

The Concept of Jivanmukti in Advaita And Other Topics

ShrIgurubhyo namaH

HariH Om

Recently I saw the following observation in the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) of the site: www.dvaita.org.

Why does Tattvavâda deny jîvan-mukti?

//Because a mukta, or liberated person, should not even be physically present in the material universe, unlike the un-liberated. A person who is living in the world cannot be said to be free of sorrow born of material contact, and also cannot be said to experience the joy of his own nature at all times. The very act of living in a gross material body entails things such as eating, sleeping, pleasure and pain, etc., which cannot be accepted in a mukta.

//The Advaitic concept of a jîvanmukta is also absurd because a person who has surmounted the realm of perception and realized the Absolute (as Advaita holds of a mukta) should not continue to exist within and interact with the realm of perception that he has realized as being not-Real—no one continues to perceive a snake after realizing that the object of his perception is actually a rope. The suggestion that such bondage to the world of perception continues for a while after the occurrence of Realization, because of past attachments, is not tenable—such attachments themselves are artifacts of the perceived world that has supposedly been sublated, and should not continue to besiege the consciousness of the Realized. If they do, then we have to either reject the Realization that is said to have occurred, or else reject the notion that the world of perception, as manifesting through the attachments on a supposedly Realized person, can be sublated. In either instance, the notion of jîvanmukti is not meaningful. //

After reading the above, the following was written in the form of mananam. The purpose is to find out how an advaitin would look at such an objection/opinion. In the process of this exercise, some more topics were taken up that are either directly or indirectly connected with the main topic. As a result the document grew to its present size of 50 pages. It is possible that there are some repetitions of ideas/quotes.

Originally, there was no thought of presenting this document to the organizers of the Dwaita.org site. It was meant to be a study material for interested mumukshus. Owing to the fact that objections against Advaita arise due to inadequate grasping of the system as it is taught and practiced in the sampradaya, I took a decision to send the document to the website so that the Advaitin's perspective of various topics could be made known. No criticism or counter-objections are intended in this attempt at dissemination of knowledge. If this spirit, the one that could be seen in the recent Kannada book 'Mata

traya sameekshaa' by Dr. A.V. Nagasampige, is had in mind, this document would have served its purpose. The emphasis is mainly on explaining the stand of the Advaitin while viewing the objections. It is possible that quotes in Sanskrit (Devanagari) lipi does not come out in transmission. The references given would help in that case. Om Tat Sat.

The Explanation commences here:

In the Bhagavadgīta, a 'Tattavit' is distinguished from the ignorant person as:

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate 3.27

*tattvavit tu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate* 3.28

Again, in the fifth chapter, we have the lakshana of a tattvavit described:

naiva kiṁcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit
paśyañ śṛṇvan spṛśañ jighrann aśnan gacchan svapañ śvasan 5.8

pralapan visṛjan grhṇann unmiṣan nimiṣann api
indriyāṁdriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan 5.9

The bodily acts of eating, sleeping, etc. are possible in the case of a Tattvavit while living, without the 'aham karta' bhava which is what is destroyed in the case of the tattvavit at the time of realization, aparoksha jnanam, of the Atman/Brahman.

That such a state is admitted by the Lord is evident from His words:

sarvakarmāṇi manasā saṁnyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī
navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan 5.13

yatendriyamanobuddhirmunir mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ
vigatecchābhayakrodho yaḥ *sadā mukta eva saḥ* 5.28

The mention of the 'nine-gated city' to mean that the Knower of the Truth still lives is significant. And that such a knower, 'does not do nor cause anything to be done' is also **clear evidence for the released state while living** which is called jivanmukti. All the bodily functions can go on without hindering the vision of the Absolute that the liberated person has gained by dint of his sadhana. His is the state of 'naishkarmyam', the state of Brahman. The other verse quoted above has Bhagavan's own words that such a person is ever-liberated.

The lessons on samatvam, equanimity, in dvandvas like joy, sorrow, laabha, alaabha, etc., which are to be practiced by a sadhaka, when practiced adequately, remain in the tattvavit even after gaining the aparoksha saakshatkara. So, when the body/mind complex is subject to these dvandvas, owing to prarabdha karma, he remains unaffected as they pertain to the deha/manas which are evolutes of prakriti, which the Lord has taught as anatma and the jnani has realized it to be so. If this were not to be so, the following lakshanas of a ‘gunaatita’ will be questionable:

udāsīnavad āsīno guṇair yo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ity eva yovatiṣṭhati neṅgate 14.23

samaduhkhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ samaloṣṭāsmakāñcanaḥ
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīras tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ 14.24

mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ
sarvārambhaparityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate 14.25

And also,

*na prahṣyet priyaṁ prāpya nodvijet prāpya cāpriyam
sthirabuddhir asaṁmūḍho brahma vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ 5.20*

bāhyasparśeṣv asaktātmā vindaty ātmani yat sukham
sa brahmayogayuktātmā *sukham akṣayam āsnute 5.21*

ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā duḥkhaḥayonaya eva te
ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ 5.22

śaknotīhaiva yaḥ soḍhuṁ prāk śarīravimokṣaṇāt
kāmakrodhodbhavaṁ vegaṁ sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ 5.23

yontaḥsukhontarārāmas tathāntarjyotir eva yaḥ
sa yogī brahmanirvāṇaṁ *brahmabhūto*dhigacchati 5.24

When is the ‘samachittatva’ practiced by the sadhaka put to test? Not when the body is not available. It is impossible to have dvandva anubhava in the absence of the body/mind complex. The teaching of samachittatva becomes meaningful only in the possibility of their (of dvandvas’) occurrence and the Jnani’s ability to remain equanimous. Being affected by dvandvas is what samsara is and moksha is release from such identification with dvandvas. This mochanam is what is demonstrated by the above verses. That is why it is called jivanmukti.

The following verses of the VI chapter too throw much light on the topic. The words ‘*brahmabhūtaḥ*’ is especially significant in that the Lord says that such a yogi who is a Tattvavit is ‘Brahman’ Itself. This is reminiscent of the Upanishadic statement: ‘brahma

veda brahmaiva bhavati'. This is undoubtedly jivanmukti. The words 'sarvathā vartamānopi sa yogī mayi vartate 6.31' bear great significance to the 'actions' of a Jnani. In case he is a grihastha, he will have to do the duties. In case he is a sannyasi, there will be no worldly duties. Whether required to do duties or not, sarvathā vartamānopi, the Jnani does not lose sight of the Absolute. Again the message of Jivanmukti is unmistakable. The Lord says that such a mukta ever abides in Me, Brahman. When such a Jnani is Brahman Itself, where is the doubt that he is a mukta right now?

praśāntamanasaṃ hy enaṃ yoginaṃ sukham uttamam
upaiti śāntarajasaṃ *brahmabhūtam* akalmaṣam 6.27

sarvabhūtaṣṭham ātmānaṃ sarvabhūtāni cātmani
īkṣate yogayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ 6.29

yo māṃ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṃ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāhaṃ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati 6.30

sarvabhūtaṣṭhitaṃ yo māṃ bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ
sarvathā vartamānopi sa yogī mayi vartate 6.31

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṃ paśyati yorjuna
sukhaṃ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṃ sa yogī paramo mataḥ 6.32

It is agreed that becoming affected by dvandvas is what constitutes samsara. So, the Lord prescribes the sadhana of practicing equanimity in the face of dvandvas. That means, as long as the body lives, dvandvas cannot be avoided or wished away. They keep coming in turns. But the tattvavit who has become free from ignorance, ajnana, has gained the ability to stand equanimous, unaffected, in the face of dvandvas. Since the gunatita, sthitaprajna lakshanas are prescribed, it obviously means that such a gunatita, tattvavit, is still alive. For, there is no meaning in prescribing these lakshanas if there was no possibility of a Jnani who has freed himself from samsara continuing to live in the body. Since Jnana is the means to moksha and since moksha means release from samsara caused by ajnana, jnanaprapti, and not death, means samsara-mochanam. That such a mukta can be admitted to live till the fall of the body is what is amply evidenced by the verses on the gunatita/sthitaprajna. Dvandva-s, the other name for samsara, are unable to affect this Jnani:

yadṛcchālābhasaṃtuṣṭo *dvandvātīto* vimatsaraḥ
samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate 4.22

This is called Jivanmukti: Remaining unaffected by the dvandva-s. This is the meaning of moksha from samsara.

Thus, there is nothing unusual in the mukta purusha eating, sleeping, facing pleasure and pain, etc. while being still embodied in the nava-dvara pura deha.

In the SrImadbhAgavatam, in the Jadabharata story, we find a verse that talks of jivanmukti:

-agvt pura[pÂm> SkNx> àwmae=Xyay>

muKtae=ip taviÓ-&yaTSvdehmarBxmîUi-manzUNy>, ywanu-Ut< àityatinÔ> ik< TvNydehay gu[aÚ v&/<&&Ktee. 16.

(SrImadbhagavatam skandha 5, chapter 1, verse 16):

In the above verse (of Lord Brahmaa) the word ‘Mukta’ is significant. The word ‘api’ is even more significant in that it speaks of the ‘praarabdha karma phala’ for a Mukta which is none other than **jIvan mukti**. The word ‘abhimAna-shUnyaH’ informs us that the Mukta is devoid of attachment to the pleasure or pain the prarabdha karma brings to him. In the second line we have an interesting expression: ‘yathAnubhUtam pratiyAta-nidraH’ = the way one who considers the dream experienced after waking up from sleep. This is the way the Jivanmukta, who having woken up to the Truth of the Non-dual Brahman, perceiving the **duality as a dream** does not get attached to it knowing that **it is not real**.

[One is reminded of the ideas contained in the ‘sAdhana-panchakam’ of Sri Bhagavatpada Shankara. ‘prArabdham tu iha bhujyatAm...prAkkarma pravilApyatAm chiti-balAt naapyuttaraiH shlishyatAm..’ conveying the message of the teaching of the above verse.]

The Nature of Brahman is taught in the following verse:

-agvt pura[pÂm> SkNx> Öadzae=Xyay>

}an< ivzu!< prmawRmekmnNtr< TvbihäRü sTym!, àTyKàzaNt< -gvCDBds<}< yÖasudev< kvyaevdiNt. 11.

(SrImadbhagavatam skandha 5, chapter 12, verse 11):

In the above verse of Jadabharata to King RahUgana, the nature of the Absolute Truth is being conveyed. It is Pure Consciousness, ParamArtham, Ekam, with no inside and outside, meaning It is Non-dual, Impartite Consciousness which does not afford any duality within Itself or outside of Itself. It is Satyam. What is more? It is ‘pratyak’ meaning ‘the Inmost Consciousness experienced by the jiva as ‘I’. In effect, the verse teaches that the ‘Tat’ is non-different from the ‘tvam’. This is the true meaning of the terms BhagavAn and Vaasudeva. Such is the way the Seers (kavayaH) teach the Truth. It is to be noted that the word ‘ParamArtham’ means ‘Absolute Truth’. That means that anything other than That is not the Absolute Truth but is only in the relative plane. In other words that which is not ParamArtha is only relatively real or mithyA.

From the various statements of the Lord that He (the Lord, Brahman) is akarta and abhokta and the true nature of Atma (jiva) is also akarta and abhokta it is clear that what differentiates a samsari from a mukta is the presence of the aham-karta/bhokta bhava and

its absence. To be akarta (eating, sleeping) and abhokta (sukha, dukha) one need not die. Tattvavedanam destroys the kartritva/bhoktritva bhava. It does not destroy the prAna. Nor does Tattvavedanam require prAna-tyaga to give its fruit of liberation. ‘Tam evam vidvAn **amrita iha** bhavati’ says the Purusha Suktam. There is absolutely no difficulty in explaining statements like:’ pretya asmAn lokAt amrutaa bhavanti’. ‘Loka’ is this samsaric world. To ‘leave’ it is to render it powerless to affect the mukta purusha. To disidentify oneself from the body/mind is what is moksha. This is enabled by aparoksha jnanam. So, a jnani-mukta becomes amruta the moment the jnana dawns. One need not die to become amruta.

//The Advaitic concept of a jîvanmukta is also absurd because a person who has surmounted the realm of perception and realized the Absolute (as Advaita holds of a mukta) should not continue to exist within and interact with the realm of perception that he has realized as being not-Real—no one continues to perceive a snake after realizing that the object of his perception is actually a rope. The suggestion that such bondage to the world of perception continues for a while after the occurrence of Realization, because of past attachments, is not tenable—such attachments themselves are artifacts of the perceived world that has supposedly been sublated, and should not continue to besiege the consciousness of the Realized. If they do, then we have to either reject the Realization that is said to have occurred, or else reject the notion that the world of perception, as manifesting through the attachments on a supposedly Realized person, can be sublated. In either instance, the notion of jîvanmukti is not meaningful. //

Reply:

The realm of perception is the realm of Maya. That this Maya is ‘GunamayI’ is said by the Lord. To ‘cross over Maya’ is to realize, first hand, that it is unreal. The practice for that is to follow the ways of the Gunatita who considers, nay experiences, that the function of perception, etc. are a play of Maya (gunA guneshu varitante/ indriyANi indriyArtheshu varitante). The fruit of the practice is the aparoksha anubhava of the Absolute in which realm there is no Maya. If total freedom from prakriti (identification with the three gunas) were an impossibility while the body exists, the Lord would not have prescribed the means for and stated the lakshanas of gunaatItatvam.

[In the verse ‘DavI hyeShA gunamayI mama mAyA duratyayA/ mAmeva ye prapadyante mAyAmetAm taranti te’ of the seventh ch. Gita, the ‘mAmEva’ means ‘ Me the Lord alone with the exclusion of the mAyic world’. If one resorts to the Shuddha Brahman alone without heeding to the mAyic duality, one can overcome the mAyic duality and become freed. The freedom from mAyic world is taught in the Shruti: ‘BhUyashchaante vishva-mAyA nivrittiH’. That the jivan mukta is freed from the world created by mAya is clear from these Shruti/Smriti statements.

That the Lord is to be known as free from the guNas of Maya is also taught by the Lord alone:

MAyA hyeShaa mayA sriShTa yan mAm pashyati naarada |

Sarvabhuta-guNairyuktam maivam mAm jnAtumarhasi || (Mahabharata/Vishnu Puranam)

Here the Lord instructs Sage Narada after showing him His VishvarUpa: This form of mine, O Narada, is created by Me out of MAyaa. One should not know Me as endowed with the guNas of the creation.

When one separates the gunas obtaining in creation, in other words, the entire creation, from the Bhagavan, what we are left with is His shuddha, nirguna, svarUpam. This is what is His Absolute Nature; the knowledge of this is what is called 'liberating knowledge'. This is the Lord's teaching that the creation is atAttvika, mAyika.]

To contend that 'eating, sleeping, experiencing pleasure and pain, etc. are not possible for a mukta who is alive in a body' would land one in a situation where Sri Rama and Sri Krishna will have to be admitted to be baddha, ajnani samsaris. We have a number of instances recorded in the Gita/Mahabharata and the Valmiki Ramayana where eating, sleeping, experience of pleasure and pain are associated with these Divine Incarnations. For example in the Gita we have:

yac cāvahāsārtham asatkṛtosi
vihāraśayyāsanabhojane *Ṣu*
 ekothavāpy acyuta tatsamakṣam
 tat kṣāmaya tvām aham aprameyam 11.42

Lord Krishna's sleep and eating are mentioned here by Arjuna.

In the Mahabharata there is a description of the Lord expressing His anguish and pain:

It is recorded in this Great Book that on learning of the death of Abhimanyu, Arjuna vowed that he would slay Jayadratha, who prevented the Pandavas from going to Abhimanyu's aid, by sunset on the next day, failing which he would immolate himself. Krishna retired to His tent for the night after counseling Arjuna.

