

Vivekachudamani

Adi Shankara

Part A 1-20



This book contains supplementary study material for the video recordings of the Vedanta seminar with Andre Vas in Thonse (India) in January 2026.

The video recordings are the main study material and can be found here:

www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani

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Vedanta seminar with Andre Vas in Thonse (India) in January 2026.

This particular seminar is highly beneficial for gaining a deep understanding of Vedanta. In the third session, the importance of repetition is highlighted, as the extensive subject matter only partially remains in our memory. This applies not only to the participants, but also to those watching the videos at home (self-study). By watching the video recordings in combination with this accompanying studymaterial, you can make the knowledge of Vedanta your own.

This book with the first twenty sessions has been produced by Vedanta NL to help students accomplish this. Part B with the following 19 sessions can be downloaded here: www.vedanta.nl/en/videos-seminar-met-andre-vas-india-januari-2026

Information about seminars with Andre Vas: www.vedanta.nl/en/agenda.nl
Website Andre Vas: www.yesvedanta.com



Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

01. The Manual for Self-Realization Introduction, by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-1

Verse 1: Prayer

**sarva vedānta siddhānta gocaram tam agocaram
govindam paramānandam sadgurum praṇato asmi aham**

I remain saluting that teacher Govinda, who is limitless and of the nature of joy, who is not objectified by the senses and the mind but is known through the mahāvākyas of all the Upaniṣads.

Introduction

This lecture introduces the text Vivekachudamani and sets expectations for an intensive 10-day course aimed at cultivating discriminative intelligence (viveka) to discover the final reality (Self/Paramānanda). Key themes: course format and discipline, meaning of the title, the purpose of study (subtractive wisdom), and a close reading of the opening verse (maṅgalācharaṇa).

Course overview and expectations

Purpose and intensity

10-day intensive course focused on serious study and inner work.
Not a beginner course — requires active thinking and sustained attention.
Instructor commitment: ensure transformation through sustained effort.
Transformation requires hard work.

Learning format and participation

Interactive classes; participation encouraged (invites questioning and self-examination).
Interaction creates pressure that helps reveal automatic thoughts and assumptions.
Participation will be voluntary and gradual — no forcefulness.
Practical tip: allow at least one restorative break per day (e.g., 20-minute nap) to stay sharp.

Quick Review

Course is intensive and demanding.
Active participation accelerates insight.
Rest and pacing are part of effective study.

Title and key terms: Vivekachudamani

Meaning of "Viveka"

Viveka = discriminative inquiry; ability to discern truth from falsehood.
Applies both to ultimate reality and to everyday decision-making.
Art of living intelligently = exercising viveka (use intellect to make right decisions).

Meaning of "Chudamani"

Literal: an ornament worn on the crown (a crest jewel).
Deeper sense: the most excellent or the crown jewel of discrimination.
Vivekachudamani = the supreme teaching of discriminative wisdom.

Quick Review

Viveka = discriminative intelligence for life and liberation.
Chudamani = excellence; the text is the crown of viveka.
Goal: sharpen buddhi (intellect) to navigate both relative and absolute levels.

Course orientation: Nature of the teaching

Not additive, but subtractive (para-vidyā)

Teaching is not about acquiring new information; it's about removing false identifications.
Para-vidyā: higher knowledge that subtracts misconceptions and misidentifications.
Outcome: a durable framework to reinterpret life and face inevitable challenges.

Attitude toward reality and debate

Vedanta examines multiple standpoints; reality has many facets.

Avoid dogmatic single-aspect assertions; appreciate nuance and depth.

Example image: disagreement like seeing a "6" vs. "9" — both valid from different standpoints.

Quick Review

Teaching removes false identifications rather than adds objects.

Vedanta emphasizes nuance and multiple viewpoints.

The course builds a reusable interpretive framework.

Practices and rituals introduced

Opening prayer and communal practice

The group began with the universal prayer sāhana vavatu (intention of mutual protection and welfare during study).

Instructor demonstrated a memory/gesture method to help internalize the prayer.

"Not mine" (Namah) practice

Sanskrit root namah interpreted as not mine.

Bringing a short practice into daily life: mentally point to body, objects, relationships and say not mine.

Purpose: loosen automatic ownership attachments tied to the body.

Example applications: before meals, while greeting — convert routine acts into moments of sadhana.

Effect: reduces the habit of exclusive possession ("my body, my knowledge, my family") and reveals the instrumentality of body/things.

Quick Review

Rituals (prayer/gesture) orient attention and community.

"Not mine" practice weakens automatic ownership and identification.

Everyday acts (eating, greeting) become opportunities for sadhana.

Close reading: Verse 1 (Maṅgalācharaṇa) — core ideas

Structure and purpose

Verse 1 is a maṅgalācharaṇa (introductory invocation) and encapsulates the whole course.

It is a prostration to the teacher (guru) and contains condensed wisdom about the Self and means of realization.

Key terms unpacked

1. **Praṇataḥ asmi aham** — "I bow/prostrate": Attitude of humility and reverence toward the teacher/guiding principle.

2. **Namah / Namonamaha:** Gesture of salutation; also "not mine" — embodied reminder of non-possessiveness.
3. **Agocharam:** Not objectifiable; cannot be directly perceived, inferred, or grasped as another object. *Contrast:* Ordinary knowledge deals with objects (flowers, sounds, feelings). *Claim:* "I have grasped It" → turns Self into object (gocharam), missing true nature.
4. **Sarva Vedanta siddhanta gocharam:** Paradox resolved: Self (agocharam) pointed to via Vedanta teachings (Upanishads, mahāvākyas). Teachings as mirror/pointer — reveal reality via inner light (*analogy:* words visible because of light; words point to light).
5. **Paramānanda:** Revealed reality: supreme, limitless joy/wholeness; ever-present, inerasable. Not obtained — recognized: "You already *are* that" (tat tvam asi).

Implications for practice and epistemology

Although the Self cannot be known as an object, scriptural teaching is the appropriate means to remove ignorance and facilitate recognition.

Most topics (body, mind, koshas, cosmology, māyā, prakṛti, etc.) are means or stepping stones toward recognizing Paramānanda.

Emphasis on simplicity: you are not gaining something far away; you are uncovering what is already present.

Quick Review

Verse 1: humility to the teacher; Self is agocharam (non-objectifiable).

Vedanta (scripture/teachings) acts as a mirror/pointer to the Self.

Goal: recognize Paramānanda (ever-present fullness) — not add new possession but remove ignorance.

Practical takeaway and course transition

95% of the content acts as stepping stones leading to recognition of Paramānanda.

The work is primarily discriminative and clarifying, not accumulation.

Classes resume after a short break; sessions will repeatedly begin with the invocation to ground the learning.

Quick Review

Most study serves as preparatory steps toward Self-recognition.

Repeated invocation/practice stabilizes orientation.

The course continues with sustained, focused sessions.

Sanskrit

Adi Shankara

Agocharam

Buddhi

Chudamani

short meaning

author traditionally associated with Advaita Vedanta

not approachable or not objectifiable

intellect or discriminative faculty

crest-jewel; the most excellent of discrimination

Gocharam	that which is perceptible or observable
Govindam	name of the Lord; Govinda in oblique form
Govinda	name of the Lord or revered teacher
Koshas	sheaths or layers covering the Self
Mahavakyas	great sayings of the Upanishads
Mangalacharana	auspicious invocation or introductory prayer
Manas	mind
Namonamaha	repeated salutation
Namaha	salutation; I bow
Paramanandam	supreme bliss
Para vidya	transcendental or liberating knowledge
Prakriti	primordial nature or material reality
Pranathah asmiyaham	I bow down
Pranathosmiyaham	form of prostrational salutation
Sahana vavatu	may we be protected (invocational prayer)
Sarva Vedanta siddhanta	the established teachings of all Vedanta
Satguru	true teacher or spiritual preceptor
Siddhanta	established doctrine or conclusion
Upanishads	scriptural texts of Vedanta
Viveka	discriminative discernment
Vivekachudamani	the crest-jewel of discrimination; the text being studied
Vedanta	the end of the Vedas; the philosophical teaching of the Upanishads
Maya	illusion or apparent reality

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

This text is an introduction to a 10-day intensive study of the Vivekachudamani (attributed to Adi Shankara). The teacher sets expectations: the course is not for beginners or passive participants but requires hard intellectual work, daily focus (including short breaks or naps), and active, sometimes uncomfortable, interaction. The aim is transformation through disciplined inquiry (viveka)—the faculty to discriminate truth from falsehood in both everyday decisions and in the pursuit of ultimate reality.

The title Vivekachudamani is explained: viveka (discriminative reasoning) and chudamani (literally a crest jewel; figuratively “the most excellent” of viveka). The goal is to cultivate and sharpen buddhi (intellect) so one can correctly discern at relative and absolute levels. Although authorship by Adi Shankara is uncertain, the text is valued for its direct, concise, and penetrating statements.

Key pedagogical points:

The teaching is largely “subtractive” (para-vidya): not about adding new things but removing false identifications that obscure what we already are.

Vedanta (the Upanishads and texts like Vivekachudamani) functions as the means—a “gocharam” or visible pointer/mirror—that helps reveal the otherwise ungraspable Self.

The Self (the reality to be discovered) is described as “agocharam” (not an object to be perceived or grasped by senses, mind, inference, or intuition). Claims of “having contacted” it are often mistaken because true Self is not an object of knowledge. Yet the Upanishadic teaching can reveal this non-objective reality by serving as a pointer, comparable to words revealing light when light is present.

Practical and devotional elements:

The course begins with mangalacharana (an invocation/prostration) in which Adi Shankara’s prostration to his guru is recited and explained (the chant is taught line by line).

The Sanskrit namah (prostration) is interpreted as “not mine,” a practice suggested to cultivate non-attachment: recognizing body, possessions, relationships, emotions, knowledge, and ignorance as “not mine” because they are tied to the body-mind and not the true Self. This can be used as a simple daily sadhana (e.g., before meals).

The guru is saluted as one who points to the limitless, joyful, non-objectifiable reality (paramānanda).

Nature of the goal:

Paramānanda (supreme bliss/fullness) is ever-present, cannot be negated, and is not something to be newly acquired; rather, the seeker is to discover or recognize what they already are. Because it is nearest (always present), this discovery is not ultimately difficult— Vivekachudamani and Vedanta are the tools that help remove ignorance and clarify understanding.

Most course material (body, mind, koshas, cosmology, maya, prakriti, etc.) serves as stepping stones or means toward realizing paramānanda; the central teaching remains simple and singular.

Overall tone and logistics:

The teacher emphasizes sustained attention, the importance of avoiding quarrels over viewpoints (recognizing different standpoints), and that participation will be gradual and non-coercive.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

02. The 3 Rarest Things In the Universe

by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-2

Verse 2: The Three Graces of Life

**durlabham trayam eva etat deva anugraha hetukam manuṣyatvam mumukṣutvam
mahāpuruṣa saṁśrayaḥ**

The status of a human being, the disposition of one who longs for freedom and being under the tutelage of a teacher - this three-fold blessing is difficult to gain and has its cause only in the grace of the Lord.

Verse 3: Reason to Strive Now?

**labdhvā kathañcit nara janma durlabham tatra api puṁstvam śruti pāra darśanam
yaḥ sva ātma muktyai na yateta mūḍhadhīḥ saḥ hi ātmahā svam vinihanti
asadgrahāt**

Having somehow obtained the rare human birth and there too, exalted qualities and mastery over the Vedas, that person of deluded intellect who would not strive for his / her freedom is indeed committing suicide. By holding on to the unreal he / she destroys oneself.

Introduction

Lecture examines how Vedanta points the seeker to the final reality (the Self) and why systematic practice is required despite the ultimate unity of all.

Main themes: the Mahavakya (Aham Brahmasmi / Tat Tvam Asi), the three graces required for realization, the nature of Ishvara-anugraha (divine/graceful help), and the three rarest things in the universe.

Mahavakya and the Nature of the Self

Core idea

Vedanta teachings (cosmology, practices) function like tools — useful until the Self is realized; then they are no longer needed.

Realization: once you recognize the Self, doubts vanish and life continues outwardly unchanged but with inner certainty.

The problem: Why don't we know the Self?

Everyone uses "I" naturally, so there is an implicit sense of Self.

Error: Ascription — people project the "I" onto impermanent things (emotions, thoughts, situations), identifying the Self with changing contents.

Result: loss of separation between the thinker and the mental/emotional field; one feels identical with grief, joy, desire, etc.

Methodology of Vedanta

1. Initially create separation between the Self and non-Self (to see the error).
2. Use systematic inquiry to dissolve the separation and realize non-duality.

The major statement (Mahavakya): Tat Tvam Asi (properly tvam asi tat — you are that) — equates the individual tvam with the whole tat.

Mahavakya functions as *pramana* (means of valid knowledge), not mere affirmation.

Quick Review

Vedanta is instrumental: teachings are tools to point to the Self.

Error is identifying the Self with impermanent phenomena.

Mahavakya (Tat Tvam Asi) is the culminating statement that removes the sense of separation.

The Three Graces (Verse 2)

Sanskrit verse: Durlabham trayam eva etat deva anugraha hetukam manushyatvam mumuksutvam maha purushah samshrayah

Meaning: Three rare blessings — a human birth, the desire for liberation (mumukshutva), and shelter under a competent teacher; such threefold favour depends on Ishvara-anugraha (Lord's grace).

1) Manushyatvam — the human birth/status

Definition: Manushya here = thinking being (a being with viveka, discriminative intelligence), not merely a feeling creature.

Significance:

- Human capacity: the ability to choose, to go against conditioning and instinct; can exercise viveka (discrimination).
- Potential: as humans we possess the capacity for the most excellent viveka (chudamani) and hence for paramananda (limitless bliss).
- Practical implication: use the human birth to exercise discrimination directed to self-knowledge.

Quick Review

Human birth is rare and valuable because it allows discriminative inquiry.

Viveka (discrimination) is the core faculty that differentiates humans from animals.

Use human life to pursue self-knowledge; it's the best use of viveka.

2) Mumukshutvam — the desire for freedom

Definition: a burning yearning for permanent freedom (not merely worldly security or temporary pleasures).

Distinction:

- Ordinary desire = pursuit of artha (security), kama (pleasure), dharma (virtue) within the world.
- Mumukshu is suspicious of worldly satisfactions, sees limits of enjoyment and permanence, and wants permanent, limitless freedom (not just long-lived pleasures).

Origins of mumukshutvam:

1. Discontentment — noticing limitations of life.
2. Prarabdha/past causes: unseen karmic factors or past efforts (punyam) that predispose one.
3. Samskaras — conditioning/impressions that make one reflective or inquisitive.

Progression: Many start seeking via action/sadhana (yoga, rituals); maturity shifts the seeker from action to inquiry (from mumukshu to jijnasu — the one who desires to know).

Quick Review

Mumukshu wants permanent freedom, not temporary pleasures.

The yearning arises from discontentment plus past conditioning/merit.

Mature seekers shift from doing (action) to knowing (inquiry).

3) Maha-purusha samshrayah — shelter of a great teacher

Definition: a qualified teacher (mahapurusha / shrotriya) who knows the truth and can transmit it skillfully.

Qualifications of a teacher:

- Not based on outward signs (ashram, titles) but on capability to transmit knowledge and set students free.
- A teacher is someone who can use the scriptures effectively and guide internal inquiry.

Practical note: trusting a teacher again after disappointment requires patience and risking trust; liberation is shown by the teacher but must be realized by the student.

Quick Review

A true teacher is rare and crucial — someone who can transmit knowledge and free the student.

Apparent external credentials are not reliable indicators.

Patience and willingness to trust again are required to benefit from a teacher.

Ishvara Anugraha — Nature of Grace

Ishvara-anugraha here means the enablement or fruits that make realization possible; it is NOT partial favoritism.

Two perspectives:

- Grace as external benevolence (common view).
- Vedantic framing: grace is the ripening of one's own past efforts plus conducive circumstances — Ishvara as karmaphala-data (giver of results).

Analogy (Swami Sivananda): petrol in a car = Ishvara — petrol enables travel but the driver decides how to use it; Ishvara “says yes” to what you choose.

Interpretation:

- Your own sustained effort, refinement, and readiness create conditions (merit/punyam) that Ishvara helps manifest.
- You “author” your freedom; divine grace aids by aligning results and opportunities.

Quick Review

Grace = ripening of one's own past effort plus favorable alignment, not arbitrary favoritism.

Ishvara is the dispenser of results; your choices determine which results you receive. Spiritual progress comes from your effort refined and supported by such grace.

Why Strive? The Three Rarest Things in the Universe

(Verse interpretation)

If one obtains the three graces and still does not strive, that avoidance is likened to spiritual suicide — holding to the unreal that comes and goes.

The three rare things enumerated:

1. Human birth — rare opportunity for discrimination and inquiry.

2. A strong independent mind (pumstvam) — the capacity to think independently, make connections, apply teachings creatively rather than parroting received ideas.

Independent thought: not herd-thinking or mere memorization; able to apply teachings to one's life.

Development requires repeated, disciplined thinking and application.

3. Shruti pradarshanam — receptivity and appreciation of the Shruti (scriptures); recognizing their relevance and applying them rather than dismissing as archaic.

The rare combination: human birth + independent mind + receptivity to scriptural insight.

If these are present and one does not pursue liberation, the result is a wasted opportunity (metaphorically: committing suicide).

Quick Review

The three rarest things: human birth, an independent thinking mind, and receptivity to the scriptures.

All three together create real potential for self-knowledge.

Failing to use them is the gravest waste.

Obstacles, Courage, and Paths

The common path (pravrtti) vs. the needed path (nivritti)

Most follow pravrtti: pursuit of external goals and desires to obtain relief (action-based).

What people truly want behind those desires is nivritti: freedom from the very craving/desire — permanent cessation of the inner urge.

Vedanta's proposal: stop chasing external satisfactions and pursue the cessation of desire.

Inner resistance and courage

Habit, conditioning, and ease of gratification make renunciation of desire difficult.

Spiritual maturity requires courage:

- Endure temporary loss of worldly happiness to pursue higher freedom.
- Fight the pull of habitual patterns; refusal to fight equals slow death (spiritual suicide).
- The fight continues until final realization or the last breath; giving up the struggle is equated with giving up life's highest purpose.

Quick Review

Most people pursue desire-satisfaction (pravrtti); the deeper aim is freedom from desire (nivritti).

Leaving the comfort/ease of habitual gratification requires courage.

Persisting in inquiry and resisting the pull of old habits is the central struggle.

Conclusion / Final takeaway

Vedanta gives a systematic path: recognize the Self by discriminating between the real and the unreal, use the rare opportunity of human life, cultivate intellectual independence and scriptural receptivity, seek a qualified teacher, and persist courageously in inquiry.

Grace assists, but realization is ultimately the fruit of one's own refined effort and readiness.

Quick Review (overall)

The Mahavakya "Tat Tvam Asi" points to non-duality but requires method: first discriminate, then dissolve separation.

Three essential graces: human birth, burning desire for liberation, and a competent teacher; these are rare and precious.

True goal is freedom from the desirer (nivritti), not endless pursuit of objects; courage and sustained effort produce the fruit, with Ishvara's grace aligning results.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Aham brahmasmi	I am Brahman
Atma	Self or inner awareness
Brahman	Absolute reality
Chudamani	the crest-jewel; most excellent
Deva	deity or heavenly being
Ishvara Anugraha	grace of the Lord
Jijnasu	one who wants to know
Karmaphala-data	giver of the results of actions
Maha purusha samshrayaha	dependence on a great person or teacher
Mahavakya	great dictum or principal statement
Manushya	human being
Manushyatvam	the status of being human
Mumukshu	one who longs for liberation
Mumuksutvam	the state of yearning for freedom
Nivriti marga	path of withdrawal from desires
Pramana	means or source of valid knowledge
Pravrti marga	path of worldly activity and pursuit
Punyam	merit or fruit of good actions
Paramanandam	supreme bliss
Pradarshanam	demonstration or exposition
Pravritti	activity or engagement in the world
Samskara	mental impression or conditioning
Shrotriya	one learned in the scriptures

Shruti	that which is heard; revealed scripture
Shruti Pradarshanam	presentation or appreciation of the Shruti
Tat tvam asi	that thou art
Tvam	you
Veda	sacred knowledge or scripture
Viveka	discriminative discernment
Vivekachudamani	crest-jewel of discrimination; a text

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Summary

Overview: purpose of Vedanta and the Mahavakya

The lecture explains that the diverse doctrines and practices across Vedanta serve as instruments—like hammers—to reveal the final reality (the Self). Once realized, these means can be set aside. Vedanta’s systematic method first establishes an apparent separation between the individual “I” and the world, then removes it by inquiry, culminating in the Mahavakya declarations (e.g., Tat Tvam Asi, Aham Brahmasmi). The text emphasizes inquiry over rote affirmation: one must inquire into the nature of the “I” to realize the Self.

The Three Graces (Durlabham Trayam)

Vivekachudamani identifies three rare and necessary conditions for awakening—gifts of Ishvara’s grace (Ishvara Anugraha), though grace here also signifies the fruit of prior effort (punyam):

- **Manushyatvam:** Human birth — the capacity for discriminative thinking (viveka). Human beings can make choices, resist conditioning, and investigate reality; this potential must be used to pursue the supreme.
- **Mumuksutvam (tvam):** A burning desire for freedom — not mere worldly improvement but a longing for permanent, limitless liberation (not temporary pleasures or heavenly status). This desire often arises from discontentment and the recognition that sensory or social gains are transient.
- **Maha-purusha samshraya:** Reliance on a true teacher (shrotriya) who is established in Brahman and capable of conveying the teaching effectively. A qualified teacher helps convert external action-oriented striving into internal inquiry.

The lecturer clarifies that grace functions as the interplay of prior causes, conditioning (samskara), and present effort. Ishvara merely grants results (karmaphala-data); the seeker authors their own progress by right effort and readiness.

Three Rarest Things and the Call to Strive

The speaker names the three rarest things: (1) human birth, (2) a strong independent mind (capable of original discrimination, not herd-think), and (3) the capacity to appreciate Shruti (scriptural relevance). Possessing all three yet not striving for liberation is likened to self-annihilation—"slow suicide."

The talk contrasts two paths: pravrtti (pursuit of desires through action) versus nivrtti (withdrawal from desire). True fulfillment is freedom from the desirer itself—the cessation of the constant itch for satisfaction—not merely obtaining successive objects. Attaining this requires courage: to forgo transient worldly comforts long enough to pursue lasting freedom. The Upanishadic method asks seekers to analyze their experience, convert action into inquiry, and steadfastly fight the pull of conditioning until liberation is realized.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

03. How to Learn Faster | Meaning of Moksha by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-3

Verse 4: Need for Knowledge on this Path

**vadantu śāstrāṇi yajantu devān kurvantu karmāṇi bhajantu devatāḥ ātma aikya
bodhena vinā vimuktiḥ na siddhyati brahma śata antare api**

Let people study the scriptures; let them propitiate devās through Vedic rituals; let them do altruistic activities; let them worship the gods. Without the knowledge of the oneness of the self, even after a period of the rule of hundreds of Brahmajis mokṣa is not accomplished.

Introduction

Lecture covers practical methods to learn and retain knowledge faster, psychological obstacles to change, and classical Vedantic teaching on mokṣa (liberation) from Vivekachudamani Verse 4. Combines study-science (training balance, Ebbinghaus curve, repetition) with spiritual-philosophical analysis (pravṛtti/nivṛtti, what mokṣa means, limits of action and the role of dharma).

Learning: the Training Balance Scale

Concept

A two-sided scale to assess learning effectiveness:

- **Left side:** willingness to learn (openness, curiosity).
- **Right side:** willingness to accept change (ability to transform behavior/perception).

Effective learning = product of the two sides (example given: 10/10 learning × 1/10 willingness to change = 10/100 → 10% capacity).

Common observations

Many adults: high willingness to learn but low willingness to change due to:

- Attachments, comfort zones, habits, fear of abandonment, social belonging.

Opposite problem: high willingness to change but low willingness to learn → results in misguided action (“excited idiot”).

How to increase willingness to accept change

Self-inquiry: Brutal honesty about current progress and satisfaction.

Methods/attitudes suggested:

- Implement — create impetus (sometimes by recognizing pain of stagnation).
- Prayer, faith, courage — for immediate shift in orientation.
- Recognize benefits: clarify why change is desirable (better life, growth).
- Identify what must be let go (attachments, roles, fears).
- Personal homework: determine concrete steps to raise your scale value.

Quick Review

Learning effectiveness depends on both learning and willingness to change.

Adults often resist change due to attachments and habit.

Solutions: honest assessment, motivation (benefits), and concrete practices to let go.

The Ebbinghaus Learning Curve (Forgetting Curve) — How to Retain

The phenomenon

After learning, memory retention drops rapidly:

- Start: 100% when first learned.

- By end of day 1: retention ~40% (lost ~60%).
- By day 7: retention ~20% (lost ~80%).

Cause: brain discards non-essential data to prioritize key information.

Countermeasures (study science)

1. **Review:** revisit material multiple times.
At least two reviews are critical.
Even 5 minutes of review significantly improves retention (can keep retention closer to ~60%).
2. Questions and active engagement during learning help reinforce memory.
3. Repetition promotes neural strengthening; nididhyāsana (Vedantic practice) = continuous revisiting until knowledge becomes ingrained.

Quick Review

Memory decays quickly without review (Ebbinghaus curve).

Two brief reviews greatly improve retention.

Active engagement (questions, repetition) is essential for durable learning.

Nididhyāsana and Repetition

Nididhyāsana: repeated, sustained contemplation to internalize truth; not just intellectual grasp but inculcation into personality.

Purpose: make insight naturally manifest in perception and behavior through repetition.

Quick Review

Nididhyāsana = continuous review and contemplation.

Repetition converts learned knowledge into lived knowledge.

Essential for Vedantic realization, not optional feel-good reinforcement.

Paths to removing a condition on the Self: Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti

Definitions

Pravṛtti mārga (active/path of pursuit): Seek and obtain objects or conditions to relieve dissatisfaction.

Temporary alleviation; can increase appetite for more (scratching the itch).

Nivṛtti mārga (withdrawal/path of renunciation/recognition): Seek permanent ease with existence by removing dependence on conditions.

Aim: recognize that the seeker (I) itself is a mistaken identification and has no intrinsic incompleteness.

Key point

Most worldly pursuits address the condition on the Self superficially; real freedom requires shifting to nivṛtti — the insight that the limited "I" is a false identification.

Quick Review

*Pravṛtti gives temporary relief; nivṛtti aims for permanent freedom.
True change requires recognizing the I's false sense of incompleteness.
Vedanta emphasizes withdrawal/recognition over mere accumulation.*

Verse 4 (Vivekachudamani) — What gives mokṣa and what does not

Etymology and meaning

Mokṣa from muc = to let go, freedom.

Mokṣa = letting go of false identifications and all dependencies that create suffering: Needs for security, validation, sense of incompleteness, fear of death, stories, roles, attachment to identity, etc.

Also includes letting go of the desire to be liberated — even that can be an attachment.

The verse's teaching (summarized)

People may study many disciplines (science, rituals, arts, technical skills, perform rituals, build temples, do karmic acts), but none of these automatically produce mokṣa.

Karmakāṇḍa (ritual/action section of the Veda) serves to enrich the small I — it is additive and finite; mokṣa is not achieved by adding more to the I.

Quick Review

*Mokṣa = freedom by letting go, not by accumulating.
Rituals, disciplines, and actions enrich the limited self but cannot remove its incompleteness.
True liberation involves subtractive knowledge: removing the false notion of "I is incomplete".*

Limits of Action and Why Actions Cannot Produce Mokṣa

Three limitations of action

1. Action is performed by a limited agent (the small I).
2. Each action is finite and mutually exclusive (doing A excludes doing B simultaneously).
3. The time-bound nature of action yields time-limited results.

Finite + finite + finite cannot logically produce the infinite (mokṣa). Therefore, actions (artha/kāma/dharma pursuits) cannot yield limitless freedom.

Quick Review

*Actions are finite in agent, scope, and duration.
Finite actions cannot produce infinite liberation.
Recognize the proper role of action: useful but limited.*

The Three Purusharthas: Artha, Kāma, Dharma (and their role)

Artha: security, wealth — provides comfort necessary to pursue higher learning.

Kāma: pleasure, enjoyment — balanced pleasures prevent mistaking mokṣa for mere feel-good escape.

Dharma: ethics/virtue — cultivates strength of character required for realization.

Purpose: these three support life and prepare the person for higher knowledge; they are not to be mistaken as means to mokṣa.

Quick Review

Artha, Kāma, Dharma are essential but insufficient for mokṣa.

Properly ordered, they create the conditions to pursue higher knowledge.

Misused, they become obstacles or excuses.

Dharma: Two senses and role in practice

Samanya Dharma (general social ethics)

Basic social harmony and mutual respect necessary for societal functioning.

Violations arise from ego-driven incompleteness; people act irrationally when driven by overwhelming needs (analogized to oxygen/ survival).

Consequences: guilt, lowered self-esteem, breakdown of trust; long-term adṛṣṭapāla (future consequences).

Active Dharma (sadhana of alignment)

Dharma as active self-correction — continuously realign perception and action to what is right.

When you notice deviation, deliberately bring yourself back to correct behavior.

Dharma builds strong-mindedness, discernment, and capacity to hold higher knowledge.

Quick Review

Two aspects: social (samanya) and active personal alignment.

Ego-driven needs cause dharma violations and downstream consequences.

Practicing active dharma strengthens the person for inner work.

Ahimsa (Non-injury) and Boundaries

Ahimsa = minimize harm to others and oneself.

Includes reducing self-criticism, setting healthy limits, avoiding resentment.

Authentic giving requires staying within limits; exceeding leads to resentment and inauthenticity.

Story of the false coupon illustrates cumulative social harm: small unethical acts ripple outward, producing large unintended consequences (karma web).

Quick Review

Ahimsa requires kindness to self and others; set boundaries to avoid resentment.

Small ethical lapses propagate into wider social harm (story demonstrates chain of

causes).

Be vigilant: everyone contributes causes into the social web; accept and work with consequences.

Practical takeaways for study and spiritual work

1. Regularly self-assess the training balance: where are you on willingness to learn vs. willingness to change?
2. Use short, frequent reviews (at least two revisits) to counteract forgetting.
3. Employ repetition (nididhyāsana) to internalize insights.
4. Distinguish instrumental actions (artha/kāma/dharma) from the non-additive path to mokṣa: use the former skillfully, but pursue recognition (subtractive knowledge) for liberation.
5. Practice empathy and active dharma in interpersonal life; check for ego-driven behavior and cultivate ahimsa.

Quick Review

Combine study-science (reviews, repetition, honest assessment) with inner work (letting go, active dharma).

Make revision and nididhyāsana daily habits to retain and embody knowledge.

Use worldly pursuits wisely as supportive, not substitute, for liberation.

Sanskrit

short meaning

Adrstapala

delayed consequence or future result

Ahimsa

non-injury; avoiding harm to self and others

Artha

material prosperity and security

Aikya

unity or oneness

Atma

Brahma

ultimate reality or the Absolute

Devata

deity or divine being

Dharma

ethics, duty, or right conduct

Drstapala

immediate consequence or instant result

Ishvara

personal God or supreme controller

Kama

desire, pleasure, or enjoyment

Karma

action and its moral consequences

Karmakanda

the ritual and action portion of the scriptures

Manushya

human being

Moc

root meaning to let go or release

Moksha

liberation or freedom from bondage

Nididhyasana

continuous contemplative repetition to internalize knowledge

Nivrtti marga	path of withdrawal leading to liberation
Para vidya	higher knowledge that removes ignorance
Pravrtti marga	path of worldly activity and pursuit
Samanya dharma	general ethical order and mutual harmony
Shastra	scripture or authoritative teaching
Vidya	knowledge

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of key concepts

Overview

This document distills central Sanskrit terms and concepts that appear in the lecture transcript. The focus is on the nature of learning, the causes of change or resistance to change, and the Vedantic distinction between worldly pursuits and the path to liberation. Several traditional categories surface repeatedly: human motivations and limitations, ethical guidance, scriptural classifications, and spiritual practices aimed at removing ignorance and realizing freedom.

Learning and transformation

The speaker introduces a practical model contrasting willingness to learn with willingness to accept change. Learning alone, without readiness to transform, yields minimal lasting benefit. Techniques to increase willingness include earnest self-honesty, creating motivational pressure, prayer, and recognizing concrete personal benefits for change. The Ebbinghaus forgetting curve is used to show how rapidly information decays and how repetition and review—nididhyasana—are essential to retain and integrate knowledge.

Paths and goals

Vedanta distinguishes two broad approaches to resolving conditions on the Self. Pravrtti marga describes action-oriented solutions that temporarily relieve deficiencies by adding objects, status, or pleasures. Nivrtti marga centers on withdrawal and recognizing freedom from the need to constantly secure or augment the self. Moksha is defined as letting go of false identifications and cravings, culminating in enduring freedom.

Limitations of action

Actions, even virtuous or skillful ones, are finite: they are limited in scope, performer, and time. Therefore, no finite action can yield an infinite, permanent liberation. Rituals, moral effort, and worldly successes enrich the limited self but do not remove the fundamental sense of incompleteness that prompts further seeking.

Ethics and social order

Dharma has two complementary senses: samanya dharma, the shared ethical order enabling mutual trust and social harmony, and an active, corrective discipline of continually realigning conduct with what is right. Ahimsa—minimizing harm—and honest self-boundaries are emphasized as essential both to personal growth and to reduce cascading adverse consequences in society. Stories and examples illustrate how small unethical choices propagate harm across many lives.

Integrative perspective

The text argues for a balanced approach: worldly pursuits of artha, kama, and dharma are necessary for a stable life, but they must not be mistaken for the means to final freedom. True spiritual study is subtractive: it removes the false idea that the limited "I" is incomplete. Repetition, ethical maturity, compassion, and persistent inner inquiry (nididhyasana and para vidya) are the practical methods to internalize liberation and transform perception so one lives aligned with what is.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

04. Four Rituals To Master Your Mind

by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-4

Verse 5: Karma-Yoga Brings Purity

**cittasya śuddhaye karma na tu vastu upalabdhaye
vastu siddhiḥ vicāreṇa na kiñcit karma koṭibhiḥ**

Action is for purification of the mind, not for gaining (knowing) the truth. Knowledge of the truth is by inquiry alone, not even a little knowledge is gained by crores of actions.

Introduction

The talk explains how impersonal, impartial laws (samanya dharma) shape life and why action alone cannot produce liberation (Moksha). It distinguishes the roles of action (karma), which purifies the mind and inquiry (viveka), which reveals the Self. Four practical attitude-shifts / practices (rituals) are offered to purify the mind and prepare it for Self-knowledge.

