

WHAT IS IGNORANCE (AVIDYA)?

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1. What Is Ignorance (Avidya)?

Why should we practice meditation? Why should we cultivate knowledge and wisdom? When we reflect deeply, we realize that every human being faces problems, sorrows, and hardships because of one root cause — ignorance.

Sri Adi Sankaracharya explained that *Ajnana* means *lack of knowledge*, while *Avidya* means *false knowledge* — that is, misunderstanding something as what it is not. Thus, *Ajnana* and *Avidya* are not the same.

Avidya can be understood in two ways:

- a) Inability to perceive reality correctly.
- b) Misinterpreting what is true.

True understanding is called *Samyak Jnana* — right knowledge. But why is such right knowledge missing? Because of *Avidya* and *Ajnana*. And it is because of these that human beings live in continuous sorrow and confusion.

When there is no proper understanding, when things are misunderstood, suffering arises. From childhood itself, parents advise their children out of love, wishing for their well-being. Yet, when children dislike what they hear, they often complain,

“My mother is always like this! My father never gives me what I ask for!”

Take a simple example — a child loves chocolates. Eating one or two is fine but eating too many can spoil the teeth. So the mother, thinking of her child’s health, refuses to give more. She does this out of responsibility and care.

But the child, unable to understand, feels hurt and thinks, “My mother never lets me eat chocolates! She always finds some excuse.”

This is Avidya — misunderstanding born out of limited awareness.

As the child grows up, this pattern often continues. When parents refuse something, instead of understanding their reasoning, the child — now a young adult — may develop resentment or hatred toward them. Some, unable to express their pain, continue to live in silent suffering.

Desires Beyond One's Capacity

You see, some people have desires far beyond their capacity. When those desires are not fulfilled, they think,

“My life is worthless! What’s the point of living?”

Instead of trying to understand the reason behind their situation, they fall into despair.

The root cause of this is lack of knowledge. Due to misunderstanding and wrong perception — *Avidya* — they see things in a distorted way.

But when there is right understanding, there is no room for misinterpretation. And for right understanding to arise, one must possess wisdom. Yet no one is born wise. Every human being is born into ignorance and must consciously seek knowledge to rise above it.

At present, almost everyone on earth is living in ignorance — rarely does one make a genuine effort to acquire true knowledge.

We are indeed blessed souls, for we have realized that the ultimate purpose of life is self-knowledge. Only through self-knowledge can one attain the true goal of human existence.

And remember — this wisdom we now seek has not come to us merely in this birth. It is the fruit of good deeds and merits earned in our past lives that has led us into this path of meditation

and inner realization. Even among those who have a Guru, very few possess the sincere **desire to attain true knowledge**.

The Five Forms of Misunderstanding — Teachings of Adi Shankaracharya and Govinda Padacharya

Sri Adi Sankaracharya and his revered Guru, Govinda Padacharya, explained *Avidya* — false understanding — through a series of vivid examples and analogies.

They taught that there are five kinds of false perception, born out of ignorance and illusion.

1. Mistaking a Rope for a Snake

Imagine it is twilight — the time between day and night — when light and shadow mingle. A rope lies coiled on the floor of your courtyard, but you haven't noticed it all day. Now, in the dim light, you suddenly catch sight of it and think,

“Oh! There's a snake!” You panic, your heart races, and fear grips you. But in truth, it is only a rope, not a snake. Because of incorrect perception, you fail to see reality as it is. This is *Avidya* — seeing the unreal as real.

2. Mistaking a Tree Stump for a Ghost

A traveller is walking through a forest at night. In the faint moonlight, he sees the stump of a fallen tree and mistakes it for a man. Then, fear fills his mind —

“This is a haunted forest... that must be a ghost!”

Here again, ignorance creates illusion. He mistakes a harmless stump for a spirit, and thus, truth remains unseen — covered by fear and false imagination.

3. Seeing Divine Forms in the Clouds

Sometimes, when we look at the sky filled with moving clouds, they form various shapes — some resembling figures or faces. In their **misguided devotion**, some people exclaim, “Look!

I can see gods in the clouds! The deities have appeared to me!” They even bow down, believing they have witnessed a divine vision. But this, too, is false perception — born not from realization, but from imagination. They fail to look deeper, to discern the reality behind the appearance.

4. Mistaking Shimmering Shells for Silver

Along the seashore, oyster shells often glisten under the sun. Their shining surface reflects light like polished silver. Someone passing by might exclaim, “Oh! Look, pieces of silver are lying here!” But on closer inspection, they realize it’s only seashells — not silver. That moment of mistaken belief is again Avidya, a misunderstanding caused by illusion.

5. Mistaking a Mirage for Water

During the heat of summer, as you walk along a long road, you may see what looks like water shimmering in the distance. You hurry toward it, thirsty and hopeful — only to find that there is no water at all.

What you saw was a mirage, not reality. Once again, illusion deceives perception. This too is false knowledge — Avidya. Thus, Shankaracharya and his Guru taught that ignorance is not merely the absence of knowledge; it is the presence of wrong understanding — the inability to see things as they truly are.

Only right knowledge (Samyak Jnana) dispels these illusions and allows the seeker to perceive Truth — pure, eternal, and self-luminous.

The Illusion of Misunderstanding – The Mist of Avidya

Look carefully—The rope *was* just a rope, yet the mind mistook it for a snake. The clouds *were* only clouds, yet imagination painted gods upon them. The fallen log *was* merely wood, yet fear transformed it into a ghost. The shells by the seashore *were* simple

fragments, yet greed saw them as silver. The shimmering mirage on the horizon *looked* like water, yet dissolved upon approach.

In truth, nothing changed — only our perception did. That distortion of perception is what the sages call Avidya — Ignorance. The mind veils reality in illusion and calls the illusion “truth.”

The Root of Misjudgement

The same illusion plays out in life. Many form wrong opinions of those they dislike, and even of those close to them. Some see everyone through the lens of suspicion, misinterpreting words and intentions alike. The cause? Not this life — but impressions carried from past births. Old tendencies cling to the soul like unseen fragrance. But, as the Masters teach, *they must be released in this very life*. Otherwise, they cloud our understanding and darken our wisdom.

The Power of Words – Friendship or Enmity

Observe carefully:

“A kind word creates friendship; a harsh word breeds enmity.” When one speaks arrogantly — “I already know!” — without humility or patience, it plants a seed of bitterness in another’s heart. From that seed grows misunderstanding, and from misunderstanding, conflict and sorrow. Thus, a single careless word can destroy what years of affection built.

The Folly of Unasked Advice

Some people are forever ready to advise others — unsolicited, uninvited, unnecessary. Such behaviour, however well-intentioned, reflects a lack of inner maturity.” Before advising others, learn to let your own mind be silent.”

Meditation calms the mind.

Wisdom refines speech.
When both are present,
our words no longer wound — they *heal*.

The Early States of the Soul

In the beginning stages of the soul's journey, human beings live under the sway of Tamas and Rajas — darkness and restlessness. Fear dominates their mind, and they live by impulse. Some lives are spent for the *body* — in pursuit of comfort, pleasure, and survival. Some lives are spent for the *mind* — seeking approval, pride, and emotional fulfilment.

But wisdom is still immature. Hence, perception remains distorted; truth is not yet seen as truth.

The Dissolution of Ignorance through the Light of Meditation

When one enters the path of meditation, the Master's teachings gradually begin to dispel Avidya (false understanding) and Ajnana (ignorance). Until the truth is realized, *Avidya* continues to veil perception like a mist before dawn.

Consider this simple example—in the dark, one mistakes a rope for a snake. But when someone lights a lamp, the truth is revealed: it was only a rope all along. At once, the fear vanishes, and one laughs at his own folly. The illusion disappears only when the light of truth dawns.

Similarly, imagine a man walking through the forest at dusk. He sees a fallen tree and, blinded by fear, believes it to be a ghost. Later, when someone explains that it is merely a log—the misunderstanding dissolves. Or take the clouds that momentarily take the shape of gods—for a moment, we believe we are witnessing divine forms, until, minutes later, they shift and fade, and we realize: *they were only clouds*.

The same is true of shimmering shells that appear like silver from afar, or the mirage that promises water but offers only burning sand. Each illusion fades only when seen in the clear light of truth.

The Nature of False Perception

How then does false understanding disappear? It dissolves only through realization of truth. First arises *Avidya*—the misunderstanding of what is. Then follows *Ajnana*—the darkness of ignorance itself. If one remains trapped in these, truth forever stays beyond reach.

That is why, when we step onto the meditative path, the Master gently reveals these small but profound lessons. Even subtle residues—old impressions and mental habits—can pull the mind back toward misunderstanding and illusion. The great teachers, therefore, continually remind us to watch for these shadows within ourselves.

The Subtle Roots of Conflict

False perceptions are not limited to ropes or clouds. In daily life too, they manifest as misjudgements about others. Through misunderstanding, ego, and pride, we create enmity where none exists. We assume, we interpret wrongly, we cling to “*I know everything.*” And in doing so, we distance ourselves from truth.

The sages warn: when such errors are corrected, *Avidya* perishes. To destroy ignorance is not merely to read scriptures, but to *live in inquiry* and *question illusion*.

True Knowledge and Inquiry

Yes, we study the great declarations of the Upanishads — “*Aham Brahmasmi*” (I am Brahman), “*Tat Tvam Asi*” (Thou art That), “*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*” (All this is indeed

Brahman). But unless we apply Vichara — inner inquiry to dispel our own ignorance, even the highest knowledge remains barren.

That is why Sri Ramana Maharshi proclaimed, “Vichara — self-inquiry — is the supreme knowledge.” And the sage Vasistha too declared that inquiry alone leads to the ultimate wisdom.

The Purpose of Meditation

Today, many claim to meditate for the sake of desires — for success, comfort, or worldly gain. But true meditation is not for fulfilling desires; it is for the vision of the Supreme Self.

As long as desire exists, one remains bound to the plane of the mind. Only when desire ceases, does consciousness ascend to the plane of the Spirit.

Why Truth Escapes Us

Why then do so many fail to understand this? Because they do not engage in true self-study — Swadhyaya. Without introspection, meditation becomes mechanical, and desire continues to rule from within.

When desires dominate, it is a sign that one still dwells in the mental realm, not yet in the realm of pure awareness.

True Understanding — The End of False Knowledge

The Master has declared, “You yourself are Divine.”

When you truly understand that the Supreme Consciousness pervades all of creation, what more is there left to desire? If *you* are divine, what could a god possibly crave? Even after learning this truth, if you still approach meditation as a means to fulfil worldly wishes, it is not devotion — it is misunderstanding.

The Cause of Misunderstanding

The root of this misunderstanding lies in the lack of right self-study (Swadhyaya). Because of this confusion, many use meditation merely to gain success, destroy karma, or manifest

desires. But such motives arise from false knowledge — from *Avidya*.

To ascend to higher states of realization, one must first let go of the lower rung of the ladder. Only by leaving the lower step can you climb upward.

That lower step is desire —whether physical, emotional, or intellectual. As long as any desire remains, you are still bound to the illusion of being the body. This, the Master says, is the *first false knowledge* that confronts the seeker on the spiritual path.

The Test of True Understanding

Even when the Guru explains the truth, if your opinions do not change —if new desires continue to arise —it means you have not yet grown in wisdom. While living on this earth, you must use this body as an instrument of *sadhana* (spiritual practice), not as a servant of pleasure. To do that, you must cultivate true learning and right effort.

