

Self-Effulgent Bliss Divine

— by —

Swami Akhandananda Saraswati

All living beings desire happiness—such happiness which will be obtainable always, everywhere and from every one, for which no exertion is necessary, not dependant on other and which should remain perceptible. It is amazing that despite the ideal being so supremely ambitious, there is no uniformity of opinion in the means of obtaining it. Some believe that after reaching a particular place they will be happy; some are trying to create a special environment; some are engaged in obtaining certain object; some are busy in the glory of social work; some with folded hands are begging happiness from others; some are trying to make themselves unconscious. As many individuals so many opinions, as if the well has been admixed with an intoxicant.

For happiness should we enjoy or control? Renounce or amass? Work or retire? Dance and jump or go into trance? Remember some one or forget everybody? To be conscious or unconscious? It is clearly seen that people desiring happiness are hopeful and diligent by putting themselves in different states mentioned above. What is its *raison d'etre*?

Because the correct and true nature of the ideal happiness is not exactly determined, people are occupied with temporary incomplete laborious and dependant state etc., with the delusion of obtaining happiness and instead of peace, they are experiencing exhaustion and weariness. In limited space, time and object with limited individual and labour, in limited mentation and 'ego' limitless or infinite happiness cannot be obtained. Finite is incapable of experiencing infinite.

Is then endless labour itself ideal happiness ? No, No; Rest is the reaction of labour, may be it is sleep or trance. Then for our ideal happiness whose door shall we knock ?

Certainly, the true nature of the ideal has not been profoundly grasped. Come on ! Let us once separate 'now', 'here' and 'this' from always, everywhere and all. Leave off labour and begging. Let us find out whether happiness is felt or not. If it is not felt meaning that it is not 'now', 'here' and 'this', then how can it be always everywhere and in all things ? Then it will not also be accomplished as effortless and independent. Definitely there is an error in comprehending our ideal happiness. We are demanding happiness which should always remain but do not accept that it is present now or earlier, demanding it to be everywhere but not recognising it to be directly present here, demanding it as accomplished and for which labour, state and grace is hoped and expected. This is the sport of intellectual contradiction, unclear reasoning or delusion. For ideal happiness this alone has to be removed.

Really we seek perceptible happiness, as happiness has no invisible existence. Whenever it is present, it is direct and experiential. The meaning of experience is not as a result of evidence and its conclusion but witness-perceived experience. Despite witness itself being of the form of happiness, due to ignorant behaviour, meaning not recognising itself to be awareness (Brahman), it enlightens happiness in the form of the other. Because of this it believes in changes of happiness according to changes in perceptible states and identifying with dream behaviour or waking, it believes itself to be sometimes happy and sometimes miserable.

It is worth enquiring whether we are not believing a particular state of mind either with object or without to be itself happiness. If it is so, then that particular state will be conditional, related to time and space. For this reason perception of happiness from particular state will be a delusional accomplishment. The import of this is that the ideal happiness for the individual is not of any worldly form but comple-

tely bereft of it. Only such happiness can remain indestructible, unchanged and complete, despite changes in forms due to space, time, in presence or absence of objects and in the terrible dance of creation. Philosophically happiness is only a perception of divine (Brahman). The momentariness of the relative happiness can not cause the perception of the divine bliss to be transient. Because momentariness is the object of perception, and happiness is of the true nature of perceiver (Awareness), timeless, spaceless and objectless. Meaning of this is, awareness is divine (Brahman), indestructible, existent, all-illuminating, absolute knowledge and it is the ideal blissful consciousness of all living beings. This bliss of consciousness by itself is in no way concerned with time, place, state, shape, with effort or effortless, obtained from someone or not so obtained, consciously or unconsciously, perceived with form or formless. All these perceptions are not at all different from consciousness itself, neither are they the effects. They are apparent modification (Vivarta) because of their opposite behaviour to the essential nature of consciousness. But truly all that consciousness is divine (Brahman) in nature only.

