



Introduction

The study of any science cannot be undertaken without a preliminary understanding of the exact definitions of the terms and terminologies employed in it. The fundamental beliefs, the accepted theories and the observed modes of behaviour, are all necessary data with which a modern scientist freely launches his new adventure into the realm of science. Similarly, in philosophy also, a fundamental knowledge of the terms used and the correct connotations in which various terms have been employed, is an unavoidable preliminary requirement before a student can start the study of Vedānta.

Vedānta is truly the ‘Science of Life’. Śaṅkara, the great interpreter of Vedānta, not only gave us his commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the *Brahmasūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, but also many primary texts, which introduce the seeker into the joys of Vedānta. One of the greatest texts he has written as an introduction to Vedānta is *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, means, ‘The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination’.

A careful study of these verses with the full freedom to enquire will give any student a correct understanding of the entire theory of Vedānta and he can, even without a very serious study of the scriptures, start his daily practices with tremendous benefit.

There are hundreds of seekers who, without understanding the fundamentals, are aimlessly struggling along a so-called spiritual path. Naturally, they suffer agonies of painful disappointment, although they have behind them years of painstaking practices. An exhaustive and careful study of this text helps to avoid all pitfalls on the way to progress. It is my intention to bring forth from every verse not only its obvious meaning, but also its hidden import