1. Samanya Dharma — The Impersonal Laws of the Game

Main ideas

- Samanya dharma = the universal, impartial order (laws/feedback) that governs consequences for all beings, regardless of status.
- Life outcomes are the cumulative result of many small actions (micro-actions); therefore life is not random but largely self-authored.
- Ishvara (the Lord / designer) sets up the system like a computer game designer: laws, characters, consequences/feedback.
- Feedback is always present and serves as corrective information (not personal punishment/reward).
- Recognizing this increases discernment, responsibility, and ability to choose actions that change outcomes.

Key examples / illustrations

Saint with a precious vase drops it — gravity applies equally to saint and thief. Laws do not favor moral standing.

Game designer analogy: characters pass levels by following rules (punyam points); misbehaviour triggers feedback/consequences.

Practical consequence

Seeing cause-effect connections helps you modify causes (actions) to change future results. If you don't change causes, you will get the same outcomes.

Quick Review:

Samanya dharma = impartial laws / feedback, not personal judgments.

Life outcomes = cumulative micro-actions; responsibility lies with the actor.

Feedback is constant; treat it as corrective information, not arbitrary punishment.

Recognizing this fosters discernment and purposeful change.

2. Moksha, Alupta-Drk and Aparoksha Anubhuti (Direct Knowledge)

Main ideas / definitions

- Moksha here = removal of ignorance about your true nature (not gaining something new in the acquisitive sense).
- Alupta-drk = the uninterrupted, unbroken, non-negatable seer / witness — ever-present awareness that underlies every experience.
- Aparoksha anubhuti = direct, immediate realization/experience of that presence (no separate object or added state).
- Liberation is recognition of what was always present (analogy: glasses on head, the ring that is gold, face revealed in mirror). The realization stops the searching/looking.

Illustrations

Glasses-on-head metaphor: you always had the glasses (awareness) but kept searching elsewhere; a teacher or mirror (Viveka Chudamani) points it out.
The ring/gold analogy: action or opinion about the ring cannot change its substance (gold); knowing is recognition, not fabrication.

Quick Review:

*Moksha = removal of ignorance, recognition of ever-present awareness (alupta-drk).
Aparoksha anubhuti = direct, immediate knowing; not a new experience but recognition.*

Teacher/appropriate instrument (viveka) points out what has always been present.

3. Verse 5 — Distinction: Action Purifies Mind; Knowledge Comes by Inquiry

Key verse meaning (summary)

“Action is for purification of the mind, not for gaining the truth. Knowledge of the truth is by inquiry alone; not even a little knowledge is gained by crores of action.”
Chittasya suddhaye karma — action cleans the mind. Vastu siddhih vicharena — realization of the Self (the Vastu) occurs only by inquiry (vicāra).

Logical arguments why action cannot produce Self-knowledge

- Self is actionless and already accomplished — action is for accomplishing something; if Self is already accomplished and actionless, actions cannot reveal it.
- The finite cannot reach the infinite — finite actions/instruments cannot produce or attain the infinite (Self), which is already ever-present.
- Action is an effect of ignorance — actions arise because of the sense of lack; effects cannot remove their own cause (ignorance).
- Action reinforces the doer (ego) — acting to obtain enjoyment strengthens the sense of being a limited doer, which is contrary to realizing the limitless Self.

Practical note

While action cannot produce final knowledge, action is necessary up to the point of realization (sadhana, right living, purification). The body/instrument still acts before and after realization, but it does not transform the Self.

Quick Review:

Action purifies the mind but cannot realize the Self.

Self is actionless, already accomplished; finite actions cannot produce the infinite.

Actions arise from ignorance and reinforce the doer; only inquiry removes the original error.

Practice (action) is required until realization, but knowing requires inquiry.

4. Purification of the Mind — Four Practical Attitudes / Rituals

Purpose: prepare a relatively clear mind capable of receiving Self-knowledge. These are practical shifts you can apply in daily life.

4.1 Ishvara Arpana Buddhi — Attitude of Giving

Definition: shift the intention behind giving from "I expect return" to "I offer to Ishvara/the whole order."

Practice: when you give (time, money, service), think of giving to the whole network/order (the Lord manifest), not just to the immediate person.

Effects: expands vision beyond the narrow individual; loosens attachment and the small self that hoards (money, time, energy). Danam (charity) is powerful because it weakens clutching tendencies.

Quick Review:

Give as an offering to the whole (Ishvara), not for personal gain.

This expands vision and reduces the ego's clutching.

Even small acts of giving can weaken the "little me".

4.2 Ishvara Prasada Buddhi — Attitude of Receiving / Equanimity

Definition: receive results with samatvam (equanimity), seeing outcomes as consequences within the order, not personal punishments or special favors.

Practice: When unpleasant results occur, recognize them as consequences of past causes and opportunities for inspection and refinement. Use difficulty as information: what triggered your reaction? How can you respond differently?

Effects: Avoids personalizing events; enables composed, discerning responses. Turns tests and conflicts into opportunities for inner work.

Quick Review:

Receive outcomes as neutral feedback from the order, not personal attacks.

Use unpleasant events to inspect triggers and refine responses.

Equanimity enables discernment and practical solutions.

4.3 Svadharma — Flexibility (Right Role in the Right Context)

Definition: flexible shifting of roles to meet situational demands (like a chameleon). Play different social roles appropriately (work vs. home vs. friends).

Problem when absent: Rigidity creates friction in relationships and environment signals (feedback).

Practice: Drop a single-role identity; adapt attitude and behavior as the situation/person requires. Be present to what the environment seeks from you and respond accordingly.

Quick Review:

Svadharma = adaptive, context-sensitive action; drop rigid role-identification.

Flexibility reduces interpersonal friction and aligns you with situational needs.

Being present and responsive is the practical skill.

4.4 Transform Binding Desires into Non-Binding (Set Boundaries)

Distinction: Desire itself is not wrong — it is a natural phenomenon (breath, life, aspiration). Binding desire = a strong like/dislike that chains you, distorts priorities, and reduces life's variety (creates fixation).

Problems caused by binding desires: Messes with priorities, creates guilt while doing other duties, reduces variety/nuances in life, harms self-esteem when one cannot control it. Reinforces "me-centeredness" and steals time/attention from balanced living.

Practice to counter binding desires: Recognize binding patterns (e.g., obsessive passion, compulsive engagement). Deliberately set boundaries (decide a time limit or a rule: "When X happens, I will cut down my time on Y"). Convert to non-binding desire: preferences that can be postponed without distress; you can redirect attention as needed.

Personal example: speaker's own programming passion that runs overnight — needs deliberate "no" and boundaries to avoid self-binding.

Quick Review:

Desire is natural; binding desire is problematic because it fixes attention and distorts life.

Identify binding desires, set boundaries, and convert them into non-binding preferences.

Non-binding desires allow flexibility and prevent erosion of priorities/self-esteem.

5. Practical Integration — How These Fit Together

1. Use the four attitudes to purify and stabilize the mind:
 - Give as offering (Ishvara arpana buddhi) → loosens hoarding/clinging.
 - Receive as consequence (Ishvara prasada buddhi) → develops equanimity.
 - Be flexible in roles (svadharma) → reduces friction and keeps presence.
 - Bound and convert binding desires → maintain priorities and mental variety.
2. Purified mind becomes able to perform inquiry (vicāra) into the Self.
3. Inquiry (not action) reveals the alupta-drk (ever-present witness) leading to aparoksha anubhuti (direct realization).
4. Up to realization, actions (sadhana, ethical living) are necessary to maintain the instrument and create conditions for inquiry; after realization, action no longer produces Self-knowledge (the Self is already accomplished).

Quick Review:

Purify mind with the four attitudes to create readiness for inquiry. Inquiry, not action, reveals the Self (alupta-drk).

Action is supportive until realization; knowing is by direct inquiry/recognition.

Conclusion / Final points

The path requires both right living (action that purifies) and discriminative inquiry (viveka) that recognizes the ever-present Self. Use daily interactions (giving/receiving/roles/desires) as practical laboratories for purifying the mind. Once the mind is sufficiently purified and stable, inquiry discloses what was always present; then searching ceases.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Advaita Vedanta	nondual school of Vedanta teaching on oneness of Self
Ahamkara	ego sense or I-maker
Alupta-drk	uninterrupted, unbroken witness or seer
Antahkarana	inner instrument of mind and intellect
Aparoksha anubhuti	direct, immediate realization or experience
Arpana buddhi	attitude of offering or dedicating (as in Ishvara arpana buddhi)
Chitta	mind or consciousness
Chittasya shuddhaye	for purification of the mind
Chudamani Viveka	Viveka Chudamani, a classic text on discrimination and wisdom
Danam	charity or giving
Dharma	law, duty, or moral order
Ishvara	Lord, personal aspect of the divine or controller
Ishvara arpana buddhi	mindset of dedicating one's giving to Ishvara
Ishvara prasada buddhi	mindset of accepting results as grace of Ishvara
Karma	action and its results
Moksha	liberation or release from ignorance
Punyam	merit or virtuous credit
Purusha tantra	domain or mode pertaining to the person/doer
Samanya dharma	universal or common laws and duties
Samatvam yoga uchyate	equanimity is called yoga
Svadharmam	one's own duty or appropriate role; flexibility in role
Vastu	the truth or the real entity to be known (the Self)
Vastu tantram	domain or method pertaining to the reality to be known
Vicharena	by inquiry or investigation

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Summary of the Document

Core message

The talk centers on the practical and philosophical distinctions between action and self-knowledge in the Vedantic tradition. It emphasizes that daily actions and ethical conduct (karma) are essential to purify the mind and prepare a seeker for inquiry, but they cannot themselves produce realization of the Self. Liberation or Moksha is an immediate, actionless recognition of the ever-present Self; it is revealed by discrimination and inquiry rather than by accumulation of meritorious acts.

Key points

Life operates under impartial laws (samanya dharma) that produce cause-and-effect feedback. Recognizing this helps one take responsibility for small daily choices and refine behavior. Actions change circumstances and minds but cannot transform the essential nature of the Self because the Self is already actionless and complete. Action often arises from ignorance (the sense of lack) and reinforces the doer identity; thus action alone cannot remove that ignorance.

The speaker explains the concept of alupta-drk as the uninterrupted witnessing presence that persists through all states and experiences. When a teacher points this out and the seeker directly recognizes it, this aparoksha anubhuti—the direct experience—marks the cessation of searching and the attainment of Moksha.

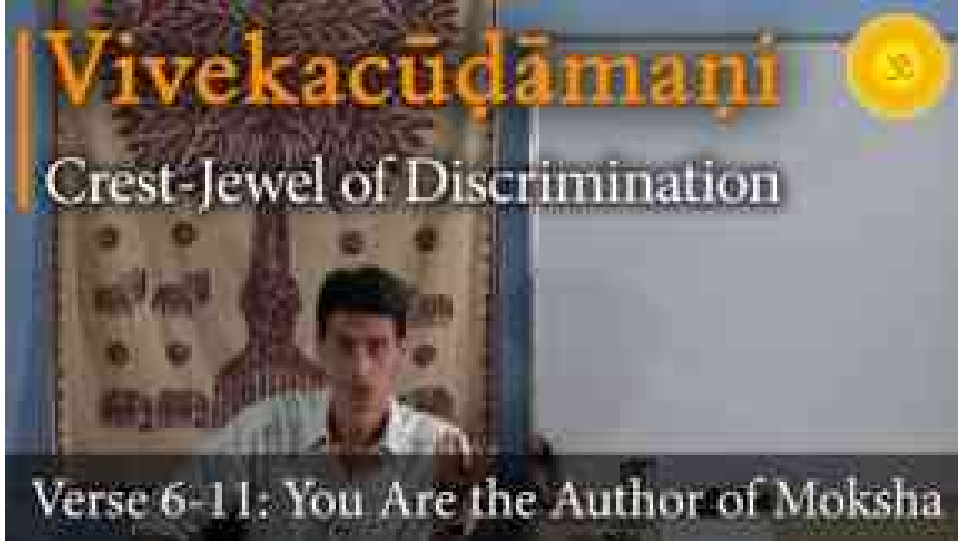
To prepare for inquiry, one must purify the mind (chittasya shuddhaye). Four practical methods are offered: cultivating an attitude of offering (Ishvara arpana buddhi) so giving becomes a practice that expands vision beyond narrow self-interest; developing an attitude of receiving (Ishvara prasada buddhi) to meet results with equanimity and learn from feedback; practicing svadharma or flexibility to play appropriate roles in diverse contexts; and transforming binding desires into non-binding ones by setting boundaries and reducing attachments that narrow attention. Philosophically, inquiry (vicharena) is the means to realize the Self (vastu). The talk argues the finite cannot reach the infinite: actions are finite, purposive, and time-bound, while the Self is already infinite, actionless, and complete. Therefore knowledge of the Self must be accomplished by direct inquiry and removing obscurations—like clouds covering the sun—rather than by further actions aimed at producing realization.

Practically, action remains necessary until realization: the body and life require action for survival and functioning. Sadhana, moral conduct, and attentive living tune the mind, making it receptive to teaching and inquiry. Once direct knowledge is attained, actions continue as functions of the body but no longer serve as a means to attain the Self.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

05. You Are the Author of Your Own Moksha/Enlightenment by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-5

Verse 6: Enquiry & Guidance Needed

**ataḥ vicāraḥ kartavyaḥ jijñāsoḥ āma vastunaḥ
samāsādyā dayā sindhum gurum brahma vid uttamam**

Therefore, having properly approached a teacher who is an ocean of compassion and the best among the knowers of Brahman, inquiry into the truth of oneself is to be done by one who wants to know the truth.

Verse 7: Success Depends on Readiness

**adhikāriṇam āśāste phala siddhiḥ viśeṣataḥ
upāyā deśa kāla ādyāḥ santi asmin saha kārīṇaḥ**

Accomplishment of the desired end especially calls for a qualified person. Place, time, etc are auxiliary means in this pursuit.

Verse 8: Conditions for Success & Failure

**sādhānāni atra catvāri kathitāni manīṣibhiḥ
yeṣu satsu eva sanniṣṭhā yat abhāve na sidhyati**

In this context the four means for making one qualified for the knowledge are told by those who have an ascertained vision of the śruti. In their presence only firmness of knowledge takes place and in their absence, it does not take place.

Verse 9: What are the Four Means?

**ādau nitya anitya vastu vivekaḥ parigaṇyate
iha amutra phala bhoga virāgaḥ tat anantaram śama ādi ṣaṭ sampattiḥ
mumuṣutvam iti sphuṭam**

The four means for making one qualified is thus clearly reckoned: first the discriminative understanding between what is eternal and what is time-bound; then the absence of longing for enjoyment of pleasures here and hereafter; then the six-fold qualifications like śama, etc and the longing for mokṣa.

Verse 10: Viveka

**brahma satyam jagat mithyā iti evam rūpaḥ viniścayaḥ
saḥ ayam nitya anitya vastu vivekaḥ samudāhṛtaḥ**

Ascertainment in this form that Brahman is eternal and the world is time-bound is presented as discriminative understanding between nitya and anitya.

Verse 11: Vairagya

**tat vairāgyam jihāsā yā darśana śravaṇa ādibhiḥ
deha ādi brahma paryantam hi anityam bhoga vastuni**

Vairāgya is a mental disposition characterised by the absence of longing in all time-bound objects of enjoyment from this body upto Brahmaji, attained through seeing, hearing, etc.

Introduction

Lecture analyzes verses 6–11 of Vivekachudamani, focusing on why knowledge (jnana) — not action — is the means to discover the Self (moksha). Covers: why actions cannot remove ignorance, role of teacher (guru), required student qualifications (adhikāritva), and the four/five key preparatory attitudes (viveka, vairāgya, śamādi ṣaṭka-sampatti, mumuṣutva).

1. Action vs. Knowledge: Why Knowledge Liberates

Main argument

Every action aims to remove an unpleasant condition one believes oneself to have. Implication: action arises from a sense of limitation (ignorance). If the Self were truly

incomplete, action could complete it; Vedanta asserts the Self is already full, whole, complete.

Therefore:

1. Action cannot remove the fundamental ignorance that makes one feel limited — because action is an effect of that ignorance.
2. The antidote to ignorance is knowledge (correct cognition) of the Self's nature.

Key distinctions

Purusha-tantra: processes dependent on the doer/limited person (actions, choices).

Vastu-tantra: processes dependent on the nature of the object to be known (knowledge of what is). Knowing the Self is vastu-tantra: the truth of the Self does not change with one's opinion.

Quick Review

Action arises from ignorance; it cannot remove the root ignorance. Knowledge of the Self is the appropriate means to remove ignorance. Self is already whole — misidentification causes action and suffering.

2. How Inquiry Begins and Why a Teacher Is Essential

(Verse 6)

What prompts inquiry?

Inquiry typically begins from a sense of incompleteness or suffering, not happiness. Earthly life (with its limits) is a conducive setting for starting inquiry.

Common beginner mistakes in ātma-vicāra (Self-inquiry)

- Treating the Self as an object to be summoned with "Who am I?" — but the Self already knows itself.
- "Internal deep-sea diving": localizing the Self in a bodily location, chakra, light, voice, or vision.

Results in turning the Self into another object (a place, sensation, or image) rather than recognizing its all-pervasive nature. Misreading terms like pratyagatma (inner Self) as implying a localized interior entity.

Role of the teacher (guru)

A compassionate teacher (dayā-sindhu; ocean of compassion) guides the student:

- Prevents objectification/localization of the Self.
- Adopts patience and skillful means: treats the student's problems provisionally as real while pointing to ultimate truth.
- Is free of agenda (already self-realized) and transmits knowledge via lineage (paramparā).

Quick Review

Inquiry starts from dissatisfaction; beginners often err by objectifying the Self. A compassionate, impartial teacher corrects these mistakes and demonstrates the

non-local, all-pervasive Self. Teacher skill: treat relative problems seriously while pointing to the ultimate truth.

3. Student Qualifications — Who Succeeds? (Verses 7–8)

Primary point

External conditions (teacher, place, time) matter, but the main determinant of success is you — your attitude and preparedness. Example contrast: Indra (responds to teaching) vs. Virochana (remains unchanged despite perfect conditions).

Consequences of lacking qualifications

Vedanta can be misused as a comparative or theoretical study rather than a transformational practice. Without qualifications, scriptures get interpreted transactionally (as rituals or actions) rather than as pointers for inquiry.

Quick Review

You author your own moksha — inner readiness matters more than external context. Perfect environment does not guarantee transformation without the right attitude.

4. The Four (Primary) Requirements — Overview (Verse 8)

To realize Self-knowledge, a student needs certain qualifications; without them, knowledge won't take root. The classical list: (1) viveka (discriminative inquiry), (2) vairāgya (dispassion/freedom from longing), (3) śamādi ṣaṭka-sampatti (sixfold inner disciplines), (4) mumukṣutva (intense desire for liberation).

Quick Review

Fourfold readiness prepares the “soil” of the mind for knowledge to penetrate. If you treat Vedanta merely as theory/comparison, learning will be superficial.

5. Viveka — Discriminative Inquiry (Verse 9–10)

Definition

Viveka: ability to discern the permanent (nitya) from the impermanent (anitya).

Developmental progression

1. Begins with obvious distinctions (e.g., stable relationship vs. one-night stand).
2. Matures into subtle discrimination: seeing that everything in the world realm is impermanent, and there exists only two categories: permanent and impermanent.

Practical implication

Without full discernment, one will endlessly chase seemingly permanent objects (infinite possibilities of false pursuits). Viveka leads to asking: Am I seeking temporary objects or freedom from needing objects? — This shifts the goal to freedom itself.

Quick Review

Viveka distinguishes permanent (Brahman) from impermanent (world). It converts motivation from chasing objects to wanting freedom from object-dependence.

6. Vairāgya — Freedom from Longing (Verse 11)

What is vairāgya?

Vairāgya: absence of longing for time-bound objects of enjoyment; recognition of pros and cons of worldly things leading to dispassion (virāga).

Correct understanding vs. common mistake

Not the same as running away from the world or “disenchantment” that escapes to monasteries (jihāsa). True dispassion is objective appraisal: seeing both pros and cons and realizing all are impermanent and hence limited. Does not require geographical withdrawal; one can remain engaged but without clinging.

Psychological effect

Relief: realizing objects will disappoint removes compulsive longing. Danger: if misinterpreted, dispassion can lead to nihilism; balanced teaching points to the permanent (Brahman) as the true goal.

Quick Review

Vairāgya = no craving for impermanent objects; arises from viveka. It's objective appraisal, not escapism.

7. Śamādi Ṣaṭka-sampatti — The Sixfold Discipline (detailed)

These six virtues naturally grow out of viveka and vairāgya:

1. **Śama** — inner calm / control of mind
Managerial control: observe and direct thoughts, reject unhelpful ones, replace with constructive perspectives.
2. **Dama** — restraint of the senses
Ability to refuse sensory lures; sometimes requires physical withdrawal or deliberate suppression.
3. **Uparati** — withdrawal
Natural pulling back from activities that do not serve self-knowledge (not forced renunciation).
4. **Titikṣā** — endurance / forbearance
Ability to tolerate opposing pairs (praise/criticism, comfort/discomfort) without being disturbed.
5. **Samādhāna** — one-pointed attention / focused concentration

Result of settled mind and reduced disturbance; better capacity to study and reflect.

6. **Śraddhā** — faith / open-mindedness

Trust in the teacher/scriptures and openness to learning.

Remarks

These are not forced exercises but emerge progressively as discernment and dispassion deepen. They form the practical mental discipline that allows knowledge to penetrate and stabilize.

Quick Review

Six disciplines (śama, dama, uparati, titikṣā, samādhāna, śraddhā) support inquiry. They arise naturally from concerted discrimination and dispassion.

8. Mumukṣutva — Intense Desire for Liberation

Mumukṣutva: ardent yearning or obsession for freedom from suffering. This eagerness is the driver that sustains sustained inquiry and diligent practice.

Quick Review

Mumukṣutva fuels persistent effort and keeps attention fixed on liberation.

9. Additional Illustrations and Cautions

Examples used in the lecture

- Dr. Phil case: a woman delusionally believes she's pregnant — shows how mind perks up for imagined gains; similar delusional excitement can occur when people misinterpret "Self" as some sensational experience.
- Indra vs. Virochana: same perfect teacher/environment; only Indra internalized the teaching — highlights inner attitude as decisive.

Warnings

- Beware of "perking up" at the thought of the Self as if it were something new and sensational — the Self is ordinary and already you.
- Beware of using Vedanta as comparison or for ritualistic/punyan gains (interpreting Mahāvākya as a mantra for merit rather than an object of inquiry).

Reflect: what objects have you given excessive meaning to? (These create attachment and resist dispassion.)

Quick Review

Illustrations highlight mind's tendency to cling to fantasies and to miss the ordinary Self. Transformation depends on honest introspection about attachments.

Conclusion — Practical Takeaways

1. The Self is already whole; action cannot remove ignorance — only knowledge can.
2. A compassionate teacher is crucial to correct common errors (objectification/localization).
3. You are primarily responsible for your own progress — inner readiness matters most.
4. Prepare the mind: cultivate viveka → vairāgya → the sixfold discipline → mumukṣutva.
5. Regularly inspect: where am I clinging; what false meanings have I attributed to objects?

Quick Review (overall)

Ignorance, not action, is the root cause of suffering — knowledge is the remedy. Teacher + correct attitude = effective inquiry; outer conditions are secondary. Develop viveka (discrimination) and vairāgya (dispassion); the six disciplines and mumukṣutva will follow. You author your own moksha — inner readiness and persistent inquiry produce liberation.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Adi Shankara	early Advaita Vedanta teacher and commentator
Aham Shivaya Namami	I bow to Shiva
Adhikari	qualified seeker
Anitya	impermanent
Ati	excessive (contextual root)
Brahman	ultimate reality
Brahmavidya	knowledge of Brahman
Bhajagovindam	devotional work by Adi Shankara
Bhagavatam	Purana focused on devotion and stories of Krishna
Dama	self-restraint of the senses
Daya-sindhu	ocean of compassion
Gita	Bhagavad Gita, sacred dialogue in Mahabharata
Ishvara	Lord, personal aspect of the divine
Moksha	liberation
Mahavakya	major Upanishadic proclamation
Mimamsakas	school of Vedic exegesis emphasizing ritual and action
Mumukshutva	intense desire for liberation
Moksha	liberation
Namati	to bow

Nitya	permanent
Parampara	lineage or tradition of transmission
Prahasa Iva	as though smiling (phrase from Gita)
Pratyagatma	inner Self
Purusha	manual or individual self
Purusha-tantra	approach dependent on the individual
Raga	attachment (root of viraga)
Samadhana	focused attention
Sampradaya	tradition or school
Shama	mind control and calmness
Shraddha	trust or receptive faith
Shatka-sampati	sixfold disciplines
Shankara	Adi Shankara, teacher and commentator
Satyam	truth or reality
Tattvamasi	you are that
Titiksha	endurance of opposites
Tattva	that which is
Tantra	system or method
Tattva	principle or reality
Upasana	meditative practice
Uparati	natural withdrawal
Vairagya	dispassion
Vastu	that which is to be known
Vastu-tantra	approach dependent on the object of knowledge
Vedanta	end of the Vedas; philosophical teaching
Veda	sacred knowledge or scripture
Vimamsaka	one who investigates or interprets
Viraga	dispassion or detachment
Virtchana	Virochana (name appearing in story)
Yoga	practice or discipline

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of Lecture Content

Core thesis and means

The lecture explains that liberation (moksha) is realized not through action but through knowledge of the Self. Actions arise from a limited sense of self and therefore cannot remove the ignorance that produces them. Ignorance is dispelled by knowledge relevant to the Self, and this inquiry is a vastu-tantra process dependent

on the nature of what is to be known. A teacher (guru) who embodies compassion and realization is essential to guide the student away from common mistakes such as searching for the Self as an object, localizing it in the body, or turning it into a spectacle.

Role of teacher and lineage

A realized teacher communicates from a perspective where the world appears like a dream, but compassionately accommodates the student's provisional reality. The teacher's patience and presence prevent the seeker from misplacing the Self into sensations, locations, or visions. The importance of parampara (lineage) is emphasized: the tradition transmits both clarity and method for inquiry.

Student qualifications

Self-knowledge requires inner readiness. Adi Shankara teaches that the primary determinant of success is the seeker, not the environment or teacher. Four main qualifications are identified: discriminative inquiry (viveka), freedom from longing (vairagya), the sixfold disciplines (shatka-sampati), and an intense desire for liberation (mumukshutva). Viveka discerns the permanent (nitya) from the impermanent (anitya). Vairagya arises when one sees pros and cons objectively and recognizes the limitations of worldly enjoyments.

Sixfold disciplines

As a product of viveka and vairagya, six disciplines naturally arise: shama (calm control of mind), dama (restraint of senses), uparati (withdrawal from nonproductive pursuits), titiksha (endurance of pairs of opposites), samadhana (one-pointed attention), and shraddha (receptive faith). These cultivate mental steadiness and openness needed for inquiry.

Practical cautions and attitude

Seekers must avoid using Vedantic statements as mere objects of meditation or as comparative study without commitment. False excitement or "perking up" at ideas that are actually delusional must be checked by humility. Dispassion does not mean fleeing to another impermanent environment; rather it means seeing that value in objects is assigned by the mind. The teacher supports the seeker to ground understanding in knowledge rather than in imagined experiences.

Conclusion

The path to Self-knowledge is a process of disciplined inquiry guided by a compassionate teacher and enabled by specific inner qualifications. When the seeker cultivates discernment, dispassion, disciplined mind, and earnest desire for liberation, Vedantic teachings can transform perception and reveal the ever-present reality of the Self.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

06. How to Develop Mental Composure by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-6

Verse 12: Śama (Mind Management)

**virajya viṣaya vrātāt doṣa dr̥ṣṭyā muhuḥ muhuḥ
sva lakṣye niyata avasthā manasaḥ śama ucyate**

The mind's abiding in its own goal through dispassion towards the whole host of objects by seeing their limitations again and again, is said to be śama, resolution of the mind.

Verse 13: Dama (Physical Self-Control)

**viṣayebhyaḥ parāvartya sthāpanam sva sva golake
ubhayeṣām indriyāṇām sa damaḥ parikīrtitaḥ**

The placing of both the organs of perception and action in their respective places after withdrawing them from their respective objects is said to be dama.

Verse 14: Uparati & Titiksha

**bāhya anāmbanam vṛtteḥ eṣā uparatiḥ uttamā
sahanam sarva duḥkhānām apratīkārapūrvakam | cintā vilāparahitam sā titikṣā
nigadyate**

Freeing the thoughts from the influence of objects, this is the highest form of Uparati (self-withdrawal). Objectivity to all pains without any anxiety, complaint or any attempt of revenge is said to be titikṣā (ability to endure the ups & downs of life / determination).

Verse 15: Śraddhā (Provisional Trust in the Teaching)

**śāstrasya guru vākyasya satya buddhi avadhāraṇā
sā śraddhā kathitā sadbhiḥ yayā vastu upalabhyate**

That conviction that the śāstra and the words of the teacher are true is said to be śraddhā by the wise by which the truth is known.

Introduction

Lecture examines practical methods to cultivate mental composure from the Vivekachudamani: vairagya (dispassion), shama (mind-settlement), dama/dhamma (self-control of body/organs), uparati (non-leaning), titiksha (endurance) and shraddha (trust).

Compares Vedantic and Buddhist approaches to dispassion, shows how viveka (discernment) generates natural dispassion and explains how the other four or five practices operate in real-life situations.

Vairagya (Dispassion)

Overview / Definitions

Vairagya: dispassion or detachment toward objects; not mere avoidance but the mental state emerging from clear discernment.

Distinguishes Vedantic dispassion from Buddhist approaches.

Buddhism vs Vedanta: two methods to reduce attachment

Buddhism:

- Emphasizes the pervasive suffering and impermanence (duhkha, anitya) of all forms to create renunciation.
- Uses seeing the world as mere aggregates/parts (forms → atoms) to undercut attachment.
- Risk: without attention to consciousness as final reality, this can produce aversion or nihilism if not integrated properly.
- Example: seeing clothes/objects as “just threads/atoms” — may lead one to withdraw from life if misunderstood.

Vedanta:

- Does not teach that the world is simply suffering; instead emphasizes *mitya anitya viveka* — objects are real as means, not as the ultimate end.
- Objects are respected and can be enjoyed but are seen as limited means pointing to the permanent (Brahman/Ishvara).
- Goal: recognize limitations of objects while preserving ethical engagement and devotion toward the permanent.

How dispassion arises in Vedanta

1. Practice *viveka* — repeatedly examine the limitations (*dosha*) of objects.
2. Recognize objects cannot provide permanence, complete fulfillment, or ultimate identity.
3. Natural byproduct: *vairagya* — a balanced, non-reactive relation to objects (neither aversion nor craving).

Important point: dispassion is not commanded; it grows from discernment and repeated intellectual-emotional alignment (head and heart “shaking hands”).

Illustrations / Practical consequences

If you overproject onto objects/people, you will misbehave or expect the impossible (ask partner to fulfill everything).

When discernment lacks, the mind vacillates and may adopt avoidance or aversion (Buddhist style) instead of healthy detachment (Vedantic style).

Quick Review

Vairagya arises from repeated recognition of the limitations of objects.

Buddhism uses suffering/impermanence to produce detachment; Vedanta uses discernment that objects are means, not the end.

Dispassion in Vedanta lets one engage with the world ethically, without clinging or aversion.

Viveka → Source of Dispassion

Core idea

Viveka: intellectual and experiential discernment of what is permanent vs. impermanent; seeing objects “as they are.”

Removing projections (meanings, fantasies) is the work that yields clarity and dispassion.

Process

1. Intellectually apprehend limitations of objects.
2. Repeatedly entertain these limitations until emotional attractions align with the intellect.
3. Result: emotional and cognitive congruence; clarity/objectivity.

Practical signposts

When all projections are gone in crisis, many people spontaneously call to God — evidence of a deeper fallback (kutastha / Ishvara).

The practice is incremental — no “secret pill”; disciplined repeated reflection converts head-knowledge to heart-knowledge.

Quick Review

Discernment is the seed; dispassion is the fruit.

Repeatedly contemplate object limitations to align feeling with understanding.

The path is gradual — steady removal of projections produces clarity.

Shama (Managed Mind / Mental Restraint)

Definition

Shama: calming/settling the mind; mental control through discernment (a primarily internal/psychological practice).

Shama works by calling problematic thoughts into inquiry and reasoning with them (like counseling an “inmate”).

Function and relation to damah

When shama succeeds: mind evaluates and reframes desires/attractions.

When shama fails (intellectually you know limitations but still feel attached): you need dama/dhamma (physical self-restraint) as backup.

Example

Loud motorcycle exhaust triggers immediate anger; shama would examine possible reasons (garage, liking loudness, poor hearing, attention-seeking) to soften reaction and see the person contextually rather than demonize.

Quick Review

Shama is the mental investigation and calming of impulses.

It aims to remove projections and see objects/people more realistically.

When mental reappraisal fails, physical restraint (dama) supports the process.

Dhamma / Dama (Physical Self-Control)

Definition

Dhamma / Dama: placing organs of perception/action in their correct place; withdrawing senses and actions from objects when required.

Twofold: (1) alertness regarding organs of action (karmendriya), (2) alertness regarding organs of perception (jnanendriya).

Practical function

1. Organs of action — pause before acting (speech, grasping, walking, procreating, excreting).

Example: refrain from uttering angry words; a physical pause creates space to choose a better response.

2. Organs of perception — control what you expose your senses to (leave gossip, turn off negative media).

Example: if conversation is gossipy, excuse yourself and leave.

Analogy with shama

Shama = the counselor/dialogue with thought (calls inmate to office).

Dama = the guard who physically prevents harmful inmates from acting in society.

Anger management application

Anger often masks unresolved inner pain; when triggered, use dama to hold back immediate reactive behavior and convert the moment into sadhana (practice).

Real-life incident: lecturer allowed an angry man to vent, used the episode to study human behavior and grow.

Quick Review

Dama is concrete self-restraint of speech, body, and senses.

Use it as a backup when mental reappraisal (shama) is insufficient.

Practically: pause speech, leave toxic spaces, restrict sensory inputs.

Uparati (Non-leaning / Withdrawal)

Definition

Uparati: non-dependence or non-leaning on external objects for identity, well-being, or confidence.

Participates with the world but without emotional dependence.

How to cultivate

See limitations (dosha) of objects repeatedly; investigate what in you causes the leaning.

Remember: "Not mine" (namaha) — remind yourself possessions, relationships, and even the body are conditional/gifts.

