanaa  
     Harati Avidya Vikshepaan  
     Rogaaniva rasaayanam.

Thus, the impression (Vasana) created by constant practice of 'Aham Brahmasmi destroys ignorance and the agitation (vikshepa) caused by Avidya, just as medicine destroys disease.

The practice of Aham Brahmasmi has to be intensified by long reflection to destroy ignorance.

Let us now find out how to do this.
One should sit in a solitary place with a mind free from desires and controlling the sense organs, meditate with unswerving attention on the Atma which is infinite and one without a second.

The wise man should merge this visible world with Atma alone in an intelligent way and constantly think of the Atma as the stainless or pure sky.
Here the intelligence needed is the power of discrimination. Merging the visible world with Atma is by visualising the Atma in everything in the world that has Chetana and is seen by the eyes.

40  Roopa Varnaadikam Sarvam Vihaaya Paramaarthavit

Paripoorna Chidananda

Svaroopena Avatishtate.

One who has realised by constant practice of meditation the Supreme Paramatma discards all things with names and forms. He then remains as an embodiment of the infinite consciousness and bliss.

Such an Aatma Jnani will not only experience Chidananda but becomes Ananda personified.
There are no distinctions, such as 'knower' 'knowledge' and the 'object of knowledge' in the Supreme self (Paramatma). As the nature of Paramatma is endless Bliss and self luminous, there are no such distinctions within itself. At alone shines.

In ancient days, the sacrificial fire was kindled by rubbing of two pieces of wood one placed upon another (Arani).
By churning in the form of constant contemplation on the maha mantra, Aham Brahmasmi. (I am the supreme self) in the Arani of Atma with mind as the lower piece and 'om' as upper piece, the fire of knowledge (Jnana) is born and it shall burn down all the ignorance (Ajnana) in us.

43 Arune neva Bodhena
    Poorva Santamase Hrute
    Tata Aavirbhavet Aatmaa
    Swayameva Amsumaaniva.

The Lord of early dawn, Aruna, drives away darkness of the night and heralds sunrise. Similarly while the darkness of Ajnana is destroyed by knowledge, Atma rises within of its own accord like sunrise.

44 Atmaatu Satatam Praapto
    Api Apraptavat Avidyayaa
    Tannase Praaptavat Bhaati
    Swa Kanthaabharanam Yatthaa
Atma is an ever present reality (Sat). Yet it is not realised due to ignorance (Ajnana). When ignorance is destroyed, Atman is realised as an object newly gained, just as the ornament of one's neck.

A person searches for the gold ornament already in his neck due to his forgetfulness. When he later finds it, he feels very happy as if he found a new ornament. He has thus lamented over a thing which is not lost.

The Atma is ever with us. We only recognise it when the cause for its veiling viz., ignorance (Ajnana) is removed through constant and sincere sadhana.

45  
Sthaanau Purushavat Bhraantyaa  
Krutaa Brahmaani Jeevataaa  
Jeevasya Taathvike Roope  
Tasmin Drushte Nivartate.
Due to delusion, a tree appears to be a man. Similarly Brahman who is Paramatma appears to be Jivatma because of delusion. When such delusion is destroyed, the real nature of Jiva is realised as the Atma.

46  **Tathva Swaroopa Anubhavaa**  
**Utpannam Jnaanam Anjasaa**  
**Aham Mameti cha Ajnaanam**  
**Baadhate Dibbhramadivat.**

Just as the identity of directions East, West, North, South is known when sunrises and dispels darkness, the knowledge produced by the realisation of the true nature of Atma destroys the ignorance (Ajnana) which gave rise to the wrong notions of possession - the "I" and "mine" in every one.

The sense of "I" and the concept of "mine" both become meaningless and delusory when the Atma is realised as one universal reality.
47 Samyak Vijnanavaan Yogee
    Swatmanyeva Akhilam Jagat
    Ekam Cha Sarvam Atmaana
    Eeekshyate Jnana Chakshushaa

The yogi of perfect realisation sees through his eye of wisdom (Jnana Chakshu) the entire universe (Jagat) as the manifestation of his own Atma and regards everything else as his own Atma and nothing else.

48 Atma eva idam Jagat sarvam
    Atmano Anyat na Vidyate
    Mrudo Yadvat Ghataadeeni
    Swatmaanam Sarvam Eekshyate

The entire universe is verily Atma. Nothing other than Atma exists. Pots, Jars and other potteries are made of clay (mud). They come out of mud and finally go back to the same mud. There is no separate existence
for the mud pots or jars apart from the mud. So too Atma is the reality (Sat) which has given shape to the world (Jagat) of different names and forms. This is rightly understood by the man of wisdom (Jnani).