This meditation of “Awareness on the Breath” (Anapanasati Meditation) is not meant for fulfilling desires. All desires belong to creation, but meditation is meant for the Creator.

When this truth becomes clear —that meditation is for the *vision of the Divine*, not for worldly achievement —then no false thoughts or desires will disturb you. If, however, your meditation still revolves around earthly wants, it means the Guru’s teaching has not yet been understood.

The Ultimate Goal — Liberation

As Patriji said: “Through meditation comes wisdom, through wisdom comes liberation.” The final goal is *Moksha* — not material gain. If you abandon liberation and chase worldly desires instead, it means you have not yet grasped the true purpose of meditation.

The True Meaning of Sankalpa (Divine Resolve)

People often think *Sankalpa Siddhi* means achieving what one wishes for on earth. That is not so. When you, the soul, descended from higher realms to this human birth, it was with one supreme Sankalpa (Divine Resolution): to realize the Creator while still embodied.

You were born with this *holy purpose*. But, due to impressions from past lives, you forgot your divine mission —you came to believe that you were born for enjoyment (*Bhoga*), not for Union (*Yoga*). That is the false knowledge. To know that you came to earth for *Yoga*, not *Bhoga*, is the true knowledge. Only when this realization dawns will your path of *Yoga* become effortless and peaceful. As long as desires persist, your meditation cannot flow purely.

Hence it is said: “Unless you renounce the universe, the Lord of the Universe will not dwell in your heart.” Only when the mind is purified can the Supreme Being reside within your heart, and only then can you behold Him.

Changing One’s Vision

If you long to behold God, first, you must transform your vision. See every being you encounter as a manifestation of the Soul. When this perception takes root, worldly desires naturally lose their power. When you cease to see others as “friends” or “enemies,” and understand that all have come to live out their own experiences and lessons, your awareness remains fixed upon the Self.

Destroying Avidya through Remembrance

Therefore, when you first enter the path of meditation, remember the Master’s first teaching — “Everyone is the Self.”

Contemplate this truth again and again. As you do, the veils of misunderstanding gradually lift, and the light of true knowledge — Samyak Jnana —begins to shine within.

The Nature of Misinterpretation — The Subtler Face of Ignorance

That is why Adi Shankaracharya declared:

“To cultivate true knowledge, one must destroy *Avidya* (false perception) and *Ajnana* (ignorance).”

This means: to dissolve all misunderstandings, wrong impressions, and distorted understanding. After learning about the five forms of false perception, let us now explore how misinterpretation — *Apartha* — takes root in human life.

B) Misinterpretation — Apartha

According to the sages, there are four ways in which misunderstanding distorts our perception:

1. A good word is misheard as a harsh one.
2. A noble intention is perceived as something else.
3. A virtuous quality is mistaken for weakness.
4. A righteous purpose is seen as a selfish one.

These, says Shankaracharya, arise from the twin delusions of ego (Ahamkara) and attachment (Mamakara). Let us understand each one through timeless examples given in the *Puranas* and *Itihasas*.

1. When a Good Word Is Misunderstood

To understand such matters, and for you to learn and become wise, Vyasa has provided many examples through the eighteen Puranas.

To understand how this happens, we can look to the story of Sita in the Ramayana.

In the forest, she saw the golden deer and, without reflection, desired it. Without asking whether such a creature could even exist in creation, she asked Lord Rama to bring it for her.

Obediently, Rama went after it, leaving Lakshmana to guard her.

When Sita then asked Lakshmana also to go after Rama, he tried to counsel her gently, explaining that Rama was invincible and needed no help. But overcome by desire, Sita's mind had already lost discernment. Her words turned harsh; she accused Lakshmana unjustly.

Here, Lakshmana's kind words were misunderstood as cruelty. This is *Apartha* — false interpretation. When desire overpowers wisdom, even truth sounds offensive, and every counsel feels like opposition. Thus, even noble advice is twisted by the mind enslaved by craving.

As Shankara teaches: “When desire rules, reason falls silent; when reason awakens, desire disappears.”

2. When a Noble Intention Is Misjudged

Consider Vibhishana and Ravana. When Sita was brought to Lanka, Vibhishana repeatedly warned his brother. He knew Lord Rama's might, and he knew that opposing a righteous soul would bring only ruin.

With a pure heart, he advised, “Return Sita and seek forgiveness; the Lord of Dharma will pardon you.”

But Ravana, blinded by arrogance, mocked him — “Do not speak like a coward!” Though Vibhishana's intentions were born of wisdom, Ravana's ego twisted them into insults. His destruction began in that very moment.

Thus it is said: “Vinaashakaale Vipareeta Buddhi” — When destruction approaches, judgment turns upside down.

Even a great scholar, even a powerful meditator, when seized by pride, cannot perceive truth. So Ravana’s wisdom turned against him, and his downfall came through his own misunderstanding.

3. When Virtue Is Seen as Weakness

Dhritarashtra too fell into this trap. Though Duryodhana’s cruelty was evident, paternal attachment blinded the king. In his eyes, his wicked son seemed noble, and the righteous Pandavas appeared weak and incompetent. Thus, he defended unrighteousness in the name of affection. From that misinterpretation of virtue, came the destruction of his entire lineage. Attachment and ego blur discernment, making wrong appear right and right appear wrong. This too is a form of *Apartha* — a blindness of love and pride.

4. When a Righteous Purpose Is Seen as Selfish

Finally, look at Sri Krishna. His sole mission was to destroy evil and reestablish Dharma. His purpose was pure — “*Dharma Samsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.*” Yet, Gandhari, in her grief and anger, misunderstood His divine purpose. Unable to accept the fruit of her son’s sins, she cursed Krishna, blaming Him for her family’s destruction.

Had she reflected a little, she would have recognized that it was Krishna who repeatedly urged peace — who warned the Kauravas that war would bring ruin. But ignorance and sorrow clouded her perception. She saw divine justice as cruelty, and thus uttered her fateful curse.

The Root of Misinterpretation

In all these stories — Sita, Ravana, Dhritarashtra, and Gandhari — the root cause is **Avidya** — ignorance. When ego and attachment govern perception, truth becomes distorted. Good words sound harsh, noble hearts seem deceitful, virtue looks like weakness, and divine purpose appears cruel.

“It is not the world that deceives us, but our mind that misinterprets it.” Until Avidya is destroyed through discrimination (Viveka) and self-inquiry (Vichara), even wisdom remains mere theory.

Only when the heart is purified can one see the world as it truly is — a play of Divine Consciousness.

The Subtle Enemies of Truth — Ego and Attachment

Adi Shankaracharya taught that when ego and attachment grow beyond measure, one inevitably drifts away from Truth.

Even if the ignorant do not perceive this, the wise know it well — for ego veils wisdom, and attachment chains the heart.

That is why the *Upanishads* declare: “Ego must be dissolved before Truth can be realized.”

Only when the *I*-sense disappears does one draw near to the Divine. And only those who live close to Truth attain true victory — the victory of the soul over illusion. The wise, therefore, guard themselves constantly against the subtle poisons of ego and attachment.

The Lesson of the Pandavas and Kauravas

Consider the *Mahabharata*.

Both the Pandavas and the Kauravas shared the same Guru — Dronacharya. He taught them the same skills, the same knowledge of arms. Yet, though he could teach *vidya* (outer knowledge), he could not alter their *guna* (inner quality).

The Pandavas, anchored in truth and righteousness, had God on their side. Though tested by countless trials, they were always protected by the Divine Hand.

But the Kauravas, consumed by pride, drifted away from truth — and thus from divine grace itself. Where there is ego, there can be no God. Where there is humility, there God dwells.

Ego and Attachment in the Path of Meditation

Even those who step onto the path of meditation are not free from ignorance. As long as ego and attachment dominate the mind, they remain deaf to the Guru's words. Some are bound by excessive attachment — to family, to possessions, to comfort. When told, "Strong attachments bring suffering," they protest: "But how can we give up those we love?" Such words reveal that the bond has crossed its limit. They will not change until the suffering born of attachment teaches them what words could not.

You may advise them once, even twice — but insist too much, and they turn against you. They say, "How can we remain silent and just watch?" Such reactions arise from attachment in the heart and ego in the mind — a resistance to hearing truth from another. Only when these two are dropped does one become truly victorious in life.

Letting Go — Not of People, but of Possessiveness

To renounce ego and attachment does not mean abandoning people. It means giving up the **inner clinging** — the possessiveness that says "mine," and the arrogance that says "I."

Only those who abandon these two can uphold **Dharma**. Those who cling to them cannot stand for Truth.

The Barriers to Spreading Light

You say you wish to spread meditation to the world. But if attachment to the body remains — you will never step beyond

comfort. If pride whispers, “Why should I, such a great person, go from place to place teaching others?” then true teaching will never begin. If possessiveness says, “My wealth, my property, my children — only they must benefit,” then generosity will never blossom.

You may preach from stages that “Among all gifts, the gift of knowledge is supreme,” but without living that truth, God will not be pleased. He who teaches wisdom through his actions, not merely his words, alone is great in this world. Speaking without living is not greatness —it is noise. First, learn rightly, then only teach righteously.

The Hidden Roots of Misunderstanding

If you still find within yourself false opinions, wrong understanding, or misinterpretation, know that you are still carrying **impressions from past births**. When you are unsure whether they remain or not, observe yourself carefully. Some people are so sensitive that even a small incident deeply disturbs them —this too is the residue of attachment. And such agitation is unnecessary.

Trust in Divine Order — The Path of Acceptance and Silence

My life is not merely in my hands —Nature knows it better than I do; God knows it best. If something is not happening now, perhaps a greater opportunity is on its way. If I remain positive and trusting, believing that *something better is unfolding*, then surely, life itself will bring goodness to me. When we learn to accept everything that happens in life — joy or sorrow, gain or loss —our life becomes peaceful and harmonious.

But most people cannot accept life as it is. Instead, they constantly criticize and complain, judging others without truly understanding them. And why do they do so? Because of wrong understanding —because they misinterpret others through the lens of their own ignorance.

If someone's foolishness obstructs us, let us not react with anger. Rather, we must grow in strength and awareness, for their ignorance will fade only when our light becomes brighter. If we do not meditate, others will not change. When we meditate deeply, our energy transforms those around us.

So, instead of wishing, "*Let the ignorant change,*" the wise one prays, "Let me grow stronger in wisdom and love, so that my presence alone may awaken others." Then Nature herself takes charge and arranges for transformation to happen effortlessly through you.

The Power of Silence

Remember — what words cannot achieve; silence can accomplish with ease.

That is why the great masters always say: "Speech cannot reach where silence can transform." The true language of meditation and wisdom is *silence*. Patriji always says, "Patience is progress." When you endure with patience, your spiritual evolution happens automatically.

Scolding others gains nothing. Misunderstanding others gains nothing. Insulting others gains nothing. Instead, remain silent, deepening your practice and awareness.

About Opportunities and Readiness

Never lament, "*I didn't get the opportunity.*" A fool keeps waiting endlessly for the right chance, and even when it comes, he fails to recognize it. The average person makes use of the opportunity when it appears. But the wise person turns every moment into an opportunity.

Some may not be able to travel to Bhimavaram—their husbands may not permit, or jobs or business may hold them back. Do not be disheartened. Stay home and meditate. Listen to the live

sessions online. Even if you do not grasp everything at once, you will surely absorb half the essence, and that itself will elevate you greatly.