But in the middle of the night, Krishna woke up and remembering Arjuna's vow told Daruka (His charioteer) 'O Daruka! Even for a moment, I cannot bear to see this world bereft of Arjuna and the world must not become so. For the sake of Arjuna, I will quickly conquer and kill all of them, inclusive of Karna and Duryodhana, with their horses and elephants. Let the three worlds behold tomorrow My prowess in the great battle...At daybreak after the expiry of this night, duly prepare My excellent chariot according to the norms of warfare and follow Me. Equip it with the mace Koumodaki, the divine dart, Chakram, bow and arrows.....' Several such instances can be cited from the Mahabharata of Krishna behaving as if He lacked omniscience.

That the Lord experienced pleasure needs no special mention. The Bhagavatam gives a number of instances of the Lord, as a lad, reveling with the other boys of Gokula and the playing of pranks with the Gopis.

Coming to the Ramayana, we have this instance, for example:

Rama was such an incarnation of Ishwara and so cannot have lacked the power to know what was pertinent. Yet, when Sita was abducted by Ravana, Rama searched for Her as if He did not know Her whereabouts: Here is a translation of the concerned verses from the Valmiki Ramayana:

‘Not seeing Sita there, having looked around, Rama called out with His beautiful arms upraised and then said, ‘O Lakshmana! Where is Sita? Where has She gone from here? By whom has She been abducted? Or by whom has My beloved been eaten? O Sita! If, having hidden Yourself behind a tree, You wish to jest, enough of it today. Come to Me who am very unhappy’[He uses the words ‘mAm suduHkhitam’] Together with Lakshmana, Rama began to search. The two scanned the forests, mountains, rivers and ponds.’

There is an instance of Rama’s ‘sleeping’ recorded in the Ramayana:

/One day, when Rama and Sita were dwelling on the North-eastern base of the Chitrakuta mountain, not far from the Ganges, a crow perched near Sita. She sought to drive the bird away by hurling a clod of mud at it but it defiantly remained in Her vicinity. Sometime later, *as Rama slept on Her lap*, the wicked bird sharply attacked Her breast. Again and again it tore at her bosom and her blood wet Rama. *She woke up Rama and*/

There are instances of Rama ‘eating’ in the Ramayana. For example, Rama had vowed not to eat cooked food and sustain on fruits and roots gathered at the forest during His vanavasa. Rama did not accept hospitality in Sugreeva’s palace. Rama did accept these in the hermitages of Sages Sharabhanga, Agasthya, etc. Upon hearing of the passing away of Dasaratha from Bharata, Sri Rama performed the udaka/pinda kriya and then partook of the food for the day.

There is the instance of His eating the berries offered by the great devotee Shabari.

A question would arise: Rama and Krishna are Bhagavan, Ishwara, themselves in those bodies. How can they be placed on par with the other jivas (muktas)? The former are nityamuktas while the latter were baddha jivas and have attained the status later.

The above question is answered thus:

Although it might appear that there is a distinction, on closer analysis of the Gita and other scriptures, it can be seen that Bhagavan Himself does not want to maintain such a distinction. For example, in the Fourth Chapter the Lord says:

janma karma ca me divyam evaṃ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjanma naiti mām eti sorjuna 4.9

The Lord says: Whoever realizes the truth behind My ‘birth’ and ‘action’ as being of a divine, MAYic, nature will attain moksha. How can the knowledge of the mayic nature of the Lord’s birth and actions bring about moksha to the knower? It is possible only in one way: The knower, jiva, too realizes, on the basis of the teaching of the scriptures and the Lord, that the birth and actions of himself too, are mayic alone and not real.

For example, the Lord says in this chapter itself:

cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ
tasya kartāram api māṃ *viddhy akartāram avyayam* 4.13

na māṃ karmāṇi limpanti na me karmaphale spṛhā
iti māṃ yobhijānāti karmabhir na sa badhyate 4.14

First He says: Even though He has created this universe consisting of the four varnas, in truth, He is akarta, non-doer. He is Eternal, Nirvikari (avyayam). And such a non-doer’s (seeming) actions (naturally) do not bind Him. He further says: Whoever knows this truth (that the Lord, ParamAtma) Brahman, is a non-doer and that whatever He ‘does’ is only seeming and therefore these ‘actions’ do not bind Him, will be freed from karma. How is it possible that the knower of the truth about Bhagavan’s actions becomes freed from actions? This is possible under only one condition: Such a knower-jiva realizes that even he is akarta in truth and even his actions are in truth not binding him.

In the II chapter of the Gita the Lord has specified that the Atman is nitya, avadhya, sanAtana, sarvagataH, achala, etc., all of which are applicable to Brahman as well.

The essence of the above verses is: The Lord teaches that the jiva is non-different from Brahman. There is nothing that can differentiate Brahman from jiva excepting the upadhis. When the upadhis are known to be false, mayic, the One Pure Consciousness that is Brahman and that is what the jiva is, alone remains as the Advaitam. (Shantam, Shivam Advaitam of the Mandukya 7th mantra) and that is what the jiva is savrUpataH.

Thus, the ‘eating, sleeping, facing pleasure and pain’ cannot affect the nitya-mukta nature of the jiva who has realized the Truth and continues in the body for a while. These are quite compatible with the mukta as they belong only to the asatya deha-mana-upadhis. He has, by dint of the sakshatkara, freed himself from identifying with these upadhis.

There are a number of Upanishadic passages that teach the non-difference of the Supreme and the individual:

‘AtmA hyeShAm sa bhavati’ (Br.Up.I.4.10) says that the Brahman who attains the ‘sarvabhAva’ (I am the All), is the AtmA, Self, of the devas.’ The context is whether the deva-s can create obstacles in the Jnani getting the phalam of jnanam namely moksha. The Upanishat negates this possibility by asserting that since the Jnani, verily Brahman, the sarvAtmA, is (also) the Self of the Deva-s, there cannot be any obstacle from the devas in the Jnani’s liberation.

‘atha yo’nyAm devatAm upAste’nyo’sau aham anyo’smi iti na sa veda’ (Br.Up.I.4.10) says: ‘He who worships another god, thinking, ‘He is one and I am another’ does not know.’

‘udaram antaram kurute, atha tasya bhayam bhavati’ (Taittiriya Up. 2,7.1) says: ‘He who conceives in terms of the slightest difference between himself and the Supreme, for him there is fear.’

Whenever such a non-difference between the Supreme and the individual is taught, it must be borne in mind that the identity is not with respect to the upadhis of the Supreme and the individual. The Lord, in the Gita has given enough instances to show His true nature that is bereft of upadhis: For example:

na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi lokasya *śṛjati prabhuḥ*
na karmaphalasaṁyogaṁ svabhāvas tu pravartate 5.14

nādatte kasyacit pāpaṁ na caiva sukṛtaṁ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṁ jñānaṁ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ 5.15

The Lord does not create agency or action in the jivas. Nor does He bring the jivas in contact with their karma phalam. All these happen by the play of maya, avidya. The Lord does not receive anyone’s sin or merit. These show that the Lord, in truth, does not involve Himself in any of these functions related to the jiva-s. In the 14th ch. 19th verse He says that ‘Whoever realizes that there is no doer other than the guna-s and knows the Self that is beyond the guna-s attains to My nature. This means that the individual Self that is untouched by the guna-s is non-different from the Supreme Self that is also untouched by the prakriti. It is in this sense that the identity is understood. With prakriti as upadhi, the Lord is sarvashakta and the individual is limited by nature. Since this is the vyavaharic situation, the scriptures, alluding to this, teach the paramarthic truth that is bereft of the upadhis. It is keeping in mind this fact does the Lord say: ‘JnAnI tu Atmaiva me matam’ in the 7th chapter and ‘aham AtmA guDAkesha sarvabhUtaashayasthitaH’ in the 10th chapter. In the former verse the Lord says that the Jnaani is verily Me and in the latter He says: ‘I am the pratyagAtmA of every being’. What wonderful statements of abheda/aikyam/non-difference/identity!

The above verses may be contrasted with the Lord’s words showing His upAdhi-sahita nature:

pitāham asya jagato mātā *dhātā* pitāmahaḥ
vedyaṁ pavitram oṁkāra ṛk sāma yajur eva ca 9.17

ahaṁ hi sarvayajñānāṁ *bhoktā* ca prabhur eva ca
na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te 9.24

In these verses the ‘karma-phala-pra-vibhaktritva’, the ordainer-hood of the fruit of the karma, is mentioned by the Lord. The Lord also says that He is the yajna-bhokta, the receiver of the oblations offered. What is to be noted is, the Lord denies that He is the

‘dhAtA’ and receiver of any punyakarma of the jiva-s in the verses shown in the earlier paragraph.

The identity is brought out by the Lord in these verses too:

prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ
yaḥ paśyati *tathātmānam akartāraṃ* sa paśyati 13.29

[Here the Atma is said to be the non-doer. Who is this Atma? This is shown in the next verse.]

yadā *bhūtapṛthagbhāvam* ekastham anupaśyati
tata eva ca *vistāraṃ brahma saṃpadyate tadā* 13.30

[The Consciousness that is non-doer, different-from-prakriti, is none other than Brahman, the ‘Cause’ of the entire universe. This is the Atman, that is spoken of in the earlier verse. The Chandogya Upanishad (VII.26.1) says: ‘AtmataH prANaH...’ meaning, from Atman has emerged the entire universe. The Taittriya Up. says: ‘AtmanaH aakAshaH sambhUtaH,...’. This Upanishat teaches: Brahnavit Apnoti param. Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma. Where is this Atman/Brahman to be found and realized? ‘yo veda nihitam guhAyAm parame vyoman’, It is available in the cave of the intellect. It is this Consciousness, Atman, that is taught as the one beyond the five sheaths, koshas. It is this Consciousness that every individual experiences as himself, although not knowing with clarity. The teaching of the Upanishad that the Atman available in the cave of the intellect is Brahman is unmistakable. For, it says: He who knows the Atman in the cave of the intellect is the knower of Brahman, Brahma-vit. Atmavit = Brahmavit. This proves beyond doubt that there are no two consciousness-es, Atman and Brahman. This is the One and Only Consciousness that is spoken of ‘...jnAnam, jneyam, jnAna-gamyam, hRdi sarvasya vishthitam’ and ‘*dhyAnena Atmani pashyanti kechit AtmAnam AtmanA..*’ (Gita 13th ch.) as available in the intellect of everyone, the kshetrajna, and as that which is to be realized for securing liberation:

jyotiśām api taj jyotis tamasah param ucyate
jñānaṃ *jñeyaṃ* jñānagamyam *hṛdi sarvasya viśthitam* 13.17.

[The Lord has specified that the ‘jneyam’ is the anAdimat Param Brahma in this chapter itself.]

This is the ‘kshetrajna’ in everyone which the Lord taught as to be realized as He Himself:

kṣetrajnāṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetrakṣetrajnāyor jñānaṃ yat taj jñānaṃ mataṃ mama 13.2

This Consciousness is what is taught by the Brihadaranyaka Up.(III.7.4) as ‘yESha te AtmA antaryAmyamRtaH’.] [This is your Atma that is the antaryAmi, the eternal One.] The teaching is: You, the Atma, is none other than the Eternal antaryAmin.]

In the Brihadaranyaka Up. there is the famous ‘Maitreyi Brahmanam’ where occurs the teaching ‘Atmanastu kAmAya sarvam priyam bhavati’. Sage Yajnavalkya considers all the possible objects that one desires and holds dear and finally concludes that all these objects are dear only because they are subordinate to one’s own Self, Atman. This is readily appreciable as it is so in our experience. Then the Sage goes on to say that this Atman which is the dearest of all and is non-negotiable is the one to be known clearly, i.e, without the admixture of the non-Atman, so as to result in attaining the *summum bonum* of life. This Atma-jnanam is the mukti hetu. What is noteworthy here is that there is no differentiation of Atman, the individual Self, from Brahman the Parameshwara. In the Kathopanishat, the very question of Nachiketas is about the individual Self. While giving a detailed reply to this question, Yamadharmaraja explains the nature of Atman as non-different from Brahman. We are NOT left wondering whether it is Atma jnanam or Brahma jnanam that is moksha kAranam. All these point to the fact that there are no ‘two’ Atmans, jiva and Parama. It is One Consciousness only that is spoken of in all the Upanishads as the Aupanishada Purusha. Atma sAkshAtkara is the same as Brahma sAkshAtkara. The Kathopanishat mantra (II.i.1) ‘parAnchi khAni.....’ says: pratyagAtmaanam aikshat...amrutatvam icchan, meaning, pratyagAtma jnanam is the liberating knowledge. This pratyagAtman is what is specified as the one transcending the body-mind-ego complex as ‘tad vishnoH paramam padam’. Thus it is settled beyond doubt that the Atma of the jiva is none other than Brahman.

Who are we in truth?

To this question, generally we reply that we are the person associated with a body, mind and ego and related to various people and objects. Since this is not the truth of our being, as it is born out of avidya/adhyasa, the Lord takes up the task of giving the teaching, in a step-by-step manner.

The 13th chapter has these two verses even at the start:

śrībhagavān uvāca

idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate
etad yo vetti taṃ prāhuḥ kṣetrajñā itī tadvidāḥ 13.1

The Lord says that the body-mind complex has to be separated from the Consciousness. The ‘idam’, kshetram, the inert principle that is experienced as an object, vishaya, is to be seen as different from the ‘aham’, the vishayi, the Consciousness, the kshetrajna. But, by this much we are not given the entire picture. We have been taught what we are **not**. What we **are** in truth is yet to be specified. To this end, the Lord continues:

kṣetrajñāṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetrakṣetrajñāyor jñānaṃ yat taj jñānaṃ mataṃ mama 13.2

The kshetrajna that is experienced in all of us as ‘I’ the Consciousness, is He Himself, says the Lord. In effect, the teaching is: the ‘aham’ determined in the first verse is ‘Brahman’ as taught in the second verse. Thus, in truth, we are Brahman.

We can arrive at the incontrovertible scriptural evidence for the jiva-Brahma abheda by a short analysis:

The Lord says in the Gita:

idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya kṣetram ity abhidhīyate
etad yo vetti taṃ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ 13.1

kṣetrajñāṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata
kṣetrakṣetrajnāyor jñānaṃ yat taj jñānaṃ mataṃ mama 13.2

The point made in the first verse is: the mind-body, kshetram, is the vedya, ‘known’, vishaya. The kshetrajna is the vEttA, the knower, vishayI principle. The kshetrajna is the Consciousness available in the jiva chaitanyam and is called AtmA. **This none can deny as everyone experiences his body/mind as an object.** This very chapter has a verse that says that this is the Atman that is realized by the aspirant:

dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid *ātmānam* ātmanā
anye sām̐khyena yogena karmayogena cāpare 13.24

The point that is being made now is: Atman is the knower of the body-mind anAtman kshetram.

We have in the Kenopanishat the following mantra:

Yan manasA na manute yEnAhur mano matam |
Tadeva Brahma tvam viddhi nedam yadidam upAsate || II.5 ||

[**That** which is not known by the mind but **by Which** the mind is known, know **That** to be Brahman]

Here, the Upanishad says that the Consciousness which knows the mind as a vishaya is Brahman. By juxtaposing the Gita verses above with this Kenopanishat mantra we conclude that Atman, the knower of the mind is otherwise called Brahman, the knower of the mind. The result of this short analysis is: (jiva)Atman is (Para)Brahman. The Lord echoes the words of this Kenopanishat mantra when He says: *kṣetrajñāṃ cāpi māṃ viddhi* sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata. Kshetrajna Atma is Brahman, the Lord.