Exercises: visualize people/things in front of you and mentally say with appreciation but detachment: "Thank you — not mine."

Attitudinal shifts

Maintain relationship and gratitude but avoid possessive clinging.

Recognize the relative scale (e.g., owning the world is still a speck in the universe).

Quick Review

Uparati = participate without dependence; love without clinging.

Practice: remind yourself "this is not mine," investigate inner needs that cause dependence.

Aim for gratitude and engagement, not identity-formation from objects.

Titiksha (Endurance / Forbearance)

Definition

Titiksha: endurance and forbearance toward life's continuous pinpricks; an inner fallback that keeps you upright without reactive collapse.

Not passive suffering; includes appropriate action (closing window, asking to reduce noise).

Features

Recognizes dual nature: every plus has a minus; learns to live with small discomforts without being overwhelmed.

Forbearance toward people often requires seeing them as expressions of Ishvara, driven by pressures or ignorance, not intentional malice.

How to respond to people

Cultivate accommodation, forgiveness, and active search for unity/commonality:

1. Recognize others may be acting from ignorance or pressure.
2. Find the shared ground (both are within Ishvara's order; both are part of the same reality).
3. Actively work to discover unity — this is the basis of genuine love/forgiveness.

Quick Review

Titiksha is active endurance plus wise action.

Endure small irritations without losing dignity; still take corrective action when appropriate.

Forgiveness and accommodation stem from seeking shared reality and recognizing others' ignorance/pressures.

Shraddha (Provisional Trust)

Definition

Shraddha: initial, provisional trust in the teacher and the teaching (shastra and guru-vakya).

It is a conviction that grows from experience, not blind faith.

How trust develops

Trust is earned over time: repeated consistency of teacher and scripture + personal reflection and verification.

If a student is deeply invested in their current system or identity, Vedantic teaching may feel offensive; such students are "not ready."

Practical note

Shraddha increases with listening, reflection, and experiential validation.

Teachers should not demand trust; the student's trust grows gradually.

Quick Review

Shraddha = provisional, growing trust in the teaching and teacher.

Develops by hearing, reflecting, testing, and gradual verification.

Some individuals will reject teaching until readiness and diminished investment in prior systems occurs.

Final synthesis — How these qualities fit together

1. Viveka (discernment) → recognize limitations (dosha) of objects.
2. Natural result: Vairagya (dispassion) — balanced detachment.
3. Shama (mental restraint) practices investigating and calming thoughts.
4. When shama is insufficient, Dama/dhamma (physical restraint) controls speech/actions/senses.
5. Uparati (non-leaning) removes the habitual dependence on externals.
6. Titiksha (endurance) supplies the fallback and forbearance to live with pinpricks; fosters forgiveness and accommodation.
7. Shraddha (trust) grows gradually and supports continued practice and surrender to guidance.

Quick Review (overall)

Dispassion in Vedanta is produced by repeated discernment, not by mere negation of the world.

Practical composure uses mental (shama) and physical (dama) tools together; endurance (titiksha) and non-leaning (uparati) stabilize life engagement.

Trust (shraddha) is earned through exposure, reflection, and lived verification; practice is incremental, experiential, and active in daily life.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Brahma	ultimate reality
Brahman	absolute, supreme reality
Dhamma	self-control of body and senses
Dosha	limitation
Guru	teacher
Indriya	sense organ
Ishvara	personal Lord or God
Kutastha	unchanging witness
Mithya	apparent or illusory reality
Moksha	liberation
Namaha	not mine
Satyam	truth
Shastra	scripture

Shama	mental quietude or managed mind
Shraddha	trust in teacher and teaching
Titiksha	endurance or forbearance
Uparati	non-leaning on external supports
Vairagya	dispassion
Viveka	discernment
Jagat	world

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Summary

The lecture contrasts Buddhist and Vedantic approaches to detachment and describes a sequence of qualities that cultivate mental composure and spiritual progress. Buddhism emphasizes the impermanence and suffering inherent in forms, steering practitioners toward withdrawal. Vedanta takes a different route: it recognizes objects as means rather than ends and points the aspirant toward what is permanent. The practices explained are practical and psychological, intended to align the intellect and emotion so that the mind can abide in the spiritual goal.

Core teachings and practices

Viveka, discernment, is foundational: repeatedly contemplating the limitations of objects (doshas) naturally produces vairagya, dispassion. Dispassion does not mean rejecting or denigrating the world, but seeing objects as transient and instrumentally useful, freeing the mind from obsessive attachments. With dispassion, the mind can settle on its true goal — the permanent reality often called Brahman or Ishvara. Shama is mental restraint: bringing thoughts and emotional reactions into alignment with clear perception. When shama falters, dhamma (physical self-control) serves as backup: consciously restraining the organs of action and perception (speech, hands, movement, and the senses) to prevent impulsive behavior and allow space for wiser responses. Dhamma includes alertness to what one hears or participates in and the deliberate removal from harmful situations.

Uparati and titiksha further refine attitude. Uparati is non-leaning — participating in relationships and activities without depending on them for identity or worth. This requires investigating the beliefs that create dependence and repeatedly reminding oneself of the transitory nature of possessions and roles. Titiksha is endurance and forbearance: cultivating a stable fallback that sustains one through life's pinpricks and interpersonal annoyances. This endurance is active, not passive; it includes appropriate action when needed, tempered by perspective.

Shraddha, provisional trust in the teacher and scripture, grows gradually as scriptural teachings resonate and the teacher's guidance proves sound. Trust is earned through repeated understanding and reflection, and without it some students remain unreceptive to Vedantic instruction.

Practical application

The practices are meant to be applied in daily life: use moments of emotional intensity as opportunities for spontaneous sadhana, practice physical restraint to avoid harmful speech, and repeatedly examine projections to bring head and heart into harmony. Cultivating empathy and seeing others as part of the same divine order supports forgiveness and accommodation, essential for true harmony.

Overall, the approach is psychological and incremental: discernment leads to dispassion; mental restraint and physical self-control manage impulses; non-leaning and endurance stabilize the personality; and trust matures through lived experience of the teachings. Together these qualities enable the mind to abide steadily in its spiritual goal.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

07. How to Approach a Guru & Right Attitude of a Student by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-7

Verse 16: Samādhāna (One-pointedness)

**sarvadā sthāpanam buddheḥ śuddhe brahmaṇi sarvathā
tat samādhānam iti uktam na tu cittasya lālanam**

Always and in every way focusing/placing the buddhi on Awareness (Brahman) is called samadana; it is not pacifying or entertaining the mind.

Verse 17: Mumukshutva

**ahaṅkāra ādi deha antān bandhān ajñāna kalpitān
svasvarūpa avabodhena moktum icchā mumukṣutā**

Burning desire to let go of attachment to objects [ie; hoping some worldly object or future heaven will save me] that is born of self-ignorance, and recognizing the Self as the highest value, is mumukṣutā (the disposition of a mumukṣu).

Verse 18: Reason for Approaching a Guru

ukta sādhana sampannaḥ tattva jijñāsuḥ ātmanaḥ
upasīdet gurum̐ prājñam̐ yasmāt bandha vimokṣaṇam̐

The one who wants to know the truth of oneself and is endowed with the aforesaid qualifications should approach the teacher who has the knowledge of the śāstra which would liberate from bondage.

Verse 19: Qualifications of a Guru

śrotriyaḥ avṛjinaḥ akāmahataḥ yaḥ brahmavittamaḥ
brahmaṇi uparataḥ śāntaḥ nirindhana iva analaḥ
ahetuka dayā sindhuḥ bandhuḥ ānamatām satām

** Combined with Verse 20 below.*

Verse 20: Attitude of the Disciple

tam ārādhya gurum̐ bhaktyā prahva praśraya sevanaḥ
prasannaṁ tam anuprāpya pṛcchet jñātavyam ātmanaḥ

Having worshipped with devotion that teacher - the one who has studied the śāstras, who does not have pāpa, who is not affected by desires, who is a knower of Brahman with the mind resolved in the knowledge of Brahman, who is calm like the fire that does not have any more fuel, who is an ocean of compassion without any reason, who is a helpful friend to the seekers who salute him with appreciation - one must approach him who is pleased by the service (done to him) with a proper attitude and ask him as to what is to be known about oneself.

Verse 21: His Painful Encounter in the World

durvāra saṁsāra davāgni taptaṁ
dodhūyamānaṁ duradṛṣṭa vātaiḥ
bhītaṁ prapannaṁ paripāhi mṛtyoḥ
śaraṇyam anyam̐ yat aham̐ na jāne

Oh teacher! please protect me - who is frightened of death and seeking refuge, who is scorched by the forest fire of saṁsāra which cannot be put out, who is shaken repeatedly by the winds of pāpa - as I see no other refuge.

Verse 22: Acknowledging the Goodness of Saints

śāntāḥ mahāntaḥ nivasanti santaḥ
vasantavat lokahitaṁ carantaḥ
tīrṇāḥ svayaṁ bhīmabhavārṇavaṁ janān
ahetunā anyān api tārayantaḥ

Such composed, great, saintly people do live doing good to people, like the spring, themselves having crossed the frightening ocean of saṁsāra and making other people also cross without any expectation in return.

Verse 23: Guru Expresses his Confidence

mā bhaiṣṭa vidvaṁstava na asti apāyaḥ
saṁsārasindhoḥ tarane asti upāyaḥ
yena eva yātā yatayaḥ asya pāram
tam eva mārgam tava nirdiśāmi

Oh learned one! Do not be afraid. There is no more danger for you. There is a means for crossing the ocean of saṁsāra. I will show you the same way by which alone people of right effort have gone to the other shore of this ocean of saṁsāra.

Verse 24: Roles of Ignorance & Knowledge

ajñānayogāt paramātmanaḥ tava hi anātmabandhaḥ tataḥ eva saṁsṛtiḥ
tayoḥ viveka uditabodhavanīḥ ajñānakāryam pradahet samūlam

There is indeed the bondage with anātmā for you, the limitless self, due to association with ignorance. This flow of birth and death results from that alone. The fire of knowledge born of the discrimination between the ātmā and anātmā would burn away the effects of ignorance along with the root cause.

Verse 25: Disciple's Seven Questions

kaḥ nāma bandhaḥ katham eṣaḥ āgataḥ
katham pratiṣṭhā asya katham vimokṣaḥ
kaḥ asau anātmā paramaḥ kaḥ ātmā
tayoḥ vivekaḥ katham etat ucyatām

The student wants to know the following: (1) the nature and origin of bondage, (2) how bondage is sustained, (3) how to liberate oneself from it, (4) the nature of the not-Self, (5) the nature of the Self and (6) how to discriminate between the Self and the not-Self.

Verse 26: The Sravana Begins...

yat boddhavyam tava idānīm
ātmā anātma vivecanam
tat ucyate mayā samyak
śrutvā ātmani avadhāraya

That discriminative analysis between the ātmā and anātmā which is to be known by you is being told properly. Having listened to the teaching ascertain in yourself (make it your own).

Introduction

Lecture explains the inner qualifications of a sincere student (titiksha, shraddha, samadhana), how focus develops, the arising of mumukshutva (desire for liberation), the qualities of a true guru, and the traditional student–teacher method (shravanam,

mananam, nididhyasana).

Emphasis on practical methods to steady the mind, how Vedanta is a cumulative, time-tested wisdom, and the seven core questions a student must ask to remove ignorance.

1. Endurance and Emotional Context: Titiksha

Definition and context

Titiksha: forbearance or endurance — the capacity to remain composed amid life's ups and downs.

Applies especially when difficulties come from people close to you; these are hardest to bear.

Practical points

- Recognize others usually act from emotional pain and ignorance.
- Understand that suffering may be temporary and situational (could be you or them).
- Communicate when you're struggling: request patience; likewise appreciate if others signal their difficulties.

Why it's difficult

Maintaining composure during interpersonal storms is one of the two hardest tasks (the other being conquering lust).

Quick Review

Titiksha = steady endurance under changing conditions.

Close relationships make endurance harder.

Identify others' actions as coming from pain/ignorance to stay composed.

Communicate needs; request or show patience.

Endurance is a learned skill, crucial for spiritual practice.

2. Provisional Trust: Shraddha

Nature of Vedanta and reason for trust

Vedanta is presented as a cumulative wisdom, not the product of a single prophet. Built over generations by many minds; unsound parts discarded, universally true elements retained.

Not merely philosophy or religion—an observation of life and its laws.

Shraddha: provisional, practical trust — suspend skepticism and test whether the teaching works.

Function

- Shraddha allows one to persist with practice long enough to see effects.
- It supports titiksha by giving a reason to endure and continue inquiry.

Quick Review

Vedanta = collective, time-tested discernment.

Shraddha = provisional trust to test teachings.

Trust plus endurance sustains practice long enough to yield results.

3. One-pointedness: Samadhana (Verse 16)

Understanding the mind

Mind likened to a two-year-old child: restless, easily drawn to pleasant things.

Attention exists but must be discovered and confined to a valued object.

How to develop focus

1. Confine the mind to something it values (like a child with toys or a story).
2. Repeated discipline/refinement: practice focusing again and again.
3. Use aids that create emotional engagement (music, scent, subtitles, pacing, walking, swimming, etc.).
4. Make focused work quality over duration: 10 minutes of high-focus > a whole day of distracted activity.

Result of disciplined focus

Mind becomes available to place attention on awareness (Brahman) or inquiry into truth.

One-pointedness is a byproduct of purity of mind and fewer competing goals (viveka helps reduce attachment to the impermanent).

Quick Review

Mind is naturally restless; focus must be cultivated by finding valued anchors.

Repetition and refinement produce sustained one-pointedness.

Practical aids (movement, music, reading subtitles) help concentration.

With less attachment to the impermanent, focus naturally turns to truth.

4. From Focus to Intense Desire for Liberation: Mumukshutva (Verse 17)

Process

With endurance, trust, and one-pointedness comes a burning desire to be free: mumukshutva.

Recognition: seeking infinite fulfillment in finite objects is futile.

Analysis of the root problem

The sense of "I" is limited and identifies with transient layers (body, life force, mind, memory, intellect).

Identification with changing aspects produces repeated search for enjoyment and temporary relief → cycles of suffering (bondage).

Bondage = result of ignorance (not knowing one's true, free nature).

Mumukshu's attitude

- Stops embellishing the "I" (like a decorated Christmas tree); seeks to de-embellish and free the Self from the five layers.
- Ceases pursuit of external and internal enjoyments because they are endless and unsatisfying.

Quick Review

Mumukshutva = intense desire for liberation born from insight into futility of finite pursuits.

Bondage stems from identifying with changing psychological/physical layers.

Mumukshu seeks to remove embellishments of the "I" and stop chasing pleasures.

5. Qualities of the Guru and Student Attitude (Verses 19–20)

Qualities of a true guru (Brahmavit, shrotriya)

A teacher who:

- Has studied the scripture (shrotriya) and embodies its knowledge.
- Is free from desire (akamahatah), calm, and established in Brahman (brahmavittah).
- Has a steady, non-agitated mind (likened to glowing coals without sparks — steady warmth).
- Is an ocean of compassion — helpful and supportive without ulterior motives.
- Does not rely on ego-busting or demeaning methods; acts like a friend rather than a coercive superior.

The student's role to please the guru

Pleasing the teacher means active participation, engagement, and reciprocal effort. Passive attendance diminishes the quality of teaching; both teacher and student must work to maintain good exchange.

How the student approaches

1. Approach with proper attitude: humility, devotion, and clarity.
2. State your current understanding and your specific problem (the traditional manner: "here is where I stand, this is what I want to know").
3. Ask clearly: what is to be known?

Quick Review

True guru = scriptural knowledge embodied, calm, compassionate, friend-like.

Student should be engaged, clear about doubts, and present with humility.

Mutual effort sustains effective teaching.

6. Traditional Method of Transmission: Shravanam, Mananam, Nididhyasana

Shravanam (listening)

Enter the teaching with all preconceived notions left outside (like removing shoes before temple).

Listen with an open mind; willingness to learn and suspend prior fixed beliefs is essential.

Mananam (reflection)

While listening, doubts and objections arise.

Actively examine objections, resolve them through discussion with teacher or peers.

Reflection consolidates understanding by answering the doubts.

Nididhyasana (meditative assimilation)

Apply teachings to daily life; integrate insights through sustained practice.

Knowledge becomes lived reality only through ongoing personal application — essentially lifelong homework.

Quick Review

Three-step method: shravanam (open listening), mananam (reflective reasoning), nididhyasana (deep assimilation).

Remove preconceptions, interrogate doubts, practice daily application.

Without this cycle, theoretical knowledge cannot fructify.

7. The Snake-and-Belt Analogy: Removing Ignorance (Neti-neti method)

The analogy

Ignorance functions like mistaking a belt for a snake in poor light; reaction is based on nearest approximate (fear).

The guru uses the student's language and perceptions to gradually remove false attributes.

Teaching method illustrated

Start by acknowledging the student's perception (validate the felt reality).

Slowly negate false attributes (neti-neti)—point out inconsistencies with the supposed reality (no hood, no movement, no reflection) until the student clearly sees the belt.

Similarly with atma/anatma: systematically strip away identifications until true nature is seen, not by destroying the world but by seeing its true status.

Key insight about ignorance

Ignorance = absence of knowledge of what is.

Because of this absence, the mind fills in a plausible but erroneous interpretation, and life proceeds from that error.

Quick Review

Neti-neti: progressive negation of false attributes to reveal truth.

Guru speaks the student's "language" and dismantles erroneous perceptions step by step.

Ignorance is lack of correct knowledge; removal is targeted at the individual mind (buddhi).

8. The Seven Fundamental Questions a Student Asks (Verse 25)

The course centers on answering seven questions that arise in a sincere seeker:

1. Kaha? — What is bondage? (What binds me?)
Answer summary: Taking the illusory as real; clinging to the transient; seeking infinite in finite.
2. Katham agataha? — How did bondage come about? (Origin/cause of ignorance)
3. Katham pratishtha asya? — How is this bondage sustained? (Why ignorance persists across births)
4. Katham vimokshaha? — How is liberation possible? (Is freedom attainable and how?)
5. Kaha asau anatma? — What is anatma? (What is not-Self; definition: the changing)
6. Paramaha kaha atma? — What is the supreme Self (paramatman)?
7. Tayoho vivekaha katham etat? — How to discriminate between Self and not-Self? (Method of discernment given their intimate mixing)

Pedagogical point

These questions are practical, arise from the student's experience, and guide the entire inquiry process.

Discrimination is difficult because Self and not-Self are intimately mixed (like water and red paint); methodical analysis is required.

Quick Review

Seven questions form the curriculum: bondage, origin, sustenance, possibility of liberation, nature of not-Self, nature of Self, and method of discrimination.

Discrimination requires patient analytic process because of intimate mixing.

9. Transition to Teaching: Beginning of Shravanam (Verse 26)

After these preparatory steps and the student's questions, actual instruction begins: analysis between atma and anatma.

The teacher will now start delivering the methodical inquiry that the student must hear, reflect on, and assimilate.

Quick Review (overall)

Start with inner qualifications: titiksha (endurance), shraddha (provisional trust), samadhana (one-pointedness).

Focus transforms the mind to inquire into the permanent (Brahman); develops mumukshutva.

A true guru is calm, compassionate, scripturally grounded, and friend-like; student must approach openly and participate.

Transmission method: shravanam → mananam → nididhyasana (listen, reflect, assimilate).

The teaching proceeds by answering seven foundational questions and uses progressive negation (neti-neti) to remove ignorance.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Akamahatah	not affected by desire
Analah	free from fuel like a fire without fuel (calm, non-flickering)
Anatma	that which is not Self; non-Self; the impermanent
Atma	Self; true Self; pure consciousness
Bandha	bondage; being bound
Brahman	ultimate reality; absolute
Brahmavittamah	one who knows Brahman fully; knower of Brahman
Buddhi	intellect; discriminating faculty
Mananam	reflection; thoughtful contemplation
Maya	illusion; that which veils the true nature
Moksha	liberation; freedom from samsara
Mumukshu	a seeker of liberation
Mumukshutva	burning desire for liberation
Neti-Neti	not this, not that; method of negation
Nididhyasana	deep, steady meditation and assimilation of knowledge
Pratishtha	establishment; basis or support
Prashraya	seeking refuge; taking shelter
Samsara	the cycle of birth and death; world of change
Samadhana	one-pointedness; focused attention
Shraddha	trust; provisional faith in the teaching
Shravanam	listening (to the teaching)
Shrotriya	one learned in the scriptures; someone qualified by hearing
Titiksha	forbearance; endurance of life's realities
Viveka	discernment between the permanent and impermanent
Vidvan	a person of understanding; one who has realized a point
Vimoksha	liberation; release
Paramaha	the supreme; highest (as in supreme Self)

Summary

Overview

The lecture explores essential preparatory qualities for the spiritual seeker and the traditional teacher-student relationship as presented in Vivekachudamani (verses 16–26) and explanatory commentary. It outlines key inner capacities — endurance (titiksha), provisional trust (shraddha), and one-pointedness (samadhana) — that allow the mind to be ready for inquiry into the Self (atma). From these unfold deeper attitudes: a longing for liberation (mumukshutva), the manner to approach a teacher, and the stepwise method of learning: listening (shravanam), reflection (mananam), and deep meditation/assimilation (nididhyasana).

Core inner qualifications

Titiksha is presented as an ability to remain composed amid praise and blame, health and illness, and emotional ups and downs — especially when provoked by those close to us. Shraddha is defined as a provisional, pragmatic trust in the teaching born from realizing Vedanta's cumulative, time-tested nature rather than from dogma. Together these allow the mind to settle and develop samadhana: refined, concentrated attention. Samadhana is shown to be a byproduct of a clarified value system — discerning the permanent from the impermanent (viveka) — which redirects attention toward what truly matters.

Becoming a seeker and approaching the guru

With steady focus and endurance emerges mumukshutva: a sincere desire to stop embellishing the limited self and to seek the infinite Self. The ideal teacher (guru) is one who knows Brahman directly, is free from desire, calm and stable like cooling coals, compassionate, and able to communicate in the student's terms. The student's role is active: prepare by laying aside preconceived notions, listen attentively, articulate one's problems, participate, and thereby please the teacher through engaged learning.

Method and practical steps

The traditional learning sequence is explained: shravanam (attentive listening), followed by mananam (examining and resolving objections), and then nididhyasana (continuous, practical application and meditation on the teaching). The teacher guides the student using gradual negation — pointing out attributes that are wrongly superimposed on the self (neti-neti style) until direct understanding dawns. Practical examples (snake vs belt) illustrate how perception shaped by ignorance must be carefully and patiently corrected.

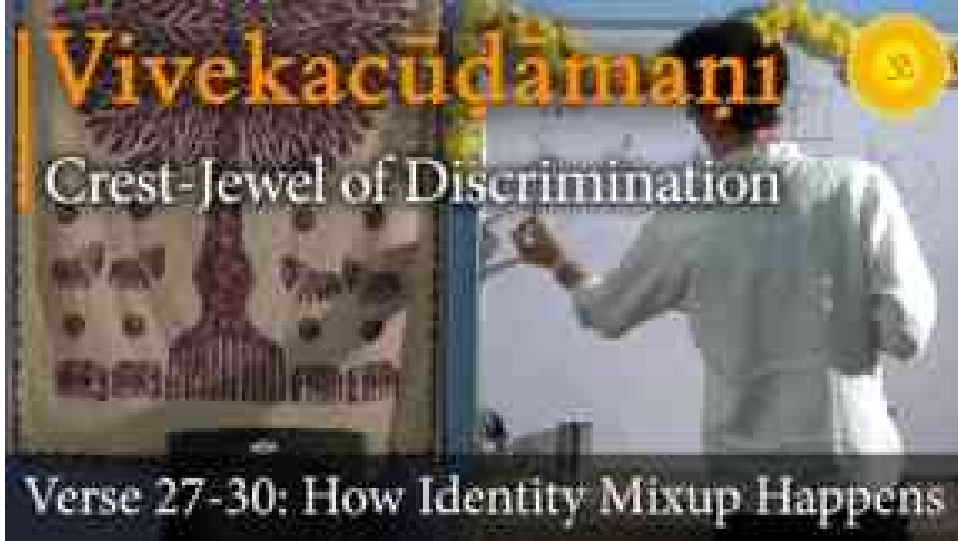
Questions to be answered

The student traditionally poses seven pivotal questions about bondage, its origin, sustenance, the possibility of liberation, the nature of the non-Self (anatma), the supreme Self (parama), and how to discriminate between them. Addressing these through listening, reflection, and steady practice is the pathway Vedanta prescribes for resolving ignorance and attaining freedom.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

08. Who Travels Between Bodies? Who is the Experiencer?

by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-8

Verse 27: The Seat of Various Experiences

pañcīkṛtebhyaḥ bhūtebhyaḥ sthūlebhyaḥ pūrva-karmaṇā
samutpannam idaṁ sthūlaṁ bhoga-āyatanam ātmanaḥ avasthā jāgaraḥ tasya
sthūla-ārtha-anubhavaḥ yataḥ

This physical body is born, as a result of the karma of previous lives, from the gross elements which have undergone the process of grossification and is the place of experiences for the jīva. The waking state is that in which his experiences of the objects of the physical world take place.

Verse 28: “Eight Cities” of the Subtle Body

vāg-ādi pañca śravaṇa-ādi pañca
prāṇa-ādi pañca abhra-mukhāni pañca buddhi-ādi avidyā api ca kāma-karmaṇī
puri-aṣṭakaṁ sūkṣma-śarīram āhuḥ

These eight 'cities' together constitute the subtle body: five organs of action such as the organ of speech, the five sense organs of perception such as organ of hearing, the five prāṇas, the five subtle elements beginning with space, the intellect, etc. (intellect, mind, ego and memory), ignorance, desire and all the actions of the body.

Verse 29: Characteristics of Subtle Body & It's Strongest in Dream State

idaṁ śarīraṁ śṛṇu sūkṣma-samjñitam

**liṅgaṁ tu apañcīkṛta-bhūta-sambhavam sa-vāsanam karma-phala-anubhāvakaṁ
sv-ajñānataḥ anādiḥ upādhiḥ ātmanaḥ svapno bhavati asya vibhaktiḥ avasthā sva-
mātra-śeṣeṇa vibhāti yatra**

Know that this subtle body is also known as liṅga-śarīra. It is indeed born of the elements in their subtle state and is possessed of impressions of previous experiences. It is the experiencer of the results of actions, viz., puṇya and pāpa, and is the beginningless upādhi for the jīvātmā. Dream is its distinct state in which it shines alone without the physical body.

Verse 30: Subtle Body as an Instrument

sarva-vyāpṛti-karaṇam liṅgam idaṁ

**syāt cidātmanaḥ puṁsaḥ vāsyādikam iva takṣṇaḥ tena eva ātmā bhavati asaṅgaḥ
ayam**

The subtle-body is the jiva's tool for performing action, just as chisel is for a carpenter. The jiva [individual], whose nature is actionless consciousness - unattached [to gross/subtle body], is free of the subtle body, but becomes an apparent actor when consciousness illumines the subtle body.

Introduction

Lecture covers verses 27–30 of Vivekachudamani: origin and purpose of the physical body, the process of manifestation (panchikarana), nature and components of the subtle body, the role of the subtle body as the experiencer (especially in dream), and the distinction between the traveller (jiva/ahamkara) and the true Self.

Emphasis on Vedantic model: bodies and mental attributes are upadhis (limiting adjuncts) imposed on an ever-present, actionless consciousness; karma explains the particular form and circumstances of each birth.

Verse 27 — Physical Body: origin, cause, function

Key claims

- Physical body arises from the five gross elements (space, air, fire, water, earth) after a process of grossification.
- The efficient cause (that which determines which body you get) is past karma — accumulated results of previous actions and impressions.

- The physical body is a locus of gross experience: it is the place where the jiva (the living entity as it identifies itself) receives pleasant and unpleasant experiences.

Supporting points and implications

Bodily traits (sex, strength, disease susceptibility, birthplace, parental conditions) are not random but are determined by prior causes (karma).

Two models contrasted:

1. **Linear model:** world and each body begin once — leads to confusion about unfair suffering.
2. **Circular/cyclic model (Vedanta):** beginningless cycle of births; each point (life) follows prior causes — explains apparent injustices.

Practical implication: acknowledge and use the body you have; understanding karma helps accept circumstances and reduces anger at the world/God.

Without a model like karma, people may react with anger, distrust, or disbelief in a benevolent order.

Example / Illustration

Two travelers in malaria-ridden forest (saint vs thief): surface observation seems unjust; karma-model explains why outcomes differ beyond simplistic moral causation.

Quick Review (Physical body)

Physical body: product of five gross elements and past karma.

Karma (efficient cause) explains specific bodily conditions and life circumstances.

Vedanta uses a cyclic model (not linear) to account for continuity and explanation of suffering.

Practical outcome: acceptance and making best use of the body earned through prior causes.

Panchikarana and the Five Elements — material cause of the body

Concepts

Prakriti: primordial material cause; composed of three gunas: sattva (knowledge/clarity), rajas (activity/energy), tamas (inertia/structure).

Panchikarana: process by which five subtle elements (space, air, fire, water, earth) combine and convert into the five gross elements that form the physical universe and body.

Process (simplified)

1. Each subtle element contains the three gunas.
2. To form a gross element, take a portion (explained as 12.5% of tamas of each of the other four subtle elements) combined with half the original — this mixing yields the five gross elements.
3. When subtle → gross conversion completes, physical time, space, and bodies manifest (analogy to Big Bang in scientific terms).

Mapping elements to bodily features (illustrative)

- Space: location/extension of body and organs.
- Air: breathing, blood oxygenation.
- Fire: temperature/metabolism.
- Water: bodily fluids.
- Earth: solidity (bones, tissues).

Comparison with modern science

Periodic table = accurate chemical model but does not explicitly include space/time as elements; the five-element model incorporates space & time as primary categories.

Quick Review (Panchikarana & elements)

Panchikarana: conversion from subtle to gross elements yields physical body and universe.

Three gunas (sattva/rajas/tamas) are fundamental qualities in prakriti.

Five gross elements correspond to observable bodily/physiological features.

Models are provisional teaching tools; ultimately stripped away to reveal the Self.

Verse 28 — The Subtle Body: “eight cities” (components)

What is the subtle body?

The subtle body (sukshma sharira) is the traveller that retains impressions (samskaras) and karma across births; it precedes and enters a physical body.

It is not perceivable by physical instruments but is evident via mental phenomena: desire, curiosity, devotion, emotions.

The “eight cities” (main constituents)

1. Five organs of action (karma-indriyas) — capacities derived from the rajas aspect of subtle elements:

- Speech (vak) — from space (subtle)
- Grasping (pani) — from air
- Procreation (upastha) — from water (lecture corrected order)
- Evacuation (pada/pravahana) — from earth
- Locomotion (pada/veg) — from fire

2. Five sense organs (jnana-indriyas) — capacities derived from sattva aspect:

- Hearing (ears) — from space
- Touch (skin) — from air
- Sight (eyes) — from fire
- Taste (tongue) — from water
- Smell (nose) — from earth

3. Five pranas — physiological functions (respiration, digestion, circulation, excretion, etc.); prana enables bodily automatic functions (e.g., breathing) and leaves at death.

4. Antahkarana (inner instrument) — integrated mental apparatus formed from sattvic aspects: four functions

- Manas: emotive processing and doubt (sensory integration and reactivity)
- Buddhi: intellect, discriminative decision-making
- Smriti: memory/storage of past impressions
- Ahamkara: ego — the "I-maker" that claims experiences as "I do/feel/think"

5. Ignorance (avidya), desire (kama), and actions (karma) — modifications and driving forces that shape the subtle body.

Functional note

The subtle body contains capacities (not directly visible): when it enters a physical body, the body knows how to perform functions (breathing, grasping, speaking) because the subtle body brings those capacities.

Quick Review (Subtle body components)

Subtle body = collection of capacities and impressions; not the true Self.

Five organs of action and perception arise from rajas and sattva respectively.

Antahkarana (manas, buddhi, smriti, ahamkara) integrates experience and forms ego.

Prana animates bodily functions; when prana departs, bodily automatic functions cease.

Verse 29 — Subtle body: characteristics; prominence in dream

Core statements

Subtle body is born of subtle elements and possesses impressions (puṇya/pāpa) of previous experiences.

It is the experiencer of results of actions and serves as the beginningless upadhi for the jiva.

Dream is the subtle body's distinct state: it functions and "shines" independently of the physical body.

Evidence & arguments

Dreams: we experience emotion, pain, events in dreams despite absence of gross physical body — demonstrates that experient (subtle body) can suffer or enjoy without physical support.

After death, the jiva's immediate state is akin to dream (not blankness); Near-Death Experiences often report enhanced vividness and freedom similar to dream-state awareness.

Subtle body carries impressions and strengths (e.g., talents observed among siblings explained as past impressions).

Upadhi concept

Upadhi: a limiting adjunct that appears to belong to the underlying reality due to close association (e.g., a crystal appearing colored because of something behind it).

The subtle and gross bodies are upadhis that make consciousness appear limited.

They are beginningless — the mistaken identification with these upadhis has no starting time in conventional memory but persists as the habitual sense of "I am this."

Quick Review (Subtle body & dream)

Subtle body is primary experiencer of impressions and karmic results.

Dreaming demonstrates experiential continuity without the physical body.

Subtle/gross bodies function as upadhis (limiting adjuncts) that obscure the ever-present Self.

The task: recognize and negate identification with upadhis.

Verse 30 — Subtle body as instrument; jiva, ahamkara and the true Self

Main ideas

- The subtle body is a tool/instrument (like a chisel for a carpenter) used by the traveller to perform actions.
- The jiva is: all-pervading consciousness appearing as confined when a subtle body emerges — consciousness + subtle body = apparent doer (“I” as a limited being).
- Ahamkara: the ego-function that claims experiences (“I am remembering, thinking, doubting”); it persists across deaths and births as the habitual “I”-sense.
- The true Self is actionless, ever-present consciousness (the crystal). It is different from the changing attributes (colors/upadhis) of mind and body.

Logical method to negate upadhis

Demonstrate that upadhis (thoughts, emotions, memories, bodily attributes) are impermanent — they come and go. If they were intrinsic to the Self, they would be constant.

Only the I-sense remains invariant, not as a thought but as self-revealing presence (alupta-drk — uninterrupted seer). This is the true, non-displaceable Self.

Negation of upadhi is achieved by recognizing the transient nature of attributes and seeing them as non-self.

Sequence described (ignorance → desire → action → results)

1. Ignorance (avidya): not knowing one’s true, all-pervading nature.
2. Desire: attempt to complete the perceived lack.
3. Action (karma): actions born of desire.
4. Punya/Pāpa: results accrues to the subtle body.
5. Subtle body obtains a corresponding physical body — cycle continues.