When Things Don't Go Your Way

If others receive chances that you do not, it is not their fault. It simply means there is still something within you to purify. Treat every delay as a test of your patience. Before meditation, I too was filled with ego. I used to think: “Whatever I say must happen.” But when things now do not go as I wish,

I understand — it is because my ego is not yet gone. So, I must continue my practice and keep my mind pure. It is not the fault of others. The correction must happen within me. That awareness — *“The fault is in me, not in the world”* — is the beginning of wisdom.

Patience and Perseverance

Sometimes, your family may not let you attend retreats like Bhimavaram, but they allow you to attend classes nearby. When they resist, saying, “Why must you go there?” Do not react. Simply say, “Alright, I will meditate at home for now.” Wait patiently — your time will come. Opportunities always return to those who wait with faith and calm. If you practice patience in every circumstance, and continue your meditation with sincerity, Nature herself will guide your purpose forward.

Humility — The Sign of Growth

When you walk the path of meditation, never assume, “*I am always right.*” Instead, reflect each moment: “What flaws still remain in me? What must I purify? What lessons is life trying to teach me?” If you are still facing pain and obstacles, it means there are inner impurities yet to be burned.

When suffering ceases completely, understand that your past karma has been dissolved, and your inner self has become pure. That awareness is liberation itself.

The Purification of the Mind — The Gateway to the Soul

For as long as we live, our duty is to purify the mind — not to dwell on the thoughts or behaviours of others. Even a single minute spent thinking about others diminishes your spiritual power and your inner clarity. In worldly life, you may have lived for family, society, and relations. But now, having entered the path of awareness, you must know your true duty — to live for your own evolution. Every moment of your life now belongs to your Self — to your *soul's ascent* and your *mind's purification*.

The Discipline of Silence and Control

Without meditation, you cannot keep your word; you will falter again and again. To master your speech, your senses must gain strength. When you resolve not to speak, you should not speak. When you decide not to see, you should not see.

When you choose not to hear, you should not hear. This inner restraint *Nigraha* is cultivated only through consistent meditation practice. Through such practice, your intellect becomes sharp, your wisdom unfolds, and your knowledge deepens.

When the Mind Is Impure

As long as the mind remains impure, the light of consciousness (Prajna) cannot flow from the soul (Atma) to the intellect (Buddhi). Only when the mind is purified can the divine light of the soul reach the intellect. If that inner wisdom is not yet awakened, know that some trace of past karmas or old impressions (vasanas) still binds your mind. Therefore, your task is to keep cleansing the mirror of the mind until it reflects the light of the Self.

Ego and Attachment — The Clouds Before the Sun

If ego (Ahamkara) and attachment (Mamakara) remain within you, you will be distanced from Truth. To move closer to Truth, you must relinquish both completely. Know clearly what actions draw you near to Truth and what actions push you away. The behaviour of others does not truly concern you — their actions cannot reduce your wisdom or weaken your practice. Only your own mind can do that. When the mind obsesses over unnecessary people and situations, when it misinterprets and lacks understanding, you drain your inner power. Remember — your mind alone is your enemy. You suffer because you identify with those whom you should have let go long ago.

Externally, they may appear as your relatives, but internally, only God is your true kin. When this realization dawns, you will live in perpetual joy.

Duality and Non-Duality

Thus spoke Sage Vasishta: “In the outer world, live in duality; in the inner world, abide in non-duality.” Outwardly, fulfil your duties but inwardly, rest in the awareness: “I am the Self. I am the consciousness that pervades all. I am the Supreme Being Himself. “If you are the Self but do not yet experience it, the obstacle is the mind the cloud that veils the sun.

The sun’s brilliance never fades; it only appears dim when clouds pass before it. Likewise, the radiance of your inner Self is ever-present. If you do not feel its light, it is because the clouds of ego and attachment block it. Meditation is the wind that clears those clouds away.

The Constant Remembrance of the Self

If you wish to reveal your inner radiance, never forget the truth—“I am the Soul.” Even a moment’s forgetfulness draws you back into the illusion of the material world. That is why you must meditate — to keep this awareness alive and unbroken. During waking hours, you may forget, but each time you sit in meditation, remind yourself once again of your true identity.

Whatever you do, if you can maintain the remembrance “*I am the Atman*,” the impurities of the mind —especially ego and attachment —will slowly dissolve. When these are gone, you become a pure soul — Shuddhatma.

Meditation — The Path to True Clarity

The mind is like a vessel stained with dirt. Meditation is the cleansing water.

Only through meditation can you wash away false perceptions, misinterpretations, and attain clear, perfect understanding. Through meditation, you polish the mirror of your consciousness until it reflects only the light of Truth.

2. The Greatness of Brahma Vidya

You are now learning the sacred science of Brahma Vidya, the supreme knowledge that reveals the nature of Brahman — the Infinite, the Eternal, the Self of all. Let us understand what the benefits of learning this knowledge are, and who is truly qualified to receive it. The word *Vidya* means knowledge. Thus, *Brahma Vidya* is the knowledge of Brahman, the wisdom that reveals the Divine Reality itself.

The scriptures describe two kinds of knowledge:

1. Para Vidya — the higher, spiritual knowledge that leads to Self-realization; and

2. Apara Vidya — the lower, worldly knowledge that deals with material existence.

Anyone may pursue *Apara Vidya* — the knowledge of worldly affairs, sciences, and skills. But *Para Vidya* — the knowledge of Brahman — can be pursued only by a few rare souls who are inwardly qualified.

The Misunderstanding of the World

Many ask, “What use is this Brahma Vidya? What benefit will it bring? Can it earn money or provide comfort?” They believe that *Apara Vidya*, the worldly sciences, can bring great wealth and prosperity — but they do not realize that *Para Vidya* bestows something far greater: freedom, peace, and eternal bliss. Such people, blinded by ignorance, mock that which they cannot yet comprehend.

Brahma Vidya in the Scriptures

The Vedas themselves first speak of *Apara Vidya* — the knowledge necessary for worldly life — and only later reveal the

secret of *Para Vidya*, the higher knowledge of the Divine. It is said that “He who attains *Para Vidya* experiences supreme joy,

not only on this earth but in the higher realms as well.”

This is the knowledge that liberates one from the endless cycles of birth and death.

The Decline of Spiritual Awareness Through the Ages

History reveals that as the ages passed —from *Krita Yuga* to *Treta*, from *Treta* to *Dvapara*, and finally into *Kali Yuga* —

humanity’s interest in Brahma Vidya gradually declined.

In the early ages, the quest for Truth was the very purpose of life.

But as the Yugas advanced, the mind turned more and more toward material pursuits. Today, only a few have the inner inclination to seek this supreme knowledge; for most, it holds no appeal.

The Qualification to Learn the Higher Knowledge

Anyone can acquire *Apara Vidya* — but *Para Vidya* can be known only by those who are spiritually ripe, whose hearts are purified by faith, sincerity, and detachment. To know the Supreme Reality is not easy —but for one whose love for Truth is deep, nothing is difficult. For the unqualified, the fruits of Brahma Vidya are neither visible nor comprehensible. They cannot perceive the bliss of higher worlds, nor the subtle joy of spiritual awakening.

Some even question the existence of such realms, saying, “We don’t know if there is a heaven or a next life —better to enjoy the pleasures of this world. “Such speech differs little from that of an atheist. The atheist denies outright; the sceptic simply doubts —but both remain far from understanding the Real.

The Warning of the Upanishads

Our Upanishads declare: “A nation that loses Brahma Vidya declines and becomes enslaved.” When the higher wisdom disappears from among the people, they live like animals — governed by instinct, driven by desire, bound by ignorance. When Brahma Vidya is absent, human dignity fades, and dependence replaces inner freedom. Even those who wear the robe of renunciation — if they have lost meditation and Brahma Vidya — cannot be called true *sadhus*.

The True Sadhu

The true sage is not the one who merely dons saffron robes or utters sacred words. A true sadhu is one who has realized the Truth and lives in the Truth. Such a one is established in the knowledge of Brahman, free from desire, serene in wisdom, and radiant with peace.

Only those who possess self-control, both over the outer senses (*bahyendriya nigraha*) and the inner senses (*antarendriya nigraha*), and who, through the guidance of the Guru, bring the knowledge of Brahman into direct experience through meditation, are truly worthy to speak the Truth. When the Guru reveals the great truths — “Aham Brahmasmi” (I am Brahman), “Tat Tvam Asi” (Thou art That), and “Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma” (All this is verily Brahman) — and when the disciple realizes that this entire creation is sustained by the consciousness of Brahman, then the light of Brahma Vidya truly dawns within. But to reach this state, intense and disciplined practice is essential. Without meditation, even if the Guru teaches, the knowledge does not take root.

The Guru can only point the way — the disciple must walk the path and bring that Truth into experience.

The Loss of Worthiness Without Discipline

Therefore, those who lack Brahma Vidya live dependent lives, bound by ignorance. Even those who call themselves *sadhus* or teachers —if they fail to understand, practice, and realize Brahma Vidya; if they neglect meditation; if they lack mastery over their senses — they lose the right to speak Truth. The *Vedanta* gives this warning most clearly. Many say, “We teach classes — we do not need meditation.”

But *Vedanta* proclaims unequivocally: “No matter how much you know or how much you teach, if meditation and sense control are absent, you lose your spiritual authority.” That is why Brahma Vidya is said to be like walking on the edge of a sword. One must tread with awareness and purity at every step. If one lives without meditation, without discipline, without adherence to righteousness, and in impurity of conduct, then one forfeits the power and privilege to speak of Truth. Such souls live dependent, unfree lives.

The Spiritual Poverty of a Nation

As Swami Vivekananda declared: “My land, rich with gems, has become burdened with debt — not because of lack of resources, but because of a decline in spirituality. When once again my nation stands foremost in spiritual strength, it shall once again become a land of prosperity and light.” Indeed, in ancient times, it was said: “Who is greater than an emperor?

He who has mastered Brahma Vidya.” Even mighty emperors bowed at the feet of a knower of Brahman, but the knower of Brahman bowed before none. Such is the majesty of this knowledge —the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, the very essence of existence.

The Blessings of Brahma Vidya

The *Upanishads* declare that he who learns Brahma Vidya gains honour in this world and bliss in the next. Even the greatest sinner — one whose sins are vast as the ocean — can be redeemed through Brahma Vidya while still living on this earth. An impure mind cannot receive or grasp this sacred knowledge. But once a person begins to study Brahma Vidya with earnest practice, and lives a life of purity and discipline, he is freed from the lower worlds even before death.

The Example of Sage Valmiki

Consider the story of Valmiki. Once a hunter who killed countless living beings, he accumulated heavy sin through violence and ignorance. Yet, by the grace of the sage Narada, a realized master of Brahma Vidya, Valmiki awakened to the higher truth. Through unwavering meditation for fourteen years, he burned away his past darkness and attained supreme realization.

His story shows that the power of the Self resides within everyone. It is not absence of ability, but lack of effort, that binds us. When the mind is given importance, it demands food, pleasure, and endless desires. But when the soul is given importance, its power becomes infinite —and liberation becomes inevitable.

The Transformative Power of Brahma Vidya

Every human body must one day perish —but even if one dies while absorbed in meditation, the next birth will be a nobler and higher one. When Sage Narada taught this truth, the sinner Valmiki — once a ruthless hunter — took to intense spiritual practice with unwavering resolve. Through years of meditation, he was transformed from a man condemned to the worlds of sin into one who attained the state of liberation.