In the Taittiriyaopanishat (Brahmaanandavalli – 1) we read: tasmAd vA EtasmAt AtmanaH AkAshaH sambhUtaH....The words ‘tasmAt’ and ‘EtasmAt’ are significant in the teaching of the Brahma-Atma abheda. ‘TasmAt’ is used when a distant, far-removed entity is referred to. ‘EtasmAt’ is used to refer to an entity available close at hand,

proximate. The Upanishad referred to Brahman by saying ‘satyam jnAnam anantam’. The teaching is: ‘From That Brahman that is verily This Atman the creation comes forth...’ This is the Upanishadic way of teaching: Brahman is Atman. The Mandukya Upanishad too says: ‘**ayam** Atmaa Brahma’ by pointing to ‘this’ proximately known Atman-Consciousness as Brahman. In the seventh mantra, after negating the jagat that is the kArya, the Upanishat says: shAntam shivam advaitam (the jagat-kAranam divested of the kAranatva status) is Atma. The adjective ‘**shAntam**’ of the TurIya in this Upanishat could be seen as the ‘tadyaccet **shAnta** Atmani’ of the Kathopanishat where the Atman is the pratyagAtman alone, undoubtedly. This Atman is the innermost, guhA-hitam, beyond the mind, intellect, ego. Thus the TurIya Brahman is Shantam and the pratyagAtman available in the jIva is also shAntam. The purport of the Upanishads is in teaching that the jiva-Consciousness is Brahman indeed.

Yet another Upanishadic reference to the above kind of teaching is to be found in the Kathopanishad II.i.10:

//Yadeveha tadamutra yadamutra tadanviha. Mrutyo: sa mrutyumApnoti ya iha nAneva pashyati//

That which is Here (in this body, the microcosm) is what is present There (Macrocosm, the All-pervading Tat, Brahman). That which is There is what is available in this body as the Chaitanyam. One who misses this identity remains in samsara.

While teaching the Jneyam, Brahman, the Gita 13th ch. says:

sarvataH paaNi-pAdam tat sarvatokshi-shiro-mukham |
sarvataH shrutimat loke sarvamAvritya tishthati ||

This verse says that Brahman is what is appearing as all the physical bodies everywhere. Brahman is what is pervading everything in the world. By saying this, the Lord says that the chaitanyam obtaining in every body is Brahman.

It could be objected: What the Lord is teaching is that the Lord is all the physical bodies; the chaitanyam indwelling the bodies are different jiva-s.

Reply: If this is admitted, then the Lord would be subjected to all the properties of physical bodies like birth, growth, old age, disease, decay and death. Contrary to this the Lord has taught that the Atman/Brahman is ajam, nityam, shAshvatam, nirvikAri, etc. Moreover, the Lord has also taught that the entire kshetram consisting of the physical bodies, the subtle bodies (mind), etc. are distinct from the Kshetrajna, the Sakshi Chaitanyam, obtaining in all bodies. Not only that, the kshetram is to be separated, by viveka, from the kshetrajna and the separated kshetrajna is to be realized as one’s Self/Brahman, for liberation to ensue. Thus the meaning of the above verse is that it is Brahman that is available in each body as the chaitanya. The bodies consisting of hands, feet, etc. are identification marks for locating the shuddha chaitanyam which is not available for sensory perception. In the Taittiriya Upanishat, BhrguvallI, we find that the father VaruNa employs this method. He teaches after saying ‘tapasA brahma vijijnAsasva [realize Brahman through intense meditative enquiry], that the doorways to

search for Brahman are: annam, prANam, chakshuH, shrotram, mano vAcham iti' [the activities seen in the jiva in the gross body, the prana, the seeing, hearing, thinking, speech, etc. are the identification marks by which one ascertains that the Brahma chaitanyam is present]. It is like specifying a residence with a particular address to locate the individual who resides there. The Taittiriya Up.says: 'tat shrushtvA tadevAnuprAvishat': Having created the bodies, Brahman entered these bodies as jiva-s and is available in the bodies as the karta, bhokta, jnAta, manta, etc. That is why the Upanishad says: yo veda nihitam guhAyAm ...so'shnute sarvAn kAmAn saha brahmanA vipashchitaa...whoever realizes the chaitanyam enshrined in the cave of the intellect as his self/Brahman attains pUrnatva and is liberated. This 'residing in the cave of the intellect' is what is meant by the 'pravasha' of Brahman into the bodies which is termed kshetram/anAtmA/prakriti, etc. The 13th ch. teaches that the Purusha/Brahman resides in the prakriti/body and experiences, out of ignorance, the guna-s born of prakriti. The separating, through viveka, from prakriti is what constitutes liberation.

The above verse also proves the scriptural teaching of jiva-Ishwara abheda.

The above analysis, incidentally, provides the answer to a possible objection, arising out of not grasping the Advaitic/Upanishadic teaching correctly: How can there be pUrnatva to the Brahman which is said to be conditioned by MAyA (MAyAvacchinnyasya BrahmanaH katham pUrnatvam upapadyate)? The reply is: The conditioning in the form of residing in the body/mind complex is not Absolute but is only incidental, Avidyaka. When by taking recourse to sadhana based on the Guru-Shastra upadesha one realizes that the sAkshi chaitanyam obtaining in the guhA = intellect is the akhanda Brahma chaitanyam, the avidya conditioning is destroyed and the native pUrnatvam is realized as 'I have ever been PUrNa'.

Is the realization in the manner 'aham Brahma asmi' an expression of arrogance?

There is an impression among the theistic schools, who are unable to arrive at the prime purport of the Vedanta, that the Advaitin's interpretation of Upanishadic teachings 'Tat tvam asi', 'Aham Brahma asmi', etc. amount to an expression of arrogance on the part of one who teaches so and the one who realizes so. That such a view is founded on ignorance is not difficult to understand. The Mandukya Upanishad teaches: 'shAntam shivam advaitam, sa Atma, sa vijneyaH' [the TurIya is Peace Supreme, Auspiciousness and Non-dual. It is the Self and has to be realized (for liberation)] The Kathopanishad teaches: 'tad vishnoH paramam padam' when specifying the transcendental nature of the Absolute Truth. The Chandogya Upanishad teaches: 'tat satyam, sa Atma, tat tvam asi' [That is the ever-existent Truth, It is the Self, That thou art]. The Brihadaranyaka Up.teaches: 'tat AtmAnam eva avet aham brahma asmi iti' [It realized Itself as 'I am Brahman']. This very Upanishad (IV.iv.13) teaches the **mode** of realization of the Truth thus:

AtmAnam ched vijAnIyAt **ayam asmi** iti pUrushaH |
Kim icchan kasya kAmAya sharIram anu sanjwaret ||

The teaching here is: whoever realizes the Atma, self, as ‘this Atma, am I’ no longer remains in embodied nature.

We find, in the above instance, such an ‘anvaya’ (positive) way of teaching by the Shruti as to ‘how’ the realization ought to be. We also find the ‘vyatireka’ way of teaching by the Shruti as to ‘how not’ the realization ought to be. For example: the Brihadaranyaka Up. I.iv.10 teaches: ‘atha yo anyAm devatAm upAste “**anyo asau anyo aham asmi**” iti **na sa veda** yathaa pashurevam sa devaanAm’. Whoever worships/contemplates any deity with the attitude: ‘This deity is different and I am different’ does so in ignorance; he is indicted as a slavish animal to the deity’. The purport of the ‘anvaya’ and ‘vyatireka’ way of teaching is that: Atman/Brahman is to be realized as oneself only and not otherwise.

Apart from this, those who advance the ‘arrogance’ view fail to see that when the Shastra teaches abheda saakshAtkAra, it is not doing it in the level of the body-mind identification. It teaches first the method of dissociating the Consciousness, the Self, from the superimposed not-self consisting of the body-mind (through the pancha-kosha viveka, avasthAtraya viveka, etc). Doing this at the individual level is not enough. The separating of the upadhis from the Cosmic Self, Brahman, is also required. This is done by negating the creatorhood, managerhood, etc. of Brahman and seeing just the Pure Consciousness. The Mandukya Upanishad does this admirably. After teaching the nature of the individual self and Cosmic Self with the upadhis in the three pAda-s, vishva-virAt, taijasa-hiranyagarbha and prAjna-Ishwara, the Upanishad embarks on the exercise of negating **all the upadhis** (of both the individual and the Supreme Self) in the seventh mantra: ‘na antaH prajnam...., etc’. What remains as unnegatable finally is: ShAntm Shivam Advaitam. This Truth, the Upanishad says: ‘sa AtmA, sa vijneyaH’ is the Self that has to be realized.

In the Bhagavad Gita too we can discern this method. For example, in the verse of the 13th chapter: ‘kshetraajnam cha api mAam viddhi’ the Lord is not equating the body-mind-upadhi-jiva with Himself. He separates the kshetraajna, the Consciousness, Knower, from the kshetra, the inert principle, the known. It is only after separating the body-mind complex from the chaitanyam does the Lord teach the aikyam. On the part of the Lord too, we can determine from the various other verses that He is the Consciousness that is ‘akartA’, ‘avyaya’, ‘na cha matsthAni bhUtaani’ etc.

Thus the abheda, aikyam, taught by the Shastra is only in the level of Pure Consciousness, the nirupAdhika chaitanya. In the sopaadhika chaitanya no aikyam is possible. The accusation of ‘arrogance’ might be valid only when someone claims he is Brahman/Ishwara without giving up the body-identification.

Thus we see that the Upanishad itself is instructing/prescribing the mode of realization of the liberating truth as ‘I am this Atma/Brahman’. To maintain that this is arrogance on the part of the teacher and the sadhaka is to impute the Upanishad itself of perpetrating arrogance.

Reason too supports that true liberation ensues from the realization of the Truth as ‘I am Brahman’. Brahman is said to be ‘amRta’, untouched by death. Liberation is freedom from the cycle of births and deaths. It is only he who gains the conviction, through direct experience, that he is free from death attains to the state of liberation which is free from death. To this end, it is not sufficient if one realizes that ‘Bhagavan/Atman/Brahman is amRta svarUpa’ and conclude ‘I am different from Bhagavan/Brahman/Atman’. The notion born of ignorance: ‘I am a samsari, subject to birth and death’ can go only when it is replaced by the knowledge arising out of the appropriate Pramana: ‘I am not a samsari, I am amRta, amaraNadharmA’. My realizing that some one other than me is amRta will not confer on me the liberation from death/samsara. There are a number of Upanishadic passages that declare the realization of an aspirant:

It is reported in the Taittiriya Upanishad, sIkshAvallI (I.x.1): ‘aham vRkshasya rerivaa, kIrthiH pRShTham gireriva..sumedhA amRtokshitaH’ [‘I am the invigorator of the tree of samsara. My fame is high like the ridge of a mountain....I am soaked in nectar. Thus was the statement after the realization of the unity of the Self expressed by Sage Trishanku] .). **In the case of Sage Trishanku’s declaration the Taittiriya Up. itself says: ‘iti Trishankor-veda-anu-vachanam’ meaning: This declaration of Trishanku is in accordance with the Veda.**

‘ahamannam ahamannam....’ is the declaration of the realization of the sarvAtma bhAva by Bhrigu in the Taittiriya Upanishad (III.x.5-6).

We have in the Aitareya Upanishad the declaration of sage Vaamadeva which is unmistakably his realization of SarvAtmabhAva and release from bondage that existed previously.

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I.iv.9) raises a question:

//tadAhuH, yat ‘BrahmavidyayA sarvam bhavishyantaH’ manushyAh manyante, kimu tad brahma avEt yasmAt tat sarvam abhavat iti//
[They say: Men think, ‘Through the knowledge of Brahman we shall become all.’ Well, what did that Brahman know by which It (Brahman) became all?]

Replying this question, the Upanishad itself says in the very next mantra: (I.iv.10):

//Brahma vA idamagra AsIt...’aham BrahmAsmI iti.’ TasmAt tat sarvam abhavat...//

[This (self) was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itslef as ‘I am Brahman.’ And thereby It became All.]

In view of all this, it would be un-upanishadic not to attain the liberating knowledge as: ‘I am Brahman’. A realization not in accordance with this form will not result in liberation, anirmoksha-prasangaH.

It might appear that the Lord does view those who have refused to come to Him as being eternal sinners. The verse:

tān ahaṃ dviṣataḥ krurān saṃsāreṣu narādhamān
kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu 16.19

could give an impression that the Lord sees these people as different from Him and that is the reason He consigns them to eternal hells. This verse has to be seen in the background of the other verses where the Lord says that He neither takes anybody's sin or merit, nor does He bring about the connection between the jiva-s and their karma-phala; it is the svabhAva, prakriti, that operates and the Lord has nothing to do with this. Also, the Lord has said that those who come close to Him get the benefit of His care and those who choose to remain away from Him do not get this benefit. Here too, the Lord remains unattached, asanga; the actions of the jiva-s bring about the respective fruits.

Understanding 'ahankaara' (a possible synonym for 'arrogance'):

Much of the confusion arises because of not analyzing the 'I', 'aham' concept. The scriptures and the ShaastrakAra-s have taken pains to do this exercise with a view to bring about a proper understanding of the 'I' concept. For example in the Yoga VAsishTha (Reference:) Sage VasishTha instructs Sri Rama:

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i^|iv|D|o r|G|v||st|Ih tv|h\;|ro j|g|-ryo |
©O ŪoSQ|iv|t|rsty||jy|: Ū³N¶ tv} ;T|y||im|
to ||
ah\ s|v|*im|d\ iv|Ãv} p|rm||tm||%hm|cy¶t| |
n||ny|dst||it| s}iv|§| p|rm|| s|| Áh\;ëit|:
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s|v|*sm||©Yit|ir•o%h\ v||l||g-|dpy|h\ t|n¶:
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wit| y|| s}iv|dev||s|o
i©t|Iy||%h\;ëit|xx¶B|| ||
m|oX||yOv| n| b|nD||y| j|Iv|nm¶•sy| iv|§to |
p||FN|p||d|idm||^|o%y|m|him|tyov| in|°y|: |
ah\;|rst³t|Iy|o%S|O l|Oi;st¶cC Av| s|: ||
ah\;ëit|©yo Ato p|Uv|o*•† B||v|y|n|/ y|id |
it|SQty|Byoit| p|rm} t|t|/ p|r\ p¶ÎS|o%n|G|
||
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[Raghava! In all the three worlds the 'I' sense is three-fold. Of these two are virtuous and the third is to be given up. Hear now the three types:

‘I am the Supreme Self, the entire Universe and nothing else exists apart from Me.’ Such a right knowledge consists of the Supreme I-sense.

‘I am different from everything else and am extremely subtle, even than the tip of the hair of a tail.’ This kind of right knowledge is the second type of virtuous I-sense.

The certitude of the kind ‘I am a mere collection of hands, feet and other organs’ is the third type of I-sense which is of the ignorant kind and is lowly.

O Sinless One, if someone contemplates for long on the first two types of I-sense that constitutes virtue, he reaches the Supreme Lord.]

(Note: While the first type is typical of the Advaitic sadhana, the second type could be viewed as typefying the Bhakti sadhana of the Dwaita/Vishishtadwaita schools.)

The Panchadashi of Swami Vidyananda too enumerates the types of I-sense. Says the Chapter VI (TRptideepa slokas 9 - 13) in this connection:

t³Fpt]dIip]¿]y]]m]ip] (p]Vc]dx]I 6) -

n]]s}go%h\¿ëit]y¶*•] ¿T]m]st]Iit] cocC&N¶ |
A¿o m¶Ky]o ©]v]m¶Ky]O wty]T]*Fs^]iv]D]o%hm]:
|| 9 ||

any]ony]]Dy]]s]ÐpoN] ¿øqsT]]B]]s]y]ov]*p]u:
|

A¿IB]Uy] B]vonm¶Ky]: t]^] m]UZ]: p-y¶Vj]]to
|| 10 ||

p³T]g]]B]]s]¿øqsT]]v]m¶Ky]O t]^] t]-v]iv]t]/
|

p]y]]*yoN] p-y¶M/•†%h\x]bd\ l]o¿† c] vOid¿†
|| 11 ||

[Question: In the Pure Consciousness that is unattached with anything else, how can there exist the I-sense?

Reply: There can be three types of I-senses of which one is primary and the other two are secondary. The primary one is the result of the mutual superimposition of the Unchanging Self and the reflected Consciousness (body-mind complex). This admixture is the one identified with by the ignorant people. (Being resorted to by most people, it is called ‘primary’.)

The Jnani, Knower, however, separates the Unchanging Self from the reflected Consciousness and identifies with both of the I-senses, in a ‘togglng’ manner, while engaging in worldly and spiritual parlances.