What is supreme consciousness ? Supreme knowledge. In knowledge, there is excellence or its supremacy is its purity. In common parlance, the word knowledge is used in conjunction with knowable and knower only. Object of knowledge is knowable and its claimant is the knower. knowable is the earthen pot and knower is the living being. knowledge is the connecting link between the two. Here the word knowledge is used as meaning evidential or instrumental. Really, because the same consciousness underlying knower, knowledge and knowable being one only, pure or supreme knowledge alone is practically used in three different forms and names. Relatively alone duality or triad exist, not in the Absolute or Divine Spirit. To irradiate these, the word knowledge is relatively used in the conceptual form of non-duality. In the practical world there can never be such knowledge whose object in some form or other is absent and whose claimant is

similarly absent. Though, philosophically even in the mixed state, knowledge is pure only, but without the eradication of ignorance, falsity of duality is not established and solitariness is hidden. In the state of ignorance, this perceived triad in knowledge is the super-imposed impurity. To irradiate this impurity, it is necessary to ascertain the pure and true nature of knowledge (Consciousness). Really knowledge is not related to knowable. Knowledge even enlightens the absence of knowable. Absence of knowable is not apart from the ground or substratum (Consciousness). Its separateness endures till the ignorance of the substratum endures. Knowable and knower are related or dependant on each other. Because whenever there is knowable then there must be some knower. Knowledge (Consciousness) is not dependant upon knowership. Knowledge is the enlightener of even the absence of knowership. Awareness and knowledge (of triad) are also not inter-dependant, because awareness (consciousness) is only one. For this reason the self-effulgent knowledge which is completely indivisible by knowableness and unknowableness, knowership and non-knowership and which is quite full in all these and which is the substratum of all these; this is not related with or dependant on any one. It is the enlightening ground of all differences. Let that difference be of space, time, species, genus, existing in itself, or of special knowledge or ignorance. For this reason the pure true nature of knowledge is bereft of the difference of knower and knowable. Here knowable means all the perceived objects and knower means individual or Lord or both. Therefore, free from the distinctions of world, individual and Lord, bereft of any other enlightenment or ground for itself enlightener of false duality and hence light free from enlightenership is itself non-dual Brahman or Supreme knowledge. This is not even related to ignorance because it is its enlightener also. Ignorance is indescribable. It cannot be true absolutely nor untrue relatively. In the substratum or ground consciousness it is imaginary in the form of veil or cover. Imaginary things do not produce any relation or

dependance in knowledge. Relative substance is false and non-related or non-dependance is true. This non-related truth is Brahman and this is designated as supreme consciousness in the Upanishads.

Now let us try to explain this subject in still simpler fashion. As this garland is in my hand, 'Garland' is knowable, 'eye' is the instrument of knowledge, 'me' the possessor of eyes is knower. Really, the ground consciousness of this divided knower is also that of the knowable. The sub-stratum of visual conception is also that same consciousness. Therefore, due to incapability of grasping the non-dividedness it is appearing in three different forms. Awareness of non-dividedness destroys the appearance of the triad of knower, knowledge and knowable. Therefore, supreme knowledge as ground consciousness is true and differences of divided knower, knowledge and knowable are attributed, false and mere appearance. All these garland, orange, clock, book appear separately; their instruments of knowledge viz. eye, skin, taste etc. appear separately and due to different claimants of the instruments different knowers are just appearing—all this is apparent modification in the non-dual supreme consciousness of the divine (Brahman). That which is merely an appearance seeming as separate consciousness due to differences of objects, instruments and knowers to be accepted as different bits of consciousness is a result of lack of thinking or ignorance. Not recognising the undividedness of supreme knowledge is ignorance. To accept ourselves and objects as divided is delusion. To iradicate this delusion the ascertainment of the substance of supreme knowledge is useful.