This shows that even though Brahma Vidya is a difficult pursuit, one who makes a sincere effort through meditation and inquiry earns the qualification to rise from the darkness of hell to the freedom of Moksha.

Grace and Effort

Some people may not have access to learning or study, and therefore may miss the opportunity to gain *Para Vidya*. But through the grace of past merit, if such a person meets a true Guru like Narada, and listens with faith to his teachings, even the most sinful soul can begin to purify themselves through effort. The story of Valmiki teaches us that there is divine potential in every being, but without perseverance and practice, it remains dormant.

One hearing or one sitting in meditation is not enough. The environment and spiritual atmosphere that existed in the *Treta Yuga* for Ratnakara (Valmiki's earlier name) may not be easily found in this age. Therefore, in the *Dvapara Yuga*, Vedanta emphasized one supreme principle: "To attain Brahma Vidya, one must engage in constant inquiry (*Brahma Vichara*).” That is why the sages repeat again and again —“Vichara, Vichara” — inquire ceaselessly into Truth.

The Practice of Inquiry

Who is Brahman? This inquiry must burn within. Brahman is the Inner Self (Antaryamin) of all beings, the Consciousness that sustains the universe. For those who are inwardly qualified, Nature itself arranges all circumstances to support their spiritual unfolding. Such seekers live in perpetual contemplation, seeing the divine presence in all things.

Equanimity and Inner Control

To progress in Brahma Vidya, one must cultivate Sama — the tranquillity born of inner mastery (*Antarendriya Nigraha*). Because the human being lives under the sway of the mind, the first instruction is always — “*Be calm.*” When the mind begins to dwell upon Brahman instead of the world, worldly desires slowly fade, and the attraction to Truth grows stronger. It is difficult to live in the world and yet remain detached from it — but if you see the Divine Power behind every experience — in the food you eat, the breath you take, the water you drink, the fruits you enjoy — then you realize that it is all the play of Brahman’s consciousness.

Brahma Vidya Brings Completeness

If you live in this world without inquiring into the nature of Brahman, your knowledge remains incomplete. Only with the knowledge of Brahma Vidya does your understanding become whole and perfect. Some people, even after receiving instruction from their Guru, show little interest in deep contemplation. Why? Because they have not yet learned the art of study and reflection (*Svadhyaya* and *Vichara*). But if you have begun to understand these teachings, know that it is a sign of spiritual worthiness. Those who constantly inquire into Brahman, who study and contemplate, develop an ever-growing love for the Divine Reality.

Self-Control and the Use of the Senses

Equally important is Dama — self-control over the outer senses (*Bahyendriya Nigraha*). Living in this world, your senses can either bind you or liberate you. The senses may be used to acquire worldly pleasures, or they may be transformed into instruments of divine pursuit. Use your eyes for study and reflection. Use your ears to listen to sacred teachings.

Use your speech only to speak the Truth. When your study is devoted to Truth, your senses automatically become purified and aligned with your inner goal. The deeper your study and reflection, the greater your worthiness to speak Truth becomes.

The Fruit of Brahma Vidya

As your knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*) and of Brahman (*Brahma Jnana*) deepens, the veils of Avidya (ignorance), Ajnana (unawareness), and Ahankara (ego) gradually dissolve. Then the mind becomes calm, the senses subdued, and the soul shines in its own radiance. This is the culmination of Brahma Vidya — freedom while living, and the perfection of peace beyond death.

The Inner Transformation Through Brahma Jnana

Whenever you study and contemplate upon Brahman, your power of understanding steadily expands. As ignorance fades, wisdom blossoms within. The more one identifies with the body and the ego — saying “*I*” and “*mine*” — the more pride grows, fuelled by worldly learning, wealth, or status. But the moment Brahma Jnana dawns, that illusion melts away. You begin to realize — “There is nothing that is truly mine. Everything belongs to the Supreme. I own nothing; I am nothing but His instrument.” And in that realization, ego dissolves completely. Through the light of Brahma Vidya, ego (ahankara), ignorance (avidya), and delusion (ajnana) all perish.

The Fruits of True Knowledge

With this knowledge arise two noble virtues: Satsilata (nobility of character) and Pavitrata (purity of heart). To live with *satsilam* means to keep one’s character forever aligned with truth and integrity. And to live with *satspravartana* — righteous conduct — is to live with love for all beings. When you recognize that the Divine dwells within everyone, you develop a natural tenderness

and compassion toward all. When impurity fades and purity awakens, and when noble character becomes natural to you, then a remarkable strength arises —the fearless power to speak the Truth.

The Cause of Fear

Many people say, “I feel afraid.” But what is fear, truly? Fear arises whenever there is inner error —somewhere within, impurity still remains. If you are still bound by attachment (mamakara), ego (ahaEkara), or fear, it means that deep inside, some impurity lingers —and impurity means unnecessary, unwholesome thoughts. When you judge or condemn others —saying “He is bad, she is wrong” —it is not them you are harming; it is your own inner purity you are clouding.

What It Means to Love All

To love everyone does not mean to condone their mistakes. True love also has the courage to correct. To point out a wrong is not hatred; it is compassion in action. Those corrected may feel hurt for a moment, but through truth they are saved for eternity. That is why the Guru never justifies wrongdoing. A Guru who condones mistakes is no true Guru. The true Guru lovingly but firmly corrects —for only correction leads to transformation.

The Inner Meaning of the Teacher’s Silence

Some of you may say, “Madam speaks softly; Sir speaks firmly.” Yes — I have not yet grown to the spiritual stature of Raghava Rao Garu. He speaks with the authority of Truth and the force of Dharma. I know that what he says is right — for when he speaks, transformation happens. Perhaps I remain silent not because I know less, but because I have not yet gained the strength to express Truth with such fearlessness.

Another reason is this — since we both share the same work and the same purpose, when one voice speaks, there is no need for a second. I know that your capacity to grasp what is said the first time is strong — so I trust in your understanding. There are many such reasons for my silence.

The Guru's Firmness is His Love

Understand this well: A Guru may appear strict outwardly, but inwardly he is overflowing with love. The one who truly wishes for your well-being will never flatter you —he will correct your faults, even at the cost of your comfort. The disciple must know: “The one who corrects me loves me. The one who overlooks my faults abandons me.” The Guru’s firmness is not anger — it is compassion in disguise. He desires not your obedience, but your awakening.

The Path to Brahma Jnana — Purification Through Practice

Attaining Brahma Jnana does not happen automatically. Even for sincere disciples and dedicated seekers, one day’s learning or one round of practice is not enough. Only through continuous effort and disciplined living can one rise to that supreme state of realization. That is why our *Vedanta* prescribes four sacred means for inner purification:

Water purifies the body

We bathe every day—not once and never again, but every day. For daily cleansing keeps the physical body pure and refreshed. In the same way, inner purity too requires regular cleansing of the mind and soul.

Right conduct (SatyacharaGa) purifies the mind

Living truthfully purifies the mind. To live truthfully means to think and act in harmony with the Divine Whatever I do, I do for the Supreme. Whatever I receive, I receive through His grace.”

When you perform every act in this spirit of surrender, your mind becomes clear and serene. Satyacharana is not merely speaking truth it is *living in truth*, moment by moment. Through this sacred way of living, the restless mind attains purity and steadiness.

Education and austerity (Vidya and Tapas) purify the soul

When you identify yourself with the body and act under the sway of the mind, you are called a *jivatma* — a bound soul. But when, through knowledge and austerity, you weaken the dominance of the mind and realize — “I am not the body; I am the soul,” then you live as the *Paramatma* Himself. That is why all are called *jivatmas* — for most still live under the influence of mind and desire. The soul becomes pure through Vidya (true knowledge) and Tapas (disciplined practice).

In practical terms — give the body only what it needs but give the soul meditation daily. Do not waste time in idle chatter; spend it in silence and inner absorption. In this way, through knowledge and austerity, the soul is gradually refined and sanctified.

Brahma Jnana purifies the intellect (Buddhi)

Until now, many have worshiped outer forms, performed rituals, and believed that heaven itself is the reward. But through Brahma Jnana, one realizes that there is a realm even higher the Satya Loka, the world of truth and pure consciousness. Therefore, while still living on this earth, one must strive to gain *Brahma Jnana* through meditation and inquiry. Mere listening makes one a scholar; only meditation makes one a realized being.

Knowledge Without Experience is Incomplete

Many scholars speak eloquently about scriptures and epics, yet rarely do they say — “It is the Supreme Brahman who sustains this creation. To reach that Brahman, you must meditate. Liberation (moksha) comes only through meditation.” This silence is not their fault — it is simply that only one who has realized

Brahman possesses the power to speak that Truth with conviction. The *Vedas* declare clearly: “To make a place for the Divine in your heart, your speech must be pure, your life must be pure.” Even to speak of Brahman, one must live in holiness and truth. Only a life sanctified by purity and right conduct earns the right to utter the Supreme Name.

The Grace of the Guru and the Power of Effort

When you understand the greatness of Brahma Jnana, you naturally begin to strive for it. It is by the grace of the Supreme that you have met a Guru like Patriji, whose wisdom and purity reflect the very light of Brahman. It is through such divine guidance that you have reached this stage of spiritual growth. By the grace of the Supreme, when you receive Brahma Jnana, your intellect becomes pure and luminous. On this earth itself, a human being can achieve two supreme goals —The burning away of all past karmas through meditation, and the attainment of Moksha through Brahma Jnana.

The Living Example of the Path

Those who understand this truth live each day with dedication, purity, and constant practice. You who now strive earnestly, meditate sincerely, and live a pure life — you have earned the right to speak of this Truth. But if you cease your practice, you will once again lose that right. To live like Patriji, to attain such a noble and radiant state, one must practice unceasingly, without being drawn toward worldly pleasures, but keeping the mind set on the higher goal — “How soon can I reach the higher worlds? How much more can I learn?

How deeply can I know the Truth?” When your heart turns fully in that direction, you will experience bliss even while living on this earth.

3. What must one do to live peacefully, happily and comfortably?

Every person wishes to live in peace, comfort, and joy — and so we make countless efforts to attain them. Even those who turn to spirituality often pursue these three goals above all. But to live thus one must follow the dharma that God has ordained in creation — in simple terms: what you give to creation, creation gives back to you.

That means: if you want to be happy, wish happiness for others; if you want to live in peace, help others live in peace; if you want joy, support the joy of others. In worldly life very few practices this: everyone wants their own comfort, their own pleasure. This arises from selfishness, and selfishness makes people indifferent to others. But when you practise sincerely, cultivate humility, and gain inner knowledge, you begin to live differently.

In the world, arrogance does not disappear, humility is rare. Without practice people cling to the idea “I must be great, I must be comfortable,” and so they sink ever deeper into sorrow. In spiritual training, the guru’s first lesson to disciples is humility. In worldly life fear and sorrow are constant companions: people guard whatever they possess, fearing its loss; if loved ones leave, they grieve. Such fears and sorrows are toxic qualities of the mind.

No amount of rituals, vows, or ceremonies will remove these inner faults. Only meditative practice can transform them. Nothing meaningful can be accomplished on earth without practice — hence the saying, “With sadhana (steadfast practice), works are perfected even on this earth.”

When the mind turns toward the world it becomes impure and habituated to corruption and vice. By impurity we mean living

wrongly — immoral behaviour and degraded conduct. Corruption means resorting to crooked means to earn money. Today the world is full of such corruption: in business, in jobs, everywhere.