Illustrations & consequences

The “crystal and colour” analogy: the crystal (Self) appears colored (upadhi) due to proximity; colors change → not intrinsic.

Because upadhis are transient, one can logically disidentify from them without necessarily performing extraordinary practices first — recognition is key.

Most people mistake the ahamkara for the true Self; Vedanta’s goal is to discriminate (viveka) between these.

Quick Review (overall)

Jiva = consciousness appearing as confined due to subtle body; ahamkara is the "I"-maker of that confinement.

Subtle/gross bodies are instruments (upadhis) not the true Self.

Negation of upadhi: recognize impermanence; what remains constant (the seer) is the Self.

Ignorance → desire → action → results is the causal chain that sustains rebirth and bodily forms.

Final summary — core takeaways

1. Bodies (gross and subtle) are conditioned, instrumental, and not the permanent Self; they arise because of past karma.
2. Panchikarana and the three gunas describe how subtle reality manifests as gross elements and capacities.
3. Subtle body carries impressions and is the experiencer (especially evident in dreams and in post-death states).
4. The jiva is consciousness localized by subtle body and identified with the ahamkara; discrimination (viveka) between the transient upadhis and the ever-present Self is the spiritual task.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	ego
Alupta drk	uninterrupted seer
Antahkarana	inner instrument or mind
Anatma	not-Self
Apas	water element
Atman	true Self
Avidya	ignorance
Bhoga ayatanam	locus of enjoyment or place of experience
Buddhi	intellect, discriminative faculty
Gunas	three qualities (sattva, rajas, tamas)
Jiva	individual living being
Jivatma	individual soul
Jnānendriyas	five sense organs
Kama	desire
Kamini	pleasure; objects of desire
Karma	action; results of past actions
Karmendriyas	five organs of action
Kanchana	wealth
Kirti	fame

Manas	mind; emotive faculty
Panchikarana	process of converting subtle elements into gross elements
Prana	life force; vital breath
Prakriti	material nature
Prithvi	earth element
Punya	merit
Papam	demerit
Rajas	active quality; passion/energy
Sattva	purity; intelligence/clarity
Smrti	memory
Tamas	inertia; darkness
Tejas	fire element or energetic brilliance
Upadhi	limiting attribute or apparent adjunct
Vayu	air element

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

This lecture unpacks verses 27–30 of the Vivekachudamani, guiding the student from the familiar (the physical body) toward subtler distinctions that reveal who the true experiencer is. It begins with verse 27: the physical body is born from the five gross elements (space, air, fire, water, earth) via transformation from subtle elements (panchikarana) and is determined by past karma. The body is presented as a locus for experience, not as the true self; its characteristics (sex, health, lifespan, environment) arise from unseen, beginningless causes that explain apparent injustices and chance events.

Elements, Gunas and Panchikarana

The teacher explains prakriti and the three gunas (sattva – blueprint/knowledge; rajas – energy/action; tamas – inertia/material). Subtle elements containing the gunas undergo panchikarana (mixing) to produce the five gross elements of the physical world. This model parallels scientific descriptions but adds space and time as elemental categories. The goal is not metaphysical fascination but to provide a workable model that will later be stripped away.

The Subtle Body and the Traveler (Jiva)

Verse 28 enumerates eight components of the subtle body: five organs of action, five sense organs, five pranas, five subtle elements, intellect (antahkarana), ignorance, desire, and the resultant actions. The subtle body is formed before the physical body and carries impressions (samskaras) and the fruits of past actions (punya and papa). It is therefore the true experiencer who migrates between bodies according to karma.

The subtle body supplies capacities—perception, action, pranic functions, mind (manas), buddhi, memory (smṛti), and ahaṁkāra (ego)—which make an apparent actor out of the jiva.

Dreams, Death and the Nature of Experience

Verse 29 emphasizes that the subtle body is the experiencer, evident because it functions in dreams without the gross body. Death is likened to falling into a dream-like state where the subtle body continues to experience, and then rebirth occurs when it assumes another body suited to its karmic results. The subtle body is an upādhi—an attribute that appears intrinsic though it is not—and it has adhered to the Self from beginningless time.

The Jiva and the True Self

Verse 30 stresses that the subtle body is an instrument; the jiva is pure, actionless consciousness that, when associated with the subtle body, appears as an individual actor. The teaching's task is to negate the upādhis by recognizing they are transient attributes—changing states that cannot be the immutable Self. The unchanging seer (the Self) remains, illumining all passing modifications without being affected by them.

Practical implication: accept the body and its conditions as karmic results, use them wisely, and discriminate between transient upādhis and the ever-present Self.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

09. The I-Thought (Ego) & the Absolute "I" by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-9

Verse 34: Introduction to the Self

**atha te sampravakṣyāmi svarūpaṁ paramātmanaḥ
yad-vijñāya naraḥ bandhāt muktaḥ kaivalyam-aśnute**

Now I will teach you that nature of the paramātmā, limitless self, knowing which one is freed from bondage and gains oneness with Īśvara.

Verse 35: The Absolute Entity

**asti kaścit svayaṁ nityam ahaṁ-pratyaya-lambanaḥ
avasthā-traya-sākṣī san pañca-kośa-vilakṣaṇaḥ**

There is one who is self-existent. He is manifest all the time in the 'I' thought. Being distinct from the five-fold kośa (as though coverings), he is the witness of the three states of experience.

Introduction

Lecture continues the inquiry from "not-Self" (physical and subtle bodies) toward discovering the true Self.

Main themes: causes of body and subtle body, the nature of the I-thought (aham-pratyaya / ahamkara), the limitless Self (paramatman), the five koshas, and the witness that underlies waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

1. Recap — Material & Efficient Causes of Body and Subtle Body

Physical body

Material cause: the five gross elements; formed by transformation (Panchikarana). Instructor noted a rough figure: 5% (reference to proportion derived in prior discussion).

Efficient cause: karma (past actions and their results).

Subtle body

Material cause: the five subtle elements (manifest as the mental/psychic faculties).

Efficient cause: karma again.

Role: gives individual personality — desires, tendencies, complex of traits.

Quick Review

Physical and subtle bodies both have material (five elements) and efficient (karma) causes.

Panchikarana = conversion/manifestation process from subtle → gross.

Subtle body shapes personality; both bodies are classified as not-Self.

2. Purpose of the Inquiry: Distinguishing Not-Self from Self

Goal: identify what is not the Self (body, subtle body, their contents) in order to find the true Self.

Subtle body = all thoughts and experiences (examples: "Should I come?", "I know who I am", desires, memories).

If all thoughts are not-Self, then every assertion made by those thoughts (including "I am Atman", "I am divine") must be examined and cannot be taken as definitive evidence of Self.

The inquiry asks: if all mental contents are not-Self, then who or what is the true Self?

Quick Review

Subtle body = the totality of thoughts/mental contents.

Thoughts asserting identity are part of the not-Self and must be examined.

The inquiry asks: if all mental contents are not-Self, then who or what is the true Self?

3. Verse 34 — The Limitless Self (Paramatman / Paramanandam)

Key statement (rephrased)

The teacher: "I will explain the nature of the paramatma — the limitless Self — knowledge of which frees the person (nara/jiva) from bondage and leads to oneness with Ishvara."

What "limitless" means (and what it does not mean)

Limitless is not an object to be imagined or postponed to the future.

Imagination confines and hence limits (places the limitless in time/space).

True limitlessness:

1. Is not bound by space.
2. Is not bound by time.
3. Cannot be displaced by any other (no second can coexist without limiting it).
4. Is the only reality/substance; its being is not changed by mental states.

Implications for practice/inquiry

You cannot wait to "be" the limitless Self after some future event (moksha) — it must already be present here-and-now.

Ask: What is present here and now? — the starting point of the inquiry.

Not displaced by mental states

Happiness, sadness, thought, or even absence of thought (meditative no-mind) cannot displace the limitless Self.

The Self is the aluptadrk — the uninterrupted witness in whose presence mental states arise and dissolve.

Oneness with Ishvara

Knowing the limitless Self reveals no essential difference between the individual and the total (Ishvara); apparent differences are not ultimately real.

Quick Review

Limitless Self = not in time, not in space, cannot be imagined as an object.

It is the unchanging witness behind changing mental states.

Realization of the Self reveals essential oneness with the total (Ishvara).

4. Verse 35 — The Self, the I-Thought, and the Koshas

Opening claim

There is something about you that is self-existent, always present and consistent in every thought and state.

Demonstration by mental imagery (teacher's experiment)

Example sequence: imagine your front door → replace it with a dancing elephant → replace that with a parent's face.

Observations:

Objects/thoughts appear in sequence (depend on time) and can be moved in the mind (depend on space).

The objects change; something remains constant: the seer/witness who experiences these objects.

Conclusion: thoughts and imagination are contents (not-Self); the constant I is the witness.

The aluptadrk (uninterrupted seer)

Definition: the non-negatable presence or continuous awareness that witnesses all changing mental states.

It manifests in the I-thought but is not identical with the transient I-thought.

Aham-pratyaya / Ahamkara (the I-thought / ego)

Aham-pratyaya = I-thought: the long-standing thought that each person commonly takes as their real self (the ego).

Nature of the ego:

It expands and contracts depending on context and associations (examples: two women in park who are confident together but shy alone; motivational events that inflate the ego).

It changes what it knows (the knower shifts focus; when it knows one thing it does not know another simultaneously).

It is pursued and sustained by seeking experiences that feed and enlarge it.

Examples illustrating ego dynamics

Social context changes ego size (expansion with friends; contraction when alone).

Stimuli change what the ego knows: entertainment vs. news of war vs. a conversation vs. a dentist appointment → different states, different knowers/feelings.

Extreme experiences (skydiving, intense events) can suspend ego temporarily — people sometimes seek such experiences to dissolve the sense of small self.

Distinction between ego and Self

Ego (ahamkara) is fluctuating and object-like (comes and goes, knows changing objects).

Self (aluptadrk) is constant, non-changing awareness in whose presence ego's changes are observed.

Because we can remember that our I was larger or smaller earlier, there must be a part that stands free of the ego — that is the Self.

The five koshas (sheaths, "as-if" coverings)

The Self is distinct from the five koshas — called “as-though” coverings (they appear to hide but cannot really cover the Self).

Each kosha can become an identity when the I is placed into it; each calls out “feed me”:

1. Annamaya kosha (physical body) — “feed me food, pleasure, comfort, appearance.”
2. Pranamaya kosha (energy/pose of life-force) — “feed me energy, exercise, stimulation.”
3. Manomaya kosha (mind/emotions) — “feed me emotional connection, companionship.”
4. Vijnanamaya kosha (intellect/knowledge) — “feed me learning, credentials, understanding.”
5. Anandamaya kosha (experiential happiness/bliss) — “feed me joy, love, experiential fulfillment.”

Central human motivation: to seek joy (Anandamaya kosha) because it feels closest to who we perceive ourselves to be — yet it is still not the ultimate Self.

Witness of the three states

The aluptadrk (Self) is present in:

1. Waking: where the I-thought is active and fluctuates.
2. Dreaming: where a different I (dream-ego) appears with different identities.
3. Deep sleep: where ego and contents are absent, yet the Self persists (we still “are” — we do not cease to exist).

Because the same underlying awareness recognizes waking, dream, and deep sleep, it cannot be the fluctuating ego — it is the constant Self.

Quick Review

The constant, self-existent awareness (aluptadrk) witnesses all thoughts and states. Aham-pratyaya / ahamkara = the fluctuating I-thought (ego) that expands/contracts and is mistaken for the Self.

Five koshas are “as-if” coverings; each can become an identity when the I is invested in it.

The Self is the witness of waking, dreaming and deep sleep — therefore it is distinct from the ego and mental contents.

Conclusion / Final pointers

Inquiry method: when the mind wants to imagine or objectify the Self, recognize imagination itself relies on the witnessing presence; thus imagination cannot be the Self.

The Self is not an object to be gained later; it is the ever-present, non-displaceable awareness available now.

Practice implication: shift attention from identifying with the fluctuating ahamkara and the koshas toward noticing the constant witness that is already present.

Om shanti shanti shanti.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Aham pratyaya	the I-thought
Ahamkara	ego; sense of I
Aluptadrk	uninterrupted witness; ever-present seer
Anandamaya kosha	sheath of experiential bliss
Antahkarana	inner instrument; inner faculty
Manomaya kosha	sheath of mind and emotions
Nara	the human being; the eternal jiva
Panchikarana	process of subtle elements becoming gross
Pancha-kosha	five sheaths covering the Self
Paramatma	the Supreme Self; highest Self
Pranamaya kosha	sheath of vital energy
Sattva guna	the quality of purity, harmony, and intelligence
Vijnanamaya kosha	sheath of intellect and discriminative knowledge

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of Key Themes

Inquiry into Self and Not-Self

The lecture examines what is not Self—the physical body and the subtle body—before addressing the nature of the Self. The physical body is treated as having material and efficient causes: the subtle elements and past causes (karma). The subtle body comprises the five subtle elements and the inner instruments (antahkarana) including the sense and action faculties, and is the locus of thoughts, desires, and personality. All such elements are not the Self.

The Limitless Self

The text defines the Self as limitless (paramatma/atman), always present and not confined by space, time, change, or duality. Limitlessness cannot be conceived as an object in the mind because any objectification introduces limitation and temporality. The Self is constant and cannot be displaced by states of happiness, unhappiness, meditation, or even absence of thought. Recognizing this unchanging Self leads the individual (nara/jiva) to realize oneness with Ishvara and the absence of essential separation between individual and totality.

The I-Thought and Ego

The aham pratyaya (I-thought) and ahamkara (ego) are described as the persistent, long-standing thought each person takes to be their real I. This ego expands and contracts—changes with company, situation, emotions, and knowledge—leading individuals to chase experiences that inflate the ego. Yet these fluctuations are witnessed by the uninterrupted awareness (aluptadrk), revealing that the ego is an instrument rather than the ultimate Self.

The Five Koshas and Witnessing Presence

The five sheaths (pancha-kosha) are presented as “as though” coverings that behave like entities asking to be fed: physical pleasures, vital energy, emotions, intellect, and experiential bliss. The Self is distinct from these layers. The lecture emphasizes the witnessing presence that remains constant through waking, dream, and deep sleep states—this presence is the true Self. Because awareness is continuous across all states, the changing I-thoughts are understood as objects appearing in the field of that awareness rather than constituting the Self.

Practical Implication

The teaching invites inquiry into “what is here and now” rather than imagining future attainment of limitlessness. By observing the fluctuating nature of the ego and recognizing the ever-present witnessing awareness, one’s identification shifts from transient instruments to the unchanging Self. This shift dissolves the sense of separation and leads to liberation and recognition of oneness with the whole.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

10. The "I" Behind the "I" – Who is the Constant Witness?

by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-10

Verse 36: The True "I" or Self

**yo vijānāti sakālaṃ jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptiṣu
buddhi-tat-vṛtti-sadbhāvam abhāvam, aham-iti-ayam**

This is the ātmā who, as the 'I', knows all - the presence and absence of the mind and its thoughts - in the waking, dream and sleep states of experience.

Verse 37: The Unseen Seer

**yaḥ paśyati svayaṃ sarvaṃ, yaṃ na paśyati kaścana
yaḥ-cetayati buddhi-ādi, na tat-yaṃ cetayati-ayam**

This is the ātmā who sees all by himself without any aid, but whom none sees; who illumines the mind, etc but whom the mind, etc do not illumine.

Verse 38: The Self & the Universe

**prakṛti-vikṛti-bhinnaḥ śuddha-bodha-svabhāvaḥ
sat-asat-idam-aśeṣaṁ bhāsayan-nirviśeṣaḥ
vilasati paramātmā jāgrad-ādiṣu-avasthā-su
aham-aham-iti sākṣāt sākṣī-rūpeṇa buddheḥ**

The paramātmā shines directly as 'I', 'I' in all the three states of experience like waking, etc as the witness of the mind, illumining without exception all these - elements and elementals - with forms and the formless, itself remaining changeless. Chinmaya: Different from Prakriti and its modifications, (the Self is) of the form of pure Knowledge; The entire visible and invisible Universe is a manifestation of That attributeless Absolute; The Supreme Self manifests itself in all the three states – waking, dream, sleep – as the "I am, I am" ego-sense directly in the intellect, and the witnessing consciousness behind intellect.

Verse 39: The Origin of Bondage

**atra anātmani aham iti matiḥ bandhaḥ eṣaḥ asya puṁsaḥ
prāptaḥ ajñānāt janana maraṇa kleśa sampāta hetuḥ
yena eva ayam vapuḥ idam asat satyam iti ātma buddhyā
puṣyati ukṣati avati viṣayaiḥ, tantubhiḥ kośakṛt vat**

In this context, the sense of 'I' in the anātmā, not-self, is the bondage for the person. This is gained due to ignorance and is the cause for falling into the afflictions of birth and death. Just as a silkworm lays a trap for itself with the threads, the jīva taking this changing body as real and as 'I', due to ignorance, nourishes it, anoints it and protects it.

Introduction

The lecture examines the nature of the I-thought (ahamkāra / pramāta), the True Self (Atma / alupta-dṛk — the uninterrupted witness), and how misidentification produces bondage and suffering.

Covers the three states (waking, dream, deep sleep), the self-illuminating nature of consciousness, why the Self cannot be made into an object, and the origin and consequences of identification with the non-Self.

I. The I-thought (ahamkāra / pramāta) and Changing Knowers

A. Definition and behaviour

I-thought / pramāta: the relative knower — a changing, conditional sense of "I" that appears in different contexts.

Characteristics:

- Changes according to context (waking, dreaming, different roles or moods).
- Knows certain objects/conditions in one state but not in others.

B. Examples illustrating change

Waking-state concerns (e.g., body, mole) can disappear in dream because the physical body/annamayakosha is absent — corresponding I-thought changes (no body-related self-esteem in dream).

Dream example: in dreams one may feel powerful (king, flying) and commit acts (killing) that cause real distress in dream — then a different waking I compares and feels relieved upon waking.

Nightmare → waking relief demonstrates how ahamkāra shifts instantaneously between states.

C. Functional role

The ahamkāra is useful: memory, buddhi, decision-making — part of the subtle body; it expands and contracts like breathing.

Not something to be forcibly abolished; recognition (discernment) of it as a function is the remedy.

Quick Review

I-thought = changing, relative knower (pramāta).

It varies across waking, dream, deep sleep.

It is functionally useful but not the true Self.

Recognize it as a transient function rather than trying to eliminate it.

II. The True Self (Atma / alupta-dṛk) — Witness and Light

A. Core attributes

Alupta-dṛk / Atma: the uninterrupted witness, the constant knower present through all changing knowers.

Self-illuminating / self-existent: does not require another light to illuminate it; it is the final illuminer.

Timeless: unbound by past/present/future; presence is constant (not produced or extinguished by time).

B. Function and relation to mind and senses

The Atma illumines thoughts, emotions, and sensory experiences — it is the presence in which:

- mind and its movement are known,
- the absence of thought (deep sleep) is known,
- changing states are registered.

Analogy: a movie screen (alupta-dṛk) that remains unchanged while the movie (subtle body, mind) plays and changes.

C. Distinction from thoughts/senses

If Atma were a particular thought (e.g., "I am happiness"), contradictions arise (cannot later experience sadness).

Atma is not any transient mental/emotional state nor any sensory faculty (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch) because those come and go while Atma remains unchanged.

The mind cannot see the Atma because there is no higher seer — Atma is the ultimate seer; making it an object would be a category mistake.

D. Illustrations & implications

Open-eyes, mind elsewhere: senses provide data but without mind there is no experience — shows dependency chain: object ← senses ← mind ← awareness. Consciousness continues when body/thoughts change or disappear (e.g., death of body = dreamlike continuation for unwise; wise person's subtle body also dissolves).

Quick Review

Atma = constant witness, self-illuminating, not dependent on other lights.

Illumines both presence and absence of thoughts; analogous to a movie screen.

Cannot be objectified or seen by the mind.

Remains unchanged through bodily, mental, and sensory fluctuations.

III. Three States and the Witness

A. States described

1. Waking (jāgrat): ahamkāra engages with body, world — expanding/contracting I.
2. Dream (svapna): different I exists with dream-content; bodily attributes absent.
3. Deep sleep (suṣupti): ahamkāra temporarily absent; absence of thoughts is recognized by the witness.

B. Role of the witness across states

The Atma is present in all three; it illuminates mind when present and illumines the absence of mind in deep sleep.

Recognizing that you exist in deep sleep (no thought) implies you are not the I-thought.

C. Death and after

Unwise person (ajnani) after bodily death experiences dreamlike instability (subtle body persists).

Wise person: when body and subtle body fall away, thoughts no longer arise; there is abiding as non-dual awareness (no identification with limited self).

In both cases, awareness itself never ceases.

Quick Review

Witness persists through waking, dreaming, deep sleep.

Deep sleep proves absence of I-thought; you remain as presence.

Death alters the body but not the witnessing awareness; responses differ for wise vs unwise.

IV. The Origin of Bondage (Verse 39) — Identification and Its Consequences

A. Definition of bondage

Bondage = identification of the Self with the non-Self (placement of the I in anatma).
Summarized: "I am this" (identification with body/mind/roles) is bondage.

B. Two fundamental errors that create bondage

1. Making the impermanent permanent:

Taking a transient body/mind and trying to make it everlasting.

2. Attribution error (projecting the limitless onto the limited):

Projecting Atma's limitlessness, permanence, and perfection onto body, personality, or teachers.

Leads to unrealistic expectations (search for perfect body/mind/personality).

C. Process and metaphor

Like a silkworm spinning a cocoon: the jīva nourishes, protects, and embellishes the assumed identity (body/ego), thus entangling itself.

The more one secures and embellishes that identity, the thicker the cocoon — harder to escape.

D. Practical consequences

Identification produces fear of death, attachment, anxiety, and lifelong efforts to remove limitations (seeking validation, perfection, power).

Attempts to take Atma attributes into body/mind always fail — only Atma is perfect and unchanging; it has no attributes to find in objects.

Quick Review

Two errors: (1) treating impermanent as permanent, (2) attributing Atma's qualities to the limited.

Result: self-created cocoon (attachment, fear, suffering).

V. Practical and Psychological Observations

Recognition vs suppression: Accept ahamkāra as a functional aspect of the subtle body rather than trying to annihilate it.

Desire for sleep/deep sleep often reflects a deeper seeking for absence of added burdens (freedom from ahamkāra).

Awareness of death can relieve fear by revealing the release from limitations;

Vedantic insight flips fear of death into understanding of release.

Identity shifts naturally with maturation (subtle body and physical instrument develop/change), but underlying awareness remains continuous.

Quick Review

Do not try to eliminate the I-thought; discern it as a transient function.

Seeking permanence in change creates suffering; recognizing the witness reduces fear.

Contemplation of death can catalyze release from attachment when seen correctly.

Conclusion — Key Takeaways

Distinguish between the transient, functional I-thought (ahamkāra/pramāta) and the timeless, self-illuminating Atma (alupta-dṛk).

The Atma is the constant witness that illumines all states and cannot itself be objectified.

Bondage arises when the I is misplaced onto the non-Self; liberation begins with correct discernment and recognition of the witness.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Aham	the sense of "I"
Ahamkara	the ego or "I-maker"
Aham pratyaya	I-thought
Ajnani	the ignorant person
Anatma	not-Self; non-self
Annamaya kosha	the food (physical) sheath
Atma	the Self; pure awareness
Buddhi	intellect; discriminative faculty
Jiva	individual living being
Kutastha	the immutable substratum of consciousness
Paramanandam	supreme bliss
Pramata	relative knower
Upadhi	limiting adjunct or condition
Aluptadrk	unceasing witness; uninterrupted seer

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Core teaching

The talk examines the distinction between the transient "I" (the ego) and the unchanging Self (Atma). The speaker distinguishes changing knowers—roles or egos that arise in waking, dreaming and deep sleep—from the constant witness that illumines all mental states. The ego (Ahamkara or Aham pratyaya) expands and contracts across states: confident and inflated in some moments, small and insecure in others, and absent in deep sleep. The Atma is described as the uninterrupted witness (Aluptadrk) that recognizes both presence and absence of mind and is self-shining, independent, and beyond being objectified.

Nature of awareness and objects

Awareness is presented as the final illuminer: it does not depend on any other principle to be known, nor can it itself be seen as an object. Objects, the senses and the mind are dependent, transient layers that appear and disappear. To recognize change, an unchanging substratum is required—this substratum is the Self. The Atma illuminates conditions of mind and senses but cannot be turned into an object by the mind, as that would contradict its self-existent nature.

Consequences of misidentification

Identifying the Self with the not-Self (Anatma)—placing the sense of "I" into the body-mind—creates bondage. Two errors follow: treating what is impermanent (body, mind) as permanent, and attributing the unlimited, perfect qualities of Atma to the limited body or mind. These misattributions lead the jiva to nourish and protect the constructed identity, spinning an ever-thickening cocoon of attachment. The result is worry about birth and death and continual efforts to secure a fragile sense of identity.

Death, continuity and liberation

Death of the physical body does not extinguish awareness. For the unwise (ajnani), death is experienced as continued subtle instability—like a dream—because identification persists with the subtle body. For the wise, dropping the body also dissolves the subtle body's limiting patterns; there is no further return to identification. In both cases, awareness itself remains undiminished. Realization consists in knowing oneself as the changeless witness rather than the fluctuating ego, which removes the suffering created by false identification.

Practical implication

The practice implied is not suppression of the ego—ahankara's functions are practical and useful—but discernment: recognizing the I-thought as an instrument that expands and contracts, while abiding as the witness. This discernment allows one to live functionally without being bound by attachment to transient states. Recognizing Atma's independence shifts fear of death into an experience of release, and transforms the attitude toward life, loss and transformation.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

11. Why "THE Truth" is Veiled From Everyone by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-11

Verse 40: How Truth is Veiled

**akhaṇḍa nitya advaya bodha śaktyā sphurantam ātmānam ananta vaibhavam
samāvṛṇoti āvṛtti śaktiḥ eṣā tamomayī rāhuḥ iva arka bimbam**

This māyā's power of veiling which consists predominantly of tamas, covers this ātmā that is shining with the power of the indivisible non- dual awareness without beginning and end, as even Rāhu covers the disc of the sun [like the tiny moon eclipses the sun].

Verse 41: Merciless Persecution by Rajas

**tirobhūte svātmani amala tara tejavati pumān anātmānaṁ mohāt aham iti śarīraṁ
kalayati tataḥ kāma krodha prabhṛtibhiḥ amuṁ bandhana guṇaiḥ param
vikṣepākhyā rajasa uru śaktiḥ vyathayati)**

When ātmā which is of the nature of pure awareness free from any impurity is eclipsed, the person considers the anātmā, body as ātmā. Then the strong power of rajas, known as vikṣepa, afflicts him much with the binding qualities of desire, anger and the like.

Chinmaya: When a man's own Self is hidden from him, the Self that is all purity and splendour, then he, out of ignorance, associates "I am" with the Not-Self, i.e. the body, and identifies himself with it. Then, by the fetters of lust, anger, and its train of vices, he gets bound inextricably, as the projecting power of Rajas mercilessly persecutes him.

Verse 42: Consequence of Maya's Powers

etābhyām eva śaktibhyām bandhaḥ puṁsaḥ samāgataḥ yābhyām vimohito dehaṁ matvā ātmānaṁ bhramati ayam

This bondage has come about for the person due to these two powers alone, deluded by which the person wanders about taking the body as ātmā.

Chinmaya: From these two 'powers' (veiling & projecting), man's bondage has sprung forth. Deluded by them, man mistakes his body for the Self, and wanders from life to life!

Verse 43: The "Tree" of Bondage

bījaṁ saṁsṛti bhūmijasya tu tamaḥ deha ātma dhīḥ aṅkuraḥ rāgaḥ pallavam ambu karma tu vapuḥ skandhaḥ asavaḥ śākhikāḥ agrāṇi indriya saṁhatih ca viṣayāḥ puṣpāṇi duḥkhaṁ phalaṁ nānā karma samudbhavaṁ bahavidhaṁ bhoktā atra jīvaḥ khagaḥ

For the tree of saṁsāra, ignorance is indeed the seed; the sense of 'I' in the physical body is the sprout; the desires are the foliage; the actions are the waters; the body is the trunk; the prāṇas are the branches; the aggregate of the sense organs and organs of action are the twigs; the sense objects are the flowers; the fruits are the different types of sorrow born of varieties of actions. Here the jīva is the enjoying bird.

Chinmaya: The seed for the Tree of Samsara is verily Ignorance. Body-identification is the sprout; desires are its tender leaves; d. work is its water; while the body is its trunk; the Pranas are its branches; the sense organs are its twigs; the sense objects are its flowers; miseries are the fruit; born out of different actions of a variety of kinds; the experiencer (Jiva) here is the individual bird (perched upon the tree)!

Verse 44: The Step-by-Step Path to Freedom

śruti pramāṇa eka mateḥ svadharma niṣṭhā tayā eva ātma viśuddhiḥ asya viśuddha buddheḥ paramātma vedanaṁ tena eva saṁsāra samūla nāśaḥ

For the one whose mind is committed to the śruti as a means of knowledge, a commitment to one's own dharma is there. By that commitment alone purification of his mind follows. For the one whose mind is purified, recognition of the limitless self takes place. By that recognition the destruction of the saṁsāra along with its cause, i.e. ignorance, results.

Verse 45: Process of Negation

**muñja ādi ikām iva dṛśya vargāt pratyañcam ātmānam asaṅgam akriyam vivicya
tatra pravilāpya sarvaṁ tadā ātmanā tiṣṭhati yaḥ sa muktaḥ**

He is free, who separating the unassociated innermost self, the subject - which is actionless - from the whole host of objects as even separating the inside stalk from the muñja grass and resolving everything there in that ātmā stays, by knowledge, as that very ātmā.

Chinmaya: Like the sheaths in the stalk of a grass stem, are the sheaths of the "seen", the not-Self. The Subjective Self that is unattached and actionless, is first differentiated from them (the sheaths); then the sheaths are all merged into It; and finally one remains identified with It. He who does this, becomes free.

Verse 46: Food Sheath

**dehaḥ ayam anna bhavanaḥ annamayaḥ tu kośaḥ ca annena jīvati vinaśyati tad
vihīnaḥ tvak carma māmsa rudhira asthi purīṣa rāśiḥ na ayam svayaṁ bhavitum
arhati nitya śuddhaḥ**

This physical body has come into being because of food; it is sustained by food and dies without food. It is a modification of food which is indeed as though a covering for the ātmā. This pack of dermis, epidermis, flesh, blood, bone and refuse does not itself deserve to be the ātmā that is ever pure.

Introduction

This lecture examines why the awareness of the Self (Atman) is hidden from us, how that hiding produces error and suffering, and what practical steps the Upanishadic teaching prescribes to reverse the error. Key themes: the indivisible nature of Atman, the two powers of maya (veiling and projecting), the two-step method of inquiry (negation and resolution), and a practical example (body as food / food-sheath).

1. Fundamental mistake: looking for perfection outside yourself

Many people seek an external person who appears perfect (morally, behaviorally, spiritually) and assume their own self is deficient.

This is a category error because it presumes a divisible or multiple self.

Key error: Treating others' apparent qualities as evidence that their "I am" is different from your "I am".

Quick Review

Seeking perfection in others assumes a divisible Self.

The real Self is not located in transient attributes or bodies.

Mistaking behavior/appearance for the Self leads to lifelong chasing.

2. The nature of the Self (Atman) as presented in the verse (verse 40)

Descriptive terms:

Akanda — indivisible

Advaya — non-dual; no second

Nityam — without beginning and without end

Anantavayi vaibhavam — all-pervasive; infinite glory

Consequences of these attributes:

If the Self is indivisible, you cannot truly oppose "my" I-am to "their" I-am — there is one I-am manifesting.

If it is beginningless, it never truly begins or ends; you cannot gain someone else's consciousness as if it were newly acquired.

If it is all-pervasive, it cannot be truly absent from any person or moment — hence enlightenment is not something located only in another person or special event.

Quick Review

Atman is indivisible, beginningless, and all-pervasive.

You already participate in that Self; it is not a future acquisition.

Transient experiences cannot constitute true non-duality.

3. Why truth is veiled: Maya's powers

Maya (power of consciousness) functions via at least two main shaktis (powers):

1. Avarana-shakti — veiling power

Hides the truth so distinct forms and duality can appear.

Analogy: clouds hiding the sun; a small moon eclipsing the sun.

Result: even basic facts (language, walking, arithmetic) are learned gradually; essential ontological knowledge is concealed.

2. Vikshepa-shakti — projecting power

Once veiled, mind projects false attributes onto things (superimposition).

Example: seeing a belt at dusk and projecting a snake onto it.

Psychological effect:

Partial knowledge of the "I am" leads to projection (I am incomplete, small, inadequate), which fuels desire and action aimed at "completion".

Ignorance alone is not problematic; the problem is the follow-up actions and wrong conclusions built on ignorance.

Quick Review

Maya veils, then the mind projects — creating world, individuality, desire.

Ignorance + projection = erroneous life patterns and suffering.

The veil is beginningless but the teaching (grace) provides a method to remove it.

4. Common misinterpretations and pitfalls

Mistaking peak experiences, substances, or a charismatic person's behavior for lasting non-dual realization:

If the experience has a beginning and end, it is not the beginningless Atman.

Non-duality cannot be isolated to a special state; it must be true in every state.

Thinking liberation equals omniscience:

Liberation does not mean knowing all empirical details.

Instead, one knows the essential substance (analogy: recognizing gold amid many ornaments).

Knowing that one substance (Atman/Brahman) dissolves the need to accumulate every detail.

Quick Review

Temporary experiences or altered states are not the indivisible Self.

Liberation = knowledge of the fundamental substance, not encyclopedic information.

Seeking external markers (smell, aura, behaviors) is misleading.

5. The epistemic method: two-step process from the Upanishads (verse 45)

The path to realization is structured in two intellectual steps:

1. Negation (Neti Neti)

Separate/recognize all that is not the Self (anatma).

Identify internal and external phenomena: body, mind, senses, objects, thoughts, emotions as not-Self.

This separation is cognitive/intellectual, not physical.

2. Resolution / Reclaiming

Resolve the negated multiplicity into the Self.

Reintroduce what was negated, realizing "sarvam Brahma" — all is Brahman.

Prevents a reduced, exclusionary monism; affirms unity without negating the world's experiential reality.

Analogy: separating pith from grass or husk from rice kernel — then retaining the kernel as essential.