It is not proper to give the illustration of the rays of the sun to explain apparent separate triads in supreme knowledge of divine (Brahman). Because this is quite full substance while the Sun is a divided entity. The Sun remains in one place and is absent in the other. Therefore, where it is absent it sends its rays. Sometimes the sun is seen and sometimes not. In other place, its opponent is also present

in the form of darkness. Its manifestations as inanimate and animate are obvious. Under these circumstances there cannot be rays of supreme knowledge (Brahman) comparable to the rays of the sun and the moon which will move in space and time and touch other substance. Then what are these triads ? Definitely they are projections of consciousness or mental constructs. The enlightening consciousness for the purpose of enlightening in the absence of different objects and because of the unsuitability of enlightening undividedness and consciousness, it itself manifests in the reverse form to its true nature. Just as when the unlimitedness of the sky is incapable of being manifested by the eye, then the blue form which is the reverse of formlessness becomes apparent as a form, in a similar way our own Self being incapable of being an object appears in the form of opposite objects. The only reason for the appearance of conscious as material, imperishable as perishable, absolute as divided, non-dual as dual, Self as the other is this that Self supreme knowledge is not the object of comprehension. Whoever tries to make the supreme knowledge as object, he will make supreme knowledge as material and divided object only. Therefore, instead of becoming supreme knowledge it will only be its apparent modification. Hence, Upanishads after ascertaining supreme knowledge does not instruct it as other but in the form of an enquiring student that you are supreme knowledge (Brahman). This is the reason why supreme knowledge is not realised as fruit of any religious performance, devotion, or mental control, neither as a result of any instrument nor as our own perception. All means achieve success in negating their own negatable entities. So much so that even knowledge resulting from the illuminating sentences (Maha-Vakya) after eradicating ignorance simultaneously disappear or is invalidated and supreme knowledge remains as before.

The concept of pervasion or pervasiveness in supreme knowledge is also imaginary. Tejobindu Upanishad clearly states that 'pervaded-pervading is false'. Take an illustrat-

ion to understand this-as past, future, present are pervading time as pervaded. How absurd it is that when past, future, present do not exist apart from time, then who pervades whom? Really noting the results in objects and accepting the order, the triad in time is imagined. Neither the ground of this viz. time nor the enlightening consciousness are at all aware of this triad. This is the sport of human intellect. This intellectual sport in technical language is called superimposition. Let us take another illustration in impartite principle of space, east, west, north, south. above, below parts are entirely imaginary. In consciousness underlying the imagination of the space principle or in ground existence the very space divisions are uncalled for. In spite of this the objective divisions viz. length, breadth, shape, outer, inner of vessels and clothes etc., all are ideas imposed on the space principle. This is imputation of one on the other. Is there pervaded-pervading connection between space principle and east-west-outer-inner etc.? Bless God! with our true nature no substance is in no way connected, not even that of identity, with whom will the Absolute have identity? Now, take the third illustration.in one non-dual impartite existence the divisions of space etc. is not in time, as it is not the effect; neither in motion as it is not action or space; neither is it natural, because it is not possible to explain production of a different thing naturally. It is not even of the nature of name and form, because they only come in during the transactions of proof, evidence and conclusion. So, in fact, apparent differences in time like present etc. or seeming differences in space such as east etc. are imagined as name and form in the primordial energy constituting as five elements and hence entirely unreal. To explain this point Upanishads, sacred books and seers give the illustration of rope-serpent or dream. In the enquiry of self, dream illustration is applied, in that of God (Tat) rope-serpent illustration and for explaining the oneness of these two (Self & God) no illustration is available. Therefore, to explain the all-pervasive nature of supreme consciousness (Brahman), it is

proper to state from the view-point of self-consciousness that dream objects appear in that space and time where and when they are totally unreal. Similarly the seen phenomenon in the supreme consciousness is entirely false. In addition, just as in the space occupied by rope and during the time of appearance, the apparent serpent is false; similarly the indivisible conscious existence as the substance God (Tat), this seen phenomenon is false even during the time of appearance. After the determination of the falsity of the seen phenomenon there is no differentiating substance between self-consciousness and supreme Self as ground consciousness. In fact, difference is phenomenon and is seen without becoming in the true state of supreme consciousness (Brahman). In supreme consciousness both the pervasiveness and pervadedness are relatively imaginary and merely pervasion absolutely.

