

The Ātman is beginningless (anādi), endless (ananta). Everything springs forth into birth and disappears in its death in the medium of Consciousness only. Destiny can only pertain to that which has birth and death and not to the eternal Substratum upon which the illusion of birth and death is taking place from time to time.



अजो नित्यः शाश्वत इति ब्रूते श्रुतिरमोघवाक् ।
तदात्मना तिष्ठतोऽस्य कुतः प्रारब्धकल्पना ॥ ४६० ॥

*ajo nityaḥ śāśvata iti brūte śrutiramoghavāk,
tadātmanā tiṣṭhato'sya kutaḥ prārabdhakalpanā. (460)*

460. The Ātman is 'birthless, eternal and undecaying', such is the absolute declaration of Śruti. How can prārabdha be attributed to him who lives ever identified with That?

Having given in the previous verse the logical reason why the Ātman has no prārabdha, here Śaṅkara supports his rational argument by quoting the scriptures.

In Vedānta, conclusion arrived at by mere reasoning are not in themselves acceptable since the intellect, itself a product of delusion, can get more and more confused by its own illusory perceptions. Therefore, in the science of Reality as conceived by the great ṛṣis of yore, the rational conclusions, arrived at logically by an intellect, when supported by similar conclusions declared by the scriptures, become doubly guaranteed and, therefore, totally acceptable to the students. In the verse under commentary, the Teacher gives the authority of the scriptures (Śruti pramāṇa). Here, a verse from the *Kaṭhopanīṣad* is quoted – birthless, eternal and changless¹ is the nature of the Self, says the Upanīṣad and the words of the scriptures are infallible – amoghavāk.²



¹ *Kaṭhopanīṣad* –1.2.18

² *abādhitartam* – the meaning of which can never be proved false.