As to how he does this is explained thus:

l]Oi;vy]v]h]re%h\g]cC]m]Ity]]id;t b¶D]: |
 iv]iv]cyOv] ic]d]B]]s} ;øqsT]]-} iv]v]X]it]
 || 12 ||
 as}g]o%h\ ic]d]tm]]%him]it] x]]s^]Iy]İFSqt]:
 |
 ah\x]bd\ p-y¶M/•t%y]\ ;øwsTo ;tv]]lo b¶D]: ||
 13 ||

In worldly vyavahara such as ‘I an going to...’, the Knower separates the reflected Consciousness (from the Pure Consciousness) and uses the ‘I’ in this sense.

When engaging in contemplating upon the Pure Consciousness as ‘I am the unattached Self, the Pure Consciousness’, the Knower uses the I-sense in the Pure Self.]

Thus one can see that the Vedic teaching of the manner of realization of the Truth in the form of ‘Aham Brahma asmi’ is conveyed by the Acharyas to the aspirant most carefully by giving no room for any ‘arrogance’ in the process.

Are we many?

Having seen that the jiva-Ishwara bheda is founded on false knowledge, let us examine the jiva-jiva bheda. We have the experience, ‘I am different from the others’. Each of us swears that he is undoubtedly a conscious being. Is this not proof of our being different individuals? To such a question, the Lord replies:

In the 13th chapter there is a verse:

avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu *vibhaktam iva* ca sthitam 13.16

The Lord says that Brahman, Consciousness, is not divisible; It cannot be fragmented and distributed in each individual. But it *appears* to be divided in various individuals. The Lord uses the particle ‘iva’ to denote the seeming nature of such a division. The Shruti ‘Nishkalam...’ denies parts or amsha-s in Brahman/Atman. Admitting amsha-s in Brahman is against other shruti teachings like ‘vijnaana ghanaH’, ‘ekam eva advitIyam’, ‘ajam, avyayam’, etc. Smriti, the Gita, too is against this contention. The Sutra ‘avibhAgo vachanAt’ IV.ii.16 also denies any vibhaaga, kalaa, amsha, in Brahman in the absolute state. The Prashna Up. VI.5 states: ‘ bhidyete tAsAm nAmarUpe.sa esho *a-kalo* amruto

bhavati'. That which is made up of parts is essentially a created one and not *ajam*. When the parts, *amshas*, disintegrate, the 'whole', *amshI*, faces destruction. Then, what is the basis of our 'holding' that we are all different individuals? The reply is: We see the different bodies and get deluded that we are different individuals. *Deha-nAnaatva* is mistaken for *chaitanya nAnAtva*. Since each of us has, due to *adhyasa*, conceived a body which is finite, *paricchinna* and *apUrna*, we conclude that each is a finite, different individual. The *kshetram* does not subsist in the state of *Moksha*; it is separated from the *Purusha* and discarded. So, it would be wrong to hold that the *Mukta* will continue to have a distinct entity of his own from the others, either while alive or after the fall of the body. All distinguishing factors belong to the *kshetram/prakriti* alone and the *Purusha/Brahman* is untouched by this.

Then what about the Lord's other statements where there is a clear indication of many *jivas*?

natv evāhaṃ jātu nāsaṃ na tvaṃ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ *sarve vayam* ataḥ param 2.12

[That the Lord is using the plural number having in mind the various bodies that are experienced in the world but He has not conveyed that the *jeeva-s* are many in number in the *pAramArthic/absolute* sense can be understood by examining some other verses.

A verse (32) occurring in the 11th chapter:

'...Rte'pi tvAm na bhavishyanti sarve ye....yodhAH'
[Even without you(r effort to slay them) these warriors will not survive]

Here, the Lord shows how the rule: '*jAtasya hi dhruvo mRtyuH*' (II. 27) 'death is certain for one who is born' is infallible. In the verse we saw above (II.12) He avers the other side of this rule: '*dhruvam janma mRtasya*' 'Birth is certain for the one who dies'. Thus, in order to take another birth, the departed souls (note plural) have to exist. It is only the realized one, *Mukta*, that does not take another birth after the physical body dies.

Again,
antavanta ime dehAH nityasyoktaH sharIriNaH |
anAshino aprameyasya|| 2.18

Here too, we see the plural number with reference to the bodies. But the Lord **does not** use the plural to denote the indweller of the bodies: *sharIri*. He qualifies the *sharIri* as *Nitya*, *anAshI* and *aprameya*. The Lord had taught what the true nature of the *sharIri* is in verse 2.17 as '*avinAshI*' and who pervades ALL THIS CREATION and this entity is beyond destruction by any force.

Here we have in clear terms that the Self, *Atman*, about whose true nature the Lord is teaching *Arjuna* in the wake of his despondency, is One only and that It is All-pervading. An additional point to be noted in verse 2.18 is: All the(se) bodies are the various

manifestations of the One sharIri alone; the shashThee vibhakti makes this clear beyond doubt. The ultimate teaching is: One Self and several bodies.

The above is corroborated through the Lord's own words in the 13th chapter:

Kshetrajam cha api mAm viddhi sarva kshetreshu bhArata

Know Me to be the SharIri obtaining in every body. (An aside point: the word 'kshetram' cannot mean 'the entire world/creation' ; it can mean 'the body' alone. This is because, apart from other reasons, the use of the plural 'sarva-kshetreshu' would have to be taken as 'many worlds/creations' which would be absurd. Also, that the mahA-bhUtani ahankAra etc. which the Lord explains as kshetram will have to be conceived as also being multiple, which is also absurd.)

The wording of this verse:

natv evāhaṃ jātu nāsaṃ na tvaṃ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ *sarve vayam* ataḥ param 2.12

could give an impression that the Lord is differentiating Himself from the others and therefore there is duality as taught by the Lord. That such is not the case can be known from other utterances of the Lord. He says in the 4th chapter:

bahUni mey vyatItAni janmAni tava cha arjuna 4.5

The Lord refers to His present incarnation as a janma of His and Arjuna's present body as his janma. It is based on these different bodies that the Lord says in the above verse 2.12 that gives the impression mentioned above. That this has to be so is clearly understood when we see the Lord's words:

Na jaayate mriyate vaa kadAchit.....2.20 : The Self is never born.....And with regard to Himself He says: ajopi san avyayAtmA in 4.6.

The Lord also says in 13.16: avibhaktam cha bhUteShu vibhaktam iva cha sthitam:

The One undivisible Consciousness indwells the various bodies and appears as though divided. This Consciousness is the SharIri, the Kshetrajna indwelling all the bodies.

The plural used in verse 2.12 and the expression: **ataḥ param** (hereafter) are significant. There will be transmigration for the jiva-s after death. And Ishwara will not have total extinction; He will have to be there in every creation. So, in the realm of bondage, plural has to be spoken of. But this is not the absolute truth is what is shown in this analysis.

Where does the Lord teach that there is no plurality in the absolute plane?

In the 18th Chapter, for instance, while specifying what constitutes saattvic jnAnam He says:

sarvabhUteShu yena ekam bhAvam avyayam IkShate
avibhaktam vibhakteShu taj jnAnam viddhi sAttvikam 18.20

The One undiminishing, ever-existing, undifferentiated essence that runs through all the variety in creation is to be recognized and this constitutes saattvikam jnAnam. The scriptures point out that this is none other than Brahman. The Lord points out what **does not** constitute true knowledge:

pRthaktvena tu yaj jnAnam nAnAbhAvAn pRthagvidhAn
vetti sarveShu bhUteShu taj jnAnam viddhi rAjasam 18.21

Holding that the varied beings are truly different from each other and are distinct entities is tainted knowledge. Quite contrary to the unenquired notion held by those uninitiated into Shastra that the beings are really different, tattvato bhinnAH, the Lord teaches that the scriptural Truth is that the beings are non-different: tattvato abhinnAH.

Where else do we find this teaching in the Gita?

In the 5th Ch. verse,
vidyāvinayasaṃpanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ 5.18

ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ
nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitāḥ 5.19

In these verses, while teaching the experience of a Jivanmukta, the Lord specifies the Non-dual Atman experience that the Jnani secures and how he would view the world of apparent duality/variety. The Non-dual Truth is Samam, of equal nature, in all apparently different beings. While the Samam is the unchanging essence, the ‘containers’ of this Samam are ephemeral. They are insubstantial, being products of prakriti. It is the separating of the Purusha from Prakriti (as taught in the 13th ch.) that constitutes liberating knowledge. Such a Jnani transcends samsara ‘here itself’ as the above verse shows and is a mukta.

Again, in this following verse too the Lord teaches that the difference among beings is only seeming and not real:

avibhaktaṃ ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam **iva** ca sthitam 13.17

The One Indwelling Consciousness remains undivided really but is mistaken to be differentiated. The variety in the bodies is mistaken to be the variety in the One Consciousness, Brahman. The word/particle ‘iva’ above shows this.

A study of the following seminal verse of the Gita too would prove that the Absolute Truth can be only One, Advaitam:

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo.antas tv anayos tattvadarśibhiḥ 2.16

Here the Lord teaches that the Sat, (that which is seen as ‘ekam BhAvam’ in the verse 18.20), is the One inhering principle in all the perishable bodies. The bodies themselves are asat. The teaching is: There is no existence for the ‘asat’ in all periods of time. And there is no non-existence of Sat in all periods of time. Sat can be only one; there is no way we can have a variety in Sat. There can be any number of manifestations of Sat, but Sat in its absolute nature can be One only. Sat is Brahman. Saattvic Jnanam as per the Lord constitutes in apprehending the Truth as One Sat; a multiplicity is not the right kind of realization.

All this goes to show that: the Lord is not differentiating between Him and others **and also between** others from the absolute standpoint.]

natv evāhaṃ jātu nāsaṃ na tvaṃ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ *sarve vayam* ataḥ param 2.12

mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥśaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛtisthāni karṣati 15.7

The explanation given above applies to the interpreting of these two verses as well. The Lord would not be contradicting the Aupanishadic position about the jiva-jiva bheda. In the Kathopanishad too there is the mantra similar sounding to the Gita 13.16 we saw above. It says that it is ‘mahAntam vibhum Atmaanam...’. That which is MahAn and vibhu cannot be many in number; we cannot have more than one infinite. In the light of these, obviously, the Lord in the above two verses is having in mind the multiple bodies/minds that is generally experienced in vyavahara. Also that, in order to explain transmigration to other lokas, rebirth, karma, etc. the difference among jivas is acknowledged by the Shruti. But this is only in the relative plane. When it comes to understanding the Tattva that leads to moksha, this relative plane has to be transcended. The Turiya is taught as ‘shAntam shivam advaitam’. The transcendental Truth does not transmigrate and has no karma. What transmigrates is only the antaHkarana along with its samskaras. This is only aupAdhika. The Atman free of these upAdhis is the Atman to be realized for liberation.

Says the Gita:

sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṃ bhāvam avyayam īkṣate
avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu taj jñānaṃ viddhi sāttvikam 18.20

That vision is conducive to liberation which consists of recognizing a **Unitary Principle** that runs through the entire creation. A vision that admits **absolute differences** is censured by the Gita as rajasic and tamasic.

What about the difference between chetana (sentient) and inert objects?

The general thinking is: We, the perceivers, are chetana, sentient beings, and the perceived objects are inert, jaDa. In the 13th ch. beginning itself, the Lord makes this distinction: the kshetram, body-mind, jaDa, is the vedya, perceived. The Kshetrajna, the knower is chaitanya, Consciousness. It would be helpful to know that the kshetram is otherwise known as prakriti. The similarity between the constituents of the kshetram spoken of in the 13th ch. and the constituents of prakriti in the 7th ch. is striking. From the overall teaching of the scriptures, the Gita in particular, we understand that the prakriti/kshetram is conducive to bondage and liberation consists of separating the Purusha/Kshetrajna from it. Since liberating knowledge consists of excluding the prakriti from Purusha, it follows that prakriti is not of the status of the absolutely real; it enjoys only a relative reality. That which is not absolutely real and is only relatively real is otherwise called mithya. Now, since we are concerned with the ‘difference between Consciousness and the kshetram, the jaDa,’ we have to recognize that any difference (bheda)/relationship (sambandha) between two entities is possible only when they enjoy the same status of reality. We cannot compare a table in the waking with a table in the dream. Since the kshetram, jaDa, is accorded the status of ‘mithya’, to say that it is different from chetana is without any meaning and substance. There are no ‘two’ entities to compare and contrast; there is only one chetana and the other cannot be counted along with the chetana as a second. So, the question of establishing a ‘bheda’ between chetana and jaDa does not arise at all.

The Chandogya Upanishat Ch.VI teaches:

//vAchArambhanam vikAro nAmadheyam, mRttiketyeva satyam.//

Brahman, Sat, is the material cause that inheres in every object without exception. As every object is essentially ‘Sat’, the truth of every object is ‘Sat’, Brahman. As the Upanishad teaches the effect is no more than a name, the ‘vastu’ that is seen as an effect is none other than Sat, Brahman. The ultimate teaching is: Since all objects are appearances in Brahman, their material cause, they are non-different, abheda, from their substratum. As such, there is no question of bheda between the Chaitanyam, Brahman, and the achetana, jada objects.

That the Upanishad teaches that ‘the knowledge of the upadana karanam is the one that makes all the effects, sarvam kAryam, known’ is undisputable. Supposing we take that the Upanishad is teaching that with the knowledge of the Lord as the nimittakAranam, an efficient cause, all else becomes known. This proposal is defective because, everywhere the karyam, effect, is known on the basis of its upadana karanam, the substance. Supposing it is said: In the world there are many things that are popularly known after

their maker, the efficient cause. For example, paintings by Raja Ravi Varma, Picasso or Da Vinci are famous only by the painter/artiste's name and not by the material of canvas or paint used therein. While this is not objected, when we see the example given by the Chandogya Shruti we come to the firm conclusion that it is not the efficient cause that is spoken of. The Shruti vakyam is: ekena mritpindena vijnAtena **sarvam mrinmayam** vijnAtam syAt..., etc. When the material cause of one product of mud is known, *all* the mud-products become known. In the case of the painter/painting we cannot hold this rule to be true. This is because, it is accepted by all that *all (sarvam) the paintings of the past, present and future universally* are not the works of Ravi Varma, Picasso or Da Vinci or any single individual. Contrary to this, in the case of the material cause of an earthen pot universally, at all times, it is mud alone. Further, the word 'mRNmayam' has the suffix 'mayat' which gives the meaning of either vikaara, modification, or prAchurya, predominance. Both ways, it is the material cause that fits as the meaning of *mayat*. What is clinching in the Upanishad is the expression: 'mRttiketyeva satyam' [as mud alone (the mud-products) are real.] This shows beyond doubt that the Upanishad is talking about the material cause and not the efficient cause, for, it does not say: 'kulAla ityeva satyam.' ['as potter alone the mud-products are real']. When an effect is examined, the maker is not discernible but the material is what is available as inhering in it. Also that it is not the intention of the Shruti to teach that there is a maker of the universe and that he is to be known. The drishtAnta used by the Shruti is not needed at all to teach this well-known fact that every object invariably has a maker. This already well-known fact does not constitute 'vijnaanam'. That makes it clear that the Upanishad is talking about the knowledge of the material cause, Brahman, as the vijnanam required to gain the vijnanam pertaining to everything in the world. If this is not admitted, we will have to concede that the Upanishad is giving unsuitable, defective examples to teach the Truth.

In the Srimadbhagavatam there is a verse that teaches that the effect is to be viewed as non-different from its material cause:

kArya-kAraNa-vastvaikyad-darshanam paTa-tantu-vat |
avastutvAd-vikalpasya bhAvAdvaitam taduchyate || VII.15.63|| (Prahlada charitram)

[To view the cause-effect as one non-different entity, as in the case of yarn and the cloth woven with it constitutes bhAvAdvaitam. This is because 'difference' (between the material cause and its effect) is not real.]

The Chandogya Upanishad teaching of 'vAchArambhanam vikaaro nAmadheyam, mRttiketyeva satyam' is what is reflected in the above verse.

