

Since it is an object, it has a beginning and an end. Ātman is not space but is like space; it is comparable with the subtlest element, space, for the purpose of intellectual understanding. In short, Śaṅkara wants us to meditate upon and experience Brahman, the all-pervading and eternal.

Elaborating upon the simile ‘like the infinite space’ used here, he continues in the following verse –



घटकलशकुसूचिमुख्यैः
गगनमुपाधिशतैर्विमुक्तमेकम् ।
भवति न विविधं तथैव शुद्धं
परमहमादिविमुक्तमेकमेव ॥ ३८६ ॥

*ghaṭakalaśakusūlasūcimukhyaiḥ
gaganamupādhisaṭairvimeuktamekam,
bhavati na vividham tathaiva śuddham
paramahamādīvimeuktamekameva. (386)*

386. Having dropped hundreds of its limitations such as a pot, a pitcher, a barn or the eye of a needle, space is recognised as one and not many. So too, Brahman is indeed one, when denuded of the ego and so on.

The example of space given in the above verse is expanded in this one.

A pot, jar, barn¹ or the eye of a needle are the conditionings for space. Pot-space, jar-space, barn-space and needle’s eye-space are all parts of the same space and are so called because of their respective conditionings. Space is one, with no limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*). When the *upādhis* are all removed the one space remains all by itself. There can be no differences in it. The apparent differences are all due to its conditionings. Similarly,

¹ *kusūlaḥ - yatra dhānyarāśih saṁbhriyate saḥ mahāparimāṇaḥ*
the ample bosom of a barn in which large quantities of grain are stored.