By “vices” we mean the leftover bad impressions from past lives that persist as habits — eating meat beyond necessity, drinking alcohol, and so on. As long as such impurity, corruption, and vices remain, one cannot live in true happiness.

To remove these three impurity, corruption, vice you must practise meditation and svadhyaya (self-study/scriptural study). If you want comfort, joy, and a beautiful life, you must use meditation to uproot whatever habits and traits on this earth have become ingrained.

To purify the mind in this way, cultivate true friends who help you grow. If someone speaks a beneficial truth to you, receive it with friendship and gratitude. Where there is opposition, strive to remove it through patience and right conduct. At first people may not listen, but by repeating the right teachings steadily, the other person may change. Strive to become the kind of person whose words carry power and are heard by others.

The Secret of True Happiness

Look at the birds they build their own nests. Look at the ants they gather their own food. Would you say they lack intelligence? Certainly not. Every creature in creation works hard, each in its own way. No being robs another, nor does it crave what belongs to someone else.

But man alone, in his ignorance, harms other beings killing animals, eating their flesh, believing that by violence he gains strength. This is not strength; it is delusion born of greed. When sin exceeds its limit, the Supreme Being Himself takes some form to restore balance through suffering, through lessons, through karma. And when one is enduring punishment, how can peace, happiness, or comfort exist? Think deeply about it.

The Path Back to Joy

That is why it is said: “*Focus on the breath the bridge to the Divine.*” Through meditation on the breath (Anapanasati Meditation) you draw in the cosmic energy of the universe and offer it back to the Divine within you. Without some effort, no real joy can arise. Worldly wealth may bring possessions but inner joy comes only through spiritual practice. If you truly wish to make others happy, begin by walking the path of non-violence (Ahimsa) that is the first step.

Then comes selfless service (Paropakara) doing good for others without expectation that is the second step. And finally, meditation, self-study, and introspection the third step, which lead you to wisdom, purity, and inner peace. Only when these three steps are firmly practiced can one live an extraordinary, blissful, and luminous life.

The State of Liberation

Liberation (*Moksha*) is nothing mysterious it is the state of everlasting joy. When the mind becomes pure, the vision of the soul (Atma Darshana) arises naturally. When you live in that non-dual awareness when your heart sees the same Self in all then life itself becomes pure bliss.

So if you wish to live peacefully, happily, and joyfully, allow everyone around you to live the same way. For only when you give others happiness, does the universe return that happiness to you.

“True joy is born not from what you possess, but from what you purify within.

Non-violence opens the heart, service expands it, and meditation fills it with divine light.”

4. Rejoice Not in Wealth, but in Wisdom

Human beings constantly hear, read, and speak of the need to rise to higher states of consciousness. Yet, in spite of this, they often fall prey to illusion (Maya) unaware that they are descending rather than ascending. That is why daily meditation, listening to wisdom, and constant contemplation are essential.

Just as your body needs food every day, your soul too requires nourishment the life-force of divine knowledge.

Through regular practice, listening, and reflection, you steadily learn and grow. People may ask, “How long will you keep listening? How long will you keep learning?” But remember as long as you live, you need food for the body; likewise, for one who seeks Self-realization, practice and knowledge are necessary every single day. If someone still asks such a question, it simply means ignorance still binds them.

The Trap of Maya

Before you entered the spiritual path, you may have lived however you pleased. But once you step into this life of awareness, you must be vigilant—constantly checking yourself: “Am I falling under the sway of illusion again?” How does a person enslaved by Maya behave? They are filled with ego, pride, and desire. When their position grows, when their education grows, when their wealth grows their arrogance grows even faster.

That is why the sages and masters of old, those who practiced deeply and gained supreme wisdom, warned again and

again that a true seeker must never harbour ego. Many great ones have said: “Do not rejoice in riches; rejoice in knowledge.”

The False Joy of Wealth

Some people celebrate when wealth increases, feeding their pride and looking down upon others. Others boast arrogantly about inherited fortunes, as if they had earned them through their own effort —falling further and further from grace. But the true knower of the Self —the Atma-Jñanî — rejoices not in gold or gain, but in every new spark of insight discovered through meditation and wisdom. Watch closely: sometimes, while listening to a discourse or reading a sacred verse, you suddenly feel wonder: “Ah! I never saw it from this angle before!” That moment of inner revelation is real celebration. It is the joy of learning, the bliss of understanding another facet of Truth.

The Joy of True Learning

You may think, “What I already know is complete, there is only one path.” But if there were only one way, why would there be so many masters, so many scriptures, so many paths leading toward the same light? Each teaching reveals another dimension of truth. Yet despite hearing countless words, you may still not be firmly established in knowledge — for God cannot be seen; only His creation can. And because the human mind always turns toward what it sees, it easily becomes enslaved by desire —forever craving, forever comparing, delighting in possessions, and swelling with pride. Thus, though people may even *know* the purpose of human birth, they forget it again and again, distracted by illusion and attachment.

The Vanity of Wealth and the Wisdom of Renunciation

That is why daily practice (sadhana) and listening to sacred wisdom (sravana) are indispensable to every seeker. Without these two, spiritual growth cannot be sustained. Sri Adi Sankaracharya in his timeless hymn *Bhaja Govindam*, offers this profound warning:

**“Ma kuru dhana-jana-yauvana garvam,
Harati nimecat kala sarvam;
Mayamayam idam akhilaA hitva,
Brahma-padaA tvaA praviuA vidiitva.”**

Meaning: “Do not take pride in your wealth, your family, or your youth. In a single instant, Time devours them all. Knowing that this world is pervaded by illusion, Seek refuge in the Supreme Brahman.”

The Ephemeral Nature of Possessions

All the riches on this earth are destined to vanish. Only one treasure endures forever the presence of the Divine (Paramatma). When you realize this truth deeply, you stop taking pride in worldly possessions. Take Duryodhana, for example. Born into royal privilege, inheriting vast wealth and power, his ego swelled with the pride of lineage. Though once friendly with the Pandavas in childhood, he let arrogance harden his heart: “This kingdom is ours! We are the true emperors!” That false pride led him to enmity, and in the end, **he lost everything** — his kingdom, his kin, his life. This is precisely what shankara meant when he said:” All can vanish in a moment; everything in this world is but illusion.”

The Snare of Maya (Illusion)

All that you take pride in your strength, your wealth, your relationships are only fleeting reflections in the mirror of Maya.

Even this entire creation is illusion —that's why the sages declare again and again:

“Atman is the only Truth; the world is but appearance.”

We hear this countless times, yet we keep falling into the same illusion. In the very moment we need awareness most, it slips away — we forget that “this too is Maya.” Sankaracharya explains why:

The Two Tests of Life

Those who are spiritually ready and deserving (arhata) are tested by the Supreme in the form of hardships. If they overcome those hardships with faith and steadiness, He draws them nearer to Himself.

But those not yet ready are tested in another way they are given wealth, success, and comfort. They become intoxicated by these gifts, falling deeper into illusion, believing the unreal to be real. Thus, they drift farther away from Truth. Understand this: whether you are engaged in the world or walking the path of meditation —both are tests. Worldly life tests your detachment; spiritual life tests your perseverance.

The Choice Before You

The one who delights in material wealth forgets the value of the Divine. The one who sees through illusion realizes that every loss is a lesson, every trial is a bridge to transcendence. So, do not rejoice in riches that perish rejoice in the wisdom that endures. Do not measure life by possessions measure it by how much illusion you have overcome.

“Time will take away all that you hold dear —your wealth, your youth, your name. But if you conquer illusion, even Time bows to you.”

The True Glory of a Spiritual Life

A truly spiritual person, no matter how much wealth he possesses, never forgets the Divine. That is what makes his life sacred. When Lord Vishnu came to King Bali in the guise of Vamana, his guru Ūukracarya warned him: “Do not grant this request. This is no ordinary Brahmin. He has come to take away all that you possess!” But what did King Bali reply? “Many emperors have ruled this earth. They gained immense riches, and yet whose name has endured forever? Wealth fades, power fades, fame fades but when the Supreme Himself stretches out His hand to ask, even if I lose my life, I will surrender everything to Him.”

And with that unwavering resolve, Bali gave his word and offered his gift, even against his teacher’s warning. He declared: “A death at the hands of the Lord is no death it is liberation.” That is why his name lives eternally in history.

Though a mighty emperor, Bali never forgot the Divine and that remembrance made him immortal in spirit.

Demons Who Became Divine

Both Prahlada and Bali, though born in so-called *demon lineages*, rose above their origins through devotion, surrender, and wisdom. It was not their birth, but their virtues and surrender to God, that made them radiant with divine qualities. No one is truly lowly if they strive through practice (*sadhana*).

Anyone no matter where they come from can rise to greatness by meditating on the Divine and striving to dwell in His presence. Those who conquer illusion and ego attain glory. Those who cling to arrogance can never overcome Maya.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's Lesson on Humility

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa would often teach his disciples: "Never think that you alone are great. In this vast universe, there will always be souls nobler and mightier than you." He would remind them — there are always people wiser, more generous, and more useful to the world than oneself.

Hence, pride has no place on the spiritual path. To illustrate this, he told a beautiful parable:

The Firefly, the Stars, the Moon, and the Sun

When night falls, fireflies appear, glowing brightly. Each firefly, seeing its own light, thinks: "I illuminate the world!" But soon, stars emerge in the sky —and the fireflies realize their light is pale in comparison. Then the stars themselves, shining proudly, think:

"We light up the heavens!" But as they bask in their brilliance, the Moon rises, spreading his cool, silvery glow. And when dawn breaks, the Sun appears —and before His splendour, the light of all else fades away. So too, said Ramakrishna, is human greatness. Every small glow thinks itself the brightest until it meets a higher light.

The True Sun of the Soul

Just as the sun gives light to the world, the Divine Human (Divya Manava) radiates the light of wisdom to all. But if one becomes proud over a small ability, that very light will be withdrawn.

The truly wise know —there will **always** be greater souls in this universe. The path of humility is the path of light.

The Supreme Realization

Those who fail to understand that attaining the Supreme (Parabrahman) is the highest knowledge remain trapped in pride boasting of wealth, of family, of power. Such people are not strong they are bound by illusion.

But the joy of realizing the Supreme Self far surpasses any joy wealth or fame could offer. That is why the sages said: “Do not rejoice in riches. Do not celebrate possessions. Rejoice when wisdom dawns —when you awaken as a Divine Being.”

Becoming a Divine Human — The Path to Co-Creation with the Supreme

You truly become a Divine Human a *Divya Manav* only when you realize the Self and perceive the vast design of the Cosmic Creation (BrahmaGa). That is the moment of awakening, when you and the Creator become one in purpose.

Patriji often said:

“You must become a Co-Creator with Existence.” When your consciousness expands to align with the power that sustains creation itself, you attain Brahma-Jnana the wisdom of the Infinite. When that supreme goal stands before you, how can you still take pride in temporary riches, in perishable knowledge, or in worldly achievements that fade like morning dew? If you do, you close the very doors that lead to true wisdom.

The Purpose of Human Life

Why have you come to this earth? What is your mission? Patriji taught that the purpose of life is to know the Creator while

still in the body —to awaken to the source from which this body and this universe arise. He not only taught this truth; he guided you to practice it daily —to meditate, to listen, to study, and to share the knowledge with others so that it becomes a part of your very being. “Only when you share wisdom with ten others,” he said, “does it begin to spread through the world. “Thus, he urged: “Learn, live, and share.” This is how divine wisdom multiplies — not by hoarding it, but by radiating it.