To hold Brahman as the nimitta kAranam alone also is not free from defect/s. The Shruti says Brahman is 'nishkriyam'. Brahman has no modification born out of action. If it is said that 'icchAmAtram', by mere will, Brahman creates the world, then also there is problem. The Mundaka Shruti says Brahman is 'aprANo hi amanAH shubhraH'. IcchA is the characteristic of the mind and Brahman is sans mind. Even to hold Brahman as the material cause will not be strictly correct for He is avikAri; espousing an effect involves

modification in the cause. The only way to surmount these problems is to admit that Brahman remains Itself unchanging, immutable, by being the adhishtAnam of the world- appearance. It is only in this way Brahman can be the nimitta and upAdAna jagatAranam and yet be Nishkriyam, nirvikAri, amanaaH. It is here that the role of Maya is admitted. To appreciate this, the dream analogy could be considered:

In a dream, I find myself traveling in a bus in a city Y; my real place of residence being city X. In the bus, I converse with the man seated beside me about the various landmarks that I see as we move on. I witness several events outside the bus: a funeral procession, a brawl, a minor accident, etc. The dream part is now over.

Now, analyzing the dream, have I undergone any modification by actually traveling to the city Y, boarding a bus and riding through that city? Obviously no; I have been lying on my bed in city X. Did I make a sankalpa to witness all those things in the dream prior to the commencement of the dream? No. It just happened by itself. The power of sleep, nidrAshakti, has conjured up the dream for me to witness. So, I am not the creator really and I have not undergone any modification in order to create the dream scenes. Could the nidrAshakti do the dream-creation all by itself? No, this is also not possible; it has to happen only with my, a Conscious being's, presence, although passive.

What we saw above is this: Creation requires a shakti. This shakti cannot operate by itself. It has to depend upon Consciousness. This Consciousness is nirvikAri, nishkriya. Despite the Consciousness remaining passive, the shakti succeeds in creating a whole gamut of experiences. This consisted of creating a 'me' with a body-mind with which I effortlessly identify myself. And the various relationships with a variety of persons, events, objects, etc. that 'I' enter into and sustain. When I have woken up from the dream I recall, quite justifiably: I saw **myself** as me, the others, time, space, etc. in the dream. This is what is called the 'vivarta' of Consciousness as all the things/events that appeared. This appearance could not have come up and existed and ended without me, the Conscious being lying on the bed. What is the kind of 'role' that I have played in dream-creation? If at all there is a 'role' assignable to me, it is only a passive one; I have just remained stay-put on the bed. My Consciousness was utilized by the shakti and the dream-creation was projected. At best, my role has been that of a witness.

To apply the analogy to the jagat srishti: Brahman is the vivarta upAdaana kAra of the jagat. No modification takes place in Brahman as a result of creation. Yet, the creation could not be without Brahman as its basis. The Shakti that brings forth and sustains the creation has no existence independent of Brahman, the Chit. Brahman the Chit is the adhishtAnam of the entire jagat and the shakti. The 'role' of Brahman in the jagat-srishti is a passive one; It is just a sAkshi, witness. Saakshitvam can be understood as: akartrtve sati bodhrtvam, 'knowing sans acting'. This is what is spelt out by Bhagavan in the Gita (IX.10): mayA **adhyakshena** prakritiH sUyate charaachram jagat, with Me as a Witness, Prakriti brings forth the creation. Bhagavan makes His 'role' clear by denying any kartritvam for Himself in creation: tasya kartAram api mAm viddhi akartAram avyayam, na mey asti kartavyam, svabhAvastu pravartate, etc. His role is mere adhyakshatvam, sAkshi. This conveys the Vedantic position of: 1. A Nishkriyam

Brahman as an indispensable element in creation, 2. This Brahman is a mere witness, 3. Therefore, Consciousness, 4. The 'doing' part is that of Prakriti, 5. All these mean that Brahman is not really 'nimitta kAranam', efficient cause, of the creation, prakriti, being the one undergoing modification, is the pariNAmi upAdAna kaaranam, and Brahman is just the vivarta upAdAna kAranam of creation, 6. The final Vedantic position is: The creation is merely an appearance of Brahman as the chara-acharam jagat through the instrumentality/intervention/modification of Prakriti, Maaya. That is why we find expressions like: Maayaa nirmitam jagat, Brahma kAryam jagat, etc. being variously used in Vedantic works. While understanding these statements we have to keep in mind: Brahman is vivarta upAdaanam, MAyA is parinAmi upaadAnam and the jagat is an appearance of Brahman just as a bangle, chain and ring are appearances of gold.

Brahman, the Sat, Chit, without which prakriti cannot create, remains as It is. He who realizes himself as Brahman is Amrta, ShAshvata, Sanaatana. For, the nature of Sat is: na abhAvo vidyate SataH [Existence will never go out of existence] (Gita II.16) and the nature of Chit is: na hi drashTurDRshTer viparilopo vidyate, avinAshitvAt [the vision that is Consciousness of the seer is never lost, for It is Imperishable](Bhadaaranyaka Up IV.iii.25)

[An aside point: Shakti or Maya is anAdi and is an upAdhi of Brahman. It is unreasonable to look for a cause of what is admitted as anAdi; 'Prakritim purusham chaiva viddhyanAdI ubhAvapi' says the Lord in the Gita. This is called 'avidyopAdhi' and owing to this UpAdhi-sambandha all the effects, aupAdhika, emerge. Why is Maya called an upAdhi? It is because in its 'presence' Brahman is seen, mistakenly, as creator, etc. For example, a crystal, in the proximate presence of a red flower, appears as red; the red flower/redness is the upaadhi. When SvarUpa jnanam dawns it destroys this upAdhi-sambandha (chidachitgranthi) as well as the upadhi itself (as Brahman is taught by the Shastra and realized by the sadhaka as advitIyam satya vastu and Maya is mithya) and shows forth Brahman as free from the upAdhi. The jagat is rendered 'baadhita', sublated, since Brahman has been 'separated' from Maya.]

When Brahman is spoken of as the abhinna-nimitta-upAdAna-kAranam of jagat, it is only by 'associating' Maya with Brahman. This is the principle of Ishwara who is the subject matter, in the cosmic level, of the third pAda of the Mandukya Upanishat (6th mantra). He is spoken of as antaryAmI, SarveshwaraH, the **jagad yOni**, etc. The Consciousness bereft of this 'association' with Maya is taught as the TurIya, Atman, Advaitam in the chaturtha pAda of this Upanishat. It is the realization of the Turiya Atman that is termed 'vijAnam' resulting in Moksha.

We see in the world that every object is known through the main material that goes into its making. For example, we say: suvarnAtmakam kundalam, a golden earring, mrdAtmakaH ghataH, an earthen pot, etc. We do not encounter expressions like: kulAlAtmakaH sharaavaH, a potter-pot, pAchakAtmakaH soopaH, cook/chef-soup, etc. Thus the Upanishadic Teaching is: Brahma/SadAtmakam jagat, where the substance of the kArya-jagat is none other than Sat; the nama-rupa aspect of the jagat is insubstantial –

vAchArambhanam vikAro nAmadheyam. Sat is Brahman, Sat is Atma. So teaches the Mahavakya: Tat tvam asi.

In the context of discussing the upAdaana-kAranatva, material causehood, of Brahman it would be helpful to refer to the number of instances in the Gita where the Lord says He is the 'Bijam' (seed), 'pitA' (Father), the Source of origin, sustenance and resolution of the universe, etc. The Mandukya Upanishad (6) refers to Brahman/Ishwara as the 'Yoni' (womb) of the universe. These are references to the material-causehood of Brahman/Ishwara. A mere efficient/intelligent cause like a painter or a potter or a goldsmith is not seen in the world to provide the essential 'seed' in the products that are made. Certainly these makers are not the yoni, womb, of the products. The Brahmasutras 'prakRtishcha' (I.iv.23), 'yonishcha hi gIyate' (I.iv.27) teach that the Supreme is the material cause of the universe. There are a number of Shruti passages that talk of the material causehood of Brahman. For example, 'kartAram Isham Purusham Brahma yonim (Mundaka Up. 3.1.3), 'yad bhUtayonim paripashyanti dhIrAH' (Mundaka 1.1.6), the Kaivalyopanishad 'UmA-sahaayam Parameshwaram.....bhUtayonim...tamasaH parastAt' teach this same idea. The PANini Sutra (I.iv.30) 'janikartuH prakRtiH' teaches that the word 'prakRtiH' means progenitor. There is nothing wrong in referring to the PANini Sutra as VyAkaraNa is a valid VedAnga which aids in determining the purport of the Veda. The lexicon 'Amara kosha' III.2480 says: 'prakRtir-yoni-linge'. The commentary thereon says: 'yonau linge cha prakRtiH'.

Are the various insentient objects not different mutually?

Having seen that the chetana (Ishvara/jiva) - jaDa bheda is untenable in absolute terms, we may now examine the position that the jaDa padarthas are mutually different. The Gita says:

na tad asti pṛthivyāṃ vā divi deveṣu vā punaḥ
sattvaṃ prakṛtijair muktaṃ yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ 18.40

The entire category called 'objects', jaDa, kshetram, can be grouped under one name: prakriti. The above verse says that there is no object in all the three worlds that is bereft of the three gunas born of prakriti/maya. The objects are different in their name, form, utility, etc. But in essence, they are not different from each other. What is the essence that is the unifying factor? It is the material cause of the objects/kshetram which is the sattva-rajastamo-gunAtmikA mAyaa. In the manifest states of the waking and dream we observe the variety in objects. In the state of sleep, all the objects resolve into their cause, the undifferentiated state. Thus, it is not possible to establish any real bheda between one jada object and another. All differences pertain to names/forms/utility, etc. Yet another categorization of the entire gamut of the objective world is: shabda, sparsha, rasa, etc. All the objects come under this five-fold category. This itself resolves into the pancha-bhUtas that are the cause of the objects. The pancha-bhutas are again evolutes of Maya. Thus, as the kArana prakriti, no kArya-vastu, object, is essentially different from another.

The concept of abheda is possible in the realm of the jaDa prapancha as also in the

Chaitanyam. All bodies are a product of food, annam. On this basis there is no difference between one body and another. The indwelling Consciousness in every body is also the same and no difference can be spoken of on that basis too. The dravya called mind in each being is also the same; manas being a product of the sattvaguna-samashti of the pancha bhUtas which are again the evolutes of prakriti. Any difference is possible only in the realm of nama-rUpa which is again taught by the Chandogya Shruti to be only word-based and not substantial. The substance of everything in creation is ultimately Brahman, Sat.

The essence of the consideration of the five 'bhedas' (jIva-Ishvara bheda, jiva-jiva bheda, jiva-jaDa bheda, Ishwara-jaDa bheda and jada-jada bheda) is contained in an encapsulated form in the 7th mantra of the Mandukya Upanishat: 'nAntaH prajnam....' All duality is categorically negated as pertaining to the relatively real (mithya) realm, the pAda-traya, and the Turiya is declared as the Absolute Truth: Advaitam Atma.

The Panchadashi, Chitra Deepa Prakaranam (Ch.VI) teaches the method of comprehending the Non-dual Brahman/Atman by taking the example of a painting on a cloth/canvas. We can show that the five bheda-s (considered above) are not real in the absolute sense by studying this example. Let us suppose we have a painting-on-canvas of a scene of a market place. There are various people, men and women, different animals like cows, dogs, sheep, etc., several birds like crows, pigeons and so on depicted in the painting. There are many insentient objects like dress materials, food grains, sweet-meats, soft drinks, etc. that are being sold there. There is a temple and people go in and come out of it.

What is fundamental to the above example is: the wide variety of sentient and insentient entities is having one common base, the canvas. Although the outlines, the colour, the presence of clothing on the people and its absence on animals, cars, cycles, etc. differ, the entire 'difference' stands on the one substratum, the canvas. The five bheda-s are observable only on the surface but when the substratum canvas is considered, the bheda-s no longer matter. The shopkeeper-customer (jiva-jiva) difference, the shopkeeper-foodgrain (jiva-jaDa) difference, the temple Deity-devotee (Ishwara-jiva) difference, the food-grain-cycle (jaDa-jaDa) difference, temple Deity-temple bell (Ishwara-jaDa) difference are all perceived only apparently but fade into insignificance the moment it is realized that the entire gamut of variety stands on one common substratum, the canvas. It is to be noted that the variety of objects, sentient and insentient, has no existence apart from the canvas on which they are painted. The objects cannot be 'separated' from the canvas.

The canvas is the One Non-dual Consciousness, the Sat, Chit, Ananta Brahman/Atman, the drk. The variety, drishya, is only a superimposition on this substratum. The variety has no existence apart from the Consciousness on which it appears.

The consideration of a dream, as an analogy, also would bring out the same results as above. The Shruti says: na iha nAnaa asti kinchana (No difference whatsoever exists here in Brahman).

The five bheda-s were taken up for consideration not without a purpose. All bheda, duality, forms the subject matter of aparā vidyā, the sciences that pertain to the world. The Veda too has this portion when it teaches the purusharthas of dharma, artha and kAma. But when it comes to Moksha, the vidya takes the name of ‘parA vidyA’. This field of the Shastra is essentially the one that transcends bheda, duality. The main purport and purpose of the Vedānta, the Upanishads, is to teach abheda and only in this the Upanishads become the indispensable pramana. While bheda, duality, is perceived naturally, without being instructed, abheda is not; it requires to be instructed with effort and understood with great effort. It is towards this end the Upanishads endeavour. Says Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada in His commentary to the mantra 5.1.1 of the Briharanyaka Upanishad:

//na upadeshArham dvaitam, jAta-mAtra-prAni-buddhi-gamyatvAt.//

[Duality does not require to be instructed (by the Veda) since it (duality) is perceived by every being even at birth.]

A question would arise: If this is the case, why does the Veda speak of duality in great volumes? Reply: The Veda is actually refining the duality that is initially crude by making it conducive to the grasping of the ultimate teaching of Advaitam. All kinds of duality like: he is different and I am different, I am his/her son/daughter, I am dependent on him/her for my sustenance/wellbeing, etc. is cognized by every being even untutored. Even a just born baby or pup or calf looks upon the mother for being fed and security. This dependence on an external source continues as the child grows up. It looks up to the teacher for knowledge. The grown up man looks upon the employer, sva-svAmi-bhAva, for monetary benefits and to lead a life of happiness. The Veda takes this forward and teaches us that we have to look upon Ishwara for our wellbeing. It teaches us the existence of other worlds and helps us in attaining these by adhering to the means prescribed therein. It teaches us that the karmaphala dhAta is Ishwara and He is the One that can grant us the Parama PurushArtha, Moksha. All this is the *refinement* the Veda does in the realm of duality. It is only when it comes to the instruction pertaining to Moksha, the Veda takes a quantum jump, as witnessed in the Mandukya 7th mantra, and negates all duality, totally and holds out the Advaitic Truth as the means for Moksha which itself is ShAntam, Shivam, Advaitam.

The pitiable status of the world

The analysis conducted above gives rise to a situation where the status of the world is in question. The Lord says in the Bhagavadgita:

mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ jagad avyaktamūrtinā
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni *na cāhaṃ teṣv avasthitaḥ* 9.4

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūtabhṛn na ca bhūtastho mamātmā bhūtabhāvanah 9.5

In the first half of the first verse, the Lord says that He, Brahman, pervades the entire world. The Gita says elsewhere that there is no object in all the three worlds that is not a product of prakriti. Prakriti is the other name for kshetram, the observed world. It is inert principle while the Atman, the kshetrajna, the Purusha, is Consciousness. When it is said that Brahman pervades the entire world, what is meant is: the world has no existence/shine of its own apart from that of Brahman. This dependence of the world on Brahman is what is said in the third quarter of the first verse: ‘the beings (world) rest(s) in Me’

In the fourth quarter of the first verse the Lord states that He, Brahman, does not inhere in this world. He hastens to add, in the next verse, that nor does the world inhere in Him.