49 \textit{Jeevan Muktastu Tat Vidvaan}  
\textit{Poorvopaadhi Gunaan Tyajet}  
\textit{Satchidananda Roopatvaat}  
\textit{Bhavet Bhramara Keetavat.}

A Jivanmukta i.e, one who has realised the Atma by long years of meditation upon the divine nature of the Atma and has become completely free from ignorance (Avidya), even while he lives in his body, gives up the traits of the gross, subtle and casual bodies (upadhis) On account of his nature of Sat Chit Ananda, he verily becomes Brahma, like the worm which grows up in the mud nest for a long time and transforms into a wasp after contemplation over the form and nature of the wasp.
The Yogi who crosses the ocean of Moha (delusion) and kills the demons called likes and dislikes will be peaceful and dwells in the glory of his own real self as an Atma Rama.

Here the phrase Atma Rama is used suggesting that Atma is godly like Rama, the incarnation of Paramatma who crossed the real ocean and killed demon Ravana.
The Jeevan Mukta who relinquishes all his attachments to the illusory (Anitya) and external (Bahya) happiness and is satisfied with the bliss derived from Atma, shines inwardly like a lamp placed in a pot.

As the Jeevanmukta detaches from all sense organs, he turns the mind inward it will be still without any delusions. Then his mind experiences this inward light of the Supreme Brahma.

52 Upadhisthopi Tatdharmaih
Alipto Vyomavanmunih
Sarvavit Moodhavat Tishteth
Asakto Vaayuvat Chareth.

The state of Jeevan Mukhta is further described in this sloka. Though he lives in the upadhis, he remains untainted like the sky (Vyomavat) and he moves abouts like the wind, perfectly unattached.
53  Upadhi Vilayaat Vishnau
    Nirvisesham Visermunih
    Jale Jalam Viyat Vyomni
    Tejas Tejasi Va Yatha.

When the upadhis are destroyed, a person who constantly contemplates on the divine, is totally absorbed in Vishnu, the all pervading spirit, just as water is absorbed into water, space into space and light into light.

54  Yallabhat Na Aparo Labho
    Yat Sukhat Na Aparam Sukham
    Yat Jnanaat Na Aparam Jnaanam
    Tath Brahmeti Aavadharayet.

Realise that to be Brahma, the attainment of which leaves nothing more
to be attained, the blessedness (sukham) which is far more superior to any other blessedness, and the Jnana which is superior to any other knowledge.

The supreme experience of realization of Brahma is explained in this sloka as (1) the greatest gain, (2) the greatest knowledge (jnana) after gaining which none will like to add any more to it, (3) the greatest bliss of the self after enjoying which none will strive for a greater bliss.

All Upanishads like Bruhadaranyaka and Mundaka confirm this. The highest goal is to know Brahma and become Brahma only.
After seeing which there is nothing else to be seen, after attaining which there will not be any more birth and after knowing which there is nothing else to be known, that is to be understood as Brahma.

For the Yogi who attained the highest goals of Adhyatma and became a Brahma Jnani, nothing else is required because everything else is dismal compared to the Brahma.

Bhagavat Gita calls this highest goal as the Supreme Abode and Yogis reach there never to return. (Chap 2-72)
56  *Tiryak Oordhvam Adhah Poornam Satchidanandam Advayam Anantam Nityam Ekam Yat*  
* Tat Brahmeti Aavadhaarayet.*  

The one that pervades in all places even above and below is Brahma. It is one without a second. It is infinite, eternal and filled with Satchidanananda. It exists as only one. That one is to be understood as Brahma.  

This description of Brahma is in Mundaka Upanishad which also says that it is immortal and is there before and exists behind and in all sides.
Atat Vyaavrutti Roopena
Vedaantaih Lakshyate Advayam
Akhandanandam Ekam Yat
Tat Brahmeti Avadhaarayety.

This Brahma is nondual, indivisible, blissful and always exists as only one. The Upanishads indicate that this Brahma is reached by a process of negation of what it is not and of assertion of what it is.

Akhandananda Roopasya Tasya
Ananda Lavaasritaah
Brahmaadyaah Taaratamyena
Bhavanti Anandino Akhilaah.

All the deities like Indra, Varuna and others worshipped by us, are only a particle of the unlimited bliss of Para Brahma and accordingly enjoy their proportionate share of that particle.
Every living being who worships deities enjoy the bliss of Paramatma according to his capacity. But it is only a very small fraction of the total Atmananda the Parabrahma is capable of giving.

According to vedanta all meritorious and righteous men after death enjoy a particle of the Bliss of Paramatma. After the fraction of Bliss of Paramatma is exhausted, they are again born as great men and help to establish Dharma.