Purity — The Prerequisite to Real Growth

You read books, listen to masters, attend classes but before all else, your mind must be purified. Without that inner cleansing, no true growth is possible. Consider this: before printing on a cloth, the cloth must first be washed spotless white. If stains remain, the print won’t appear clearly. In the same way, your mind collects dust from the world the grime of desire, the dirt of self-interest. Through daily meditation, you must cleanse this inner fabric, so that divine impressions the teachings of the Guru, the truths of enlightened masters can leave their mark upon you.

When your mind becomes as pure as a white page, whatever wisdom you hear will sink deep and take root. And when you share that wisdom with others, it grows even brighter within you.

The True Aim of Evolution

Why must you evolve? Because the ultimate purpose of human birth is to know the One who gave you this body. Until you realize the Creator, you will continue to be born again and again. And what is birth but a cycle of opposites? Pain and pleasure, gain and loss, pride and sorrow a wheel turning endlessly. To step off

that wheel and dwell in eternal bliss, you must strive to reach the Realm of Truth (Satya Loka) your true home beyond illusion.

You have already understood this truth by walking this path. Now, your duty is to fulfil that goal through practice.

The Effort Required

In worldly education, a student studies day and night to secure good marks and a desired seat. He attends coaching classes, learns diligently, and sacrifices sleep for success. So too, as a resident of the Realm of Truth, you must work tirelessly here on earth to regain that divine state through constant meditation (sadhana), noble company (satsanga), and self-study (svadhyaya). Each of these practices polishes your awareness, revealing ever-deeper dimensions of wisdom.

The Greatest Obstacle — Ego

Among all impurities, ego is the most dangerous. It may be just a four-letter word, but it has the power to pull you down lifetimes. Attachment (mamakara) may still be moderate but ego (ahaEkara) hides subtly in everyone. It whispers, "*I know. I am right. I am special.*" The moment you believe it, your ascent halts. A single trace of ego can undo years of meditation. But one moment of humility can open the gates of liberation.

Essence of the Teaching

- You become divine when you see the Self in all.
- Purify the mind daily — only a clean canvas can hold divine art.
- The purpose of life is not survival, but **Self-realization**.
- Share wisdom — every truth given multiplies within you.

· Practice constantly; humility is your greatest strength.
“You are born not merely to exist, but to evolve —to co-create with the Divine, to shine like the sun, and to return home —luminous, liberated, complete.”

Celebrate Knowledge, Not Wealth — The Wisdom Beyond Illusion

Sri Sankaracharya, in his timeless compassion, reminded humanity: “All the wealth, all the relationships, all that comes your way exists only for a fleeting moment. In the blink of an eye, all can vanish.” No treasure, no dynasty, no power endures forever. Look at Duryodhana how proud he was of his riches, his might, his royal army. Even with Lord Krishna Himself standing by his side, his arrogance blinded him.

He could not recognize Divinity, he turned away from Truth. So too, when we fill our ears with unnecessary chatter instead of the sacred words of the Guru, we waste the chance to rise higher. Patriji distilled this eternal truth into three simple phrases:

**“From meditation comes knowledge;
from knowledge comes liberation.”**

If you seek moksha, then meditate for only through “awareness upon the breath” (Anapanasati Meditation) can knowledge take root within you. Book knowledge and listening are only the beginning it must become your living experience.

True Celebration

Most people celebrate wealth they throw lavish functions for birthdays, anniversaries, and achievements. Each increase in possessions brings more celebration. But these are not the true festivals of life. The real day of celebration is the day you gain

knowledge — the day you awaken to the truth of the Self. Celebrate not the birth of the body, but the birth of understanding. Not the growth of possessions, but the flowering of awareness.

Recognizing Growth Through Nature's Reflection

How do you know you are growing in wisdom? Nature herself shows you. Patriji said: “Count the number of people who sit before you that is the measure of your energy.” If only ten people come to listen, that is the strength you currently hold.

When your inner power expands, the universe will bring a hundred before you. Nature is never biased she mirrors your state exactly. So if attendance is low, do not blame others.

It is not their fault it is a reflection of your own energy. Increase your meditation. Deepen your knowledge. Purify your mind. When your vibration rises, people will naturally be drawn to you —for the universe arranges everything perfectly.

The Real Measure of Growth

Never declare, “I have arrived.” The moment you think you are complete, growth stops. Keep the inner fire of aspiration alive the constant wish to evolve further, to understand deeper. Patriji used to say:” Everything in this world exists to test your ego.” Positions, praise, possessions —each is a spark from the fire of Maya (illusion).If you get carried away by them, you burn. If you stay aware, you shine.

The Final Words of the Master

Just before leaving his physical body, Patriji visited our home one last time. As he was getting into his car, he turned back and said softly, yet firmly: “Never fall into Maya.” “Never fall into Maya.” “Never fall into Maya.” Three times he repeated it his final teaching, his final blessing. At that time, I didn’t grasp its

depth. I thought, “Why would I fall into illusion?” But as life unfolded, I began to see how Maya comes in countless subtle forms through wealth, family, youth, praise, and pride.

Sankaracharya’s Warning in Bhaja Govindam

“Wealth, family, and youth—these three breed arrogance. You may think, ‘I spend, I give, I do great things,’ or ‘People admire me,’ or ‘I can travel, teach, accomplish.’ But all of this is Maya — gone in an instant.”

The True Way to Rejoice

So, no matter how high you rise, how much you acquire, or how far you travel —let your heart constantly whisper: “This too is Maya. This entire world is Maya.” When you see everything as part of that grand illusion, you no longer rejoice in temporary gains. You rejoice only when wisdom deepens — when the light of understanding dawns. That is the true festival of the soul.

Celebrate not the glitter of gold, but the gleam of inner knowing. Celebrate not possessions, but perception. For when knowledge grows, you are reborn as light itself.”

5. Why People Fail to Focus on Spiritual Life

Every human being must one day realize this truth: Only through spiritual living can a person become complete. Human birth is not an ordinary occurrence it is the only form that grants the soul the possibility of immortality. But what is immortality? It is not about escaping death or living endlessly in the body. Immortality means living in the fullness of divine awareness a state beyond time, beyond fear, beyond the cycle of birth and death.

Worldly Life vs. Spiritual Life

If one lives only a worldly life, it remains incomplete. But when worldly life is harmonized with spirituality, life becomes whole, radiant, peaceful, and eternal. Worldly life, by itself, is bound to limitation: it offers pleasures, but they are temporary; it gives comfort, but it fades; it grants joy, but it soon turns to longing again. In contrast, a spiritual life connects you to the unending source of joy a joy that no loss can diminish, no time can destroy, no death can take away.

The Purpose of Human Birth

The sages and masters declare: “Among all births, the human birth alone is most precious for it alone can lead to immortality.”

Through spiritual awareness and right living, a human being can transcend all limitations and experience divine consciousness while still on Earth.

The purpose of this birth is not merely to eat, earn, and exist it is to realize the Divine within and to live as that truth.

What Is Spiritual Life?

To live a spiritual life is to live in the awareness of God to understand the sacred power behind all creation. In worldly life, people enjoy what God gives wealth, family, pleasure, recognition and call it happiness. But it is limited joy, momentary joy. After pleasure comes emptiness, after gain comes fear of loss.

They wander from one desire to another, until one day by grace they encounter a Guru, a friend, or a divine situation that awakens in them the yearning for Truth. They begin to sense that there is something more something beyond possessions, beyond pleasure, beyond time. That *something* is the spiritual path.

Yet, Even After Knowing, Why Do So Few Walk This Path?

Even after hearing of its greatness, even after feeling its peace, most people still cannot stay devoted to the spiritual path. They know it brings eternal happiness yet their minds wander elsewhere. Why? What prevents them? Let us understand the reasons.

1) Growing Up Without Spiritual Awareness

From childhood, many people grow up in an environment completely devoid of spiritual understanding. In some families, even the parents lack awareness of what *spiritual life* truly means or how sacred it is. They have never experienced its depth so naturally, they cannot share it with their children. Children raised in such surroundings grow up believing that the visible world itself is the greatest reality. They think that wealth, beauty, possessions, and status are the true signs of success.

Not because they are selfish but because they were never shown anything higher.

But those who are blessed with even a little spiritual awareness begin to see life differently. They realize that no matter how much one acquires in this world comfort, pleasure, luxury, or recognition it all fades. It can give happiness, yes, but not *eternal joy*. Eternal joy arises only through spiritual living by knowing the Divine within and aligning with the rhythm of Nature. When parents themselves lack that understanding, their children, too, grow up unaware of the path that leads to peace.

The Modern Condition — Outward Smiles, Inner Restlessness

Look around: today, almost 99% of people live in sorrow, anxiety, and inner emptiness. They may look cheerful on the outside neatly dressed, smiling, talking pleasantly but within, their hearts are restless, worried, and tired. “They look fine to the world, but within them, waves of worry never stop rising.” This happens because of spiritual ignorance because they have forgotten the sacred connection between life and Nature, between the human soul and the Divine essence that sustains it.

An Example — The Rain and the Sunshine

Once, there was a small incident that beautifully revealed human ignorance. My relatives invited me to attend the opening of their new shop. For four days before the event, it rained continuously and heavily. Everyone was anxious — “What if it rains tomorrow? How will we hold the inauguration?” they said. But the day before the event, the rain suddenly stopped. On the day of the opening, the sun shone brightly.

Everyone was relieved and began to celebrate. Then someone said, “It’s because *you* prayed and bowed down, that’s why the sun came out!” I smiled quietly. Because in truth, Nature

always moves in its own rhythm. Rain, sunshine, storms all follow the divine order. Yet people, in their ignorance, think, “It happened because of me.” “It stopped raining because of my prayer.” If that were true what about the others who didn’t pray? Didn’t the same sunshine fall on them too? But such reasoning does not occur to minds still trapped in ignorance.

So I simply smiled not out of arrogance, but with compassion. Because sometimes, wisdom means smiling and staying silent.

Another Example — Misunderstanding the Cause

Later, someone said, “Rajalakshmi meditates a lot that’s why it didn’t rain during her event!” I didn’t feel proud or offended.

I simply smiled again. Because this is how the human mind works it constantly wants to assign cause and effect, to tie everything to a person, an event, or an action. But the truth is simple: Nature does what it must naturally, harmoniously, perfectly. It doesn’t obey anyone’s command.

It isn’t cruel. It doesn’t target anyone. It merely fulfils the purpose set by the Divine. Our only duty is to accept Nature as it is without complaint, without resistance, without judgment.

That acceptance itself is the highest form of reverence.

The Difference Between the Spiritual and the Unawakened Mind

A person with spiritual insight understands this truth deeply. He knows that Nature never behaves cruelly. Whatever happens good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant is part of a larger balance beyond human control. But those without spiritual knowledge think differently. They live in reaction, judgment, and blame. They label everything: “This is good, that is bad.” “This is

like this, that is like that.” They cannot see beyond the surface. The spiritual mind sees the Divine rhythm in everything. The unawakened mind sees only disturbance. That is why the spiritual person never criticizes Nature he cooperates with it. He knows that by respecting Nature, he is respecting the Divine itself.