What results from these statements of the Lord is: The world is neither established in Brahman nor does Brahman support the world. This leaves the world without any real basis. A real supporter-supported relationship is possible only between two finite, sa-avayava objects. In the present case, Brahman is Infinite, niravayava. It is a-sanga and hence no type of relationship is possible for It with the world. The situation is akin to the superimposed snake on the substratum of a rope. The rope does not inhere in the snake as the snake, being illusory, does not have an existence of its own. Nor does the snake really rest on the rope as the rope in no way supports the illusory snake. Then where does the snake exist? The only answer to this is: the illusory snake exists only in the imagination of the one who thinks it exists. Similar is the case with the world. It exists only in the imagination of the one who believes it exists.

This very teaching is brought out by the Veda/Upanishads in several ways: ‘yatra hi dvaitam **iva** bhavati.....’ ‘mRtyoH sa mRtyum gacchati ya iha nAna **iva** pashyati’, ‘vAchArambhaNam vikAro nAmadheyam’, ‘sarvANi rUpANi vichitya dhIraH nAmAni kRtvA abhivadan...’ By using the particle ‘iva’, the Upanishad says that the world is as though existent but not really.

The above Gita verses also bring out the vivartopAdana-kAraNatvam of Brahman. This is akin to the rope being a ‘material cause’ for the appearing snake. The rope has certainly not provided any of its material to the snake appearance except its existence which is the foundation upon which the perceiver imagines a snake. The rope only appears to be a snake for this perceiver. Brahman, by not inhering in the world, does not lend any real material for the world. Brahman is only appearing as the world to the one who perceives the world. This is what is termed as the vivartopAdanatvam of Brahman in respect of the world. The Chandogya Shruti ‘vAchArambhaNam vikAro nAmadheyam, mRttiketyeva satyam’ teaches that the various products of clay are mere appearances of clay; their substance is only clay. In giving this analogy, the Upanishad teaches that the world, a product of Brahman, is only an appearance of Brahman; its substance is Brahman. As world it is insubstantial.

ye caiva sātvikā bhāvā rājasās tāmasās ca ye
matta eveti tām viddhi *na tv ahaṃ te su te mayi* 7.12

This verse too could be seen in the light of the above explanation.

The jnana-chakshus:

The Gita says:

utkrāmantam sthitam vāpi bhujānam vā guṇānvitam
vimūḍhā nānupaśyanti paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ 15.10

yatanto yoginaś cainam paśyanty ātmany avasthitam
yatantopy akṛtātmano nainam paśyanty acetasaḥ 15.11

In these couple of verses we can discern the ‘AdhyAsic’ nature of the jivatvopadhi. The jiva, out of ignorance of his true nature (which is described in the II ch. as ‘ajo nityaH shaashvato’yam purAnaH etc. which are also the true nature applicable to Brahman), identifies himself with the imagined upadhis called body-mind complex and experiences the upadhi-dharmas as his own dharmas. Thus he says: I am born, I experience sukha dukha bhoga, I will grow old, I am subject to disease and finally I will die. I am subject to rebirth and therefore am a miserable samsari. Bhagavan calls this by the name ‘vimUDha drishti’, the view of the ignorant, deluded. The Lord says: Those who are ignorantly identifying themselves with all these upadhidharmas are failing to see the Chaitanyam to whom these are seemingly happening. It is only he who possesses the jnana-chakshus born out of shashtra-acharya upadesha and sadhana can separate the Chaitanyam, Atman, from these upadhis and become freed of samsara. The Lord says in the 13th ch. PurushaH prakritistho hi bhunkte prakritjAn guNAn. This is akin to the seeing of the snake in the rope (vimUDha drishti) and later knowing the Truth by applying the appropriate pramana: jnana-chakshus. Here the Lord is teaching the Adhyasic nature of the samsaric experience. This is what is elaborately brought out by the Bhashyakara in the Adhyasa Bhashya. The ‘adhyAsa Bhashya’ contains an analogy: ekashchandraH sa-dvitIyavad, ‘the really only one moon appearing as though two in number’. The case of the ‘two birds’ is similar to this and the Mundaka Shruti is alluding to this common error on the part of the deluded jivas by initially ‘approving’ it and later correcting the vision.

Now, looking at the above quoted verse once again, we get this insight: The dvitIyA vibhakti, accusative case, in the verse 15.10 is of great significance. Supposing the police is looking for a criminal named Mohan. They know that he is speeding away in a car, identified by the police. They have an informant with them and are closely following the criminal’s car. That car contains five others also. Now, the police want to know who among the five is Mohan so that in case they have to shoot him, they should not be making a mistake. So, they ask the informant to identify Mohan. The informant looks into the car and identifies: ‘The one who is driving is Mohan.’

Now, in the present context we have a similar identification made by the Gita. It says: The one who is seen to be involved in samsara as a kartA-bhoktA, endowed with the three guNas, who is subject to birth, death and transmigration, is Brahman. The dvitIyA

vibhakti is significant in this sense of identifying the chaitanyam with jIvatvOpAdhi as the Brahman that is to be realized as nirupAdhika chaitanyam. This realization confers liberation. This is stated in the verse 15.11. The words ‘enam’ ‘this one’, and ‘ātmany avasthitam’ ‘one established in the intellect’ convey the MahAvAkyArtha that the chaitanyam seen to be endowed with jivatvopAdhi in the earlier verse is the chaitanyam that is seated in the intellect. That it is Ishwara chaitanyam that is seated in everyone’s intellect is taught by the Lord in this very chapter: sarvasya chAham hRdi sanniviShTo...I am seated in everyone’s intellect.....

Just as the Police apprehend Mohan for his crime and not for his driving or wearing denims, the aspirant, by invoking the JnanachakshuH, apprehends the Pure Consciousness by discarding the jivatopadhi-dharmas which are only incidental and not svarUpa dharma.

It is gaining this vision that is spoken of as ‘jnAna chakshUs’ by the Gita.

Perception of duality and the Jivanmukta

//The Advaitic concept of a *jīvanmukta* is also absurd because a person who has surmounted the realm of perception and realized the Absolute (as Advaita holds of a *mukta*) should not continue to exist within and interact with the realm of perception that he has realized as being not-Real—no one continues to perceive a snake after realizing that the object of his perception is actually a rope. The suggestion that such bondage to the world of perception continues for a while after the occurrence of Realization, because of past attachments, is not tenable—such attachments themselves are artifacts of the perceived world that has supposedly been sublated, and should not continue to besiege the consciousness of the Realized. If they do, then we have to either reject the Realization that is said to have occurred, or else reject the notion that the world of perception, as manifesting through the attachments on a supposedly Realized person, can be sublated. In either instance, the notion of *jīvanmukti* is not meaningful. //

Reply: The objection has stemmed out of an improper understanding of the Vedanta/Advaita prakriya. The analogy of rope-snake is not very appropriate in the case of jivanmukti. This analogy suits the explanation of the adhyasa and its removal. But what condition prevails post-adhyasa-removal is not clearly brought out by this example. To explain this state, the other example, employed by the Acharya, of mirage-water is what is apt. The Acharya has explained this in [the Gita\(?\) bhashyam \(ref.\)](#) We can take the example and apply it in the modern context:

Supposing, I am driving on a highway on a summer day. The sun has well risen and in the noon time there is formation of mirages on the highway ahead of me. Actually there is no formation of mirage; it is only an appearance of the mirage to me, the perceiver, from a particular spot and angle. When the spot/angle is changed, the appearance ceases. Nevertheless, when I maintain the position and angle even while driving, there are chances that I continue to see mirages as I proceed. At the first instance, if I am new to

that locality, I might mistake it for a water-spread, puddle, on the road and might even exercise caution to avoid any skidding and regulate my speed. But the moment I realize that it is after all a mirage, I am no longer cautious in that respect. I drive without that aspect engaging my mind, even though I continue to see mirages almost upto 4 in the afternoon on the highway.

Similar is the case with the Mukta who has known that the perception-based prapancha is unreal. By 'sublation' what is meant is: the satyatva buddhi of the aropita vastu is destroyed. It is not necessary that the aropita vastu itself should go out of (perceptual) existence. If this is not admitted and appreciated there will be problem in explaining various actions of the Mukta. For example, the Lord says that the Tattvadarshi, when approached in the appropriate manner, will impart the Atmavidya to the jijnasu. If the Tattvadarshi were to himself become non-existent soon after the dawn of knowledge, how is valid tattvopadesha possible, as mentioned by the Lord? To carry out the tattvopadesha, the Mukta ('Muktashcha anyAn vimochayEt' is a part of a famous shloka: durjanassajjano bhUyAt/sajjanH shAntimApnuyAt/shAnto muchyeta bandhebhyaH/muktashcha anyAn vimochayet//) has to 'perceive' the jignasu and see him as 'another', listen to his questions, doubts, etc. and give out the teaching suitably. All this can happen only if the perception-based world is remaining intact, although for the Tattvadarshi it is only asatya. The Lord echoes this idea when He says:

yadyad ācarati śreṣṭhas tattad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇaṃ kurute lokas tad anuvartate 3.21

na me pāṛthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiṃcana
nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ *varta eva ca karmaṇi* 3.22

yadi hy ahaṃ na varteyaṃ jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ 3.23

Even though the Lord has nothing to gain by acting in the world, yet He acts. This is the state of the Jivanmukta. His state has been voiced by the Lord in this very chapter:

yas tv ātmaratir eva syād ātmatṛptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmany eva ca saṃtuṣṭas *tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate* 3.17

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaścid arthavyapāśrayaḥ 3.18

anAditvAt nirgunatvAt paramAtma ayam avyayaH |
sharIrastho'pi kounteya na karoti na lipyate || (13.31)

Compare the above with the following.

navadvāre pure dehī *naiva kurvan na kārayan* 5.13

{ These set of verses too teach that the jivanmukta is non-different from Brahman, the Lord. }

If lokasangraha, tattvopadesha, etc. are to happen, the perceptual world has to exist. There is no reason for it to be believed to be absolutely real by the tattvadarshi, as in the case of Bhagavan as well. The mirage can continue to be perceived but that there is no water there is known by the one who has shifted the angle and position and realized the truth but returns to the same angle/position and continues driving. The shift in perception has taken place in the mind. Although the eyes report water there, the mind knows that there is no water there. Similarly, although the indriyas report the world of perception, the Mukta knows that they are not absolutely true. With this knowledge intact, sthita prajnaa, he lives in the world, nava-dvare pure, naiva kurvan na kArayan, just as the Lord remains in His sva-Maya-nirmita body and performs actions, even though He is akarta, aja, avyaya.

That the Lord sees the world as an adhyAropa, a pratibhAsa, in Him is spelt out by Himself in the 9th Ch.

mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ jagad avyaktamūrtinā
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṃ teṣv avasthitaḥ 9.4

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūtabhṛṇ na ca bhūtaṣtho mamātmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ 9.5

The Lord's teaching is: Even though it might appear that the world rests in Me, by virtue of My 'being its upAdAna kAraNam', still in truth it does not rest in Me as I, Brahman, am only the vivartopadAna kAraNam of the world. So, how then does the Lord go about doing His actions? It is with the knowledge that the world is an appearance that He acts, since He is akarta in truth. This is the state of the Jivanmukta. He knows that the world is an adhyaropa in the Atman. With this firm knowledge he goes about his vyavahara, not being bound by his actions. At the same time, the actions of a Jivanmukta, like that of the Lord, are of immense help to the baddha jivas.

The 'sublation' of the world of perception for the Tattvavit is spoken of by Bhagavan in these verses:

naiva kiṃcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit
paśyañ śṛṇvan spṛśañ jighrañ aśnan gacchan svapañ śvasan 5.8

pralapan viśṛjan gṛhṇann unmiṣan nimiṣann api
indriyāṇīndriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan 5.9

In the above verses one can see the mention of almost all the activities of the sense organs. The realm of the activity of the sense organs is the world of perception. To the Tattvavit who knows that he, the Atman/Brahman, is not the pramAtru and therefore not

the doer/enjoyer, this world of perception is only a show of the unreal prakriti. This is because, as taught by the Lord:

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate 3.27

tattvavit tu mahābāho guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ
guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta iti matvā na sajjate 3.28

it is the prakriti's realm which is the world of perception. As the Jnani has separated himself from the realm of prakriti (otherwise called the kshetram), as taught by the Lord in the 13th chapter:

kṣetrakṣetrajñayor evam antaraṁ jñānacakṣuṣā
bhūtaprakṛtimokṣaṁ ca ye vidur yānti te param 13.35

the world of perception is sublated. The activity of 'eating', etc., of the Jivanmukta is quite possible in the manner taught by the Lord in the verses 5.8 and 9 above. This is one of the instances where the Lord is teaching Jivanmukti. The Tattvavit, mukta, is with the firm realization that *naiva kiṁcit karomīti yukto manyeta tattvavit* (I never perform these actions). The Lord is talking of these actions for a person who is alive and not to a one who has departed from the world. The usage of the 'shatr' pratyaya in the words: *paśyañ śṛṇvan spṛśaṁ jighrañ aśnan gacchan svapañ śvasan 5.8* *pralapan viśṛjan gṛhṇann unmiśan nimiśann api 5.9* are noteworthy. This pratyaya indicates a present continuous tense where even when the action is going on, the realization that one is not the doer is present. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV.v.15) gives the larger picture of this state of Jivanmukti which the Lord stated in the verses just seen:

%pin;t! b&hdar{ykaepin;t! ctuwaer=Xyay> pÂm< ääü[m!
(yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati taditara itaram pashyati...jighrati, rasayate, etc.) This is the state of ignorance.

yÇ ih ÖEtimv -vit tidtr #tr< pZyit
tidtr #tr< ij°it tidtr #tr‡ rsyte tidtr
#trmi-vdit tidtr #tr‡ z&[aeit tidtr #tr< mnote tidtr #tr‡ Sp&zit tidtr #tr< ivjanait,

(yatra tvasya sarvamAtmaivaabhUt tat kena kam pashyet...jighret...rasayet....etc.) which is the state of jivanmukti.:

yÇ TvSy svRmaTmEva-Ut! tTken k< pZyet! tTken k< ij°et! tTken k‡ rsyet! tTken
kmi-vdet! tTken k‡ z&[uyat! tTken k< mNvlt tTken k‡ Sp&zet! tTken k<
ivjanlya*ened‡ svj ivjanait t< ken ivjanlyat! s @; neit neTya=Tmag&yae n ih
g&yte =zlyaeR n ih zlyRte =s¼ae
n ih sJyte =istae n Vywte n ir:yit, iv}atarmre
ken ivjanlyaidTyuK/tanuzasnais mEÇeYy! @tavidre oLvm&tTvimit hae@va
ya}vLKyaevjhar. 15.

The Chandogyopanishat VII.24.1 too states the above after first stating that the state of ignorance as ‘alpam’. It contrasts the above with the state of jivanmukti as ‘bhUmA’.

%pin;! DaNdaeGyaepin;d sYmae=Xyay> ctuiviz> o{f>
 yÇ naNyTpZyit naNyCD&[aeit naNyjÖjanait s -Umaw
 yÇaNyTpZyTyNyCD&[aeTyNyjÖjanait tdLp< yae vE -Uma tdm&tmw ydLp<
 tNmTyR< s -gv> kiSmNàitiót #it Sve mihiç yid va n miçlit. 1.

The Jivanmukta has realized his true nature as the One Absolute Chaitanyam, the All-pervading Witness of the realm of prakriti, the world of perception. This nature of the Truth/Jivanmukta is taught by the Shvetashvataropanishat in the VI.11 mantra: Eko devaH sarvabhuteshu gUDhaH.....sAkshI chetaaH kevalo nirgunashcha...:

%pin;! ñetañraepin;! ;óae=Xyay>
 @kae dev> svR-Ute;u gUF>
 svRVyapl svR-UtaNtraTma,
 kmaRXy]> svR-Utaixvas>
 sa]l ceta kevlae inguR[í. 11.

