

Ātmānam – in your own Self.

‘What is Its nature?’ This is exhaustively discussed now –

1. **Of infinite Knowledge (akhaṇḍabodham)** – That, because of which, all other knowledges are possible is called pure Knowledge. This is the objectless Awareness. It is Knowledge which is unbroken (akhaṇḍa) not the knowledge of things, but the Knowledge which illumines all other knowledges.
2. **Ever effulgent (sarvaprakāśam)** – Illumining everything and also the absence of things. It ever Is, never is not.
3. **Neither has It form, nor is It formless (sat-asat-vilakṣaṇam)** – Neither gross nor subtle, It is beyond the form and the formless. It is the Knowing Principle of both the gross and the subtle, the knowledge of the gross and the subtle, of the form and the formless. The ‘Knower’ must be something other than the ‘known’.
4. **Eternal (nityam)** – That which is changeless; not conditioned by time, space and causality¹.
5. **All-pervading (sarvagatam)** – Pervasiveness indicates subtlety. The Self pervades all and nothing pervades It. Hence, the epithet is following immediately.
6. **Subtler than the subtlest (susūkṣmam)** – Subtlety is measured by pervasiveness, therefore, the term means, ‘all-pervading’.
7. **Devoid of division within and without (antar-bahiḥśūnya)** – The supreme Reality is all-pervading and eternal and is one without a second. For such a divine Truth, how can there be a ‘within’ and a ‘without’? Within and without of what? It is homogenously present everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances.

¹ *deśa-kāla-vastu-aparicchinnah*

- 8. Not different from yourself (ananyamātmanah)** – It is not to be recognised as an object existing and functioning somewhere outside. It is not other than the Self. We have to identify ourselves with this supreme Reality.

Having clearly understood this great Truth as one's own Self, one becomes rid of all mental agitations. When we understand a thing as we understand ourselves, there will be no trace of doubt about it in us. Even if hundreds of people were to come and tell me that I was Swami Govindananda will I ever have any doubt as to who I really am? Should such a thing happen, I would say there is definitely something wrong with them all.

If many people say something contradictory about any other thing, I may have doubts about it but never can there be any doubt about myself. So firmly rooted must become the knowledge of the Self. This is not merely because the Teachers of the Upaniṣads say so but because 'I know It'. We must come to live It, every moment of our lives.

Such a man of merit, who has known thus, gets rid of all his 'sins' (pāpa). 'Sin' is the negative vāsanā which creates agitations in the mind. Such a man becomes taintless. Even the good vāsanās should be got rid of. Vāsanās, good and bad, both are taints in the personality. In Brahman, the Reality, even good vāsanās are disturbances. From the standpoint of supreme Peace (Paramaśānti), even merit (puṇya) is relatively bad, a 'sin' (pāpa).

- 9. He becomes free from death (vimṛtyuḥ)** – Death means, 'the principle of change'. His experiences are, thereafter, not through the body, mind and intellect. These equipments are constantly changing. Therefore, the experience gained through the BMI are not permanent. Every such experience must die. The Man of Realisation lives not upon these finite experiences. Hence, he is 'free from change'.

When one has realised the Infinitude, he no more experiences the world through these equipments. So he has no experience of