Numbered sequence (method)

1. Observe and negate all objects/experiences as not the Self.
2. After negation, resolve or recognize how those appearances are expressions within the one Self.

Quick Review

Realization requires: (1) intellectual negation of non-Self, then (2) resolving those into the Self.

Neti Neti prevents mistaking the transient for the eternal.

Final stage affirms non-dual unity (all is Brahman).

6. Example: perceptual error — belt seen as snake

Conditions that allow error:

Partial light (incomplete information)

Similarity to prior percept (memory)

Ignorance of the belt's true nature

Process:

1. Ignorance of belt →

2. Projection of snake onto belt →

3. Action (fear, running) based on false perception

Teaching point: world and persons are similarly misperceived when the Self is partially known — we superimpose separateness and desire onto the indivisible Self.

Quick Review

Perceptual errors arise when partial knowledge + similarity cause projection.

The same mechanism projects personhood, desires, separation onto Atman.

Removing the projection requires repeated discrimination.

7. Differentiating Atma from Anatma: the projected identity

What is mistakenly projected onto the Self:

The egoic, expanding-contracting "I" (desires, likes/dislikes, identification with bodily states).

Consequence:

Because we identify the Self with transient desire-based identity, any suppression of desire feels like an attack on existence.

This is the root of strong attachments, resistances, and psychological suffering.

Quick Review

The egoic "I" is a projection, not the Atman.

Identifying with desire/contracting-expanding self causes suffering and resistance.

Discrimination weakens the identification.

8. The food-sheath (Annamaya Kosha) — body as food (verse 46)

Definition:

Anna = food; maya = modification → the physical body is a modification of food.

Practical implications:

Body arises from, is sustained by, and returns to food; it is materially a bag of skin/flesh/blood/feces/bone.

The body's physiological and psychological cravings are rooted in the food-nature of the organism.

Identifying with the body makes the body a kosha — an apparent covering that seems to obscure the Self.

Practical stance:

Maintain transactional care (health, exercise, diet) without over-identification.

Use repetitive contemplation (e.g., "this is food-born, sustained by food, will return to food") to weaken attachment.

Balance: care for the instrument (body) while cognizing it is not the Self.

Quick Review

The body = modification of food; understanding this weakens bodily identification.

Health practices are useful but can deepen identification if done egoically.

Repetitive contemplation reduces attachment; body remains an instrument.

9. Practical, ethical, and social consequences

Empathy: knowing maya's universal operation cultivates compassion — everyone is partially veiled.

Interpersonal conflict: much disagreement stems from mutual ignorance; empathy requires information about the other's context.

Social level: collective ignorance fuels conflict (e.g., religious violence) — again projection and partial knowledge.

Liberation in practice:

Receive shabda pramana (scriptural/teacher knowledge) as a corrective to the partial knowledge of "I am".

Persist in inquiry (neti neti) and reconciliation (resolving back into Self).

Avoid the trap of endless detail-gathering; aim for recognizing the central substance.

Quick Review

Compassion grows from appreciating universal veiling.

Most conflicts are due to ignorance + projection, not inherent malice.

Follow the method (shabda → neti neti → resolve) rather than seeking endless detail.

10. Final practical recommendations

Acknowledge collective ignorance: "I don't know everything" — humility reduces conflict.

Use repeated, simple contemplations (e.g., body = food) to erode identification.

Focus on knowing the substance (Atman/Brahman) rather than exhaustive factual knowledge.

Keep investigating; avoid premature conclusions about what lies "behind the moon".

Quick Review

Humility and repeated discrimination are the practical tools.

Concentrate on the essential substance rather than transient particulars.

Persistent inquiry prevents false closures and projections.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Akanda	Indivisible; unbroken; whole
Advaya	Nonduality; not two
Ananda	Bliss
Ananda Maya	Bliss sheath
Anatman	Not Self; that which is not the Self
Annapraya	Related to food (used in context of food sheath)
Annamaya	Food sheath; body as a modification of food
Ananta	Without end; infinite
Apavarga	Emancipation; liberation (contextual)
Āvaraṇa Śakti	Veiling power of Maya
Bodha	Awareness; knowledge; awakening
Brahman	Ultimate Reality; absolute
Buddhi	Intellect; discriminative faculty
Eva	Emphatic particle meaning indeed or just
Ikṣa	Seeing or perception (contextual)
Ishvara Anugraha	Divine grace of the Lord
Ivā	Like; as if
Kaivalya	Isolation of the Self; liberation (classical term)
Kosha	Sheath; layer that appears to cover the Self
Manomaya	Mind sheath
Munja	Munja grass; used in classical simile of separation
Neti Neti	Not this, not this; process of negation
Nityam	Eternal; without beginning or end
Pratyancham	Innermost Self; inner core
Pramāṇa	Means of valid knowledge
Rahu	Mythic eclipse entity used as a metaphor
Sarvam	All; everything
Śabda Pramāṇa	Verbal testimony as a means of knowledge
Śānti	Peace
Tamas	Inertial quality; darkness; dullness
Upādhi	Limiting adjunct; that which appears to limit the Self
Vikṣepa Śakti	Projecting power of Maya
Vijñānamaya	Intellect sheath
Vṛtti	Mental modification or fluctuation

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Overview

The teaching explains why the ultimate truth remains veiled for most beings and what to do about it. Central to the exposition is the nature of the Self as indivisible, eternal, and all-pervasive. Ignorance arises not because the Self is absent but because a veiling power—Maya—operates through two complementary capacities: the veiling (*āvaraṇa śakti*) that hides the Self and the projecting (*vikṣepa śakti*) that superimposes false attributes on the evident “I-am.” Together these produce the experience of duality and personal identity.

The Problem of Partial Knowledge

The Self is inherently present as “I-am,” yet because that presence is not apprehended fully, the mind fills the gap with projections. Partial recognition enables error: it is neither total ignorance (which would prevent any misinterpretation) nor perfect knowledge (which would prevent mistake). This partial ignorance leads to seeking completion in external things and people and to mistaking transient attributes—body, behavior, or states—as definitive of the Self.

Mechanics of Veiling and Projection

Maya’s veiling power conceals the nondual awareness, functioning like a cloud hiding the sun. The projecting power then paints onto that concealment a world of distinctions—person, object, desire—thereby creating the sense of an expanding-contracting individual who seeks fulfillment through objects. The teaching uses metaphors such as Rahu eclipsing the sun and the snake mistaken for a rope to illustrate how small mental misapprehensions produce large experiential consequences.

Method: Negation and Resolution

Self-recovery follows a two-step approach found in the Upanishads. First, employ *neti neti*—negation of what is not the Self—by identifying and separating the *anatma* (non-Self) elements: body, mind, senses, and their contents. This separation is intellectual and contemplative, not physical. Second, resolve or reclaim the excluded multiplicity back into the one Reality: *sarvam khalvidam brahma*—recognize that all manifestations are Brahman and integrally belong to the Self.

Practice and Living Application

Practical work includes repetitive contemplations that weaken the habit of identifying with transient layers, such as recognizing the body as *annamaya* (a modification of food). Simultaneously, one cultivates empathy and humility by understanding that ignorance is beginningless and universal. Scriptural testimony (*śabda pramāṇa*) and the grace of *Īśvara* are presented as keys that can catalyze realization, guiding the seeker from partial knowledge to abiding awareness of the indivisible Self.

Outcome

Freed from the veiling and projecting powers, a person abides as the nondual Self. The superimposed identities dissolve and what remains is the simple, unchanged "I-am" that pervades all. This is liberation: remaining established in the Self while living in the world, seeing the one reality in all forms.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

12. You Are Not Your Body — The 5 Koshas by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-12

Verse 47: Body is a Known Object

**pūrvam janeḥ adhimṛteḥ api na ayam asti jāta kṣaṇa kṣaṇa guṇaḥ aniyata
svabhāvaḥ na ekaḥ jaḍaḥ ca ghaṭavat paridṛśyamānaḥ svātmā katham bhavati
bhāva vikāra vettā**

This physical body does not exist before birth and after death; it gains new attributes with the birth of every moment and is of uncertain nature; it is not a single unit (but is an assemblage) and inert; it is an object of perception like a pot. How can it be the self who is the knower of the modifications?

Chinmaya: Before birth as well as after death, it (the body) does not exist; When born, it is of a fleeting nature, and full of uncertainty, i.e. ever-changing; It is diversified and inert, and, like a jar, has all the qualities of only a sense object; How then can it be the Self, which is the witness of all changes in all things?

Verse 48: Composition & Function of Pranamaya Kosha

karmendriyaiḥ pañcabhiḥ añcitaḥ ayam prāṇaḥ bhavet prāṇamayaḥ tu kośaḥ yena ātmavān annamayaḥ anupūrṇaḥ pravartate asau sakala kriyāsu

The prāṇa endowed with the five organs of action forms this prāṇamaya-kośa, a covering as if for the ātmā, pervaded by which this body becomes alive and engages in all activities.

Chinmaya: The five faculties of the organs of action together with the Prana or the vital airs, constitute the Pranamaya Kosha, indeed. By this sheath, the life-force is breathed into every part of the Food sheath. Then only is this body able to perform all its various activities and functions.

Verse 49: Why Pranamaya Kosha is Non Self

na eva ātmā api prāṇamayaḥ vāyu vikāraḥ gantā agantā vāyuvat antaḥ bahiḥ eṣaḥ yasmāt kiñcit kva api na vett iṣṭa aniṣṭam svaṁ vā anyam vā kiñcana nityam paratantraḥ

This prāṇamaya also can never be the self because the prāṇamaya is a modification of air, and goes in and comes out (of the body) like the air; does not know anything anywhere, anything desirable or not desirable [Prana cannot know the joys and sorrows], for itself or for others, and is always dependent.

Introduction

This lecture examines why the physical body (Annamaya Kosha) is not the Self, using Vedantic logic and five distinguishing features. It then moves to the next kosha — the pranamaya (life-force) — explaining its nature, how we mistake it for the Self, and why it too is not the Self.

Verse quoted (summary)

The body:

Does not exist before birth or after death.

Changes attributes moment to moment.

Is composite (an assemblage), non-unitary and inert.

Is an object of perception (like a pot).

Conclusion: How can the body be the Self, the knower of modifications?

Major themes

1. General Vedantic method

Two-step method used in the course:

- 1. Identify what is not the Self (neti-neti / negation).
- 2. Reveal what is the Self (to be addressed later).

Use of logical analysis and examples to disidentify with non-Self layers (koshas).

Why you cannot be the body — five features (logical analysis)

Intro: Vedanta asserts the true Self is unlimited; the body is limited. The verse gives five logical reasons.

Why you cannot be the body — five features (logical analysis)

The body is an object of awareness

Anything known/perceived (object) is distinct from the knower.

Example: a pen, a finger, a hand — known objects, therefore not the Self.

Incremental argument:

1. If one body part (e.g., a finger) is not me, adding more parts doesn't make the whole me.
2. All parts are made of the same inert constituents (atoms) — same logic applies to brain, heart, etc.

Empirical examples:

People who lose body parts or have large surgeries still retain personhood.

Artificial hearts, half-brain patients: capacities change, personhood persists.

Consequence: body as object ⇒ cannot be the knower.

Quick Review

Anything perceived is different from the perceiver.

Parts → whole dis-identification argument.

Medical cases illustrate persistence of personhood despite bodily changes.

The body is saguna (with attributes / changing)

The body constantly acquires and loses attributes (pain, hunger, fatigue, diseases).

Attributes are perceived; what is perceived cannot be the Self.

Mistaking body-conditions for "I" creates additional psychological suffering (e.g., being told you are bleeding increases distress).

Practical benefit: viewing bodily attributes objectively reduces suffering and produces a healthy relationship to the body (not detachment but correct use).

Quick Review

Body is mutable (attributes change constantly).

Mistaking transient conditions for "I" multiplies suffering.

Objective view of bodily changes aids equanimity.

The body is anekāha (not a single unit; composite)

The body is an assemblage of parts; there is no single indivisible bodily entity.

If consciousness were located in the body parts, removing a part would reduce consciousness — which does not happen.

We have had many bodies (baby → teenager → adult); the unbroken continuity of awareness across changing bodies implies the Self is distinct from any single body.

Presence of an unbroken witness (alukta-dṛk / witnessing presence) that perceives these changes.

Quick Review

Composite nature of body excludes it being the indivisible Self.

Continuity of awareness across bodily transformations indicates a distinct witness.

The body is jadā (inert)

Body is made of inert elements (atoms, molecules, periodic table elements).

Inert + inert + inert logically cannot yield consciousness (Advaitic position).

Counter-argument to materialist claim that genes/brain produce consciousness: genes are inert too; no atom contains consciousness.

Empirical pursuits (neuroscience mapping consciousness) are critiqued from this standpoint.

Additional logical argument: if consciousness were intrinsic to body, it could not leave dead bodies — but consciousness apparently departs at death, so it was not intrinsic.

Quick Review)

Body = inert matter; cannot logically be the conscious Self.

Consciousness leaving body at death supports non-inherence to the physical body.

The body is an object of perception (restate / general rule)

Anything perceived or known can never be the knower (subject).

This general rule underpins the previous features.

Quick Review

General epistemic rule: known is not knower.

Body is known; therefore, body is not Self.

Two higher-level summary arguments (why body is not Self)

1. Body is changing → to perceive change requires an unchanging witness. Therefore consciousness must be changeless and distinct from body.

2. Body is objectified (perceived) → object cannot be subject (knower). Therefore body is not subject.

Analogy: recognizing motion requires a stationary reference (stationary clouds to judge planes); similarly, recognizing mental/physical change requires an unmoving witness.

Waking / deep sleep / death examples used to illustrate continuity of awareness and non-identification with the body.

Quick Review

Change requires an unchanging witness (presence).

Being perceived/objectified excludes identity with the subject.

Transitional topic: proving consciousness existed before birth

If consciousness depended on bodily birth, it would be an object (dependent); but consciousness is the self-existing witness.

Two supporting lines:

1. The persistent presence while the body changes (cutting/removing parts) shows consciousness is unaffected.

2. Death and near-death reports: consciousness can continue when physical life ends (inference to non-inherence).

Memory and the subtle body: inability to recall infancy arises from forgetting, not non-existence — introduces the subtle body as carrier of impressions (to explain continuity).

Quick Review

Consciousness remains through bodily changes → points to pre-birth presence.

Death and near-death experiences used as supporting evidence.

Subtle body explains continuity of personality/impressions across births.

Introduction to the Subtle Body and Prana (transition)

Subtle body carries impressions and capacities (explains continuity despite physical death).

Next kosha to analyze: Pranamaya Kosha (life-force / energy).

Pranamaya Kosha — what it is and why we mistake it for the Self

Definition and role

Prana = life-force / energy; analogous to electricity or software that powers the physical body (hardware).

Prana empowers bodily functions: digestion, circulation, inhalation/exhalation, motor capacities (grasping, walking, speaking), procreation, excretion.

Biblical parallel: "Lord breathes life into man" — prana as vital breath.

Experiential test: holding breath / deep breathing reveals the subjective sense of aliveness.

Why we identify with prana

Strong instinct: when aliveness is present we say "I am alive"; when it leaves we think "I go".

Practices: breathing exercises increase felt energy and can be experienced as enhanced presence (can become addictive).

Prana provides a compelling sense of self because it is the felt power that animates the body.

Prana is not the Self — logical points

1. Prana is a modification of air (oxygen → life force). We don't say "I" for air, yet when air becomes prana we often claim I am aliveness.

2. Prana varies in intensity (energy levels, fatigue, intoxication); awareness does not vary in essence.

Awareness remains constant while pranic intensity fluctuates — therefore awareness is not prana.

3. If prana were the Self, then exhaling would mean the Self ceases, inhaling would make it present — not consistent with actual experience (awareness persists regardless).

4. Prana is dependent on:

- Food (nutrition) — fasting lowers energetic levels.
- Air (breath) — prana relates to breath.
- Mind — mental processes affect prana (yogic control shows dependence).

Anything dependent cannot be the self-existing Self.

5. Prana as intelligence for bodily functions: prana carries the driver/“software” that enables innate capacities — this intelligence is part of the subtle body (present in dream/dream-actors as functional capacities).

Special notes on prana and death

When the physical body can no longer host prana (cells fail to accommodate), pranic support falls and subtle body separates — body dies.

Prana as part of subtle body continues after physical death; the subtle body carries memories and tendencies until re-embodiment or liberation.

Pranamaya kosha characteristics

Considered the most noble kosha:

Works tirelessly (24/7), sustains life without asking; likened to a karma-yogi (selfless worker).

Yet it is still a kosha — a cover — because it is perceptible, changing, and dependent.

Quick Review

Prana = life-force / software for bodily functions; empowers respiration, digestion, motor abilities.

Identification with aliveness is common but mistaken.

Prana fluctuates, depends on food/air/mind, and thus cannot be the changeless Self.

Prana continues in the subtle body (dream, post-death) but is not identical with I.

Additional supporting examples and analogies used

Driver / printer driver analogy: prana is the driver that enables hardware (body) functions.

Robot/electricity analogy: prana like electricity powering a robot.

Medical / anecdotal cases:

Half-brain surgery: personhood persists despite loss of brain tissue.

Artificial heart patients: feel normal despite heart being external device.

Terminal patients feel extreme tiredness as tissues fail to host prana.

Dream state analogy: dream-characters still grasp/walk/speak — shows prana & subtle body functions independent of current gross body.

Practical implications

Repeated self-reminder (dis-identification) cultivates a healthier relationship with body and prana.

Practices that regulate prana (breath control) change mental qualities: slowing breath reduces rajas → increases sattva (calmness).

Understanding koshas reduces attachment and fear of loss; promotes equanimity in sickness, ageing, death.

Quick Review

Regular reflection: the body and prana are instruments — learning to use them properly reduces attachment.

Breath/pranayama affects mind (rājasic → sattvic shift).

Observing fluctuations in prana clarifies it is not the unchanging Self.

Rules and methods summarized (epistemic rules used repeatedly)

1. Anything perceived/known (object) cannot be the knower (subject).
 2. Anything that changes (has attributes) cannot be the changeless Self.
 3. Anything dependent on causes/conditions cannot be the self-existing Self.
- These rules were applied to: body (annamaya) and prana (pranamaya) to show both are not the Self.

Closing / Next

Next lecture will examine the manomaya kosha (mind-sheath) and continue the negation method to arrive at the Self.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Advaita	non-duality
Annamaya	made of food; physical sheath
Anekaha	not one; manifold
Abhavavrti	memory of absence (deep sleep residue)
Brahman	absolute reality
Bhava	becoming; state or emotion
Guna	fundamental quality or tendency
Ishvara	personal lord or controller
Jadah	inert; lifeless
Kosha	
Moksha	liberation
Manomaya	made of mind; mental sheath
Prana	life force; vital energy

Pranamaya	made of prana; vital-energy sheath
Purvam	formerly; before
Rajas	activity; passion; dynamism
Sattva	purity; clarity; knowledge tendency
Svabhava	own nature; inherent characteristic
Tamas	inertia; darkness; resistance
Turiya	the fourth state; pure consciousness
Udana	upward moving prana associated with exit
Upadhi	limiting adjunct or condition
Vedanta	end of the Vedas; philosophical system

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Overview

The lecture explores the traditional Vedantic teaching that the Self is not the body but a changeless awareness distinct from various sheaths or coverings (koshas). It begins with the annamaya kosha, the physical sheath made of food and bodily constituents, and uses logical arguments to show why the body cannot be the Self: the body is perceived as an object, it changes, it is composed of multiple parts, it is inert, and it is an object of perception. These features reveal that the true Self must be unchanging, unitary, sentient, and not an object.

Key logical points

The teacher presents several core rules of discrimination: anything perceived cannot be the perceiver, anything with attributes cannot be the attributeless Self, anything composite cannot be the indivisible Self, and anything dependent cannot be self-existing. Applied to the body, these rules show that loss or change of parts (finger, heart, brain) does not affect the witnessing presence, so consciousness cannot be located in any bodily part made of inert atoms. The fact that consciousness appears to leave the body at death reinforces that consciousness is not intrinsic to the physical frame.

Subtle distinctions and further sheaths

The talk then examines prana and the pranamaya kosha. Prana (vital energy) animates bodily functions and enables action and sentiency; it is likened to a driver or software for the body hardware. Although powerful and experienced as aliveness, prana is shown not to be the Self because its intensity fluctuates, it depends on food, air, and mind, and it can be observed as a modification. Prana also carries functional

intelligences (breathing, grasping, procreation) that persist in dreams and across forms, which explains continuity of abilities across births without implying identity with the physical body.

Practical implications

The repeated instruction is to cultivate an objective, mature relationship to body and life force: treat them as instruments rather than the ultimate I. This elevates resilience in suffering, reduces attachment, and supports clearer spiritual inquiry. Methods such as observing breath, slowing respiration, and discriminative reflection are practical tools to discern the changeless witness.

Conclusion

The lesson frames Vedantic soteriology: by rejecting the body, vital force, and mind as the Self through logical analysis and contemplative practice, one can discover the immutable witness (turiya, Brahman). The kosha model functions as a pragmatic map—identifying and dis-identifying from layers—toward realizing non-dual awareness and eventual liberation (moksha).

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

13. Nature of the Mind is Sorrow - Why Your Mind Isn't You by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-13

Verse 50: Composition of Manomaya Kosha

**jñānendriyāṇi ca manaḥ ca manomayaḥ syāt kośaḥ mama aham iti vastu vikalpa
hetuḥ sañjñā ādi bheda kalanā kalitaḥ balīyān tat pūrva kośam abhipūrya
vijṛmbhate yaḥ**

The organs of perception and the mind make up the manomaya kosha. It pervades the pranamaya kosha and is very powerful because it projects the seeming duality of "I" and "mine." It can differentiate names and attributes.

Verse 51: Why Mind Cannot be the Self

**manomayaḥ na api bhavet parātmā hi ādi antavatvāt pariṇāmi bhāvāt duḥkha
ātmakatvāt viśayatva hetoḥ draṣṭā hi dṛśya ātmatayā na dṛṣṭaḥ**

The manomaya kośa can never be the paramātmā because it has a beginning and end, is subject to changes, has sorrow as its very nature, and is an object of perception. The subject (seer) is never seen to be in the form of the object (seen).

Introduction

Lecture analyzes why the mind (manomaya kosha) cannot be the Self, using the three golden rules of negation and classical kosha doctrine.

Covers composition and functions of the manomaya kosha, how identification arises, practical practices for discriminating the Self, and the scriptural claim that the mind's nature is sorrow.

Three Golden Rules (How to know something is not the Self)

Core criteria (used to negate any kosha)

1. Changeability — it undergoes modification; it is impermanent.
2. Perceptibility — it can be perceived/experienced (is an object).
3. Dependence / Composed of parts — it depends on other things (is conditional/dependent).

Example applications:

- Prana depends on air, food, mind → not Self.
- Body depends on nutrients/environment → not Self.

Negation (neti-neti) is cognitive recognition: coming to see “namaha (not mine)” — this mental recognition negates identification and is central to the teaching.

Quick Review

The Self is recognized by not satisfying change, perceptibility, or dependence.

Negation is cognitive: realize “not mine” rather than destroying the object.

Apply these three rules to each kosha to disidentify.

What is a Kosha?

Definition and practical qualifier

A kosha is described as an apparent covering (“as though” covering).

Empirical presence (e.g., annamaya body) does not contradict its status as a kosha; negation is about identification, not physical destruction.

When is something no longer a kosha?

Not when it ceases to exist physically, but when you stop identifying with it — internally say “not mine” (namaha).

Cognitive shift from “this is me” to “this is an instrument” changes its status.

Quick Review

Kosha = apparent covering; negation is identification withdrawal.

Physical persistence of the kosha does not prevent it being negated.

The operative switch is “not mine” recognition.

Manomaya Kosha — Composition and Functions

(verse 50)

Composition

Made of the organs of perception + mind; pervades the pranamaya kosha.

Very powerful: projects the seeming duality of I and mine; differentiates names and attributes.

Relative subtlety

Progression of subtleties:

1. Annamaya (gross, physical)
2. Pranamaya (subtler, energy/feeling)
3. Manomaya (subtler still — thought, perception, emotion)

Each inner kosha pervades the next outer one (manomaya pervades pranamaya; pranamaya pervades annamaya).

Input and processing

Receives five types of sensory matter: form/color (sight), sound, tactile (touch), taste, smell.

Functions of the mind (manomaya):

Doubting — first reflex: skeptical processing (“what to do with this?”).

Vacillation — indecision: “should I / should I not?”

Memory — storage and recall; good memory = strong identification with manomaya.

Emotion — feelings shape perception; leads to value-based responses.

Forming vrittis — mind molds itself into shapes of perceived object/emotion; these conditions of the mind (vrittis) receive names (sanjnadi).

Metaphors & illustrations

Mind as play-doh/plasticine: quickly assumes the form of perceived objects (harmonium, fan, wall), memories, or emotions.

Perception works frame-by-frame like a movie; fluid continuity is an illusion.

Example: embarrassment thought → manomaya triggers prana (heat) → physical blush (annamaya).

Mind shapes perceptions plus applies memory/value leading to distortion (different persons see same object differently because of personal vrittis).

Vritti and naming

A vritti = a specific mental condition/form.

Naming (sanjnadi): when a vritti arises, it gets called by different names — these names create and reinforce duality (forms and names).

Quick Review

Manomaya is the subtle mind kosha receiving five-sense data and producing doubt, memory, emotion, vrittis.

It shapes itself into representations; identification with those shapes yields I-thought.

Vrittis + naming produce duality and distortion of reality.

Identification with the Mind — Practical consequences and practices

How identification arises

Data → manomaya forms a unified “I” thought (ahamkara): “mine” is stamped on sensations, doubts, emotions, memories.

Intellect (buddhi) consults to decide action; sequence is rapid and often bypasses conscious awareness, creating a strong sense of personal ownership.

Examples of identification

“I want no mind” — still identifies with manomaya (desire to silence it).

“I feel the truth” — subjective feeling equated with truth; Vedanta warns this is identification with manomaya.

People who make decisions from feeling are identified with manomaya.

Practices to disidentify

Cognitive negation: repeatedly assert “not mine” for objects, body parts, possessions, relationships, prana, emotions, doubts.

Alternative framing: regard everything as belonging to Ishvara (divine owner) — “it belongs to the right guy”.

Vipassana and mindfulness: observe sensations, vrittis, prana activity to create space and reduce identification — note: witnessing itself is still mind-level (ahamkara) but useful as a preliminary tool.

Practical test: imagine hands, house, money, family — practice saying “not mine” to loosen attachment while retaining practical conduct.

Limits and cautions

Don’t adopt pseudo-spiritual literalism — “not mine” doesn’t license irresponsible behavior. Transactional ownership remains for life navigation.

Witnessing tools from CBT/DBT are useful but the witness they create is still manomaya/ahamkara; deeper inquiry required to realize the Self.

Quick Review

Identification arises because manomaya notes “mine” and stamps experience.

Practices: not mine negation, seeing ownership as Ishvara’s, and mindfulness/Vipassana to create space.

Witnessing is a stepping stone; ultimate discrimination must examine the witness itself.

Why the Mind Cannot Be the Self — Verse 51 (summary and commentary)

Scriptural claims

Manomaya kosha cannot be Paramatma/Self because:

1. Has beginning and end — it changes (parinami bhavat).
2. Subject to change — impermanent and variable.
3. Observable / object of perception — it can be seen, heard, noticed.
4. Dependent — relies on brain, senses, prana, environment.

Conclusion: The subject (pure consciousness) is never observed as an object; the eye cannot see itself as object. Likewise, the Self is not an object of perception.

Aluptadrk (unbroken witness)

Awareness/consciousness is aluptadrk — uninterrupted, unmodified witness that nothing sticks to.

Phenomena (sights, sounds, thoughts, emotions) arise and pass in this witness but do not adhere to it.

Logical point: if nothing presently sticks to awareness, nothing from past (or future) has actually stuck to it — suffering is due to identification, not to the Self.

“Nature of sorrow” explained

The manomaya’s very function (doubt, vacillation, emotionality) creates instability and thus sorrow or unease.

Doubt → anxiety, worry, uncertainty.

The mind must doubt to function, but that function produces a restless state.

Therefore manomaya’s nature is sorrow: birth into this kosha ensures exposure to sorrow so long as one identifies with it.

Happiness (ananda) properly belongs to a different kosha (anandamaya) or ultimately to the Self; bliss is not intrinsic to manomaya.

Quick Review

Manomaya cannot be Self: impermanent, perceivable, dependent.

Awareness/aluptadrk remains untouched by vrittis; suffering arises only when identification occurs.

The mind’s built-in doubt and instability explain why manomaya’s nature is sorrow.

Final Practical Notes

Regular practice: apply namaha (not mine) to sensations, possessions, roles, thoughts, emotions — balance inquiry with practical living.

Use mindfulness/vipassana as a tool to observe and create space, but understand the witness produced is still mind-level; keep discriminating toward the unchanging Self.

Recognize capacities (memory, doubt, aliveness) as given — humility and reduced identification arise naturally when you see these as not-you or as Ishvara's gift.

Quick Review

Use the three golden rules to negate koshas: changeable, perceptible, dependent → not Self.

Manomaya shapes experience into I/mine via vrittis, memory, doubt, emotion; its nature leads to sorrow.

Practical work: apply not mine practice, mindfulness, and discrimination to loosen identification and abide as the unchanging witness.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	the I-thought or ego sense
Adi Shankara	classical Vedanta teacher and reformer
Aluptadrk	unbroken or uninterrupted witness awareness
Anandamaya	
Annamaya	the physical or food-based sheath
Buddhi	intellect or discriminating faculty
Ishvara	the Lord or cosmic controller
Manomaya	the mental sheath or mind layer
Namaha	not mine; I do not own
Om	sacred primordial syllable
Paramatma	the supreme Self or supreme soul
Parinami bhavat	being subject to change or transformation
Prana	life-energy or vital breath
Pranamaya	the vital-energy sheath
Sanjnadi	designations or names given to mental states
Shanti	peace
Vritti	a mental modification or condition of the mind
Vipassana	insight meditation practice

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of the document

Overview

The recorded talk examines the nature of the mind and the layers of self according to Vedanta, focusing on the koshas (sheaths) and why the mind cannot be the true Self. The speaker outlines three criteria that disqualify anything from being the Self: it changes, it is perceived or experienced, and it is dependent on other things. These criteria are applied to the various koshas to demonstrate their non-self status.

Main points

The teaching begins with the gross sheaths and progresses to subtler layers: annamaya (physical body), pranamaya (vital-energy sheath), and manomaya (mental sheath). Each kosha is examined to show how identification with it results in a sense of “I” and “mine.” The manomaya kosha in particular is described as the seat of perception, doubt, memory, emotion and the shaping of experience into names and forms. It molds itself to external inputs and internal memories, producing vrittis (mental modifications) that create the illusion of duality.

Psychology of the mind

The speaker uses everyday examples—embarrassment causing blushing, memory shaping images, likes and dislikes coloring perception—to show how the mind forms and distorts reality. Manomaya is said to produce the I-thought (ahamkara) that stamps experiences as mine. Cognitive tools such as witnessing or separation (used in therapies like CBT or DBT and practices like vipassana) can create helpful distance from mental activity, but the one who “witnesses” within those practices is still part of the mind’s functioning.

Why the mind is not the Self

Applying the three golden rules, the mind is shown to be changing (parinami), observable (an object of perception), and dependent on senses, prana and brain functioning. The talk emphasizes that consciousness itself is aluptadrk—an uninterrupted, unaffected witness that nothing sticks to. Because mental states are transient, full of doubt and lacking stable direction, the nature of the mind is characterized as sorrow. True awareness, by contrast, remains unchanged and unbound by the flux of thoughts and emotions.

Practical guidance

The practice of internally declaring “not mine” (namaha) toward body, possessions, roles, emotions and memories is recommended as a method to loosen identification and cultivate humility and peace. Recognizing capacities—memory, doubt, feeling—as given (Ishvara’s or provided faculties) reduces pride and attachment. The speaker cautions that transactional responsibility remains (one still functions in the world), while encouraging steady inquiry to see the distinction between instrument and witness.

Conclusion

The talk invites sustained discrimination between transient mental phenomena and the unchanging witness. By observing the koshas and consistently applying the criteria—change, objecthood, dependence—one can negate identification with the mind and realize a more stable awareness beyond sorrow and fluctuation.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

14. Even Happiness Keeps You Bound by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-14

Verse 52: Composition of Vijñanamaya Kosha

**buddhiḥ buddhīndriyaiḥ sārđhaṁ savṛttiḥ kartṛ lakṣaṇaḥ vijñānamaya kośaḥ syāt
puṁsaḥ saṁsāra kāraṇam**

The buddhi with its thought modifications and the organs of perception is the vijñānamaya-kośa which is of the nature of the doer and the cause of saṁsāra for the person. Chinmaya: The intellect along with the organs of perception; together with its special thought modification, the root idea "I am the doer" that it itself creates; these comprise the Intellect Sheath. It is the cause of man's transmigration.

Verse 53: The "Reflection of Consciousness"

**anuvrajat cit pratibimba śaktiḥ vijñāna sañjñāḥ prakṛteḥ vikāraḥ jñāna kriyāvān
aḥam iti ajasraṁ deha indriya ādiṣu abhimanyate bhr̥śam**

This kośa known as vijñāna has the power of illumining due to the reflected consciousness which has entered it; it is a modified form of prakṛti having the function of knowledge and action and always identifies totally with the body, sense organs, etc as 'I'. Chinmaya: Being but a "reflection of consciousness", this sheath is a

modification of Prakriti. It is always the “knower” and the “doer” in respect of the body and sense organs, and is completely identified with them.

Verse 54: The Nature of “Jiva”

**anādi kālah ayam ahaṁ svabhāvaḥ jīvaḥ samasta vyavahāra voḍhā karoti karmāṇi
api pūrva vāsanaḥ puṇyāni apuṇyāni ca tat phalāni**

* Combined with Verse 55 below.

Verse 55: The Nature of “Jiva”

**bhūṅkte vicitrāsu api yoniṣu vrajan āyāti niryāti adhaḥ ūrdhvam eṣaḥ asya eva
vijñānamasya jāgrat svapna ādi avasthāḥ sukha duḥkha bhogaḥ**

V54-55 Combined: This vijñānamaya whose beginning cannot be determined has the 'I' sense due to identification with the body, etc and is the jīva, the carrier of all activities. Having the impressions of the previous karmas ingrained, he performs puṇya-karmas (actions enjoined by the śāstra) and pāpa-karmas (actions prohibited); he enjoys their results in various bodies above and below. Moving in various bodies he comes down and goes up. For this vijñānamaya alone are the three states of experience of waking, dreaming, and sleep, and the experience of joy and sorrow.