Although, from his point of view, the Jivanmukta sees only the Atman/Brahman, everywhere, yet from the point of view of the baddha jivas, there is something ‘true’ happening to their benefit. The Lord says:

na kartṛtvaṃ na karmāṇi lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
 na karmaphalasaṃyogaṃ *svabhāvas tu pravartate* 5.14

nādatte kasyacit pāpaṃ na caiva sukr̥taṃ vibhuḥ
ajñānenāvṛtaṃ jñānaṃ tena muhyanti jantavaḥ 5.15

The Lord places the entire onus of samsara on the avidya of the jiva. The avidya-nivritti too takes place owing to the seriousness, sincerity, dedication, application, hard work, etc of the jiva. The role of the Tattvadarshi and the Lord is in no way insignificant. It is Their anugraha, constant goading, teaching, etc. that trigger the seriousness, mumukshutvam, in the jiva and helps him cross over samsara. Without Their being a ‘role model’, the jiva is nowhere in the path of progress.

Supposing, someone does not want to admit jivanmukti. Let us consider the situation of a Tattvadarshi imparting jnanam to a jijnasu. The Gita says the Tattvadarshi sees Atman/Brahman, Bhagavan everywhere and in everything. Now, the Jnani sees This in the jijnasu too. Since the jijnasu is Brahman/Atman, where is the need to teach him? To avoid this situation, one will have to say: Although the jijnasu is Brahman/Atman from the Tattvadarshi’s standpoint, to the jijnasu this truth is not yet aparoksha. So, the Guru considers him a jijnasu and imparts the teaching. This is exactly the way the Lord views the world/people. Although the entire jagat is non-different from the Lord (should we not admit, on the basis of the Lord’s teaching, that the Lord too sees Atman/Brahman

everywhere and in everything?), yet the Lord has chosen to teach by word and by example.

saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṃso yathā kurvanti bhārata
kuryād vidvāṃs tathāsaktaś cikīrṣur lokasaṃgraham 3.25

na buddhibhedaṃ janayed ajñānāṃ karmasaṃginām
joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran 3.26

Just because He is in a body to do this, can we say that the Lord is not a mukta purusha but a baddha jiva although a Tattvadarshi? The Vishnu sahasranama says He is: ‘Tattvavit’, and also ‘vimuktAtmA’. When the Lord can be a Tattvavit and vimuktatma why can’t a jiva who has followed the teaching of the Lord and gained Tattvadarshanam be a mukta while still in the body? Is the ParamArtha tattvam known to Bhagavan any different from the tattvam realized by the jiva during sAkshAtkAra?

After all, the Lord too, in the Rama and Krishna incarnations, was born from a Mother’s womb. He too grew up from childhood to adulthood. He too ate and slept. He too experienced pleasure and pain. In the case of Krishna, He too departed from this world upon being injured by an archer/hunter. Was Krishna not a mukta purusha and still a Tattvavit while in the Krishna-body?

The Kathopanishad says:

.....Vimuktashcha vimuchyate..(II.ii.1)

Upon realizing the Truth the aspirant is liberated – vimuktaH. The liberated one is never born again – vimuchyate. The Upanishad says: upon realization he lives as a mukta. Upon the fall of the body, he does not transmigrate and therefore does not take a birth again. He is liberated for ever.

[A possible objection: ‘The Divine Incarnations cannot be taken up for comparison with the Jivanmuktas. ‘Can a Jivanmukta fight single-handedly like Lord Rama did when He engaged in a combat the 14,000-strong army of Khara, DhUshana and Trishiras in Janasthaanam, Dandakaranya?’ This objection is considered already in an earlier paragraph while discussing the ‘identity’ of Jiva and Brahman in the context of upadhis.]

Objection:

//If they do, then we have to either reject the Realization that is said to have occurred, or else reject the notion that the world of perception, as manifesting through the attachments on a supposedly Realized person, can be sublated. In either instance, the notion of jivanmukti is not meaningful. //

Reply:

As we saw above, the Lord as Sri Rama and Sri Krishna did experience pain and pleasure in their lives. They did eat and sleep. If these are the parameters to judge whether a tattvavit is a mukta or not, then we have to question the realization of Sri Rama and Krishna and put them under the 'supposedly Realized persons' category. For, the world that the Lord said 'does not inhere in Me = na cha matsthAni bhUtAni' (in other words, 'remains sublated') did bring pain and pleasure to Him.

The shastra says: 'na tasya prAnaaH utkrAmanti...'. Aparoksha jnanam and the jivanmukti that results give a guarantee to the Jnani the truth of this mantra. He knows by direct realization of the Truth that he is amaraNadharmaa. If the tattvadarshi believes that he will become mukta only after death, this mantra is invalid, aprAmANika. Therefore, for the rule 'JnAnaan MokshaH' to be true, jivanmukti has to be admitted.

The Chandogya Upanishat (VI.14.2): 'tasya tAvadeva chiram...' [there is delay only till such time as the body ceases to exist] teaches the released state even while alive where experience of the residual karma is admitted. That there is no further perpetuation of samsara after the fall of this body, in which the Atmajnana dawned, is clear from the 'eva' of the mantra.

Here is a fine verse from the Srlmadbhagavatam, Prahlada charitram:

Naarada uvAcha:

nindana-stava-satkAra-nyakkArArtham **kalevaram** |
pradhAna-parayO rAjan **avivekena kalpitam** || Canto VII . Ch.1. verse

[This body has been *concocted, imagined, owing to the non-discrimination between the Supreme Brahman and Maya, the Prakriti*. What is the result of this concoction? The body is subjected to insults, praise, honour and dishonour. [The teaching is: If one continues to identify with the body, one will have to pay the price....of these dualities.]

The above verse is significant in that it teaches that the body is a product of imagination, kalpana, born out of aviveka. The Aprozha jnani has freed himself from this aviveka and realized that the prakriti-born body is not his Self as per the Gita (13.34):

kshetra-kshetrajnayorevam antaram jnAnachakshushA |
BhUtaprakriti-moksham cha ye viduryAnti te param ||

This is what is conveyed by the AdhyAsabhashya.

Therefore the body is anatma. Since his identification with the body has ceased, the insults, praise, etc. pertaining to the body are seen as anatma, mithya, by him.

Closely connected with the above Bhagavatam verse, we have this line from the same source:

Ishwara jIvakalayA praviShTo bhagavAniti [[Canto 3; Chapt. 29; verse 34; line 2]

Ishwara, the Supreme Self, has entered this body in the form of the jiva, individual self. This line of the Bhagavatam teaches that the jiva, in truth, is Ishwara. There are several Shruti vakyams that teach that it is Ishwara Himself that is appearing as the jiva. For example, the Chandogya Upanishat VI.iii.2 says: ‘anena jIvena AtmanA anu-pravishya ... [Let me enter in the form of the soul of each individual being] ajAyamAno bahudhA vijAyate [He who is never born, takes birth as multifarious beings...] says the Purusha sUktam.

Objection: The above line of the ‘Bhagavatam’ does not mean that the jiva is in truth Ishwara, for, the word ‘jIvakalayA’ only means that the jiva is an amsha of Ishwara. The Bhagavadgita verse: Mamaivaamsho jIvaloke jIvabhUtaH sanaatanaH....of the 15th ch. also clearly says that the jiva is only an amsha of Ishwara.

Reply: Even though ‘kalaa’ has the sense of ‘amsha’, we should not be taking the meaning of ‘part/aspect’ in both the verses above. There is the **Shruti:** ‘Nishkalam nishkriyam shAntam...’ (Shvetashwataropanisat VI.19) which says the Atman/Brahman is Impartite. Parts/aspects in the Brahman that is Impartite is inadmissible. **Yukti:** If Brahman were to be admitted as consisting of parts, He would be liable to destruction upon the disintegration of parts. So, the meaning of ‘amsha’ or ‘kala’ is to be taken as a reflection of the Supreme in the upadhi namely the antahkaranam. This would be the correct way to see the jiva because when the jiva realizes his true nature as the bimba, Brahman, the upadhi called the antahkaranam will be known to be unreal and the ‘amsha’ nature of jiva is no more present. Thus, amshatva is only a figurative expression for the Brahman available in the antahkarana upadhi called jiva. **Anubhava:** Vidwad anubhava is also of the nature of ‘aham pUrNaH’ and not ‘aham amshaH’. The Shrutis ‘aham brahmAsmi’, ‘Tat tvam asi’, ‘Atmaivedam sarvam’ ‘Brahma veda Brahmaiva bhavati’, etc. are the authority in this regard. The declarations of the jnani-s in the Tatittiriya Upanishat, for example, is also authority in this regard. The pUrNatva he realizes is in tune with the description of Brahman given in the Mundaka Upanishad (II.ii.11): Brahmaivedam amrutam purastAt, Brahma pashchAt,...’ etc. This mantra teaches that the ‘idam’ that we see as the world all over is none other than Brahman. This is also the meaning of the Gita verse: abhito BrahmanirvANam vartate viditAtmanAm: ‘The enlightened Jnanins experience the All-pervading Brahman.’ Brahman alone appears to the deluded intellect as the world just like a rope appearing as a snake.

That True Realization is marked by the unique feeling of ‘release’ from samsara is unmistakable for the person who has that Realization and that therefore such a state of moksha while alive is undeniable -- is brought out by this passage of the Aitareya Upanishad with regard to the Realization of and its expression by Vamadeva:

//garbhe nu sannanveShAm avedam aham devANAm janimAni vishvA shatam mA pura AyasIr-arakShannadhaH shyeno jvasaa niradEyam iti. Garbha eva etat shayano vAmadeva evam uvaacha.// (II.1.5)

Translation: // ‘While still in the womb of my mother I obtained the knowledge of all the births of these gods. Hundred numerous citadels, bodies, of iron, that is, as if made of iron, held me. **Then forcefully by the power born of Knowledge I came out like a hawk tearing through a net.**’ Vamadeva said this in this manner while remaining in the womb itself.//

Objection: It is improper to say that the jiva in truth is Ishwara Himself. The Mundaka mantra (III.i.1): dvA suparna.....clearly distinguishes the jiva and Ishwara as different entities.

Reply: While this is what appears to be the meaning of that mantra, one has to look at the mantra in a larger context.

Supposing a man has seen a snake in the place where actually only a rope is there. When he reports to another person about his ‘sighting’ a snake and its ‘presence’ there, he is actually under the belief that the snake ‘is’ there. Now, supposing the other person who is familiar with that spot knows for sure that it is only a rope left behind by some workers, he tries to convince the deluded person about the truth.

Where is the snake?

There, in that spot.

No, it is not a snake. It is a rope.

No, it is indeed a snake; I could not have mistaken.

OK. Let us go to the spot where (you say) the snake is and verify.

So, they go to the spot; the deluded person holding that the snake ‘is’ there and the other one only seemingly agreeing that it is there. He knows that there are no ‘two’ entities there: a rope **and** a snake. He knows that the illusory snake cannot be counted as another entity after the only entity, the rope. If he says categorically ‘the snake is not there, it is a rope,’ as he did say, the deluded one is not going to take it; he is not mentally prepared to take the truth. He is in need of further instruction. Until the further instruction is given, by showing the truth, the instructor has to appear to be in agreement; for that message is conveyed to the deluded man by the very agreeing to go to the spot.

What we have in the Mundaka mantra cited above is similar to this example. The Shruti knows that there are no ‘two’ entities in the body-tree. The illusory ‘jiva’-bird cannot be counted along with the Sakshi-bird. The ‘paramam sAmyam’, the aikyam, that the Shruti teaches in the subsequent mantras of the Mundaka Upanishad is ample proof for the Shruti not holding the bhokta-bird as absolutely real.[Reference to the Gita 15.10 and 11 verses discussed above could be made for clarification on this point.] The mithya cannot be counted along with the satyam. The ‘sAmyam’ mentioned here could be understood in the light of ‘nirdosham hi samam brahma’, ‘samam sarvatra pashyan samavasthitam Ishwaram’, ‘samam sarveshu bhUteshu...’ of the Bhagavad Gita. ‘sAmyam’ can mean identity only for the Shruti denies any ‘other’ entity that is equal to or like Brahman:

Na tat samashcha abhyadhikashcha drishyate

Na tasya pratimA asti

(Shvetashvataropanishat VI.8 and IV.19)

The Shruti cannot in one go demolish the jiva-identity. It accepts, as it were, (abhyupetya) initially, that jiva is a separate entity entangled in samsara. So it specifies that these are the 'two' birds in the body-tree. Once the jiva starts 'gazing' at the Sakshi, under the teaching of the proper Guru, the Guide, the sadhana will progress and culminate in his gradually giving up his 'separate' identity and appreciate the Truth of the secondless Unity of the Sakshi. The subsequent mantras of the 'dvaa-suparna' teach exactly this.

The earlier cited Bhagavatam verse teaches that the mind-body complex is unreal. The ultimate message we get from the two Bhagavatam verses is: When the jiva is separated, as taught in the Kshetra adhyaya, from the mind-body complex, what remains is One (Supreme) Self alone; there is nothing to identify someone as 'jiva'. This conclusion is relevant in the context of jivanmukti while discussing the 'unreality' of the world of perception. The words 'kalpitam avivekena' of the earlier Bhagavatam verse is of particular significance.

Why is the 'dvA suparNa' mantra not pAramArthika ?

The mantra occurs in the Mundakopanishat III.3.1.

In this mantra the jiva is shown as the karma-phala bhOkta, the experiencer of the fruits of his karma. When we look at the teaching about the true nature of the jeeva, as taught in the Bhagavadgita, for example, we know that the jiva is not born, does not die, etc. For an entity that has no birth at all, there cannot be the mind, prana, body apparatus (all evolutes of prakriti, kshetram, from which one has to discriminate oneself and become free). It is possible to have ignorance, desire, action, karma, fruit of karma, experiencing of the fruit etc., only when this apparatus is available. But in this mantra we have the jiva portrayed as not someone who is free from birth and death but who is in samsara. This itself shows that the jiva as a samsari spoken of here is not the true nature of the jiva. But everyone in ignorance experiences to be a samsari. This unenquired-into experience of everyone is being alluded to in this mantra and hence it is only a depiction of the vyavaharika state and not the absolute Truth of the jiva.

No system that promises moksha to the jiva has for its goal the retention of the above samsaric bhokta state of the jiva. All systems endeavour to portray the jiva as free from samsara. This is the pAramArthika state. This free-of-samsara state of the jiva is what is taught in the subsequent mantras. That is one reason why the mantra 'dvaa suparna' is not the one teaching the absolutely true nature of the jiva but only the depiction of the vyavaharic state.

When the separation from the kshetram is successfully accomplished, the realization that one is no different from the 'Other' bird, Paramaatman, is had. For, when the kshetram

is separated, there will be nothing to finitize the Atman and consider It to be different from the ParamAtman.

Moreover, the mantra speaks of the 'body' tree where the two birds, Paramaatma and jeevaatma, are perched, as it were. In the state of moksha no body will be there for the mukta for the two birds to be located. There will be no way of specifying two birds or two entities the Para and jeeva Atmans. If it is held that there will still be a body, then that will be no moksha at all for the freedom from prakriti would not have been accomplished. For this reason too, the 'dvaā suparna' imagery is not absolute but only a temporary acceptance, abhyupetya, by the Shruti.

Yet another reason as to why this can be only an imagery and not the paramārtha tattva: The mantra says the jeeva bird is busy experiencing karma phala. This can happen only in the realm of artha, kaama and dharma purusharthas. But in Moksha purushartha, the very purpose of which is to free the jeeva from the earlier cycle of samsara of the three other lower purusharthas, there will be no bhoga-bhogyā-bhokta triputee (triad). So the jeeva is just one Pure Consciousness freed from all bhoga instruments and bhoga objects. This is taught by the subsequent two mantras culminating in the 'paramam sAmyam'.

In the 'AparokshAnubhUti' Acharya Shankara Bhagavatpada says:

svaeR=ip VyvharStu äü[a i³yte jnE>,
A}anaÚ ivjaniNt m&dev ih "qaidkm!. 65.

[At all times, by all people, all vyavahara is done only 'with' Brahman. Owing to ignorance people do not realize this.* The Truth is akin to seeing all earthenware as non-different from its material cause, earth. As the entire universe is only a manifestation of Brahman, everything, at all times is Brahman.]