In Vedantic thought one pervading the other is not called pervasion. Fire pervading iron or clarified butter pervading milk are not illustrations of real pervasion; because their pervasiveness is time-limited and action-limited. Real pervasion as that of the effect in the material cause. That in which after destruction of the effect it becomes one, meaning the substance from which the effect is formed, wherein the form is constructed, which is present in the effect in the form weight, that is called the material cause, viz. earth in pot, water in wave, fire in flame, air in vital force (prana), house-space in general space, dream vision in dream. In pot-earth illustration earth is not the only material but all the five elements. Therefore in the sound, touch, sight, taste and smell of pot in all these five elements are present, Pot is not apart from five elements. Five elements remain even after breaking of the pot. Similar is the case in wave, flame etc. to be understood. Perception material as dream and rope as serpent are illustrations of effect due to the ignorance of the substratum. Even they are not apart from the material cause. In spite of all these illustrations being useful in explaining pervasion of supreme consciousness they do not

exactly explain pervasiveness. Because all these illustrations are related to objects or matter. Supreme Awareness is Consciousness per se (Spirit or Eternal Subject). Whenever consciousness or spirit is the material cause, there it is really free from the differences of cause and effect.

For this reason the pervasion of consciousness constituting absence of other substance is its Absoluteness.

Cause-effect form pervaded pervading idea is obtained only in the seen and not in their enlightener and ground consciousness. Therefore spatial effect, time effect and affectness in substance—three cannot be connected with supreme consciousness. The ground enlightener of the absence of space, time and causality is supreme consciousness. Space, time and substance enlightened by supreme consciousness, because they are the opposite of their absence in the substratum are false. Due to their being seen, transformed and divided also they are not independent, indestructible and full. Under these circumstances, when where and in what form the enquiry should be done to realise supreme consciousness ?

It is surprising that for searching supreme consciousness we desire for some-time, state and circumstance; because when it is indestructible there is no part of time which is from it. In past, future and present form, also free from the imaginary triad it is full. By it this triad is enlightened. This cannot even imagine in it self its death, change, absence and birth; because it is their witness and enlightener. Then why is it not realised in the sub-stratum of each moment ?

Surprisingly enough, despite it being free from any connection with objective changeable spatial concepts and ideas, free from interior, exterior, intermediate triad, despite being the substratum and enlightener of this triad of imaginations, despite free from inward-lookingness, outward-lookingness etc. spatial states, circumstances as also going, not-going, atomicity, all-pervasiveness, intermediate proportionness etc., why is it not realised as enlightener in this space time and in the sub-stratum of this spatial limitedness; when it never

imposes on itself at any time incompleteness, limitedness; etc., because it is the witness consciousness only of presence and absence of space. Where is the waiting and necessity of entering the uttermost silence of inner region? Why is it not perceived and searched right in this space?

It is surprising that in this very space, time, with whatever form, change, type, tendency is being experienced in objects; these in their entirety are appearing as apparent modification in the causal ground consciousness enlightened by itself, in spite of being non-different really; why do they appear as objects of intellect? When it is indestructible full non-dual conscious existence, free from space time in the form of all. One who has never experienced himself to be united with subject-object relation, because subject and object in spite of their appearing as different are not so; in this factual state when there is no other; for its realisation where is the necessity of proof-conclusion practically? If it was an object like pot then visibility, if it was distant like God then inference, if it was some other similar then example, if it was unknown then statement of reliable authority was necessary. But for the realisation of this supreme consciousness which is the ground of all, enlightener of all, self-effulgent; what instrument is necessary; which new instrument is to be prepared when it never experiences any object at any time as different from itself nor is it the object of experience of anyone else.