Verse 56: Conclusion: Vijnanamaya Cannot be Self

**ataḥ na ayam parātmā syāt vijñānamaya śabdataḥ vikāritvāt jaḍatvāt ca
paricchinnatva hetutaḥ drśyatvāt vyabhicāritvāt na anityaḥ nityaḥ iṣyate**

This one with the name ‘vijñāna’ cannot be the paramātmā because he is subject to change, is not self- effulgent, is limited, is an object of perception and is inconsistent. The time-bound cannot be regarded as timeless.

Introduction

Lecture examines the vijñānamaya kośa (intellect/knowledge sheath), its features, how it binds the self, and the method to disidentify from it.

Covers practical tools (mantras/practices), the nature of memory, I-thought (ahaṁkāra), roles the jīva plays, reflected consciousness, karma, rebirth, and arguments showing the vijñānamaya is not the Self.

Practice: Using a One-line Mantra

Purpose

A short personal sentence or mantra helps interrupt identification when one is caught in a kosha (sheath) — whether by pain, joy, or other strong states.

Practice = assimilation of knowledge into life; a single statement can quickly put things in perspective.

Examples suggested by students

"Ishvara, Soham, I am the whole, beautiful."

"Neti neti" (not this, not this)

Quick Review

A brief personal mantra is a practical tool to break identification.

Practice is required to assimilate theoretical knowledge.

The mantra's role: rapid perspective shift during strong emotional/mental states.

Vijnanamaya Kosha: Definition and Primary Features

Scriptural definition (summary)

Vijñānamaya kośa = buddhi (intellect) + associated thought-modifications + cognitive/perceptual organs.

Characterized as kartr lakṣaṇa (having the nature of doer/agent) and a principal cause of saṃsāra (entanglement).

Functions and capacities

Cognitive capacity: analysis, problem-solving, forming conclusions, deciding direction. Contains both memory and active thinking (distinction: rote memory vs novel reasoning).

Constantly strategizes for the I: "How do I get this/that?", plans and evaluates.

Memory and expediency

Memory stores past information for efficiency — avoids recalculating known outcomes.

Memory prevents pure presence in the experiential "now" because even being "in the now" requires accessing learned patterns.

Quick Review

Vijñānamaya = intellect + perceptual organs, center of decision-making.

It mixes memory and active reasoning; memory is for expediency.

It contributes to the sense of being a doer (agent) and fuels identification.

The Nature of the "Now" and Awareness

The experienced "now" is not the ultimate Now: it is mediated by memory and cognition (milliseconds elapse before awareness forms content).

The true now = pure awareness, which cannot be objectified or experienced as an object.

Experiences are objects; you are the presence in which experiences occur.

Quick Review

*Phenomenal "now" is constructed; awareness is the non-objectifiable true Now.
Memory and cognition intervene even in moments of "presence."
Awareness as subject cannot be turned into an object.*

I-thought (Ahaṃkāra) and Where It Resides

Where is the I-thought?

Traditional texts (and this lecture) locate ahaṃkāra primarily in the vijñānamaya kośa (buddhi/intellect).

The ahaṃkāra is relatively stable compared to other fleeting thoughts, but it still fluctuates (expands/contracts) depending on associations.

How it manifests

Different forms of the I arise (honest I, dishonest I) and carry accompanying emotions (guilt, pride, satisfaction).

Emotions act as feedback guiding the agent toward sreyas (the good/higher) or preya (expedient/easy).

Quick Review

*Ahaṃkāra is centered in the vijñānamaya — the sense "I" tied to intellect.
The I-thought changes with context and carries emotional accompaniments.
Emotions serve as an automatic feedback system; willingness to listen determines growth.*

Two Paths: Preyaha vs Sreyaha

Preyaha: the easy, expedient path (path of least resistance).

Sreyaha: the difficult right path (requires effort, not guided by convenience).

Quick & easy options are tempting but typically less qualitative; slow, effortful paths yield stability, control, and lasting quality.

Quick Review

*Preyaha = easy/expedient; Sreyaha = hard/right.
Lasting value requires effort; quick gains often bring later suffering.
Analysis helps choose the stable route, but habit/exigency often dominates.*

Role of the Vijñanamaya as Decision-maker

(Kartṛlakṣaṇa)

The vijñāna acts as executor/selector: presents options and selects outcomes.

Everyday decisions (what to eat, marry, etc.) are expressions of this kośa.

Identification with the decision-maker reinforces the sense of I; recognizing it as a function reduces attachment.

Quick Review

Vijñānamaya functions as selector/executor (kartṛ, pramata, bhokta).

Decision-making feels central; disidentifying reduces ego-fixation.

Recognize decisions as functions rather than the Self.

Perception, Mind, and Distortion

Sense data enters through organs → mind shapes content (adds likes/dislikes) → intellect decides response.

Perception is always somewhat distorted by personal storylines; complete freedom from distortion is not possible without awareness of that process.

Quick Review

Perception = sense input + mental shaping + cognitive interpretation.

Likes/dislikes create distortions in perceived objects.

Awareness of this chain helps mitigate automatic reactivity.

Vedanta Method: Negation and Instrumental Development

One develops the instrument (body-mind, buddhi) through practice to later negate identification with it.

The teaching: cultivate a refined instrument, then use it to realize “I am not this instrument.”

Example: buddhi :: ring; ring’s true substance = gold; buddhi’s substance = awareness — first negate the ring/buddhi identity.

Quick Review

Build cognitive/psychic instrument via practice.

Then disidentify: use the instrument to see that you are not that instrument.

Negation (neti neti) clears functional identities.

Reflected Consciousness, Jīva, and Boundness

Reflected/Confined consciousness

Consciousness is all-pervasive; when it appears within the boundary of a vijñānamaya kośa it acts as reflected or confined consciousness.

Metaphor: space in a cup = confined space; likewise, a jīva is a pocket of consciousness.

The jīva (traveler)

The jīva = reflected consciousness mixed with vijñānamaya; it identifies as a bound entity and travels from body to body.

Travels eternally until disidentification occurs.

The jīva undergoes roles: 1) doer (kartā), 2) enjoyer (bhoktā), 3) knower/inquirer (pramātā).

Quick Review

Reflected consciousness = consciousness as if confined to a kośa.

Jīva = the traveller that carries impressions and moves across lives.

Jīva cyclically adopts three roles: doer, enjoyer, knower.

Karma, Impressions, and Rebirth

Vijnanamaya/jīva carries impressions (saṃskāras) from past actions (puṇya and pāpa). There is no discernible beginning to these cycles (beginningless).

The jīva selects bodies suitable to its accumulated impressions to experience results (heaven, earth, lower worlds).

Waking and dreaming states are where karmic fruits are experienced; deep sleep suspends direct experience (gives a respite/glimpse, not full Self-realization).

Quick Review

Jīva's qualities are shaped by past actions; karma determines future embodiment.

No beginning is assigned to the chain of births/actions.

Waking/dream states reveal karmic results; deep sleep is a temporary suspension.

How to Release the Jīva from the Upādhi (Limiting Adjunct)

Method: identification and negation — repeatedly recognize features of the kośa and say “not mine” (e.g., neti neti).

Recognize the intellect's tricks (it will propose exceptions—intuition, clairvoyance, etc.); be thorough in identifying features.

Even being an “inquirer” is an attachment (final layer) — it too must be relinquished.

Quick Review

Disidentify by recognizing and negating kośa-features: “not mine.”

The intellect will create objections; remain meticulous.

The final relinquishment includes even the identity “I am an inquirer.”

Three Roles of the Jīva (Detailed)

1. Karta (doer, decision-maker) — executes choices.

2. Bhokta (enjoyer) — experiences pleasures and pains.

3. Pramātā (knower/inquirer) — investigates and forms conclusions.

These roles alternate; none is continuous. Since the Self is that which remains constant, it cannot be equated with any of these changing roles.

Quick Review

Jīva cycles through doer, enjoyer, knower.

Roles are transient; the Self is the unchanging presence.

Observing roles as functions reduces identification.

Arguments: Why Vijñānamaya is Not the Self

Three main reasons presented

1. Subject to change: the intellect takes different roles; if any role were the Self, the Self would disappear when the role changes — but awareness remains.
2. Not self-effulgent (inert): buddhi doesn't have independent awareness; it borrows light from consciousness.
3. Dependent: intellect depends on waking state, prāṇa, objects, nourishment (five elements); dependency implies it cannot be the independent Self.

Practical language shift

Replace "I am thinking" (which identifies the Self with the intellect) by neutral formulations:

"Thinking is happening."

"Thinking is going on."

"This is a function of the vijñānamaya/intellect."

Quick Review

Vijñānamaya changes roles; it cannot be the unchanging Self.

It is inert/borrows awareness; not self-effulgent.

It depends on states, prāṇa, and objects; dependence excludes it from being the Self.

The Inertness and Materiality of the Koshas

Koshas (including buddhi) are made of five subtle/gross elements; thoughts are subtler matter.

Existence of sharp vs dulled intellect illustrates dependence of mental states on conditions; awareness itself does not become sharper or duller when mind changes. Everyday life is essentially continual reshuffling of five elements producing changing mental patterns across lifetimes.

Quick Review

Koshas are elemental and therefore not the Self.

Thoughts are subtle matter; changing mental capacity doesn't change pure awareness.

Lifetimes = continuous recombination of elemental patterns (saṃskāras).

Dependence of the Intellect: Practical Observations

Intellect requires:

- Waking state (absent in deep sleep),
- Prāṇa (breath/energy),
- Objects to attend to (content to process),
- Other supports (e.g., coffee, rest) to function optimally.

Observing dependence helps disidentify: realize thinking functions because of conditions, not because "I" am the thinker.

Quick Review

Intellect functions only with specific supporting conditions.

Noticing dependence weakens identification with mental functions.

Use practical cues (sleep, breath, objects) to test the intellect's contingency.

Final practical tip

Frequently note internally: "Not mine" / "Thinking is happening" / "This is a function of the buddhi." This repeated dis-identifying practice weakens attachment and supports the shift from being a bound jīva toward recognition of the Self.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	I-thought
Annamaya	gross body
Buddhi	intellect
Ishvara	supreme personal Lord
Jagatwat	like the world
Jiva	individual living being
Karta	doer
Kartrlakshanaha	characteristic of a doer
Karma	action and its fruits
Karmapala	result of actions
Manomaya	mind sheath
Moksha	liberation
Neti neti	not this, not this
Parinami	changing material cause
Prakrti	material nature
Pramata	knower
Pranamaya	energy or vital sheath
Preyaha	path of ease
Prayaha	alternate spelling of preyaha
Papam	sin or demerit
Punya	merit
Samsara	cycle of birth and death
Soham	I am that
Sreyaha	path of the good or right
Upadhi	limiting adjunct
Veda	scriptural knowledge
Vijnanamaya	intellect sheath

Viveka Chudamani text on discrimination

Vijnanamaya kosha intellectual sheath

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Summary of the document

Overview

The lecture examines the kosha model—layers of human existence—and focuses primarily on the vijnanamaya kosha, the intellectual sheath. The teacher explains how the intellect functions, its relationship to memory, decision-making, the I-thought (ahamkara), and how it contributes to bondage and the continuing cycle of samsara. The talk highlights the practical need to recognize and disidentify from these layers to realize the true Self.

Key themes

The vijnanamaya kosha is presented as the center of cognitive operations: analysis, decision-making, discrimination, and memory. Although memory and habitual knowledge assist rapid functioning, genuine thinking activates the vijnanamaya. The I-thought is closely associated with this sheath, making the intellect a hub for identity and strategy—always oriented toward self-related goals (how to get more, how to avoid loss).

Three recurring roles of the reflected consciousness (jiva) are emphasized: karta (doer), bhokta or bhakta/enjoyer, and pramata (knower). These roles are transient and interchangeable; none of them remain constant. The permanence noticed in awareness indicates that awareness itself is not any of these changing functions. Thus, the intellect cannot be the Self.

Practical implications

Several practical pointers are offered. Cultivate a short personal phrase or mantra to reorient when the koshas take over. Practice consistent self-inquiry to identify the features of koshas—recognizing thought processes as functions (“thinking is happening”) helps reduce identification. The teacher contrasts two life-paths—preyaha (the easy, expedient route) and sreyaha (the hard, right path)—stressing disciplined effort and slow, stable development over quick fixes.

Karma, rebirth and the jiva

The lecture explains the jiva as reflected or confined consciousness that travels across bodies due to karmic impressions. Past actions determine capacities and future circumstances; the jiva carries impressions that lead it to suitable bodies and life conditions. Waking, dream, and deep sleep are experienced by the jiva, and deep sleep is described as a necessary respite rather than full realization of the Self.

Conclusion

Vedantic teaching aims to develop and refine the instrument (body, mind, intellect) but ultimately to negate identification with it. The intellectual progress, memory, and analytical skill are necessary tools that must be used to recognize one's true nature beyond the koshas. Regular inquiry, clear discrimination, and steady practice on the harder path lead toward freeing the Self from the confining identifications of the koshas.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

15. Even Happiness Keeps You Bound by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-15

Verse 57: Composition & Features of Anandamaya Kosha

**ānanda pratibimba cumbita tanuḥ vṛttiḥ tama-ujṛmbhitā syāt ānandamayaḥ priya
ādi guṇakaḥ sva iṣṭa artha lābha udayaḥ puṇyasya anubhave vibhāti kṛtīnām
ānanda rūpaḥ svayaṁ sarvaḥ nandati yatra sādhu tanubhṛt mātraḥ prayatnaṁ
vinā**

The ānandamaya kośa is a mental modification born of tamas; pervaded by reflected ānanda, possessing the attributes as priya, etc; and rises with the gain of a desirable object. For those who have done good deeds, it shines at the time of experiencing the puṇya. At that time everyone who has a body, rejoices well without effort, becoming that very ānanda itself.

Chinmaya: A reflection of the Bliss of the Self is modification that has risen from Tamas or Ignorance. This (modification) is the Anandamaya Kosha. Priya, Moda and Pramoda are its triple qualities that arise on some gaining of a desired object. When the fruits of good actions manifest as the experiences of such fortunate ones, the (three) forms of this happiness come spontaneously. In this state, everyone feels

happy and pleased. This happens to all embodied beings, and it happens without the least effort by them!

Introduction

This lecture examines how consciousness (prakriti) manifests, veils reality, and creates the false sense of individuality.

It analyzes the subtle layers (koshas), especially the vijnanamaya and anandamaya koshas, and explains why even experiences of happiness can reinforce bondage rather than lead to true freedom.

1. Prakriti, Consciousness and the Two Shaktis

Overview

Consciousness is described as nityam (beginningless and endless) and as the substratum that manifests the universe.

The manifesting power of prakriti operates through two shaktis:

- **Avarana shakti** — the veiling power that hides aspects of reality to create differentiation.
- **Vikshepa shakti** — the projecting power that produces variety and movement.

Effects in the mind

When avarana acts in the mind, it appears as ignorance (not-knowing), experienced as "I don't know."

Because the world requires intelligent interaction, ignorance causes friction; that friction points out what must change in one's life.

Prakriti and consciousness are both beginningless → experiences and manifestations are eternally present in potential.

Quick Review

Prakriti has two powers: avarana (veiling) and vikshepa (projection).

Veiling in the mind manifests as ignorance and the felt sense "I don't know."

The world's structure forces correction through friction caused by ignorant action.

2. The False Notion of the Individual and Reversal

Strategy

The mistake

Beginningless ignorance leads one to mistake the one Reality (Brahman) for a separate individual entity (I-as-person/body).

That error results in continual interaction with other perceived entities, causing actions and consequences (karma).

The pedagogical approach

Traditional teachers (e.g., Adi Shankara) warn against getting lost in secondary phenomena (bodies, koshas, prana, etc.) — likened to “counting stripes on a snake.” The remedy: systematically remove the superimposed layers (the “stripes”), then the snake (the false individuality), revealing there never was a separate snake.

Quick Review

The person-as-body is a false notion produced by beginningless ignorance.

Spiritual pedagogy removes layers of misperception stepwise (striped-snake metaphor).

Direct experiential realization requires clearing these layers, not simply intellectual agreement.

3. Criteria for Not-Self and the Koshas

Three golden rules for identifying the Not-Self

1. Anything that changes cannot be the Self.
2. Anything that can be perceived or objectified is not the Self.
3. Anything dependent on something else is not the Self.

Application to koshas

Vijnanamaya kosha (intellect / buddhi)

Dependent on mind and sense input; time- and space-bound.

Not self-effulgent — does not have independent, permanent illumination.

Changes (appears/disappears in sleep, meditation, joy) → therefore not the Self.

Anandamaya kosha (bliss sheath)

A modification arising in certain sattva/rajas/tamas interplay (e.g., joy when desire is fulfilled).

Closest to Self in felt quality but still limited, arising and ceasing → not the Self.

Quick Review

Anything changeable, perceivable, or dependent is not the Self.

Vijnanamaya is limited by object, time, and space; it is a perceivable object.

Anandamaya gives bliss-like experiences but remains a limited modification.

4. Consciousness: Universality, Attribute-lessness, and Argumentation

Core claims

Consciousness is attribute-less (nirguna) and therefore universal (one, without two).

Two consciousnesses differ only if one can ascribe a permanent attribute to each — but any attribute must be constant if intrinsic; since experiences change, those attributes fail to be intrinsic.

Therefore we cannot meaningfully assign permanent attributes (e.g., “my consciousness is happy”) that distinguish two consciousnesses.

Logical method (how to show universality)

Counter-arguments that insist on separate, bounded consciousness require assigning attributes that persist always — which is impossible empirically.

Example analogies:

- Space: space in a cup vs. space in a room — same underlying space; differences are only forms/limitations.
- Water & waves: water manifests as tall or short waves; the variations are forms, not attributes of the underlying water. If water had a fixed attribute (e.g., shortness) it could not manifest long waves.

Self-evidence of consciousness

Consciousness cannot be objectified but is self-evident: the presence of all objects and experiences implies an unchanging, knowing ground.

You do not need to prove awareness the way you prove a hand; awareness self-manifests by revealing objects.

Quick Review

Consciousness is nirguna (without attributes) and thus universal.

Attribute-based differentiation fails because any assigned attribute would have to be constant to be intrinsic.

Consciousness is self-evident — it needs no external proof; it is the condition for the evidence of all objects.

5. Dependence on Space/Time and the Nature of Awareness

Awareness vs. objects of awareness

Objects (space, time, body) appear to change with perception; examples: a room seems large as a child, small as an adult → space is perception-dependent.

Awareness itself does not depend on space or time; it illumines changing contents while remaining unchanged.

Reflection & limitation

Reflected consciousness (e.g., in ahamkara/ego) can expand/contract — it behaves as though limited when bound to kosha/body/time.

The same underlying awareness reflects in different minds; differences are due to reflected forms, not the substratum.

Quick Review

Space/time are forms perceived in awareness; awareness itself is independent of them.

Differences among individual minds are due to reflected consciousness, not distinct substrata.

Reflected consciousness (ahamkara) can expand or contract but is not the ultimate Self.

6. Happiness (Ananda), the Seeker, and Bondage

Common human motivation

Everyone seeks joy/happiness; this is a universal, cross-cultural motive that explains much human behavior.

Relationships, entertainment, food, substances — all are means to obtain pleasure.

Source analysis: what produces happiness?

Investigated possibilities:

1. The jiva (individual) as source — rejected: if the jiva were the source, the jiva would not need an object to become happy.
2. The object as source — rejected: objects lose desirability and can become repulsive; they cannot sustain permanent joy.
3. Thought as source — insufficient.

Conclusion: happiness arises when seeker (jiva) contacts a state that momentarily collapses desire and gives access to the anandamaya kosha (a taste of bliss).

Dynamics of pursuit

The seeker desires an object; upon attainment, desire collapses briefly and the mind becomes calm — like a flat lake reflecting bliss.

This reflection is not the Self, but a limited ananda. Disturbances (new desires, complaints) reintroduce waves and end the reflection.

The mind then strategizes (vijnanamaya) to reproduce the experience → cycles of craving and partial satisfaction.

Drugs and shortcuts create easy collapse of mental turbulence, giving quick access to anandamaya kosha — explaining their appeal.

Quick Review

Universal pursuit: humans strive for joy, which drives most action.

Happiness is a temporary access to the anandamaya kosha, not the Self.

The seeker's repeated quest for that taste binds one to cycles of craving and strategizing.

7. Anandamaya Kosha, Samadhi, and the Limits of Bliss

Nature of anandamaya kosha

A modification of prakriti associated with blissful experience; it shines when desire is fulfilled (punya).

It is nearest to the Self in felt quality but remains limited, localized, and changeable.

Nirvikalpa vs. Savikalpa samadhi

Nirvikalpa samadhi

Gives full access to one anandamaya kosha — described as an overwhelming joy beyond ordinary description.

Still limited: it is like compressing all joys into a grain of sand, and even the immense joy felt there is small compared to the Self (Sat-chit-ananda).

In nirvikalpa the inquirer (ahamkara) dissolves → inquiry cannot proceed.

Savikalpa samadhi

Preferred for spiritual evolution because the inquirer remains; inquiry can continue into deeper truths.

Ahamkara is still present but freed from small limiting identifications; it becomes vast rather than dissolved.

Why even bliss can bind

Pursuing repeated access to anandamaya kosha reinforces the entity (seeker/ahamkara) that craves — strengthening bondage.

The true aim is not the small tastes of bliss but freedom from the constant need to seek that taste (i.e., freedom from the seeker).

Quick Review

Anandamaya kosha provides intense but limited bliss; it is not the Self.

Nirvikalpa samadhi gives full access to that bliss but dissolves the inquirer; savikalpa retains inquiry.

Chasing bliss strengthens the seeker and perpetuates bondage; real liberation is freedom from the constant need to seek bliss.

8. Practical and Philosophical Implications

Spiritual practice (sadhana) can be seen as "cleaning the mirror" (clearing buddhi/ahamkara) to allow more consistent reflection of the Self.

Recognize the difference between:

- Temporary experiences of ananda (valuable but limited),
- And the attributeless, self-evident consciousness which is the true substratum.

Prefer practices that reduce dependence on fleeting tastes and cultivate inquiry (savikalpa) rather than mere absorption in bliss (nirvikalpa) as an end.

Quick Review

Consciousness (prakriti) operates by veiling (avarana) and projecting (vikshepa), producing ignorance and differentiation.

The koshas (vijnanamaya, anandamaya) are changeable, perceivable, and dependent — therefore not the Self.

Consciousness is attribute-less and universal; reflected consciousness creates the illusion of separateness.

Happiness commonly sought by humans is a temporary taste of the anandamaya kosha; repeated pursuit of that taste binds the seeker.

True freedom is not accumulation of bliss but release from the constant need to seek bliss — cleaning the mirror and sustaining inquiry.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	ego-sense; the "I"-making principle
Adi Shankara	early medieval Advaita Vedanta teacher
Ananda	bliss
Anandamaya kosha	sheathe of bliss; subtle layer associated with happiness
Annamaya	the food sheath; physical body layer
Artha	object or purpose
Avavana shakti	veiling power
Brahman	ultimate reality
Deva	divine being; deity
Jiva	
Jivanmukta	one liberated while alive
Kosha	sheathe or layer of being
Manomaya	mind sheath; mental-emotional layer
Nityam	eternal; without beginning or end
Nirvikalpa samadhi	non-dual absorption without mental modifications
Punya	merit; result of good deeds
Prakriti	nature; primordial manifesting power
Pramoda	joyful delight arising on attainment
Priyamoda	pleasurable delight on gaining a desired object
Raga	attachment or desire
Sat chit ananda	existence-consciousness-bliss (description of Brahman)
Savikalpa	state of samadhi with subtle distinctions present
Tamas	inertia, darkness, or tamasic quality
Vikshepa shakti	projecting or dispersing power
Vijnanamaya	intellective sheath; faculty of discriminative knowledge
Vritti	mental modification or thought-form

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of key ideas from the document

Nature of consciousness and prakriti

The teaching distinguishes an attributeless, eternal consciousness from prakriti, the manifesting power that produces differentiation. Prakriti operates by two powers: a veiling power (Avarana shakti) which conceals true nature and a projecting power (Vikshepa shakti) which creates plurality. Consciousness itself is nityam — without beginning or end — and is the substrate that illumines changing states.

Koshas, reflected consciousness and the mistake of identity

The human situation is described via koshas (sheathe-layers): annamaya (physical), manomaya (mind), vijnanamaya (intellect), and anandamaya (bliss). Ignorance leads beings to misidentify with these layers, treating the body-mind-intellect as the Self. Reflected consciousness in the subtle sheaths appears limited — time-bound, space-bound and object-dependent — and therefore cannot be the Self.

Attributes, unity and proof of awareness

Consciousness is argued to be attribute-less; you cannot coherently assign a permanent attribute (for example, "always happy") because attributes are changeable and experienced against a background of opposites. The inability to ascribe unique, persistent attributes to individual consciousnesses supports the view of one undivided consciousness, analogous to space manifesting in different containers.

Anandamaya kosha and the pursuit of happiness

People universally pursue happiness because brief access to the anandamaya kosha (the bliss sheath) gives a taste of what one truly seeks. Desire, pursuit, and occasional attainment produce temporary collapse of the seeker's turbulence, permitting a reflection of that bliss. This partial access — likened to a firefly or grain of sand compared to the sun — motivates repeated striving and can trap the seeker in endless strategizing.

Samadhi, seeker and freedom

Nirvikalpa samadhi grants full access to anandamaya kosha and is tremendously pleasing, but remains distinct from the Self. Savikalpa samadhi preserves an inquiring self (ahamkara) and is therefore valuable for further inquiry. The deeper aim is not mere repeated experiences of bliss but liberation from the small seeker that constantly chases these fleeting tastes.

Practical implications

The path involves recognizing and discriminating between transient experiences and the unchanging presence that illumines them. Clearing the "mirror" of the intellect (reducing mental impurities and distractions) allows fuller reflection of awareness. Ultimately the teaching points from working with koshas and samadhi toward the recognition of the attributeless, shared consciousness that underlies all apparent diversity.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

16. Anandamaya Kosha by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-16

Verse 58: Its Manifestation in the Three States

**ānandamaya kośasya suṣuptau sphūrṭtiḥ utkaṭā svapna jāgarayoḥ iṣat iṣṭa
sandarśana ādinā**

The manifestation of the ānandamaya kośa is fully manifested in the deep sleep state, and only partially in the dream and waking states, depending upon the sight of pleasing objects.

Verse 59: Conclusion: Anandamaya Cannot be Self

**na eva ayam ānandamayaḥ parātmā sopādhikatvāt prakṛteḥ vikārāt kāryatva
hetoḥ sukṛta kriyāyāḥ vikāra saṅghāta samāhitavat**

This ānandamaya can never be the parātmā because of having an upādhi, due to being a modification of prakṛti, on account of being a product of good deeds and because of being born of the assemblage of modifications, viz. priya, moda, and pramoda.

Chinmaya: This Bliss sheath, too, can never be the Supreme Self because it has attributes that are ever changing: it is a modification of Prakriti; it is created as a

result of good actions done in the past (perhaps past lives); and it lies embedded in the other sheaths, which are in themselves all modifications.

Verse 60: The Witness Survives the Negation

pañcānām api kośānām niṣedhe yuktitaḥ śruteḥ tat niṣedha avadhiḥ sākṣī bodha rūpaḥ avaśiṣyate

Even when the negation of the five kośas is done by logical inquiry based on śruti, the sākṣī, witness in the form of knowledge remains as the culmination of their negation.

Introduction

Overview of the anandamaya kosha (the "happiness" sheath), its nature, how it operates across waking/dream/deep sleep, and why identification with it is ignorance (avidya).

The lecture explains the kosha's composition (prakriti & the three gunas), its modes of manifestation (priya, moda, pramoda), its dependence on objects and past actions (punyam), and how Vedantic inquiry negates the koshas leaving the non-negatable witness (sakshi).

1. Nature and Role of the Anandamaya Kosha

Definition and significance

Anandamaya kosha: the layer of experiential happiness, motivation, and aspiration — what "moves the world".

It is the goal most people seek through practices, relationships, possessions, experiences.

Ontological status

Not the final Self (Brahman). It is part of prakriti (material nature) and therefore composed of the three gunas (sattva/raja/tamas).

Being a product of prakriti, it is a modification (vikāra) and an upadhi (a limiting adjunct) — i.e., not the true Self.

Threefold meaning of "born of tamas / avidya"

1. Literal: formed from the three gunas (thus contaminated).
2. Phenomenological: fully manifest in states of tamas/ignorance (deep sleep).
3. Epistemic: identification with any kosha (including anandamaya) arises from ignorance (tamas).

Quick Review

Anandamaya = experiential happiness layer, but made of prakriti.

It is contaminated by gunas and therefore not Brahman.

Identification with it equals ignorance (avidya).

"Born of tamas" can mean material origin, manifestation in deep sleep, and identity born of ignorance.

2. Manifestation: States and Modes

Manifestation across the three states

Deep sleep: anandamaya is fully manifest (no mind/opinion-maker present).
Dream and waking: it is partially manifest, dependent on contact with pleasing objects.

Why deep sleep is pleasurable

In deep sleep the vijnanamaya kosha (the thinker/opinion-maker) is temporarily absent → no limiting self-evaluations → a vast, peaceful access to anandamaya. This is a glimmer of Brahman-ananda (reflected ananda), not Brahmananda itself.

Three intensities of experiential bliss

Ordered from least to greatest:

1. Priya — anticipatory pleasure (object seen from afar).
 2. Moda — nearer, heightened pleasure (object close).
 3. Pramoda — consummatory pleasure (direct contact/union; maximum enjoyment).
- Examples: longing for a loved one (priya), their arrival (moda), hugging/making love (pramoda).

Quick Review

Anandamaya is full in deep sleep, partial in dream/waking.

Manifestation depends on presence/quality of pleasing objects.

Three intensities: priya → moda → pramoda (anticipation → nearness → contact).

3. Dependence, Causation and Temporal Nature

Dependence on objects and circumstances

Anandamaya arises when the mind contacts a desirable object; it vanishes when the object is gone.

Because it depends on objects, time, and place (and on prior causes), it fails the Vedantic test for Selfhood: the Self is independent and nitya (always present).

Role of past causes (punyam)

The frequency/intensity of access to anandamaya in life is conditioned by past actions (punyam).

The quality of vijnanamaya (clarity of intellect/inquiry) is also conditioned by past causes.

Lack of daily experiential bliss often reflects lack of conducive past causes, not an ontological defect in the Self.

Physical correlate

Brain chemistry (e.g., dopamine release) is the physiological manifestation of anandamaya experiences; drugs work by artificially forcing contact with this kosha.

Quick Review

Anandamaya is transient and object-dependent → cannot be Self.

Past actions (punyam) shape how often/intensely one experiences this joy.

Physical correlates (dopamine) mirror subtle kosha activity.

4. Errors of Identification and Everyday Examples

Two common mistakes

1. Pursue happiness as the goal of life → identify with anandamaya (koshic identity).
2. Link happiness to particular objects → believe the object "contains" the ananda.

Illustrative examples

Traveling long distances for a "package" because of expectation of bliss (access to anandamaya).

Saying "Yesterday I was happy; today I'm not" — mistaking transient experience for one's nature.

Sugarcane analogy: sugarcane's nature is sweetness, but the experience of sweetness depends on conditions. Similarly, your nature is fullness, though experience can be obscured.

Social consequences

Excessive pursuit of experiential happiness leads to major life changes (breakups, divorces) and loss of rationality under the sway of desire for bliss.

People prefer teachers/experiences that make them feel happy rather than those that foster inquiry.

Quick Review

Mistaking transient happiness for Self is ignorance.

Saying "I was happy yesterday" confuses experience with nature.

Chasing objectified happiness has significant personal and social costs.

5. Wise Person's Relationship to Anandamaya

Attitude of the jnani (wise person)

Does not chase permanence in experiential bliss.

When bliss appears, it is enjoyed; when it passes, it is accepted with equanimity (samatvam).

Recognizes happiness as an appearance/event, not as the Self: "It passes, thank you."

Practical outcomes

Greater freedom from chasing pleasures → more availability to serve the world.

Stronger, more independent inner life; unaffected by transient ups and downs.
More appreciation of small, everyday joys without attachment.

Quick Review

Wise person: detached enjoyment + equanimity (samatvam).

Experiences are accepted as transient events.

This stance brings inner strength and availability.

6. Vedantic Method: Negation of Koshas and the Remaining Witness

Anatma-vicāra (negation of the non-Self)

The lecturer walks through investigation/negation of the five koshas: physical to causal (including anandamaya).

Negation is performed by knowledge/inquiry (not by physically removing something).

Result of the negation

After logically negating the koshas, what remains is the non-negatable witness (sakshi) — the self-effulgent awareness.

The witness pervades all koshas; it cannot be found as an object or located within any kosha.

In the presence of the witness, kosha phenomena (body pain, emotions, happiness) are evident but cannot displace the witness.

Practical guidance for practice

The teaching, once heard with sincerity, works gradually in the background — insight grows over months/years.

Trust the inquiry; knowledge weakens the hold of the koshas without immediate physical change.

The goal of Vedanta is knowledge of your non-dual nature (not merely chasing non-dual experiences).

Quick Review

Negation is an inquiry that removes identification with koshas intellectually.

What remains is the ever-present witness (sakshi), non-negatable and self-effulgent.

Vedantic instruction matures over time; trust the process.

7. Summary Points (Lecture Conclusions)

Anandamaya is a prakriti modification — a reflected ananda, not Brahmananda. It fully manifests in deep sleep, partially in dream/waking, and is object/time/place dependent.

Three intensities: priya, moda, pramoda (anticipation → approach → contact).

Dependence on objects, time, and past causes disqualifies anandamaya as the Self.

Vedantic inquiry negates the koshas; the immutable witness remains as the true Self.

The teaching aims to instill knowledge of one's non-dual nature (sat-cit-ananda as realization), not to supply permanent experiential highs.

Quick Review

Anandamaya = transient, object-dependent bliss (not the Self).

Full in deep sleep; partial in waking/dream; intensity set by mind and object.

Identification with anandamaya is ignorance; negation by knowledge reveals the witness.

