

*all negations, which is like a calm ocean, which has no name, in which there are neither merits nor demerits, which is eternal, tranquil and one.*

This great Truth is undecaying (apakṣaya-śūnyam) and immortal (nāśa-rahitam). In that state where all thoughts have set (astābhāva)<sup>1</sup>, the student lives vitally the experience of Reality (vastu). All words used in wordly parlance are of no use there, hence it is the nameless state. It has no properties and cannot be indicated by name or word. This state which is indescribable in terms of words, the Teacher can indicate only by giving us an analogy. Each student will understand it only according to his capacity. If the student has the necessary mental tranquillity and the intellectual purity to fly to the heights that Śaṅkara is indicating, if he has the courage to take the plunge, it is impossible for such a student ever to fail to understand this great state.

The example given is, ‘stimita-salila-rāśi-prakhyam’. It is as though, all the waves of the ocean have suddenly stopped at the magic wave of a wand, as though they have been stunned into freezing.

This cannot be understood unless you are imaginative enough to visualise yourself on one of those solitary, uninhabited little islands in the Pacific, where, up to the horizon, all you can see is the seething, dancing, rolling, jumping, frisking waves. The clamour of their enthusiasm is noisily pulsating in all directions. When you have sufficiently imagined such a condition of dreadful awe and magnitude, imagine that all the waves have suddenly stopped. Likewise, when the meditating seeker has quietened his mind, intellect and sense agitations, all the pulsations caused by his vāsanās come to quiescence. And in that inner quiet, he comes to experience the Consciousness wherein all expression of thought (vikāra) is quietened. Guṇas qualify the vāsanās. Vāsanās manifesting at the mental level are called thoughts.

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<sup>1</sup> There is another reading where it is read as (astābhāsa) which means ‘where all illusions have ended.’