2) Influence of Worldly Relationships on Spiritual Focus

Even after realizing the value of spirituality, many cannot remain steady in it and one of the biggest reasons is attachment to worldly relationships. When the people around you your family, friends, and relatives are deeply absorbed in the material way of life, their energy, their thoughts, their words constantly pull you back into that same vibration.

Even if you know the greatness of meditation, even if you’ve tasted the sweetness of inner peace, you find yourself getting distracted, drawn again and again into their world of desires, discussions, and drama. That is why a seeker must be extremely careful and alert until a certain stage is reached.

You must stay focused, no matter who you are with, no matter what people around you are doing or saying.

As long as your mind can remain undisturbed in the midst of the world you are progressing. But the moment your attention begins to scatter, the outer world takes over again. “The test of true meditation is not silence in solitude, but silence in the midst of noise.”

The Subtle Pull of Relatives and Society

When all your relatives are worldly, they unknowingly weaken your spiritual focus. They talk about wealth, family issues, success, status never about truth, peace, or the soul.

If you allow yourself to get entangled in that vibration, your meditation loses its depth. So, remember meditation must remain meditation, no matter who you are surrounded by. Even while being among people, do what you must with awareness, and return inward as soon as possible. Do your work, fulfil your role but keep your mind anchored in the Divine. “Move with the world, but do not be moved by the world.”

When People Begin to Recognize Your Light

Once your inner awareness deepens, you begin to stand out quietly, naturally. People start to sense something different in you. They may not understand what it is, but they can feel your peace, your steadiness. One day, someone might ask you a question not about the world, but about the Divine. That is a sign. Once, a person asked me, “How did the sacred syllables *Namah Shivaya* originate?” Out of hundreds, even thousands present, why did they ask *me*?

Because something within them recognized this person *knows*. There is a light here that can give an answer. That is what happens when you live with spiritual awareness people may not have entered the path yet, but they begin to respect those who have. Your life becomes your message. Your peace becomes your teaching.

The Role of a True Seeker

When you reach such a stage, your duty is not to come down to their level again, but to lift them up gently, silently, lovingly. To do that, you must remain steady. Never slip back. Never compromise your practice. Until your light becomes strong enough to guide others, you must protect it with care.

You must continue your meditation, your self-inquiry, your discipline without pause, without pride, without fatigue. “The world does not need more talkers of truth; it needs steady flames of awareness.”

Transforming, Not Conforming

Do not let your surroundings change *you* grow until your very presence begins to change your surroundings. You must cultivate such spiritual strength that even in the midst of a thousand worldly minds, your mind remains calm, luminous, and untouched. Be like a single sacred flame burning among countless lamps not blending into the darkness, but bright enough to inspire others to light their own. “Don’t live as one among the many; live as the one who awakens the many.”

3) The Trap of the Past — Living in Memories Instead of the Present

Another subtle obstacle on the spiritual path is the constant remembrance of the past the endless recollection of one’s birthplace, old home, and bygone days. Many people, even at the age of 50 or 70, still dwell on their childhood memories: “In our village, we lived like this...” “In our house, things used to be that way...” “Those were the golden days...” They replay those moments again and again in their minds, as if clinging to a film that has long ended. But the enlightened ones especially Buddha taught us: “Live in the present.” Because when you keep digging up the past, you bury the treasure of the present moment. Every time you revisit what has already happened, you lose the opportunity to evolve *here and now*.

The Power of the Present Moment

Instead of asking, “How was my past?” ask yourself, “How deeply can I meditate *today*?” “How much awareness can I grow *now*?” Your energy must flow toward progress, not nostalgia. The past is over the present is alive, fertile, and full of divine possibilities. “The past is a memory, the future a dream only the present is real.” When your attention lives in the present, you begin to grow in wisdom, peace, and strength. But when you keep turning backward, your spiritual journey slows, your focus fades, and meditation loses its depth.

Living Stories vs. Living Truth

Some people make a habit of gathering a group and narrating their life stories “In those days we did this...” “We used to live like that...” They speak of their lives as if they were ancient legends. But spiritual growth is not found in storytelling it is found in self-realization. Instead of repeating, “Those were the days,” begin to say, “This is my moment to rise.” Think not of *how you once lived*, but of *how beautifully you can live now*.

Infinite Opportunities for Growth

In the material world, there are endless opportunities to earn money and people keep chasing them until their last breath. Likewise, in the spiritual world, there are infinite opportunities to expand awareness and gain wisdom until your last breath. As long as life flows through you, you can meditate, reflect, and evolve.

The Wise Live in the Present

The truly wise understand this deeply. They do not waste time remembering what has passed. They remain fully anchored in the present moment, continuing their practice, their learning, their inner growth. Because they know —dwelling on the past steals

the power of the present. When the mind clings to what was, it loses sight of what *is*. And that is why meditation becomes difficult because meditation lives only in the *now*. “The one who lives in the present lives with God. The one who lives in the past lives with shadows.”

4) Excess Dependence on Material Sciences Weakens Spiritual Vision

Those who immerse themselves deeply in *material sciences* often strengthen belief only in what can be measured or seen, while failing to perceive the immeasurable. By clinging to these external disciplines, they lose focus on spiritual science, which reveals the unseen foundation of creation — the Creator Himself.

Material science can explain what exists *within* creation the laws of motion, gravity, chemistry, life forms but it cannot explain who created these laws, or why creation exists at all.

To say, “*I haven’t read about God, therefore God doesn’t exist,*” is not reasoning it is blindness of ego. You do not see the air you breathe yet you feel its presence, its touch on your skin, its life flowing through your lungs. So can you deny the existence of air simply because it is invisible?

Likewise, the Divine cannot always be seen, but the wise *experience* that subtle Presence. Denying the unseen just because it escapes your senses is the height of ignorance.

To understand the unseen, your intellect must be refined and the only way to refine it is through *meditation*, through the practice of “Awareness on Breath” (Anapanasati meditation).

This is the bridge from the finite mind to infinite consciousness.

Material sciences (Apara Vidya) teach us the mechanics of the visible world. Spiritual science (Para Vidya) reveals the

mystery behind the invisible Source. You may master the first 50% of knowledge through material learning but without the other 50%, the higher spiritual understanding, you remain incomplete.

Those who study only the material sciences can explain *how* a seed grows into a giant tree: because of sunlight, water, and soil. But those who study spiritual science know the deeper truth that the *power* enabling the sun to shine, the *life-force* that awakens the seed, and the *intelligence* that shapes the tree's design all originate from the same Divine Source.

That understanding the awareness of the unseen power guiding all is true intelligence, the knowledge that transforms intellect into wisdom.

5) The Power Behind the Visible — The Path from Ignorance to Realization

All that you see the stars, the trees, the people, the endless activity of life moves because of an *unseen energy*. That invisible force is the Supreme Consciousness the Paramatma.

Those who realize this truth are no longer ordinary beings. They become Yogis, Jñânis, and eventually Brahmarcîs sages who have merged their intellect with the Infinite.

But those bound only to *material science* remain ordinary. Their eyes see, yet they cannot perceive the *Seer* behind the seen. Their intellect analyses the external, but fails to recognize the Eternal.

Believing that *the body is permanent*, that *relatives will remain forever*, or that *material knowledge alone is ultimate truth* these are the marks of ignorance (Avidya).

Like the roots of a banyan tree that spread and grow into new trunks if not trimmed, our worldly impressions (*vasanas*)

multiply lifetime after lifetime. They anchor us to illusion — to *Maya*. Even if one has heard the truth, the fog of *Maya* blinds the inner vision, pulling the seeker backward, making spiritual progress difficult. To cut these roots, one needs a weapon of discernment — Vairagya (Dispassion).

Vairagya does not mean renouncing life; it means *living amidst the world* while constantly inquiring into its Source. To live in the world yet remain untouched by its illusions — that is true renunciation. The house, the body, the relationships — none are permanent. Understanding this deeply brings detachment.

And detachment brings peace. That is why the scriptures say: “The only medicine for ignorance is Vairagya.”

To grow spiritually, you must shed Durahankara — needless pride. It is the subtlest chain that binds the soul to delusion. Avoid the company of those who mock or dilute spirituality.

Leave the friendship that weakens your inner strength but never leave the path of spiritual growth itself. If you are still practicing meditation yet find worldly desires lingering, know this clearly: Mâyâ still has a hold on you. Continue your practice, intensify your inner inquiry, and sharpen your awareness until no shadow of desire remains between you and the Divine Light.

6) Spirituality — The True Foundation of Immortality

At this point in life, you may have certain responsibilities.

Fulfil them sincerely but once they are done, return to meditation. That is the only way to keep your inner flame alive. Do not get so entangled in worldly duties that you abandon meditation and wisdom altogether. For if you do, no matter how many births you take, you will remain bound to sorrow, never

tasting the essence of *immortality*. Immortality does not mean escaping death; it means living in eternal awareness, where joy itself becomes your very existence. And that state can be attained only in human life.

Among all beings, it is the human who holds the key to transcendence. Only those who walk the spiritual path can rise into the immortal life; others remain caught in the endless cycle of birth and pain. Even after knowing the truth, even after realizing the greatness of meditation, people slip backward—and the reason is simple: worldly desires. They are the golden chains that keep the soul bound to illusion.

You all wish to grow spiritually yet when difficulties arise in worldly life, you do not wish them away; when sorrow appears, you face it with strength; when desires fade, you do not crave more. This shows that you have begun to live in truth and are already tasting the joy that springs from inner stillness.

If you wish for sorrow to vanish completely from your life, then live a spiritual life for only spirituality can lead you to eternal bliss. That is why the great sages declared: “The foundation of immortal life is the spiritual life.” Therefore, move forward in life with awareness and inquiry, hurting no one, living wisely, gracefully, and purposefully.

A true Jnani a realized one —lives beautifully in both worlds: in the material and in the spiritual. To say, “*I am spiritual, so I don't need the world,*” is ignorance. To say, “*I live in the world, so I don't need spirituality,*” is the same ignorance in disguise. The art of life lies in balance —to walk the middle path, to hold both worlds gently in your hands, and to live with calm joy in the midst of all. That is the complete life. That is the life immortal.

6. The Reason We Fail to Realize the Truth

Those who have *seen* the Truth the realized ones share their experiences so that others too may walk the same path. That is why Patriji always emphasized *Swadhyaya* self-study to help seekers understand how Truth can be experienced, not just known intellectually. By studying the lives of those who have realized the Self, your own journey becomes easier, clearer, and faster. This is why Patriji encouraged everyone to explore the teachings of realized masters for every enlightened life is a living map to the Infinite.

Let us now look at what Sri Ramana Maharshi said about Truth. He declared: “Truth is eternal — it *always* exists.” Before we go deeper, let’s understand the difference between Truth (*Satyam*) and Fact (*Nijam*).

Truth vs. Fact

A *fact* exists only in the present — it changes with time.

What is true now may not remain so tomorrow. But **Truth** never changes. It remains the same across all ages and all times.

It neither appears nor disappears — it simply *is*. For example: You see a mango tree. First, there is a flower — then a bud — then a raw fruit — then a ripe mango.

Everything changes. That is a *fact*, because it transforms. But **Truth** is that which never transforms, never fades, never ceases to exist. Anything that disappears cannot be Truth. That which is beyond all change — that alone is **Satyam**.

As Ramana Maharshi said: “That which is transient is not real.”

Why Can't Most People Realize Truth?

Every human being is born to realize this Truth — that is the very *purpose* of human birth. But why, then, do so many fail to turn toward it?