Of all surprises, this is the greatest that we try to obtain this supreme consciousness in trance etc., in particular time, in particular space such as Brahma-loka etc. and particularised state of form of intellect or mind. In elevation or motion space, in dissolution of mind, time, and in transcendence, supersession or invalidation of particular object in becoming one mentally with it; not being applicable in case of realisation of supreme consciousness; all these methods cannot be direct means. As was formerly explained while describing supreme consciousness, the best method to realise it is to obtain the true meaning of Self. Because in it are clearly perceived its contrary characters to the nature of time as death, change

etc., nature of space as interior exterior etc., and perceivability of objects etc. Nobody can ever experience his own absence, non-intelligence or absence of love for himself. For this reason in order to realise supreme consciousness in bliss form it is necessary to concentrate on Self as supreme consciousness instead of imagining it as blissful in any time or object form.

What is this Atman as the true meaning of self? For investigating it attention should be bestowed on the common usage and application of the word self. Meaning, what is that entity for which we use the word 'I'? It is essential for us to contemplate on this subject. Then we shall realise our aim when we start our enquiry from where we are, when we are, what we are. For this purpose we shall have to examine in gross, subtle and causal bodies, in waking dream and sleep states, in those exact perceived circumstances wherever we utilise the term 'I' 'I', whether really there is 'I' or not. If the word 'I' is being utilised with undetermined meaning then necessarily it is being used as visible 'I' or distant 'that'. Definitely the use of the word 'I' in this case would be with inexact meaning. And then we shall not be able to recognise even waking, dream and deep sleep states. The Self in its true form which is contrary to all those, it's a different story altogether. Before this individual five covering have to be discriminated. Then waking state in one body does not remain as our waking state but we go a step behind and obtain ourself as the ego of the entire waking state. Vedantic enquiry starts from this discrimination of three states and knowing our true nature in the form of Turiya (Fourth, witness of these states) as supreme consciousness we become free from ignorance and its results. Therefore here states are considered in order. At this time when seated in human body the enquiry, investigation and search is being done on the meaning of the word 'I' and with the outer and inner instruments of the gross body being utilised, it is obvious that it is the waking state. During this state when the individual human being is using the 'I' 'I' term for this body.

Fat-lean, black-fair, tall-stunt etc. are the many bodily characters imposed on himself and believes himself to be the body. The same person believing actions performed by the organs of actions claims as the doer of meritorious and evil deeds. The nature of ego is that I am doer, walker, speaker. When it believes to be the possessor of the organs of knowledge it claims that I see, hear, taste etc. and believes himself to be the knower and enjoyer. Superimposing the actions done by outer and inner organs and identifying with their results or failure, in spite of being himself emancipated, he believes himself to be consequently happy or miserable. Impressions or tendencies are formed according to action and knowledge. According to tendencies ideas arise and according to ideas action is done. This circle goes on through life and is the cause of life after life and death, after death. If this is the real state then the individual doer and enjoyer will perpetually remain a worldly creature, and will never be free from the circle of birth and death. This current of birth and death is called worldly existence and 'I' fallen in this is called a worldly creature. Now, we have to determine doer due to adjuncts of organs of action, enjoyer due to adjuncts of resulting ideas and worldly creature due to adjuncts of birth and death. What is this person (Jiva) really? If he was really separate, then action, special knowledge, happiness and misery etc. and his fallen state in this worldly current would be a simple thing and effort to be emancipated futile. But this separateness has been accepted unthinkingly without enquiry or experience. Therefore, it is essential to remove this blindly accepted belief or unthinking ignorant acceptance by pursuit of knowledge of Truth. knowledge of Truth—knowledge of identity of individual consciousness with Supreme consciousness, without which this eradication is not possible. Therefore effort to accomplish it is necessary.