The gloss, 'dIpikaa', by Sri Vidyananya Swamin on the above verse is:

.....ajna-nivRttireva jIvanmuktiH na tu dvaita-adarshanam. [The freedom from ajnanam, ignorance, is what is jivanmukti and not the non-perception of the dvaitaprapancha.]

*[To put it in a crude manner, the teaching of the Gita verse: 'BrahmArpraNam Brahma haviH...' is what is actually taking place in all our lives, without the knowledge of the Truth of the teaching.]

The following Shruti passage (Ref.?) too teaches that the jivanmukta has eyes, etc. but is as though without them. The Gita teachings seen above like '*navadvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan* 5.13 are strikingly similar to the message of this Shruti:

'sa-chakshurachakshuriva, sa-karno'karna iva, sa-manA amanA iva, sa-prANo'prAna iva'.
[Even though he is endowed with eyes, ears, mind, prana, etc., it is as though he is bereft of eyes, ears, mind, prana, etc.] (Sri Bhagavatpada quotes this passage in the Bhashyam for Brahma sutra 'Tat tu samanvayaat'.)

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad IV.iv.7 says:

Yadaa sarve pramuchyante.....etc.

//7. "Regarding this there are the following verses: "When all the desires that dwell in his heart are got rid of, then does the mortal man become immortal and attain Brahman in this very body.' "Just as the slough of a snake lies, dead and cast away, on an ant—hill, even so lies this body. Then the self becomes disembodied and immortal Spirit, the Supreme Self (Prana), Brahman, the Light." Janaka, Emperor of Videha, said: "I give you, venerable Sir, a thousand cows." //

The Ishavasya Upanishad 7 says:

//Yasmin sarvAni bhUtAni...

To the seer, all things have verily become the Self: what delusion, what sorrow, can there be for him who beholds that oneness? //

The above Upanishads convey the message that release from desires/delusion/sorrow is what is meant by liberation from samsara. The liberated state is experienced here, in this body itself, by those Jnanis who have secured the aparoksha jnanam.

[The Bhagavadgita II chapter verse: prajahAti yadA kAmAn sarvAn pArtha manogatAn...specifying the sthitaprajna lakshana is the reflection of the above Shruti passages. This is the jivanmukta lakshana.]

Is experience a proof for reality?

In normal parlance, that is, vyavahara, it is held that what is experienced is a proof for the reality of the experience. Since this rule does not hold good in the field of Absolute Reality, the transcendental realm, the Scripture teaches the aspirant to question this rule and grow out of this misconception.

For example, all of us believe that we are born, grow, perform actions, get old, suffer disease, experience joy and sorrow and finally die. Those who are believers hold that we transmigrate and are born again. While this is the common thinking, the Bhagavadgita, for example, teaches us something that is quite contrary to this thinking. In the Second Chapter the Lord teaches that we, the Consciousness, are never born and we never die. We are never destroyed/destroyable by any force in the creation. In the III ch. He teaches that we are not the doers of any action; only the prakriti, Maya, does everything. 'The Atma is akartaa' teach the 13th and 14th chapters. While we think we are many, distinct, entities, the Gita teaches that the right vision is the seeing of the One Conscious Principle in all the seemingly distinct bodies. It censures the seeing of difference as rajasic and tamasic.

The 15th ch. verse 'utkrAmantam.....' also proves that contrary to our experience of an embodied life, the Truth is that we are the asanga, asamsaari Atman.

Thus, quite contrary to our thinking that experience is a proof of reality, the scriptures teach that this thinking is incorrect.

Objection:

Why does Tattvavâda deny *jîvan-mukti*?

//Because a *mukta*, or liberated person, should not even be physically present in the material universe, unlike the un-liberated. A person who is living in the world cannot be said to be free of sorrow born of material contact, and also cannot be said to experience the joy of his own nature at all times. The very act of living in a gross material body entails things such as eating, sleeping, pleasure and pain, etc., which cannot be accepted in a *mukta*.

Here is a reply to the above:

The Upanishad teaches ‘The knower of Brahman is Brahman’ ‘Brahma veda Brahmaiva’ (Mundaka). In the Srivishnusahasranama we have a name: ‘Brahmavit’, ‘AnandaH’, etc.. If it is contended that while in the gross body one (a Tattvadarshi) cannot experience the svarupa-ananda at all times, we will have to conclude that Bhagavan, as Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, was devoid of svarupa-ananda during the time of these incarnations. If it is said that a Brahmavit is different from Brahman, there will be contradiction to the Shruti vakyam quoted above and also the absurd consequence of Vishnu, Brahman, being different from Himself (Brahmavit).

In the light of the above, we have to admit that the Brahmavit, Jivanmukta, being non-different from Brahman, does experience His svarupa-ananda while in the body. The Acharyapaada makes an observation in the Taittiriya Bhashyam on ‘raso vai saH...(II.7):

bAhyAnanda-sAdhana-rahitA api nirIhA nireShaNA .brAhmanAH bAhyarasa-
lAbhAdiva sAnandaa dRSHyante vidvAmsaH, nUnam brahmaiva rasaH teShAm.

//The Brahmavits are seen to be ever-satisfied with the Ananda of their nature, svarupa, as though they are deriving the joy from external objects. These Tattvadarshis are free from desire. It is certain that Brahman alone is the ‘rasa’ of these Jnanis. //

Arjuna uvāca

sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā samādhisthasya keśava
sthitadhīḥ kiṃ prabhāṣeta kim āsīta vrajeta kim 2.54

śrībhagavān uvāca

prajahāti yadā kāmān sarvān pārtha manogatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñas tadocyate 2.55

The above Gita verses make it clear that the Tattvadarshi is called a sthitaprajna, a man of steady knowledge of the Truth, when he is all with his Self, reveling in the joy of the Atman. **This is svarupa ananda anubhava.** If this state were only a temporary one, the jnani will not be called a sthita-prajna. The prajnaa-sthairyā would be meaningful only when the tushti is available to him always.

In the third chapter, we have:

yas tv ātmaratir eva syād ātmatṛptaś ca mānavaḥ
ātmany eva ca samtuṣṭas tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate 3.17

naiva tasya kṛtenārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
 na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaścid arthavyapāśrayaḥ 3.18

na me pārthāsti kartavyaṃ triṣu lokeṣu kiṃcana
 nānavāptam avāptavyaṃ varta eva ca karmaṇi 3.22

In the above verses too, we have the proof of jivanmukti. The Lord says that this ‘manavaH’, a human being in gross body, is always turned towards the Atman bliss and derives great satisfaction, tripti, from this svarupa ananda. Such a person has nothing to accomplish in the world. What else is this if not jivanmukti? Here is a clear instance of the Tattvadarshi remaining in the body and still enjoying the Svarupa ananda; there is no need to die for this. The Lord further emphasizes that this state of the jivanmukta is no different from His (the Lord’s) own state (3.22) wherein the Lord is (also) free from any ‘kartavyam’. This freedom from ‘kartavyam’ is undoubtedly the result of the Lord’s own ever-subsisting svarupa ananda anubhava. That an ignorant man is compelled to act is a consequence of his ignorance of his svAbhAvika pUrnatva is undoubtedly admitted by all. The Jnani who has realized his pUrnatva is spoken of by the Gita thus:

yAvaanartha udapAne sarvataHsamplutodake |

tAvAn sarveShu vedeShu *brAhmaNasya vijAnataH* || (2.46)

Again compare the above with the Lord’s declaration of His own PUrNatva and the consequent transcendence from ‘compelled kartavyatva’ (3.22).

sukham ātyantikaṃ yat tad buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam
 vetti yatra na caivāyaṃ sthitaś calati tattvataḥ 6.21

yaṃ labdhvā cāparaṃ lābhaṃ manyate nādhikaṃ tataḥ
 yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate 6.22

taṃ vidyād.h duḥkhasaṃyogaviyogaṃ yogasaṃjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo yogonirviṇṇacetasā 6.23

praśāntamanasaṃ hy enaṃ yoginaṃ *sukham uttamam*
upaiti śāntarajasaṃ brahmabhūtam akalmaṣam 6.27

yuñjann evaṃ sadātmānaṃ yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ
sukhena brahmasaṃsparśam atyantaṃ sukham aśnute 6.28

yo māṃ paśyati sarvatra sarvaṃ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāhaṃ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati 6.30

The highlighted portions speak for themselves the nature of the bliss enjoyed by the Tattvadarshi, even while living in the body. The bliss is the Greatest, verily the bliss of Brahman. What more proof is needed to show that the svarupa Ananda is experienced by the Tattvadarshi, jivanmukta, while in the gross body? The ‘sarvAtmatva drishti’ gained by the Jnani enables him to have the Consciousness of the Self at all times; it is never lost to him. The last quoted verse above teaches this. The ‘*sarvatra* Atma darshanam’ can be possible only when the body is alive and the senses perceive the variety. This is jivanmukti.

CONCLUSION

The core teaching of the Bhagavadgita begins from the verse 2.11:

śrībhagavān uvāca

aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṃ prajñāvādāṃś ca bhāṣase
gatāsūn agatāsūṃś ca nānuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ 2.11

From this seminal teaching we understand:

1. To grieve for those alive and those who have departed is ignorance.
2. It is ignorance because whatever happens to those who live is happening to the body-mind complex and not to the Atman. Likewise, death occurs to the body only and not to the Atman.
3. The Lord teaches that the Atman is ‘na jAyate’ (never born), ‘na mriyate’ (never dies).
4. Everyone knows that a body is assigned only if it is born.
5. Since Atman is never born, It is different from the body; it cannot possess a body.
6. The Lord teaches that we are the Atman in truth and not the body which is not our true self. Therefore the Lord says that to grieve for both those alive and the dead is ignorance. It is only because we have ‘taken’ ourselves to be the body-mind that we grieve for what happens to the body-mind. The Scriptures endeavor to correct this mistake. To think that we are the body is ignorance, ajnana, avidya. To gain the wisdom that we are the Atman and not the body is jnana, vidya.

7. That which is corrected by vidya, jnana, is ajnana, avidya. The ‘we-are-the-body’ (and therefore finite) idea is corrected by the jnana ‘I am the Atman’ (and therefore am the Infinite Brahman) .Hence the body-idea is Avidyaka. It could be objected: What is corrected by knowledge need not be unreal. It could very well be anitya. To grieve for something that is anitya is ignorance and this is what is corrected by the scripture. To this the reply is: ‘anitya’ by definition is something that was not there before and will not be there later but is there only in the present. That which is absent before and after is deemed to be absent even in the intervening present. Ultimately, ‘anitya’ is not different from ‘mithya’. The following two closely connected verses of the Gita Ch.II could be studied:

mātrāsparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ
āgamāpāyinonityās tāṃs titikṣasva bhārata 2.14

nāsato vidyate bhāvo nābhāvo vidyate sataḥ
ubhayor api dṛṣṭo.antas tv anayos tattvadarśibhiḥ 2.16

While the former talks about ‘anityatva’, the latter teaches the mithyAtva of phenomena. Both the verses occur in the context of forbearance, titikshA. Forbearance is on stronger ground when one realizes that the phenomena encountered are not real and they are only appearing to be present. Their ‘asat’ nature when realized brings about greater peace of mind and renders the mind more conducive for ‘tattva dharshanam’.

8. All those who accept that the Atman is different from the body have to admit that the body-idea is born of ignorance. Since Jnana corrects this ignorance and since this happens when one is alive, it has to be logically concluded that the body-idea is only a superimposition on the Atman. And the superimposition goes when right knowledge of the Atman arises. Since the scriptures do not say that the dawn of right knowledge is coeval with the death of the body, and since samsariva is terminated by right knowledge, the state of the Jnani is the liberated state, moksha.
9. To remain in the body-idea is samsara. Samsara is karta-bhokta bhava. This is what is amply borne out by the ‘dvaa-suparna’ mantra of the Mundaka Upanishad and the ‘utkrAmantam shtitam vAapi....’ verse of the Gita 15th ch. He who is a samsari is called a jiva.
10. The Lord teaches that the Atman is akarta-abhokta. Therefore the Atman is not a jiva, samsari.The Jnani has discarded the body-idea. He has thus freed himself from samsara and is therefore a mukta.
11. That such is the case is taught by the Lord in the verses: The jnani knows that he is not the doer/enjoyer ‘naiva kinchit karomi...’even while the sense organs are operating, ‘pashyan, shrunvan, etc.’ This is said by the Shruti vakyam: ‘sa-chakshurachakshuriva, sa-karno’karna iva, sa-manA amanA iva, sa-prANo’prAna iva’. [even though he is with eyes, ears, etc., he is as though without them.]
12. In the said Gita verses: naiva kinchit karomi....the Lord is teaching that the world/body that is sublated by samyagdarshanam will continue for some time till

//api cha naivaatra vivaditavyam brahmaavidA kanchitkAlam sharIram dhriyate na vA dhriyate iti. Katham hi ekasya sva-hrudaya-pratyayam brahmavedanam dehadhAraNam cha apareNa pratiksheptum shakyate? Shruti-smrutishu cha sthitaprajnalakshana-nirdeshena etadeva niruchyate.//

[Furthermore, no difference of opinion is possible here as to whether or not the body is retained for some period (after enlightenment) by the knowers of Brahman. For, when somebody has the conviction in his heart that he has realized Brahman and yet retains the body, how can this be denied by anybody else? This very fact is elaborated in the Upanishads and Smritis in the course of determining the characteristics of a sthitaH prajna (the man of steady knowledge of the Truth)]

a-prajna or asthita-prajnatva is samsara. Sthita prajnatva denotes moksha from samsara. The Lord speaks of the Sthitaprajna lakshanas of a mukta who is still alive.

It would be pertinent to question: What prevents a Tattvadarshi from realizing that he is a mukta? If he says/thinks that since the body is alive he is not (yet) a mukta, then it is evident that he has not had **the** true realization. For, realization of the Truth frees him from samsara instantly. If he thinks the fall of the body only will give him true moksha, he is yet to have the correct realization of the Truth. Sri Shankaracharya has raised the objections, very similar to the ones contained in the 'TattvavAda'-criticism of the Vedantic view of Jivanmukti, and answered them in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Bhashya for the mantra: I.iv.10 where occurs the Mahavakya 'aham BrahmAsmi'. This could be read on pages 114 onwards, especially page 116, in the English translation by Sw.Madhavananda published by Advaita Ashrama.

The unmistakable Freedom from samsara, Moksha/Mukti, directly experienced by the Aprozha Jnani, even while alive, as brought out in the Aitareya Upanishad, immediately upon obtaining the Jnanam is the incontrovertible, undeniable Upanishadic Proof for Jivanmukti. If someone who has no such personal experience of being freed from samsara/ajnana is considered to be a Tattvajnani (who may or may not attain moksha after death), the Tattvajnanam had is questionable. For, the very infallible nature of genuine Tattvajnanam is its immediate fruit of clearly experienceable freedom.

'While still in the womb of my mother I obtained the knowledge of all the births of these gods. Hundred numerous citadels, bodies, of iron, that is, as if made of iron, held me. **Then forcefully by the power born of Knowledge I came out like a hawk tearing through a net.**' Vamadeva said this in this manner while remaining in the womb itself.// (II.1.5)

The above quote is also ample proof for the fact that the teaching of Moksha is verifiable even while living by one who gets the Jnanam. If jivanmukti is not accepted, one has no certainty in the occurrence of the fruit of Moksha taught by

the Upanishads. It is always a 'he may attain moksha after death if ...conditions are fulfilled'. Surely this sorry state of affairs is not prevalent in the Upanishads. Mokshashastra is a Perfect Verifiable Science leaving no room for uncertainty, doubt, etc. That is the nature of the PramANa called the Upanishads.

Yasya prasAdAt ahameva VishNuH maiyyeva sarvam parikalpitam cha /

Ittham vijaanAmi sadAtmarUpam tasyAnghri-padme satatam namAmi //

SrIsadgurucharanAravindArpanamastu

Om Tat Sat