Wise response: enjoy experiences, maintain equanimity, and rest in knowledge of the Self.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	sense of "I" or ego
Ananda	
Anandamaya	layer or sheath of experiential bliss
Aparātmā	not applicable (not used—omitted)
Avidya	ignorance
Atma	Self, true Self
Guna	quality or mode (sattva, rajas, tamas)
Kosha	sheath or covering
Maya	illusion or cosmic power of manifestation
Manomaya	mind-made sheath (mental sheath)
Na	negation, "not"
Paramatma	Supreme Self or universal Self
Prarabdha	portion of past karma causing present life
Pranamaya	vital-breath sheath
Pramoda	highest degree of joy
Prakriti	primordial nature or material cause
Priya	small or initial delight
Punyam	merit, good or meritorious action
Sakshi	witness, witnessing consciousness
Samatvam	equanimity
Sattva	guna of purity and clarity
Shakti	power or energy (cosmic)
Shri	honorific or respectful prefix
Vijnanamaya	intellect- or discriminative-wisdom sheath
Vikāra	modification or change
Vṛtti	mental modification or thought-turn
Rajas	guna of activity and agitation
Tamas	guna of inertia and darkness; ignorance

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary of the Document

Overview

The talk examines the anandamaya kosha—the sheath of experiential bliss—within the Vedantic analysis of the five koshas. Anandamaya is presented as a powerful driving force of human motivation and behavior: it supplies joy, aspiration, and the felt purpose to live. Yet the speaker stresses that this layer is still a product of prakriti and the three gunas, and therefore cannot be equated with the Self (Atman or Paramatma).

Nature and Manifestation of Anandamaya

Anandamaya is described as a modification (vikāra) born of tamas or ignorance, which explains why its allure can be misleading. It manifests most fully in deep sleep, when the mind and the opinion-making faculty (vijñanamaya and ahamkara) are absent, producing a pleasurable, undivided experience. In waking and dream states it appears partially and dependently—triggered by pleasing objects, time, and situations. These transient pleasures occur in three intensities (priya, moda, pramoda) and are contingent on circumstances and past merits (punyam).

Consequences of Identification with Anandamaya

Identification with the kosha—treating the happiness experience as the Self—binds people: they chase transient pleasures, restructure lives around them, and repeatedly seek to restore fleeting states of joy. This dependence causes cycles of desire and disappointment because any phenomenon that depends on objects, time, or conditions cannot be the immutable Self. Even seemingly wholesome actions that yield joy function as mechanical reinforcement, keeping the ego loop intact.

Vedantic Inquiry and Witness

Through neti-neti-style inquiry and sruti-based discrimination, the five koshas are negated in knowledge. This negation does not physically remove the koshas; rather, it weakens their claim as the Self. What remains after this process is the sakshi—the non-negatable witness or witnessing consciousness—which pervades and illumines all koshas. The witness is ever-present and cannot be displaced by bodily pain, emotions, or transient happiness. Realization consists in abiding as this unchanging presence rather than pursuing transient states.

Practical Outcome and Attitude

Recognizing anandamaya as a sheath brings equanimity: the wise person enjoys pleasure when it arises but is not attached or driven by it. This knowledge strengthens availability and service to the world, reduces susceptibility to fleeting temptations, and fosters samatvam (even-mindedness). The teaching is said to work gradually; sincere listening and reflection will let the insight mature and alter one's life trajectory over time.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

17. What is the Self / What is Atman by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-17

Verse 61: Summary: What is the Self?

yaḥ ayam ātmā svayam jyotiḥ pañca kośa vilakṣaṇaḥ avasthā traya sākṣī san
nirvikāraḥ nirañjanaḥ sadā ānandaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ svātmatvena vipaścītā

This ātmā - which is self-effulgent, distinct from the five kośas, the witness of the three states of experience yet changeless, untainted by any association and always of the nature of fullness - should be known as oneself by one who is capable of viveka.

Verse 62: Disciple: "Nothing Left After Negation!"

śiṣya uvāca mithyātvena niṣiddheṣu koṣeṣu eteṣu pañcasu sarva-abhāvaṁ vinā
kiñcit na paśyāmi atra he guro vijñeyaṁ kim u vastu-asti svātmanā atra vipaścītā

Oh Guru, when these five kośas have been negated as not true, I do not see here anything except the absence of everything. Is there indeed any vastu to be known as oneself by the one who is, adept in the deliberation upon the self? What entity then is there to be realised by a seeker of the Self as his own Self?

Introduction

This lecture explains how Vedantic inquiry distinguishes the Self (Atman) from the five layers of experience (koshas) using negation (neti-neti), logic, and analogy. It then describes the essential characteristics of the Self (self-effulgent, witness, attributeless, fullness) and clarifies common confusions—especially the difference between awareness and the blankness that appears after negation.

1. Context & Method of Inquiry

1.1 Purpose of the exercise

The analysis of what is not the Self is a practical inquiry, not merely theoretical.
Goal: remove false identifications so the actual nature of the Self becomes clear.

1.2 Method: neti-neti (not this, not that)

Start by discarding everything you are not to avoid mixing variables into “I.”
Neti-neti is a systematic negation of the five koshas (layers of experience).

1.3 Role of viveka (discriminative intellect)

Viveka: the discerning capacity required to perform this inquiry.
Without viveka, the negation and recognition process cannot be reliably done.

Quick Review

Inquiry is practical: remove false identifications, not escape.

Neti-neti is the foundational method.

Viveka (discernment) is essential to perform the inquiry correctly.

2. Illustrations & Analogies

2.1 Crystal and light analogy

The true nature (Self) is compared to a crystal that reflects different colors depending on the light:
Colors (pink, green, red) change; the crystal is not bound to any one color.
By logic: if attributes change, the substrate was never intrinsically those attributes.
Application to the person:
The Self is like the crystal; experiences (the five koshas) are like changing colors.
If some attribute were intrinsic to the Self, its opposite could never be experienced.

2.2 Space analogy

Space accommodates smells, smoke, rose fragrance but is not tainted by them.
Similarly, the Self accommodates experiences without itself being contaminated.

Quick Review

Crystal: substrate (Self) is distinct from changing appearances (experiences).

Space: the Self accommodates experiences but remains untainted.

Analogies emphasize non-attachment of Self to attributes.

3. The Five Koshas and States of Experience

3.1 The five koshas (layers of experience)

1. Annamaya (physical body)
2. Pranamaya (vital/pranic layer)
3. Manomaya (mind/emotions)
4. Vijnanamaya (intellect/discernment)
5. Anandamaya (bliss-layer, subtlest sheath)

Experiences belong to these koshas and are therefore not the Self.

3.2 Three states of consciousness (stacked sequence)

1. Waking
2. Dreaming
3. Deep sleep

These states alternate continuously; the aware being is the constant that illumines each state.

Events (e.g., anaesthesia, passing out) occur within the waking state but do not remove the unbroken knower.

Quick Review

All experience (including states) belongs to the koshas and is transient.

Waking, dreaming, deep sleep form a repeating sequence; awareness pervades them all.

The knower persists even when the mind or body appear absent.

4. Nature and Attributes of the Self (Atman / Brahman)

4.1 Primary descriptions (from the verse and commentary)

Self (Atman) is to be known by the one with viveka.

Core attributes as explained:

Self-effulgent (swayam jyotih): self-luminous; consciousness does not need an external source to be evident.

Distinct from the five koshas: not identical to body/mind/prana/etc.

Witness (sakshi) of the three states: illumines waking, dream, deep sleep while remaining changeless.

Untainted / Uncolored (asanga; untainted by association): experiences do not stick to it.

Always of the nature of fullness (sada-ananda / fullness): ontological plenitude, not an experiential adjective imposed on it.

4.2 Terminology and clarifications

Unproven prover: the Self cannot be proved as an object (it is the subject by which objects are known); yet everything else is proven in its presence.

Irreducible knower: constant knowing is inherent—there is never a time when the knower is totally absent.

Asangah (relationship-less):

If Brahman is infinite/only reality, there is no “other” for it to relate to—so Brahman has no relationship in the usual sense.

The Self is the accommodator of all relationships (like space) but remains unaffected.

Words like ananda, nirguna, nityananda:

These are pointers meant to guide the seeker; they are not attributes to be attached as experiences.

E.g., “ananda” is used pedagogically to draw seekers (happiness as a hook), but Brahman itself remains attributeless.

4.3 Self vs common experience of bliss/hurt

If the Self were an experiential attribute (e.g., constant bliss), contradictions would follow (people would always be blissful).

The Self is the basis in the presence of which both bliss and grief appear; these states are not properties of the Self.

The feeling of emptiness arises when identification is placed in transient koshas rather than the fullness of the Self.

Quick Review

Self is self-luminous, witness, changeless, untainted, and fullness in itself.

It is not an object and cannot be directly proved as one.

Words like “bliss” are skillful means, not experiential labels to stick onto the Self.

5. Common Confusions: Blankness vs Awareness

5.1 The student's panic after negation

After negating the koshas some students feel: “There is nothing left—am I heading into a void?”

This blankness (a common phenomenon) is not the Self; it is a change that appears due to the negation.

5.2 How to distinguish blankness from awareness

Apply the three golden rules:

1. Whatever changes is not the Self.
2. Whatever is perceived/experienced is not the Self.
3. The Self is the constant presence in which experiences (including blankness) appear.

Ask: Who is the knower of this blankness? The presence that illuminates blankness is the Self (sakshi).

The Self is not identical to the blank state; it is the illuminator in whose presence blankness is recognized.

5.3 Practical guidance

Do not mistake abiding in blankness for realization.

Instead, identify the ever-present knower that illumines both presence and absence.

Quick Review

Vacuum/blankness after negation is a transient phenomenon, not the Self.

The Self is the knower that illuminates blankness.

Realization means owning the presence that knows, not clinging to the blank state that can follow negation.

6. Purpose & Goal: Moksha and Practical Implications

6.1 Moksha defined

Moksha = end of seeking; realization that there is nothing to search for because the Self (one without a second) is already present.

6.2 Why seek the Self?

Human life seeks bliss (Anandamaya kosha); scriptures use terms like bliss/light to attract seekers.

The final teaching: once misidentification is removed, the mind no longer seeks—this is liberation.

6.3 Social/ethical note

Self-realization is presented as the highest good—one who truly realizes does not continue the cycle of noise and re-creation of ignorance.

Quick Review

Moksha = cessation of the seeker; recognizing oneness ends suffering.

Scriptural language uses accessible words (bliss, light) as tools, not literal attributes.

Genuine realization reorients life and ends repetitive identification.

Conclusion / Final summary

Inquiry proceeds by negation (neti-neti) guided by viveka.

The Self (Atman/Brahman) is self-luminous, witness, attributeless, untainted, relationship-less, and of the nature of fullness.

Experiences, states, and blankness are transient phenomena illumined by the Self; none of them are the Self itself.

Realization is recognizing and owning the ever-present knower—not clinging to the empty state that can follow negation.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Alupta drk	knower of absence
Ananda	bliss
Anandamaya kosha	sheath of bliss
Asangah	relationship-less
Atman	Self
Brahman	ultimate reality
Jiva	individual self
Jyotihi	light
Mahāvākya	great saying
Neti-neti	not this, not this
Nirguna	without attributes
Nirvikara	without modification
Prana	vital energy
Sakshi	witness
Sada anandah	everlasting fullness
Swayam jyotihi	self-luminous light
Tat tvam asi	you are that
Upadhi	limiting adjunct
Upahita	placed upon
Vastu	reality
Viveka	discernment

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Context and core inquiry

The lecture examines the nature of the Self (Atman) through Vedantic inquiry. It begins by removing identifications with the five koshas (sheaths of experience) using the neti-neti method ("not this, not this") so that the seeker can clearly distinguish what is not the Self. The process is not an escape but a reflective, knowledge-based inquiry aimed at uncovering the underlying illumining principle of awareness.

Nature and attributes of the Self

The Self is described as self-effulgent and self-evident, needing no external proof. It is the unproven prover and the irreducible knower: everything perceived or experienced is evident in its presence, yet it itself cannot be presented as an object. The Self is

distinct from the five koshas, untainted by associations, relationship-less (asangah), and akin to space in accommodating experiences without being affected by them.

Consciousness, existence and continuity

The talk clarifies consciousness as an ever-present, uninterrupted knower that permeates waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Despite changes across states and lives, the awareful being remains constant. Consciousness is self-luminous (swayam jyotih) and exists as the background in which all experiences arise and subside. The teacher argues that consciousness and existence are two standpoints on the same reality, and that the knower never fully disappears even when the mind or body undergoes suppression.

Misconceptions and practical guidance

Students often mistake the negation process for leading to a void or blankness. The guru counters this by pointing to the sakshi—the witnessing presence—in whose light even the feeling of absence is illumined. Blankness that appears after negation is itself an object of awareness and thus not the Self. The seeker is invited to recognize and own the witnessing presence rather than abide in a sense of nothingness.

Terminology and teaching method

The teacher uses accessible terms—bliss, fullness, light—to draw seekers, then progressively negates attributes to prevent reification of the Self. Words like ananda, nirguna, and nirvikara are tools, not literal attributes. Moksha is presented as the end of seeking: the realization that all is one without a second. The remedy for spiritual confusion is steady viveka (discernment) and correct understanding of who the knower is.

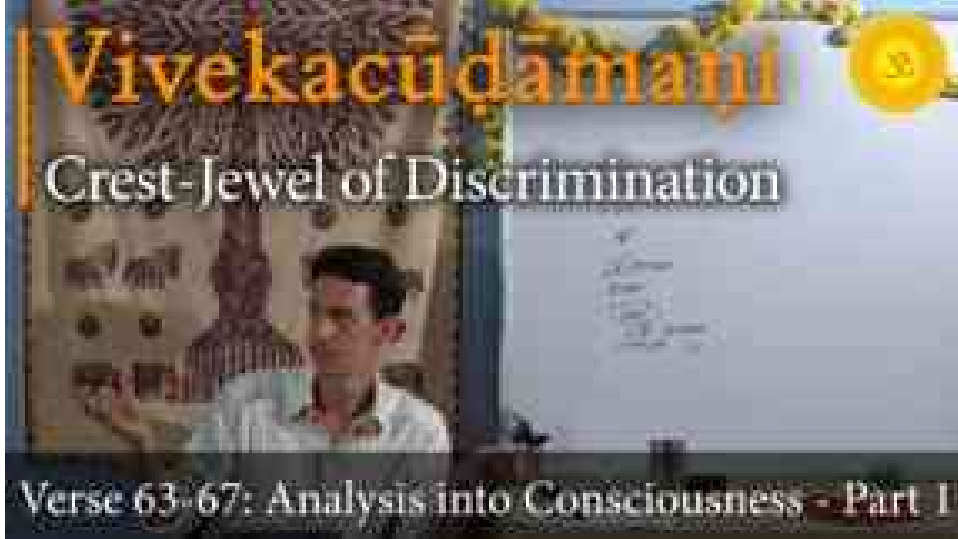
Practical implication

Ultimately, the instruction is to disentangle identity from transient koshas and rest in the witnessing awareness that illumines all states. This realization dissolves the sense of lack born of identifying with the non-full sheaths and ends the restless seeking that perpetuates suffering.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

18. What is Reality — Marks of Consciousness by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-18

Verse 63: Teacher: “Yes, Good Question!”

**satyam uktaṁ tvayā vidvan nipuṇaḥ asi vicāraṇe aham ādi vikārāḥ te tat abhāvaḥ
ayam api anu sarve yena anubhūyante yaḥ svayaṁ na anubhūyate tam ātmānaṁ
veditāraṁ viddhi buddhyā susūksmayā**

Andre: All the changing states of the mind - like the ahamkara, thoughts, feelings, and their disappearance (as in deep sleep) - are perceived by 'something' constant behind them. That which knows all these experiences - but itself is never an object of experience - is the real Self, your true nature, the pure knower.

Alt: All This (koshas) is perceived by That (atman), but That (atman) you cannot perceive with This (koshas)! That is the Self, the real You, the only Knower.

Verse 65: The Absolute 'That' & the Individual 'This'

**jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptiṣu sphuṭataraṁ yaḥ asau samujjṛmbhate pratyak-rūpatayā
sadā aham-aham iti antaḥ sphuran ekadhā nānā-ākāra-vikāra-bhāgiṇaḥ imān
paśyan aham-dhī-mukhān nitya-ānanda-cit-ātmanā sphurati taṁ viddhi svam etaṁ
hṛdi**

May you know in your buddhi as yourself that ātmā as taught now, who clearly shines independently by itself in the waking, dream and sleep, always shining in the same form as 'I, I, I, etc' - as the innermost self, objectifying these various forms and modifications from ahaṅkāra onwards and which shines in the form of ānanda and consciousness that is not subject to time.

Verse 66: You can do this! You were made to succeed!

**brahma abhinnatva vijñānaṁ bhava mokṣasya kāraṇaṁ yena advitīyam ānandaṁ
brahma sampadyate budhaiḥ**

That knowledge of the non-separateness of the self from Brahman - by which Brahman of the nature of non-dual happiness is gained by wise people - is the means for release from saṁsāra.

Verse 67: What is Consciousness?

**satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma viśuddhaṁ paraṁ svataḥ siddhaṁ nitya ānanda
eka rasaṁ pratyak abhinnaṁ nirantaraṁ jayati**

Brahman which is defined as existence, knowledge and limitless - is free from impurities, beyond māyā, self-evident, happiness not bound by time or degree, and is always available non-separate from oneself.

Introduction

Lecture explores the distinction between being conscious and being consciousness (the Self), how the Self witnesses the three states (waking, dream, deep sleep), and the implications for Moksha (liberation).

Core doctrinal focus: identifying the non-negatable, ever-present principle (existence/awareness/Brahman) via analysis and classic analogies (pot-clay, ropes/elephant) and the definition satyam jnanam anantam.

Major themes and notes

I. "I am conscious" vs "I am consciousness"

Key distinction

"I am conscious" implies a discrete being who has consciousness (a possession relation).

"I am consciousness" claims identity with the fundamental, ever-present awareful presence — not an acquired quality but one's true nature.

How to internalize the claim

Not mere affirmation or mechanical repetition; requires reflective pausing: say I am consciousness and investigate what that statement means in the present moment.

Reactions to the declaration can be intellectual (definitions) or emotional (what a relief); both are valid entry points.

Purpose: shift identification from transient contents (body/mind/personality) to the continuous subject.

Quick Review

"I am conscious" = having consciousness; "I am consciousness" = being the ever-present subject.

Practice: say the statement, pause, and examine what appears.

The shift is not verbal repetition but recognition of an always-present awareness.

II. The Self as the constant witness across three states

Teacher's assertion (to qualified students)

All changing states (ahamkara — the ego-function, thoughts, feelings, disappearance in deep sleep/coma) are experienced against a constant background.

That which knows experiences but is never an object of experience is the real Self — the pure knower.

Core points

1. The Self (Atman) shines as "I, I, I" in waking, dream, deep sleep — the same presence in all three.
2. This presence:
 - Shines independently in all states.
 - Does not require evidence from objects; it proves itself by enabling experience.
 - Is non-negatable and continuous.

Illustrations

Eye reveals itself by sight; ear by sound; similarly awareness reveals itself by the presence of experience in any state.

Three "bubbles" metaphor: waking, dream, deep sleep — different contents but the same underlying awareness.

Quick Review

Self = the constant witness in waking, dream, and deep sleep.

Awareness is self-evident: experiences presuppose it.

The "I" is the common factor in all thoughts and emotions.

III. Responses to fear of annihilation & nature of Moksha

Student resistance

Beginners may fear that realization is annihilation (loss of "me"); teacher reassures: Moksha is not loss of the true Self — it's loss of suffering and wrong identifications. You were the Self all along; liberation removes suffering, not the experiencer.

Practical effect on death and life

Realization changes relationship to death: body may die, but the same "I" persists; death becomes liberation, not annihilation.

Letting go (moksha) is experienced as relief and freedom from clinging.

Quick Review

Moksha = end of suffering/false identity, not annihilation.

Recognizing the Self removes fear of death.

The true "I" persists irrespective of bodily states.

IV. The meaning of the repeated "I, I, I" (aham aham)

Two interpretations

1. The universal, invariant I present in all experiences (not the ego).

It is the most universal principle; in any particular thought the only common element between distinct thoughts is "I".

2. The Self illuminating the small, changing ahamkara (ego-sense).

The Self (I behind the I) makes the shifting ego-consciousness possible and known.

Consequences

The small ego tries to mimic the limitless I (inflating itself, creating spiritual resumes).

Vedanta invites investigation of that I behind the changing person rather than collecting credentials.

Quick Review

There is one universal "I" present in all experiences.

The ego (small I) is a changing phenomenon illuminated by the Self (big I).

Spiritual pursuit: examine the background I, not strengthen the ego.

V. What the Self does with experiences (objectification)

Awareness objectifies the various forms and modifications (all mental/emotional conditions are seen by awareness).

Each condition is revealed as a distinct object in awareness; awareness itself is not subject to time, growth, decay, or degrees.

Practical implication: there is no "higher" or "better" awareness in the future; the same awareness is present now.

Quick Review

Awareness witnesses all mental states; it does not change with states.

No gradation of awareness: you are already in touch with the same awareness now.

Seek to remove the notion "I will be more aware later" — it is a conceptual trap.

VI. Sattvam-Jnanam-Anantam — "satyam jnanam anantam Brahma"

Definition and emphasis

Brahman described as satyam (existence), jnanam (knowledge/awareness), anantam (limitless).

Important note: these are not attributes added onto Brahman; they form a unitary definition: existence-awareness-limitless.

Why anantam (limitless) matters

Without "limitless," we would interpret existence and knowledge as limited, temporal, divisible (leading to object-based searches).

Anantam prevents constraining Brahman into finite categories (e.g., "existence in time", "knowledge as information").

Unpacking satyam and jnanam

Literal (limited) readings:

- satyam → existent object located in space and time
- jnanam → information or acquired knowledge belonging to a mind

Vedantic reading:

- satyam = existence itself (the "isness" that pervades past, present, future)
- jnanam = awareness in the sense that makes knowledge/experience possible

anantam ensures these are not temporally or mentally limited.

Quick Review

Brahman = existence + awareness + limitless (a single, nondual definition).

Anantam prevents misconstruing Brahman as a limited object or kind of knowledge.

Recognize existence and awareness as the ever-present background, not temporally acquired qualities.

VII. Pot–clay (and other) analogies: distinguishing name/form vs substratum

The analogies and their points

Cup analogy: space is the substratum; different liquids (Coke, Fanta) do not change space — space remains attributeless.

Pot–clay:

Pot, clay, atom, etc. are successive "names and forms."

You can remove names/forms (pot, clay, atom), but cannot remove existence — the common factor.

Absence of a particular form (pot) is not absence of existence/clay.

Elephant and rope:

Elephant thinks it's bound by rope (false notion). Guru leads it to realize freedom; unlearning is gradual.

Consequences for attachment

People fight over particular forms (pots) but are really attached to the same substratum (clay/existence).

Spiritual practice is teaching the mind to stop identifying with names-and-forms and to recognize substratum.

Quick Review

Name and form are transient; substratum (existence/awareness) is constant.

Eliminating a name/form does not negate the substratum.

Spiritual work = seeing through forms to the substratum, reducing attachment.

VIII. Two inseparable variables: Existence and Awareness

Key claims

Two principles you cannot negate: existence (sat) and awareness (jnana).

You cannot coherently assert absence of existence (or absence of awareness) because making that assertion presupposes existence and awareness.

Therefore existence and awareness are non-dual aspects of the same reality (Brahman).

Practical consequences

All experiences (objects, thoughts, absences like "clear mind") presuppose existence and are known in awareness.

Since awareness never ceases, there is never a future "higher" awareness; what changes are only names/forms.

Quick Review

Existence and awareness are both inescapable and one underlying reality.

You cannot meaningfully posit absence of either without contradiction.

Realization: everything is existence-appearance known in awareness.

IX. Practical/ethical outcomes of recognition

Detachment from body/mind as "mine" reduces pressure and anxiety; increases productivity, confidence, contribution.

Personality and habits continue (speech, actions) but recognition changes how one relates — "a person speaks" rather than "I am the person."

Change happens as process/momentum prior to and after Moksha; moksha itself is recognition, not an alteration of the awareness principle.

Quick Review

Recognition reduces identification and fear, enabling effective engagement in life.

Personal change is ongoing; Moksha is culmination of prior inward work, not a magic transformation of the substratum.

After realization, behavior continues but with new clarity about who (or what) is speaking/acting.

X. Methodological pointers for inquiry

1. Negation (neti-neti)

Remove identifications with names/forms (koshas) one by one.

2. Use analogies and analysis

(pot–clay, cup–space) to reveal dependence of forms on substratum.

3. Investigate the "I"

Investigate the "I" present in every thought/emotion to find the unswerving witness.

4. Avoid fetishizing future improvement of awareness

Recognize the same awareness is present now.

Quick Review

Systematic inquiry and negation reveal substratum.

Analogies help shift perception from objects to existence.

Practice: examine the present "I" across different contents.

Conclusion (summary of core takeaways)

The true Self is the ever-present, self-evident awareness that is not an object and does not change; it is the substratum of all experience.

Moksha is relinquishing false identifications and suffering, recognizing non-separateness from Brahman (satyam jnanam anantam).

Practical liberation is reflected in reduced attachment, altered relationship to death, and continued ethical engagement in the world from the posture of awareness.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Aham	I
Ahamkara	ego sense
Aluptadrk	non-negatable presence
Ananda	bliss
Anandamaya kosha	sheath of bliss
Anantam	limitless
Antahas puranekadah	phrase occurring in text (I I I interpretation)
Atma	Self
Brahman	ultimate reality
Buddhi	intellect
Kosha	sheath
Moksha	liberation

Mumukshu	aspirer for liberation
Nityananda Chidatmana	eternal bliss-conscious Self
Samsara	cycle of birth and death
Samatvam	equanimity
Satyam	existence
Shruti	revealed scripture
Siddham	accomplished
Ujjayate	arises
Vrtti	mode or modification of mind
Vrttijnanam	knowledge as a mental modification
Yoga	discipline or union
Jnanam	knowledge
Jijnassu	seeker of inquiry

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Key teaching

This teaching explores the non-dual Vedanta view that the true nature of the person is the Self or Brahman, described as existence, knowledge, and limitless (satyam jnanam anantam). The instructor contrasts everyday identification ("I am conscious") with recognition of one's essential nature ("I am consciousness"), guiding seekers to claim the ever-present awareness that underlies the changing states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

Three marks of consciousness and inquiry method

The talk repeatedly emphasizes inquiry rather than mere affirmation. Students are urged to pause and examine what is meant by statements like "I am consciousness." Awareness is presented as self-evidencing: just as sense-organs reveal their function by sight, smell, sound, taste or touch, consciousness reveals itself by enabling all experiences. Because awareness never appears or disappears with states or objects, it is non-negatable and timeless.

Negation and the process of disidentification

The method used is largely negative (neti-neti) — discerning what one is not — by negating bodies, minds, and mental modifications (vrtti). These are likened to garments or pots made of clay: the forms and names change, but the underlying existence and awareness remain. Moksha is reframed as the removal of suffering and false identification, not annihilation of the self. The teacher reassures students that liberation means losing only the misidentifications, while one's true being remains.

Practical effects and common confusions

Practical consequences of this shift include reduced fear of death, less attachment, increased equanimity (samatvam), and more effective functioning in the world. The instructor warns against the mistaken expectation that enlightenment will bring a superior or different kind of awareness in the future; awareness is already present equally now and will not improve or degrade. Spiritual ambition that seeks a better future state is seen as another attachment.

Metaphors and clarifications

Several metaphors are used: the elephant tied by a rope to illustrate a deep-held limiting notion; a shop full of pots to show people quarrelling over the same underlying clay; and layers of the mind described as koshas (sheaths) that can be examined and negated. The teaching distinguishes between knowledge as temporal information (vrttijnanam) and the direct, non-temporal knowing that is the Self.

Conclusion

The teaching is an encouragement to persistent inquiry: recognize the I that pervades all thoughts and emotions, understand that forms are ephemeral, and abide in the Self that is existence-awareness-bliss. Liberation is presented as a natural recognition available through reasoned discrimination, steady practice, and the guidance of a teacher, leading to freedom from suffering and the spontaneous expression of compassion and contribution.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

19. Logic of Enlightenment - Isolating Awareness by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-19

Verse 67: What is Consciousness?

**satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma viśuddhaṃ paraṃ svataḥ siddhaṃ nitya ānanda
eka rasaṃ pratyak abhinnaṃ nirantaraṃ jayati**

Brahman which is defined as existence, knowledge and limitless - is free from impurities, beyond māyā, self-evident, happiness not bound by time or degree, and is always available non-separate from oneself.

Introduction

This lecture examines three descriptors of the Self from Vivekachudamani — satyam (existence), jnanam (knowledge/consciousness), and anantam (infinite). The teacher distinguishes the true Self (existence-awareness that is unchanging and not an object) from the fluctuating layers (koshas, I-thought, mental modifications). The talk then demonstrates the Self's timeless, spaceless, objectless nature using logical analysis and the anvaya-vyatireka method.

1. Satyam — Existence as the Substratum

Key ideas

Satyam is not a time- or place-bound object; it is the underlying substance of all phenomena.

Sensations and mental states (happiness, grief, doubt, memory) appear and disappear, but their existence is reported — therefore existence underlies all these forms.

The five koshas (bodies/layers) are forms of existence; the Self is that existence itself.

Mistake: Identifying with a particular kosha (e.g., annamaya kosha) and treating that changing existence as the whole Self.

Demonstration

Individual experiences fluctuate (happiness increases or decreases), but there is one principle that persists through every fluctuation: I — the aware presence.

This persistent presence exists equally in waking, dreaming, and deep sleep — therefore it is not time-bound.

Quick Review

Satyam = existence that underlies all changing phenomena.

Koshas are forms in which existence appears, not the ultimate existence.

True Self is the persistent I/awareness present in all states.

2. Jnanam — Knowledge / Pure Consciousness

Definitions & clarifications

Jnanam here ≠ ordinary mental knowledge (vrtti-jñānam, a mental event like "I saw a temple").

Jnanam = pure consciousness — the awaring presence that illumines all knowings.

Use of "pure" stresses absence of attributes; there are not multiple levels of consciousness.

Properties of pure consciousness

It is self-revealing (swayam prakasha): it illumines itself and objects without needing another.

It is objectless awareness: objects appear and disappear in it, but it has no object of its own (it cannot be grasped as an object).

Emotional or mental states (happy, depressed) are objects known to consciousness; they do not alter consciousness itself.

Consciousness is the constant knower behind the fluctuating, expanding/contracting relative knower (ego/ahamkara/ahampratya).

Experiential tests given

You cannot make awareness depressed or happy in the way you can change emotions; emotions are objects of awareness.

Trying to stop being conscious (or not be conscious) fails: even in a dizzy/comatose attempt, you observe the mind's unconsciousness — awareness remains.

In sudden shocks or bodily reactions, the same consciousness witnesses both the frightened reaction and the calming that follows.

Quick Review

Jnanam = unqualified, objectless awareness that illumines mental events.

Mental knowings are objects in consciousness (vrtti-jñānam); they change.

Consciousness itself is self-illuminating and unchangeable in experience.

3. Anantam — Timeless & Spaceless (Infinite)

Purpose of the term

Anantam prevents confining satyam and jnanam to temporal or spatial limits.

If the Self had a beginning, it could have an end; but beginninglessness implies no end — the Self is never created or annihilated.

Logical consequences

Moksha cannot mean the replacement of this Self by another (a new aware being), because any change would reintroduce time-dependence and finitude.

There is no "before Moksha / after Moksha" where the Self wasn't already present; liberation is recognition of what is already true, not production of a new being.

The Self is not subject to kala (time) or dik (space): it underlies the perceptions of temporal and spatial change.

Quick Review

Anantam = the Self is beginningless and thus cannot end.

Moksha = recognition of the ever-present Self, not creation of a new Self.

The Self transcends time and space; temporal/spatial change happens within consciousness, not to it.

4. Logical demonstrations: Time & Space depend on the Self

Time

Example: Two identical five-minute spans feel different (waiting at a bus stop vs. a date). That difference presupposes a being free of both versions who perceives the difference.

Therefore time is a perceived/relative quality; the perceiver (Self) must be beyond time to discriminate temporal variations.

Conclusion: The Self is the unmoved substratum (adhiṣṭhānam) of time.

Space

Space is perceived as distance between two points (A and B). Space requires objects to be perceived.

Scientific example: gravity curves space; if awareness were curved similarly, observation of curvature would be impossible.

Because an uncurved observer recognizes curved space, awareness must be unchanging and not confined by space.

Therefore space is an object of awareness; awareness is not spatially limited.

Quick Review

Perception of varying time intervals shows an observer beyond time.

Space is relational (distance between objects) and an object for awareness.

Awareness is uncurved, unbounded, and the substratum of space-time.

5. Koshas, Upadhis, and the Not-Self (Terminology & identification)

Terms used for the not-Self

Koshas, sheaths, upadhi (limiting adjunct), anatman (not-self), prakriti, gunas, mithya (appearance)

Reflected consciousness: chidabhasa (apparent consciousness in the mind), confined consciousness

Ego terms: ahamkara, ahampratyaya (I-thought), jiva (individual), enjoyer/bhokta, doer/karta, pramata (knower)

Witness/dr̥k: the Self/awareness (alupta-dr̥k in this context means the non-absent seer)

Distinction to maintain

In this teaching the "witness" refers to the Self/awareness (alupta-dr̥k), not the relative witnessing function (which sometimes may indicate non-self in other contexts).

Quick Review

Many labels point to not-Self (limited, changing layers).

Ahampratyaya (I-thought) = relative, changing sense of "I".

Witness in this course = unchanging awareness (the Self).

6. Discriminative Exercise: Anvaya–Vyatireka method

Method explanation

Anvaya = presence/available in all states (mark with A).

Vyatireka = absence / variable across states (mark with V).

To isolate the real Self, find what is present in waking, dreaming, deep sleep, samadhi — the common, non-negatable presence is the Self.

THE "ANVAYA-VYATIREKA" METHOD

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES	THE FOUR STATES				FINAL VERDICT
	WAKING	DREAM	DEEP SLEEP	Yogic Nirvikalpa	
1. Gross Body	Present	Absent	Absent	Absent	<i>Vyatireka</i>
2. Subtle Body	Present	Present	Absent	Absent	<i>Vyatireka</i>
3. Causal Body	Present	Present	Present	Absent	<i>Vyatireka</i>
4. The SELF	Present	Present	Present	Present	<i>Anvaya</i>

Application to various items

1. Gross body

Waking: present (A)

Dream: sometimes present/modified (V)

Sleep / Samadhi: absent (V)

Conclusion: gross body = vyatireka (not Self)

2. Subtle body (mind, prana)

Waking: present (A)

Dream: present (A)

Deep sleep / Nirvikalpa samadhi: absent (V)

Conclusion: subtle body = vyatireka

3. Causal body (impressions, desires)

Waking, dream, sleep: present (A)

Nirvikalpa samadhi: temporarily ceases (V)

Conclusion: causal body is also variable (vyatireka) — it can be temporarily suspended in samadhi.