Ramana Maharshi explained that the reason is *Bhogasakti* — the power of attachment to pleasure. *Bhogasakti* means the restless desire to possess and enjoy whatever the eyes behold.

As long as this craving exists, the longing for Truth does not arise. When the mind turns outward — that is *Bhoga* (indulgence). When the mind turns inward — that is *Yoga* (union). And those who remain trapped in desire cannot even think of the Truth.

The Nature of Desire

Look around — the entire world is driven by *Bhogasakti*. People constantly want to experience, to own, to have more.

When they see others possessing something, they too feel, "*I should have it.*" Even when they attain it, the satisfaction doesn't last. Soon another desire arises. Thus begins the endless cycle of craving and disappointment.

Watching others' achievements and possessions and wanting them for oneself — this is the seed of *Bhogasakti*. And as long as this fire of desire burns, the light of *Yoga* cannot shine.

The True Purpose of Meditation

Some are fortunate — through the grace of a Guru or their own good karma — to turn inward and seek the Truth. But even among them, not all persist. Today, many know that *meditation is great*, yet few understand **why** it is great. Modern teachers often say: "Meditation brings good health." "Meditation fulfills your wishes."

“Meditation solves your problems.” True but these are mere *byproducts*. In reality, all problems arise from **karma**.

When karma is dissolved, there is no more suffering, no more disease, no more bondage. And the only way to dissolve karma is through **meditation** — because meditation is the path of *Truth-Seeking (Satyanveshana)*.

Meditation — The Quest for Truth

To meditate is not to escape the world, but to turn inward and seek the **Source** of all experience. It is the yearning to *know the Eternal* to live in awareness of that which never changes. Meditation, therefore, is not a technique for comfort it is a sacred quest for Truth. Only when you meditate for Truth’s sake does *Satyanubhuti* the direct experience of Truth begin to dawn within you.

As long as one is not on the path of seeking Truth that is, as long as one is not engaged in realizing the Truth it must be understood that such a person has not yet overcome worldly attractions or the feeling of “I am the body.” Sri Ramana Bhagavan further says: whenever your Guru teaches you about meditation, you must constantly participate in *satsanga*.

Many people think *satsanga* means being in the company of a crowd or a gathering. But that is not true. *Satsanga* means union with the *Sat* the Truth. And what is that, Truth? It is the Divine. Those who have realized that the Self within is none other than God understand that Truth is that which is eternal that which always exists. Since that Divine dwell in you as the Self, if you remain in union with that Truth — that is, if you meditate regularly — you will come to know the Truth.

Therefore, meditation should not be something done one day and abandoned the next. The depth of your yearning to know the Self, or God, must be felt by the Divine itself. If you meditate one day and skip the next, it shows a lack of genuine interest in God. If your interest were real, your pursuit would grow stronger day by day not something done only when you have free time.

If you keep saying, “I’ll meditate only when I have time,” then when will you ever have the vision of Truth?

Thus, the more deeply you understand God, the more deeply you will experience His presence. This is not something that appears in form or shape it is an inner experience. And to have that experience, you must first listen to these truths through a Guru.

What does this mean? Just as fragrance is natural to a flower, so is the presence of God natural to every living being. The flower cannot be separated from its fragrance, and no creature exists without the Divine within.

As Sri Ramana says, the more you realize that there is no life, no creation, no being without God the stronger your devotion to the Truth and to the Divine will grow.

When you perceive this entire creation as belonging to the Supreme, both ego (*ahankara*) and attachment (*mamakara*) will vanish. For as long as you think “this is mine,” ego grows; and when you think “these are my people,” attachment grows. That means you are still living with the vision of the body and the world.

To give up ego and attachment, you must constantly remain aware that all this belongs to God that there is nothing apart from Him.

The same Divine who pervades the universe in its vastness also dwells within you as the Self, in the subtlest form. The path to experience that realization is the inward journey.

Until you truly embark on this inner journey, pain, sorrow, and suffering will continue to follow you. That is to say, God Himself created human birth and it is only in this human life that He granted the ability to realize Him. As long as one does not know the Supreme Being, one remains bound in the cycle of *karma*. You can understand for yourself how many karmas still remain, by looking at your own life.

All the suffering, illnesses, and hardships you experience are the results of your past karmas. The very God who revealed the law of karma also, through the Guru, showed the way to dissolve those karmas. Until you realize the Divine within the Self through meditation your karmas will continue.

But the moment you perceive that Self, the Divine within, all karmas are reduced to ashes. Though we say “God exists in every atom of creation,” we do not truly *experience* it. This means we have lost awareness of that Truth.

You may say, “God is doing everything through me,” but that awareness is not reflected in the way you live. To live *naturally* means to live without the sense of “I” to know that it is the Supreme within who is making things happen, using this body merely as an instrument.

This instrument, the body, does nothing by itself. The day the indwelling Self the Truth departs, the body becomes motionless. This understanding must come through *viveka*, discernment.

You may intellectually understand this, but when it comes to actual living, you lose that awareness. Only when you live every moment with constant awareness can it be said that you are living in the Truth.

Constant awareness means: whatever you do, know that it is the Self within that is making it happen. Then you will say, “This body is just an instrument ⁶⁷am the Self, the Divine within.”

As your spiritual practice deepens and your knowledge grows, you will begin to experience this directly.

However, no matter how much effort you make, if there is no *good conduct* (*satpravartana*) in the outer life, you cannot experience the Self, says Bhagavan. Only one who lives righteously can seek, attain, and experience the Truth.

And what prevents right conduct in a person? The mind itself. What does the mind do? Even if you walk on the path of the Self, the wandering mind turns everything toward selfish motives, feeding desires and attachments. As long as you do not understand the Truth, your desires will continue to grow.

When you are on the path of knowing the Truth, you must understand the teachings of the Guru in the right way. What do they mean?

They mean that in this creation, everything is being done through the Divine but *you* are not the doer. Yet, the sense of “I am doing this” that ego of doership and the feeling of “this is mine” that ego of ownership both remain.

If even a trace of these two as small as a grain of sand still exists in you, you cannot attain the vision of the Self.

At first, you may think, “No, I don’t have ego or attachment.” But as your understanding deepens, you begin to see: “Ah! Perhaps I *do* still have ego... perhaps I *do* still have attachment. That must be why I haven’t yet experienced the Truth.”

Here, the word *satpravartana* is used — meaning “right conduct.” *Sat* means “the Divine,” and *pravartana* means “conduct.” So *satpravartana* means behavior that pleases God.

If your conduct displeases the Divine, it means you are still caught in the restless state of mind. But if your behavior aligns

with what pleases God, it means you are walking the path of *satpravartana*.

Still, if you believe you are living righteously but the vision of the Divine has not yet dawned, then you must understand that there is still more to transform within.

Then you should question yourself: “What must I change? Do I need to refine my speech? Should I change how I listen?

Is there impurity in the way I perceive? Are my feelings still tainted by selfishness?” You must inquire in many such ways. You should also constantly observe how your five senses are functioning. That is why Bhagavan repeatedly emphasized *vichara* inquiry. Sage Vasistha also said, “Inquiry itself is supreme knowledge.”

Only with right conduct (*satpravartana*) can one understand and experience the Truth. And the path to that is *satsanga* communion with the Truth. If you desire the experience of Truth, the vision of the Self, then you must engage in *satsanga* constantly which means you must meditate regularly. For meditation to become deep and steady, *satpravartana* is essential.

When you are united with *Sat* the Truth thoughts and desires will inevitably arise in the mind. Why do these thoughts arise? Because the mind, which wanders in the outer world, records all impressions in the *chitta* (subconscious).

If you reject an impression, it fades and does not return. But if you approve of it if you say “This is nice, I like it” it becomes imprinted in the *chitta*. Yet, such impressions are unnecessary for your inner journey.

For example, imagine you go to a railway station. You see countless people some arriving, some leaving, some boarding or getting off trains. None of them remain in your memory.

But if someone sits beside you, talks to you, tells you about themselves, and asks about you that person's image and words stay with you. Later that evening, when you sit for meditation, those people and conversations come to mind.

Why? Because you accepted them inwardly. The countless others around you whom you did not inwardly register you do not remember them at all, not even their faces. This means: only what you *accept* inwardly remains in the *chitta* as thought. If you can learn not to inwardly absorb every impression, it will not settle in the *chitta* and will not disturb your meditation.

But if you have the tendency to *absorb* everything you see — to take every person and every situation into yourself then you move farther away from the Truth. That is why *satpravartana* is vital.

If you speak a kind or useful word to someone, and you feel a quiet satisfaction that you have done good that is fine. It won't disturb you. But if you start taking others' problems and emotions into yourself, that very act will trouble your mind again.

That is why one who has truly realized the Truth and lives in *satpravartana* right conduct never accumulates memories in the mind. If you have ever scolded someone, or if someone has scolded you, those people will appear in your meditation.

But if you have helped someone, taught them meditation, given a spiritual class, advised them to give up meat, or done any such selfless act — when you return home and sit for meditation, none of those hundred people will come to your mind.

Take note of this carefully — why do they not appear? Because you did good to all of them. One who abides in the state of the Self always lives in the **present** — there is no past, no future.

But one who lives in the state of mind (*manasthiti*) is bound by both past and future. Such a person leaves the present moment, recalls the past, and fears what may happen in the future.

That is why, when you teach a class — the subject you taught, or the faces of the people present — none of these will appear in your meditation if you were established in the Self while teaching. Because when actions arise from the Self, no memories are left behind. But if you later remember what shawl someone offered you, or how many people took photos with you, then know that those actions came from the *state of mind*, not the Self.

The Self always dwells in the present. The mind, however, constantly wanders either to the past or to the future and deposits all those impressions into the *chitta* (subconscious), disturbing your meditation. Holding on to such memories is not right conduct.

Therefore, if you truly wish to experience the Self to know the Truth you must engage in *satsanga* constantly. And *satsanga* means uniting with the Truth that is, being in continuous meditation.

When your eyes are open, and you live in the external world, *satpravartana* means acting in ways that bring contentment to the Soul — through love, sacrifice, and service. These are the qualities that nurture the satisfaction of the Self and help you grow spiritually. Thus, when there is right conduct outwardly (*satpravartana*) and communion with Truth inwardly (*satsanga*) — only then is there the possibility of realizing the experience of Truth, says Ramana Bhagavan.



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Avidya means false knowledge — the inability to correctly understand what truly exists, the misunderstanding of reality. When, due to ignorance, we fail to perceive things as they are or misinterpret them, sorrow arises. From avidya come excessive desires, and from those desires comes suffering.

Brahma Vidya is the knowledge that reveals Brahman the Supreme Reality. Vidya means knowledge. The knowledge that leads one to Brahman is called **Para Vidya** (the higher knowledge), while worldly or material knowledge is called **Apara Vidya** (the lower knowledge).

If you wish to live in happiness, you must wish for the happiness of others. If you desire peace, you must allow others to live in peace. If you seek joy, you must become a source of joy for those around you. As long as impurity, corruption, and negative tendencies exist within you, true happiness will remain out of reach. To remove these, one must practice meditation and self-study (swadhyaya). If you seek happiness, peace, and a beautiful life, you must use meditation to dissolve all the ingrained habits and tendencies that bind you. Just as the body requires food every day, so too does the soul require its vital nourishment — **Prana Shakti** (life energy).

For the realization of the Self (Atma Jnana), both spiritual practice and wisdom are essential for as long as we live upon this earth.

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