

आसोक्तिं खननं तथोपरि शिलाद्युत्कर्षणं स्वीकृतिं
 निक्षेपः समपेक्षते नहि बहिः शब्दैस्तु निर्गच्छति ।
 तद्वद्भ्रह्मविदोपदेशमननध्यानादिभिर्लभ्यते
 मायाकार्यतिरोहितं स्वममलं तत्वं न दुर्युक्तिभिः ॥ ६५ ॥

*āptoktiṁ khananam tathopari śilādyutkarṣaṇam svikṛtim
 nikṣepaḥ samapekṣate nahi bahiḥ śabdaistu nirgacchati,
 tadvadbrahmavidopadesamananadhyānādibhirlabhyate
 māyākāryatirohitam svamamalaṁ tattvam na duryuktibhiḥ.* (65)

65. A treasure hidden deep below under the earth can be found only when the exact site is known, excavations carried out and the earth, stones and so on, hiding it are removed; never can it come out if merely called by name. Similarly, the pure truth of the Self which lies hidden beneath our delusion and its effects can be attained through the instructions of one who is a knower of Brahman, followed by reflection, meditation and so on. But never can the Self emerge and manifest itself as a result of repeating perverted arguments.

In the course of the last several verses, Śaṅkara has been trying to bring home to us the utter necessity and urgency for self effort undertaken in the right direction. That no amount of study and philosophical dialectics can take one, even by a fraction of an inch, nearer to the divine experience which is life's fulfilment, has already been elaborately discussed. The same idea has been brought out here which, we may consider, is the summary of a library of books on spiritual literature.

In order to explain this idea, Śaṅkara paints the picture of one digging for a treasure. One may wonder how the treasure hunter's activities can be a theme by which spiritual technique can be explained but a poet always sees much more meaning in a factual happening than an ordinary matter-of-fact observer does.

A treasure hunt can be successful only when the digger has correct information of the place where the treasure is hidden. He must also have the enthusiasm and energy to dig and find the treasure. He must slowly and steadily, with hopeful patience and

perseverance, continue digging and remove all obstacles that he may meet with till he reaches the goal of his seeking – the treasure trove. At last, when he comes to the rich vaults he must be level-headed and calm enough not to lose his balance so that he is in a position to gather the treasure and make use of it.

In the same fashion, the infinitely rich treasure of perfection that lies unseen beneath the outer crude layers of matter envelopments in the bosom of man is to be discovered as his own Self. The seeker must have the assiduity, industry, hope and patience to dig in the right place, in the right fashion, constantly and continuously with unabated enthusiasm, in the face of even the greatest obstacles, until at last, he comes not only to see the treasure but to gather it, possess it and enjoy it, as its sole proprietor. The seeker must not dig just anywhere; he must start his endeavour in the right direction as advised by those who know the Truth (*āptavākyam*) as declared in the scriptures.

In the spiritual treasure hunt, the endeavour of digging is made with the pickaxe of thought and the spade of discrimination. With these, we remove the earth – the attachments with the body, mind and intellect, which are the effects of the ignorance of the Self. Avidyā creates in us various misunderstandings and it is these agitations of the mind and negative thought veilings of the intellect that conceal the Treasure Divine, the Self. These can be removed by reflection and meditation.

Manana and dhyāna – reflection and meditation – prepare the mind for a single pointed application by bringing it to the state of least agitation. This is the condition of the mind and intellect fit for vicāra, the highest spiritual sādhanā known to man. This is exhaustively indicated only in Vedānta.

Faithful to his arguments, honest in his convictions and obedient to his experiences, Ācārya Śaṅkara cries out that this is the only path for complete and permanent Liberation from the chaotic confusions created by our ignorance of the underlying