4. Awareness / Self

Waking: present (A)

Dreaming: present (A)

Deep sleep: present (A) — evidenced by the memory I slept well; the sense of having been.

Samadhi: present (A) — reason one enters samadhi is to know the Self.

Conclusion: awareness is anvaya — present in all states, non-negatable ⇒ the true Self.

Experiential guided exercise (class activity)

Imagery task: evoke an elephant, a front door, a beloved person in succession.

Observe: each I-thought/knower is briefly filled with that image and then replaced — these are relative knowers with differing durations and qualities.

Underlying all these changing images, one constant witnessing presence remains — the alupta-dṛk.

Quick Review

Anvaya-vyatireka isolates the Self by checking what is present in all states.

All bodies and mental constituents are variable (vyatireka).

The Self/awareness is present in waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and samadhi (anvaya) — therefore is the real, non-negatable Self.

7. Practical & existential implications

Recognizing the Self does not remove bodily pain or life events — it changes relationship to them (less identification, more resilience). Liberation is the ending of the sense of limitation (anxiety of being time-bound), not the loss of existence.

Even after realization, while upadhis (bodies) persist, experience appears similar outwardly — the inner recognition abolishes suffering but may not alter empirical functions until upadhis drop.

Quick Review

Recognition changes identification and relationship, not necessarily external events.

Moksha removes the anxiety of being a limited, time-bound self.

Upadhis can persist; realization is the inner recognition of the already-present, infinite Self.

Conclusion

The lecture argues that the true Self is satyam jnanam anantam — existence, pure awareness, and infinite — and that this Self can be logically and experientially isolated by noting what is present in all states (anvaya) and what varies (vyatireka). The I-thought and koshas are shown to be ephemeral roles, while the witnessing awareness persists unbroken.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Aluptadrk	undisplaced witness, the never-absent seer
Ahamkara	sense of individual I, ego
Ahampratyaya	I-thought
Anantam	endless, infinite
Anatma	not-self
Anvaya	presence in all states, continuity
Anvaya-Vyatireka	method of presence and absence analysis
Bhokta	enjoyer
Chidabhasa	reflected consciousness
Drk	witness, seer
Gunas	qualities or tendencies of prakriti
Jiva	individual living being
Jnanam	pure knowledge, consciousness
Kosha	sheath or sheath, layer of embodiment
Mithya	apparent or illusory reality
Prakriti	nature, material principle
Pramata	knower

Prana	vital life-energy
Pranamaya Kosha	vital-energy sheath
Annamaya Kosha	food or physical-body sheath
Vijnanamaya Kosha	intellect or discriminative sheath
Pramata	knower
Satyam	existence, reality
Sat	existence
Sat and Chit	existence and consciousness
Swayam Prakasha	self-revealing light, self-illuminating awareness
Vritti	mental modification or thought-wave
Vrttijnanam	knowledge as a mental modification
Vyatireka	absence, variability, non-presence

This glossary has been generated using AI and may contain errors, for reliable and further explanation, please visit: <https://vedanta.nl/en/glossary-sanskrit/>

Summary

Core teachings

The talk distinguishes three defining principles of the Self: satyam (existence), jnanam (knowledge or pure consciousness) and anantam (endlessness). Satyam is presented as the underlying existent that manifests as changing states—happiness, grief, body, objects—but itself is not an object and does not change. Jnanam is clarified as the nonqualified knowing principle, the self-revealing awareness that illumines all mental states yet is untouched by them. Anantam emphasizes that this existence-awareness is beginningless and endless; it is not created, nor can it end.

Not-self versus Self

The speaker differentiates the temporary, fluctuating aspects known as koshas, upadhis, or anatma (not-self) from the permanent Self. Examples include the annamaya kosha (physical sheath), pranamaya and vijnanamaya dimensions, and the everyday I-thought or ahampratyaya. These not-self elements change with states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep, samadhi), while an unchanging witnessing presence (aluptadrk) persists across all states. The method of anvaya-vyatireka—establishing what is present in all states (anvaya) and what varies (vyatireka)—is used to isolate the true Self.

Practical implications

Recognizing the distinction between the transient knower (ego, role-based identity) and the ever-present knower (Self) alters one's relationship to pain, joy and life circumstances. Awareness of being the substratum of time and space provides psychological resilience: events and upadhis continue, but suffering diminishes

because one no longer fully identifies with them. Moksha is explained not as gaining a new existence but as the recognition that the ever-present existence-awareness was never bounded by time, space or objects.

Vivekachudamani, Adi Shankara

20. The Bliss Myth - Why Enlightenment Isn't a Feeling by Andre Vas



This text contains supplementary study material.
The video recording is the main study material and can be found here:
www.yesvedanta.com/vivekachudamani/lesson-20

Verse 67: What is Consciousness?

**satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma viśuddhaṁ paraṁ svataḥ siddhaṁ nitya ānanda
eka rasaṁ pratyak abhinnaṁ nirantaraṁ jayati**

Brahman which is defined as existence, knowledge and limitless - is free from impurities, beyond māyā, self-evident, happiness not bound by time or degree, and is always available non-separate from oneself.

Introduction

This lecture (Vivekachudamani, verse 67) examines what the Self (Brahman) is — and is not — and clarifies common confusions: especially the mistaken idea that enlightenment is an experiential feeling of continuous bliss. It contrasts awareness (unchanging) with the koshas, discusses moksha as responsibility and knowledge rather than an escape, and gives practical advice for integrating understanding into daily life.

1. Reality, Inclusion, and the "Tenth Man" Analogy

Main idea

If this reality (Brahman, existence-awareness) is all that is, you cannot logically exclude yourself from it — you are included.

People tend to externalize spiritual search: advising others, projecting expectations, and forgetting to take responsibility for their own transformation.

The "Tenth Man" story (illustration)

Group crosses a river and counts nine people; the tenth asks “what about me?”

Point: humans are habitually oriented toward others; spiritual work requires turning that attention inward.

Psychological note

Non-duality can become a coping mechanism (a way to avoid personal vulnerability) if used to hide insecurity.

Spiritual maturity requires taking responsibility for one’s responses, choices, and growth — this is the beginning of Moksha.

Quick Review

Inclusion: you are part of the reality you speak of.

Tenth man illustrates tendency to focus outward.

Moksha begins with personal accountability, not intellectualizing.

2. Responsibility, Practice, and Integration

Responsibility as the start of liberation

Moksha begins with accountability: noticing wrong choices, admitting errors, and adjusting behavior.

Growth occurs gradually through corrected responses and positive feedback.

Practical integration (fallback systems)

Knowledge must be made available in stressful moments, not only as theory.

Suggested method: create short, accessible prompts or threads (e.g., on a phone app like Notion) keyed to emotional states (angry, shy, insecure). Populate these with impactful teachings to recall in the moment.

Choose one teaching, mantra, or technique to carry forward after a course — depth is more effective than collecting many disconnected teachings.

Quick Review

Moksha requires activated responsibility.

Fallback systems (short, repeatable reminders) help integrate knowledge into life.

One anchored practice done consistently beats many superficial ideas.

3. Koshas, Samadhi, and the Anandamaya (Causal) Layer

Kosha overview in this context

The anandamaya kosha corresponds to the causal/joy layer; it is partly manifest in waking/dream, fully manifest in deep sleep.

In nirvikalpa samadhi there is alertness plus full access to the anandamaya kosha (contrast with deep sleep where there is no awareness of being).

Anatomo-logical distinctions (anvaya vs vyatireka)

Anvaya (A) = always present / invariable.

Vyatireka (V) = variable / dependent.

Anandamaya may appear available across states, but its degree changes (e.g., more in samadhi than waking); because it is dependent and changing, it is not the final anvaya Self. So anandamaya = A-V (available but variable).

The only truly anvaya is awareness (the Self): unchanging, not time/place dependent.

Quick Review

Anandamaya kosha gives glimpses of bliss; full access in samadhi but it is still variable. Awareness (Self) is unchanging (true anvaya).

Samadhi differs from deep sleep: awareness present vs absent.

4. Turiya, States, and Experience

Meaning of "turiya"

Literally "fourth": refers to what is other than the three ordinary states (waking, dream, deep sleep).

Contextual definitions:

1. Samadhi (in some contexts).
2. Awareness (in others) — i.e., the illuminer of the three states.

Vedantic point: we speak of states of experience (koshic/psychological states) not states of the Self. Experience is generated by the koshas; the Self illumines them but is not itself a state with attributes.

Quick Review

Turiya can denote samadhi or the illumining awareness depending on context.

Experiences (waking/dream/sleep) are kosha-generated; Self is not a state.

5. Maya, Forms, and Why Brahman Is Beyond Change

Maya defined

Maya = forms (appearance, phenomena), not an enemy nor identical with the Self.

Maya changes; if Maya were identical to Brahman (unchanging), we would not be able to perceive change — contradiction.

Logical implications

If maya = Brahman, nothing could change or be differentiated — no possibility to notice change or have freedom.

Therefore Brahman (unchanging) must be other than maya (changing forms).

How to relate to maya

Maya provides forms and experiences; one can use forms (maya) to remove ignorance produced by maya itself.

Meaning you can employ the world as a means to awaken, rather than treating maya as purely deceptive.

Quick Review

Maya = changing forms; cannot be identical to changeless Brahman.

Identifying maya with Brahman would remove perception of change and freedom.

Use maya skillfully as the medium for removing ignorance.

6. What "Ananda" Means for Brahman — Not Experiential Bliss

Distinction between koshic bliss and Brahman's ananda

Anandamaya kosha gives situational, degree-based joy (priya, moda, pramoda): experience-dependent.

When scriptural phrases say sat-chit-ananda in reference to Brahman, ananda should not be read as experiential, situational bliss.

If Brahman's nature were experiential bliss, we would perceive constant bliss in the world — which we do not.

What "ananda" signifies for Brahman

The contentment of existence or the ever-present "I am" — a cognitive fact of being, not a felt mood.

It is a matter of knowledge (jnana), not of transient experience. Recognizing your nature is like seeing that a sugarcane's nature is sweet, even when coverings hide it.

Quick Review

Ananda of Brahman = ever-present existential sufficiency, not continuous experiential mood.

Experiential bliss (anandamaya kosha) is situational and not identical with Self.

Brahman's ananda is realized cognitively (knowledge), not pursued as an escape.

7. Knowledge, Nididhyasana, and Neuro/Behavioral Considerations

From intellectual recognition to lasting change

Scriptural knowledge must be internalized (nididhyasana) — repetition and application until buddhi aligns with reality.

Neurological imprints (habits, conditioning, childhood programming) can persist; practice and reconditioning (neuroplasticity) help but do not make knowledge physically change awareness (different orders of reality).

Role of the brain and reflected consciousness

Awareness itself does not act on the brain; the reflected consciousness (ahamkara) acts and reforms patterns.

Work on the mind/behavior (therapies, techniques) helps create the conditions where knowledge can settle and impact habitual responses.

Practical tone

Expect ongoing work: Moksha doesn't eliminate the need for psychological/behavioral refinement; different wise persons express different personalities and degrees of psychological healing.

Repeated reclaiming of knowledge is necessary: not a one-time fix for all emotional/neurological traces.

Quick Review

Nididhyasana consolidates knowledge into lived understanding.

Brains are plastic; habits can change but knowledge and neurology are different orders.

Even after realization, working on behavior and mind continues.

8. The Causal Body, Ignorance, and Proof of Liberation

What is the causal body?

Stores unseen causes (karmapala), vasanas/samskaras (impressions), and ignorance about who one is.

It is not a physical location; it's a Vedantic model for the seed-layer that produces habitual patterns and desires.

How to tell ignorance is gone (pramana for Moksha)

Ignorance manifests as continued seeking and doubt after waking from sleep (causal-originated behavior).

For a wise person: once right knowledge (jnana) is established, Seeking/desire to find the Self collapses.

On waking, the person does not continue to seek; their doubt is removed.

Therefore ignorance was not carried forward into subsequent states (proof that ignorance is removed from the causal body).

Moksha is absolute: there is either total knowledge or total ignorance — no partial Moksha. When knowledge is stable, concern about rebirth dissipates naturally (scriptures are a provisional pramana; eventually one's own state confirms it).

Quick Review

Causal body = repository of vasanas, karmic seeds, and ignorance.

Proof of liberation: absence of seeking/doubt across states (waking after sleep).

Moksha is absolute (complete knowledge) rather than gradual partiality.

9. Comparison with Buddhism & Final Qualities of Brahman

Buddhism vs Advaita on "Self"

When Buddhism says "no Self" it refers primarily to ahamkara (false I/ego), not necessarily denying consciousness per se.

Advaita claims a final reality (non-dual awareness) that Buddhism often does not explicitly assert in the same way; differences hinge on definitions of "Self".

Attributes/descriptions of Brahman (from verse continuation)

Vishuddham (pure / free from impurities): nothing sticks to the Self because there is no second-to-relate.

Asangha (relationshipless): the Self does not act or change; it illumines without being affected.

Quick Review

Buddhist "no-self" critiques ahamkara, not necessarily consciousness as Vedanta defines it.

Brahman is untainted and relationshipless — not subject to contamination by forms.

10. Teaching, Humility, and Continuing Practice

Teaching and realization

Teaching doesn't change awareness; knowing something can lead to teaching, which further consolidates knowledge but does not create pride.

Once conviction is steady, retreats are no longer necessary for the realized person, although working on the body-mind continues.

Attitude recommended

Sincere, disciplined alignment of buddhi to one's true nature; relinquish the small "me" that insists on preferences.

Recognize the journey: many people exhaust options before accepting scriptural insight; that exhaustion can be a catalyst for genuine surrender.

Quick Review

Teaching consolidates but does not itself create the Self.

Practice continues after realization at the level of body-mind.

Attitude: maturity and willingness to align understanding to reality is essential.

Sanskrit	short meaning
Ahamkara	the reflected or false "I"; ego-sense
Advaita	nondual teaching that reality is one without a second
Ananda	bliss or deep intrinsic contentment
Anandamaya kosha	the sheath of bliss; causal-level substratum associated with deep pleasure/fullness
Annamaya kosha	the physical or food sheath; body-related layer of experience
Anvaya	presence or invariable pervasion; that which is always present
Brahman	ultimate reality; existence-awareness-essence
Buddhi	intellect or discriminative intelligence
Causal body	the subtle store of causes, impressions, and ignorance underpinning future experience
Ishvara	the supreme controller or manifest lord; governing principle of the cosmos
Jiva	individual embodied soul or living entity
Karmapala	store of yet-to-mature causes; accumulated karmic potential
Kosha	sheath or layer of experience (e.g., physical, subtle, causal)
Maya	the principle of form or appearance; the power that projects forms
Moksha	liberation; final release from ignorance and rebirth
Nididhyasana	deep, continued contemplation and assimilation of knowledge
Nirvikalpa samadhi	non-conceptual absorption; samadhi without mental modifications
Pramada buddhi	careless or unsteady intellect (term in context of mind states)
Pramana	means of valid knowledge or proof
Prarabdha karma	portion of karma ripe for experience in the present life
Prasada buddhi	gracious or surrendered intelligence; acceptance of Ishvara's grace
Sattvic	quality of clarity, purity, and calmness in the mind
Sat chit ananda	phrase for being-consciousness-bliss as attributes of ultimate reality
Satyam jnanam anantam	mahabhuta phrase declaring Brahman as truth, knowledge, infinite
Brahma	
Samskara	mental impressions or latent dispositions
Samskaras	plural of samskara; impressions shaping habit and character
Turiya	"the fourth"; awareness that illumines waking, dreaming, deep sleep

Upadhi	limiting adjunct or condition that makes the one appear as many
Vastu tantra	reference to truth as conformity with the object of inquiry
Vasana	impulse or tendency; often used for latent desire
Vyatireka	difference or distinction; that which is variable or not always present

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Summary

Overview

The lecture passage explores core Advaitic themes: the nature of ultimate reality, the distinction between changing forms and the unchanging Self, and practical implications for spiritual seekers. Central to the talk is the insistence that awareness (the Self) is the single, invariable factor present across waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and samadhi. Other elements—bodies, koshas, mind-states, and experiences—are variable and therefore cannot be equated with the Self.

Key ontological distinctions

Several technical distinctions are emphasized. Koshas denote layers of experience (physical, subtle, bliss/casual); the anandamaya kosha is associated with bliss but remains a changing locus that depends on conditions. Samadhi and deep sleep both involve access to anandamaya, yet samadhi preserves wakeful awareness while deep sleep lacks self-reflexive knowledge. Terms like anvaya and vyatireka are used to test what is always present versus what varies; only awareness satisfies the criterion of being ever-present.

Role of ignorance and liberation

Ignorance (avidya), located in the causal body as impressions and desires (vasanas, samskaras), is what leads to continued seeking and rebirth. Knowledge that dispels that ignorance yields moksha: an absolute, not partial, state where doubt ceases. The practical proof of liberation is behavioral and cognitive: when one no longer seeks and the doubt has collapsed, ignorance has effectively been removed from the causal layer.

Practical approaches and pitfalls

The speaker warns against treating nonduality as a coping mechanism—a way to escape problems by chasing experiential bliss. Instead, Advaita demands responsibility, maturity, and the integration of knowledge into daily responses. Techniques (psychological methods, yoga, journaling tools) are acknowledged as useful supports. The importance of nididhyasana—ongoing contemplation and

stabilization of insight—is highlighted as necessary for deep assimilation and for resolving emotional and neurological imprints that might otherwise obscure realization.

Attitude toward maya and life

Maya is presented not as moral enemy but as the realm of forms. Forms can be obstacles or gifts depending on how they are engaged. A mature practitioner recognizes Brahman as untainted and beyond maya while using life's friction productively as opportunities to embody insight. The speaker stresses that liberation does not abolish life's practical activity; rather, it reframes engagement with the world from the standpoint of knowledge.

Concluding note

Overall, the talk balances metaphysical precision with pragmatic guidance: the Self is changeless awareness; freedom requires factual knowledge that removes ignorance; and the spiritual path involves disciplined practice, honest responsibility, and the skillful use of life's challenges to stabilize realization.

Notes:

Vivekachudamani Retreat Thonse

What do you think about...

Verse 1: Prayer

1. Why can't the mind grasp the Self?
2. What mistake creates all suffering? What is root of everyone's confusion / seeking for more? Speak from experience.

Verse 2: The Three Graces of Life

1. Why is human birth necessary for moksha?
2. What shifts mumukṣutvam into jijñāsā?
3. "Grace is earned. It's not accidental". Explain.

Verse 3: Reason to Strive Now

1. What is suicide according to Shankara? [Wasting the precious opportunity. Explain]
2. What are we really seeking through desires? Attaining it or Freedom from it? Explain why. Speak from experience.

Verse 4: Need for Knowledge on this Path

1. Why do people seek solutions everywhere except in understanding the very seeker, "I"?
2. How does the pursuit of artha, kama, dharma reinforce the sense of being limited?
3. What's the difference between recognizing the Self versus experiencing something new?

Verse 5: Karma-Yoga Brings Purity

1. How do likes and dislikes prevent you from receiving help or being transformed by the knowledge?
2. Why does treating results as prasada (opportunity to grow) reduce victim mentality?
3. What makes the ring metaphor show action cannot reveal your true nature?

Verse 6: Enquiry & Guidance Needed

1. What's the danger of thinking Self-inquiry means "going within" to find something?

Verse 7: Success Depends on Readiness

2. What determines success in Self-knowledge more - having the perfect guru and ashram, or your own readiness? Why?
3. Why does an unprepared mind twist or misinterpret spiritual teachings despite hearing them correctly?

Verse 8: Conditions for Success & Failure

1. Why isn't knowledge of the Self automatic or effortless like other types of knowledge?
2. What makes mokṣa (liberation) different from the other three human goals - dharma, artha, and kama?

Verse 9: What are the Four Means?

1. What keeps a person's spiritual pursuit scattered across endless possibilities until they develop viveka?
2. How is virāga (dispassion / objectivity) different from disenchantment, apathy, non-concern?
3. Can you share a time when you enjoyed something fully but weren't devastated when it ended - what made that possible?

Verse 10: Viveka

1. Can you share a moment when you realized seeking objects was really seeking freedom from insecurity?
2. Why does recognizing everything as time-bound paradoxically make life meaningful rather than meaningless?



Verse 11: Vairāgya

1. What's one thing you've given tremendous importance to that you later realized had only the meaning you projected onto it?
2. How would your relationship with objects change if you saw them purely as means rather than ends?
3. Can you describe a time when intellectual understanding didn't immediately change your emotional habits?

Verse 12: Śama (Managed Mind)

1. When have you resisted a situation you couldn't control, and what shifted when you accepted Īśvara's order? [Acceptance brought peace]
2. What would change if you truly saw your capacities as gifts from Īśvara rather than personal achievements?

Verse 13: Dama (Physical Restraint)

1. Describe a recent situation where you successfully restrained an inappropriate response—what helped you pause?
2. When has removing yourself from a toxic environment been more effective than trying to mentally resist it?

Verse 14: Uparati (non-leaning on objects for emotional wellbeing) & Titiksha (endurance)

1. What does "non-leaning on objects" (uparati) mean to you?
2. What is "endurance or ability to put up with small pinpricks of life" (titiksha) mean for you?
3. Repeatedly sharing your suffering story (ie: absence of titiksha) keeps you trapped in victim mentality. Explain.

Verse 15: Śraddhā (Trust in the teaching/teacher)

1. How has the Vedantic teaching proven reliable in your own experience?

Verse 16: Samādhāna (one pointedness)

1. "Mind is like an undisciplined child". What is your method of regaining some order/focus/concentration?

Verse 17: Mumukshutva

1. When did you shift from seeking external solutions to questioning the "I" that feels limited?

Verse 19 & 20: Qualifications of a Guru & Attitude of the Disciple

1. How can you tell if your devotion to teaching is genuine or performative?
2. Why must a guru's compassion be "without reason" to qualify as authentic?

Verse 23: Guru Expresses his Confidence

1. What makes you "qualified to understand" (vidvān) according to this verse?
2. Which of the three processes (śravaṇa, manana, nididhyāsana) challenges you most personally?

Verse 24: Roles of Ignorance & Knowledge

1. How does ignorance create bondage with the "not-Self"? [Misidentifying body-mind as true Self]
2. When have you mistaken a "rope for a snake" in your own life?

Verse 27: The Seat of Various Experiences – Physical Body

1. If your current body and life circumstances are the "precise outcome of prior causes," how does this change your view of people born into privilege or poverty?



2. Can you identify a recent complaint you've had about your life - what would shift if you saw it as karma (product of an unseen past cause), rather than random unfairness?

Verse 28: "Eight Cities" of the Subtle Body

1. What's the difference between 5 elements that makes up the mind, and 5 elements that makes up physical body?
2. If ignorance is in the mind (subtle body), then where is knowledge of reality?

Verse 29: Characteristics of Subtle Body & Dream State

1. Can you think of a time when you confused something temporary belonging to your gross-subtle-body (mood, role, situation) with who you are? What was the "red rose" near the "clear crystal"?
2. "When point out what rose (upadhi) looks like, then the upadhi is negated". What does "negated" mean? Does it literally disappear?

Verse 30: Subtle Body as an Instrument

1. When you say "I am angry" versus "anger is present / there is anger" can you feel the difference in identification? Create 5 more examples personal to you.
2. Suppose you're in tough or a fantastic situation. Then you remember, "Self (crystal) has no connection to this (upadhi)". How might this help you regain equanimity of mind?

Verse 31: What is Maya?

1. What's the purpose of the Maya teaching?
2. What's the difference between Māyā's projection power (vikṣepa) and veiling power (āvaraṇa)?
3. How does the dream analogy help you understand Brahman projecting the world without changing?
4. When it says "Maya is ignorance", what is it actually saying?
5. How does understanding the three guṇas help you respond differently to challenging situations?
6. What's difference between maya & Ishvara?
7. Īśvara = ___ + ___.
8. Why would studying any science ultimately be studying Īśvara's Intelligence?

Verse 32: Maya is Indescribable

1. Why is labeling things definitively (EG: "It's a pot, and that's that!"), in all cases erroneous?
2. Maya (pot) is neither *identical-to* nor *different-from* Brahman (clay). Explain.

Verse 33: What is the Unmanifest?

1. What is the difference between your deep sleep and cosmic dissolution (pralaya)?
2. If the maya (macrocosmic causal-body) is the seed of the universe, what waters this seed into manifestation? What causes another big-bang?
3. When ajnani goes to sleep, all that remains is his individual causal-body. He then wakes up, and ignorance of Self continues, just as it was yesterday. What does this mean? Where is ignorance of Self located?

Verse 34: Introduction to the Self

1. What does "limitlessness" mean for you?
2. What moments/events still trigger in you that sense of limitation or disorientation? Making you forget "Self has no connection to this"?

Verse 35: The Absolute Entity

1. What's the difference between the unchanging "I" and the changing "I-thought"?



2. Which kosha do you most commonly mistake for your true Self? (Body, Energy, Emotions, Doubts, Thinking [need to be smart], need to feel good all the time [anandamaya]?)
3. "If dream-awareness was different from waking-awareness, then you couldn't say in the waking 'I dream'". Explain.

Verse 36: The True "I" or Self

1. During your day today, did you notice any moment without the witnessing presence?
2. If you said "no" to above question, why would that be a contradiction?
3. "If thoughts are your intrinsic nature, you couldn't exist without them". Explain.

Verse 37: The Unseen Seer

1. Why is it impossible for the mind to illumine ātmā?
2. What would happen if you were actually the happiness-vritti?
3. What is not evident to the Self?
4. Suppose you said "X is not evident to the Self", why is that statement a contradiction?

Verse 39: The Origin of Bondage

1. What practical difference does it make in one's daily choices if one deeply knows "I am free of this body, and life"?
2. Can you share an example when you sought perfection in your or another's body/mind, or in some place/experience?

Verse 40: How Truth is Veiled

1. What follows veiling in the waking state? (IE: "I don't have full knowledge of the rope, therefore ____".)
2. Based on Q1, how does this change your perception towards irresponsible acts? Can you truly blame the person?
3. Can you remember a time when you projected a false conclusion? What was the root cause of that projection?

Verse 41: Merciless Persecution by Rajas

1. Why do we link objects (hopes, future dreams, better life, smoother relationship) with happiness?
2. "A denied desire produces anger". Why? Can you give example from your life?

Verse 46: Food Sheath

1. What makes the body a "modification" of food?
2. When do you notice suffering from body-identification?
3. Why can't flesh and bone be the ever-pure Self?

Verse 47: Body is a Known Object

1. How does consciousness (your true nature) differ from genes or atoms?
2. Why do we grieve lost youth if change is natural?
3. If can't find consciousness in one atom, then how many atoms do you need to add up to produce a brain that suddenly has consciousness?

Verse 48: Composition & Function of Pranamaya Kosha

1. What is prana and how does it manifest in daily experience?
2. When have you felt prana draining or vibrant?
3. Why do we say "I am tired" instead of "the body is tired"?



Verse 49: Why Pranamaya Kosha is Not-Self

1. What are the key reasons prana (energy) cannot be Self?
2. "I'm alive". This is identification with prana. How do you discern between "aliveness" and Self?
3. Why is prana called the most noble kosha?

Verse 50: Composition of Manomaya Kosha

1. What happens when you see objects without likes/dislikes?
2. How does emotional charge distort what you perceive?
3. How does the mind shape itself to different objects? Give metaphor.
4. What's the difference between consciousness and sentiency?

Verse 51: Why Mind Cannot be the Self

1. Why can't the changing mind be the Self?
2. "Mind's nature is sorrow". Explain.

Verse 52: Composition of Vijnanamaya Kosha

1. Vijnanamaya is the decision maker, the inquirer in you (Atma). Give some examples of this.
2. How to discern between the I-thought (ahamkara/ego) and Self (atma)? This is CRUX of Vedanta.

Verse 53: The "Reflection of Consciousness"

1. What creates the sense of individual "I"? [Reflected consciousness. Better word is "confined"]. Use example of "confined space" in a pot, to explain what "reflected consciousness" is.

Verses 54-55: The Nature of "Jiva"

1. What compels jiva to keep performing actions?
2. Why does jiva need different bodies and realms?
3. Yesterday has affected today. This is called "karma". What is "karma" in your own words?

Verse 56: Vijnanamaya Cannot be Self

1. Vijnanamaya manifests as changing roles, decision maker, inquirer/analyser. Why can't it be the real you?
2. How does deep sleep prove intellect isn't self-effulgent?
3. When does your sense of individual "I" temporarily disappear?
4. The fact that you were able to answer Q3 above, what does that show?

Verse 57: Composition & Features of Anandamaya Kosha

1. Why is there fullness/happiness/freedom from concern in deep sleep?
2. How does calling yourself "happy" reveal ignorance of your true nature?
3. When have you experienced priya, moda, and pramoda in sequence - like seeing something desirable, getting closer to it, then finally enjoying it? [Personal experience varies]
4. Why would the seeker have no motivation to do anything without the anandamaya kosha?

Verse 58: Its Manifestation in the Three States

1. If deep sleep is so blissful, why doesn't everyone pursue it as the ultimate goal?
2. What wakes you up out of deep contentment (whether nirvikalpa samadhi or deep sleep)?
3. Why is the bliss of deep sleep called a "reflection" rather than the real ānanda of Self?
4. When you say "I was happy yesterday," what does this statement?
5. Share a time when interruption of sleep made you angry. Why were you upset?



Verse 59: Conclusion: Anandamaya Cannot be Self

1. What remains constant when your level of happiness changes throughout the day?
2. From now on, whenever you pursue “feeling good, becoming happy”, what are you placing your “I” in?
3. Share something that once made you extremely happy but no longer does - what does this reveal?

Verse 60: The Witness Survives the Negation

1. After negating body, breath, mind, intellect, and happiness - what's the one thing you cannot negate?
2. “Self not hidden inside the koshas - waiting to be discovered”. Explain.

Verse 61: Summary: What is the Self?

1. If the Self witnesses deep sleep where "time ends," what does this reveal about your relationship to time?
2. Self is the "unproved-prover". Explain.
3. Self is the “irreducible knower”. Explain.
4. Self has no relationship to anything. No relationship to life, body, karma, punya, papa. Explain + give metaphor.

Verse 62: Disciple: "Nothing Left After Negation!"

1. When you negate all objects of awareness and there's nothing left, what does “there's nothing left” show?
2. Ever experienced a "blank void" in meditation, or total Oneness in some medicine/drug induced experience? What was there?

Verse 65: Always Shines as "I, I, I, etc"

1. “Just like eye proves itself the fact there is sight of different forms. Similarly, Awareness proves itself by the fact that different experiences, sight, no-sight, etc - are evident”. Explain.
2. How can awareness illuminate "emptiness-experience" yet remain completely untouched by that emptiness?
3. Ahaṁkāra (ego) is that which contracts/expands. It's what everyone mistakes their “I” to. Give example when you (atma) identified with the expanding/contracting “I” (ego)?

Verse 66: You can do this! You were made to succeed!

1. How does removing a "notional idea" differ from gaining something new through practice/action?

Verse 67: What is Consciousness?

1. How does anantam (limitless) prevent mistaking Brahman for just "another existing thing"?
2. Why can't you judge a wise person (jivanmukta) by their mind-state or body-condition?
3. If vṛtti-jñāna (thought-knowledge) comes and goes, what "knowledge" remains constant before, during, and after thoughts?
4. How does the absence-of-thought being recognized prove awareness doesn't depend on thoughts?
5. Why can't an attribute (like sadness) permanently stick to awareness? What would happen if it did?

Verse 67b: A Pot is Only Clay

1. Why do we say “clay is MORE REAL than pot”?
2. To say “clay is more real than pot”, is that a license to look down upon the pot? To call “pot” as illusion?
3. When clay becomes pot, then fork, then chair, was clay ever actually bound to any form?
4. When looking at your hand - are the bones there? Blood? Cells? Genes? Atoms? Because you don't “feel/see” them, does it mean they're not there?
5. If everything reduces to awareness eventually, why do you still experience solid, separate objects?
6. In your daily life, what is that one thing where it causes you to give more reality to the changing forms, and forget about it's underlining substance?



7. Ignorance of satya-mithya relationship is what cause you to feel small, isolated, unimportant. Explain.

Verse 68: Universe is Mithya

1. If the pot (world, your body-mind) is only clay (Brahman), what exactly are you pointing to when you say "pot"?
2. "A mind resting in its truth, has no need to argue or prove how others are wrong. A mind not resting in truth - is loud, opinionated, and attacks other views". Can you relate?

Verse 71: The Lord's Words in the Gita

1. What does Krishna mean by "I am not in them" and "they are not in Me / no being is in Me"?
2. From clay's perspective, why are there no pots "in" it?

Verse 73: A Superimposition Cannot be Independent

1. Superimpositions (upadhis) are "meaningless". What does this mean?
2. Describe an experience where something that felt deeply meaningful, but later seemed insignificant?

Verse 75: Remove the Contradictory Qualities

1. The liberated wave "respects differences in forms, while recognizing its truth". Convert this to standpoint of a jnani.
2. Why is it safer to say "I and Ishvara enjoy the same truth", over "I am the truth of Ishvara"?
3. In what everyday situations do you most forget your essential nature and identify almost completely with limitations?

Verse 76: Conditionings are Different & Unreal

1. What is the key difference between Ishvara's upadhi (maya) and jiva's upadhi (panca-kosha)?
2. Which of your five sheaths do you find hardest to see "not I"? What will be your practice to reduce this residual identification?
3. If upadhis are mithya, why do we take them so seriously in daily experience?

Verse 77: Eliminating the Conditionings

1. What does it mean to "negate" an upadhi intellectually versus destroying it physically?
2. How can a jnani simultaneously worship Ishvara and teach non-duality without contradiction?

Verses 79-80: Example - "This is that Devadatta"

1. Imagine Devadatta gained 100 kilograms, lost all hair, and became a monk - at what point would he stop being Devadatta?
2. If gray-haired Devadatta insists "I'm not that young guy anymore!" - is he confused or just attached to his new upadhi?
3. If we need the sentence "This is that Devadatta" to INSTANTLY recognize Him despite superficial changes, how many lifetimes do we need to recognize "Tat Tvam Asi" (You are That Brahman)?

Verse 83: The Man of STEADY WISDOM

1. How does akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti differ from ordinary pot-vṛtti?
2. Why must both intellectual and emotional obstacles be removed even after the akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti arises?

Verse 84: Jivanmukta's Fullness is Continuous

1. What does "world is forgotten" mean?
2. What's the difference between a jivanmukta's actions to reach out and help, vs. ego-driven savior complex?