We can imagine this easily. In the Paramatma's incarnation as Lord Krishna. Who told, "I will be born again and again to destroy Adharma and to establish Dharma."
The whole creation is pervaded by Brahma. It is because of Brahma only all actions are taking place in this universe. Brahma permeates everything as butter permeates milk.

Here the example of Butter and Milk is given because butter is in milk but not directly visible. To get butter one has to churn milk. Similarly Brahma is spread in the whole universe but not visible. Only by intense meditation, it is possible to realise Brahma. Not able to see does not mean it does not exist. This is a perfect example given in Vedanta to explain Paramatma's existence.
Brahma is neither subtle nor gross, neither short nor long. It has no birth, no changes, no form, no quality, no colour and even no particular name.

Some of these qualities are explained in Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad where one gets more detailed discussion about Brahmatatwa which is imperceptible to the mind and hence cannot be described.
All heavenly bodies are illuminated by Brahma and are shining. But Brahma is not illuminated by their light.

It is once again confirmed in this sloka that but for the illuminating power of Brahma nothing can shine in this universe.

62  \textit{Swayam Antar Bahir Vyapya}  
\quad \textit{Bhasayan Akhilam Jagat}  
\quad \textit{Brahma Prakaasate Vahni}  
\quad \textit{Pratapta Ayasa Pindavat.}

The Supreme Brahma while pervading the entire universe outwardly and inwardly, shines of itself like the five that permeates a red hot iron-ball and glow as fire itself.
An iron ball when in contact with fire for a sufficiently long time comes to glow as fire itself.

63 Jagat Vilakshanam Brahma
   Brahmano Anyata Kinchana
   Brahma Anyat Bhatichet Mithya
   Yadha Maru Mareechikaa.

Brahma is entirely different from universe, but there exists nothing in the universe that is not Brahma. If any object in universe other than Brahma appears to exist, it is unreal like the mirage which appears to be giving water in a desert.

64 Drusyate Srooyate Yadyat
   Brahmano Anyan Na Tat Bhavet
   Tathvajnaanaat Cha Tadbrahma
   Satchidanandam Advayam
All that is perceived or heard through the sense organs is Brahma only. The Brahma that is non dual and which is in the form of Satchidananda is known only after attaining the knowledge of the Reality.

Whatever exists either in this limited body, mind and intellect or in the outer created world, they are all manifestations of the Brahma and nothing else. When this truth is realised and experienced, one can see the entire universe in which the Brahma revels as satchit Ananda absolute because it is one and only one Ekam Eva Advitiyam Brahma.

65 Sarvagam Satchidaatmaanam
   Jnana Chakshur Nireekshate
   Ajnaana Chakshur Na Eekshet
   Bhaswantam Bhanum Andhavat
We can visualise Atma that has universal existence with the help of Jnana netra (eye of knowledge) only, just as the blind cannot see the resplendent sun.

66 Sravanaadibhi Uddepta
   Jnaanaagni Paritapitah
   Jeeva Sarvamalat Muktah
   Swarnavat Dyotate Swayam

The Jeeva is purified by heating in the fire of knowledge kindled by hearing, reasoning and deep contemplation on what has been heard and reasoned out. Then the Jeeva shines of itself like pure gold obtained after melting and purifying the gold ore. Just as one heats gold ore in a crucible to purify it, one has to use the fire of Jnana to purify the mind.
Jnana can be achieved according to Hindu philosophy by Sravana (hearing) Manana (reasoning of truth) and Nidhi Dhyasana (deep contemplation). Then the mind will be free from impure thoughts, and the feeling of Jeeva gets automatically extinguished. Then only the self-illuminating Atma exists.

67 **Hrudaakaasodito hi Atmaa**

*Bodha Bhaanus Tamopahrut*

*Sarva Vyaapee Sarva Dhaaree*

*Bhaati Bhaasayate Akhilam*

The Atma, Sun of Knowledge, which rises in the sky of the heart, destroys the darkness of ignorance, pervades everything and sustains all. It shines and makes everything in the universe to shine.
Heart here means the arena of the mind from where noble and humane thoughts flow.

Here Sun is brought into comparison because it is the ultimate source of light visible to the naked eye.

68 Dikdesa Kaa laadi Anapekshya Sarvagam
Seetadi Hrunnitya Sukham Niramjanam
Yassvaatma Teerdham Bhajate Vishishkriyam
Sa Sarvavit Sarva Gato Amruto Bhavet.
The Jnani who

(1) is free from all the limitations of time, space and direction.

(2) worships the holy place of his own Atma which is present everywhere, which destroys heat and cold and which is bliss eternal and stainless becomes all knowing and all pervading and attains immortality.

Thus ends Atma Bodha May God Bless all the beings of universe.

Om Tat Sat
This book is dedicated to
Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Varu