

# *Ashtavakra Samhita*

## Study Notes of Swami Shraddhananda

### Introduction

by Lalita Maly

The following are study notes for the *Ashtavakra Samhita*, a Vedantic scripture. These are the notes that the late Revered Swami Shraddhananda wrote in the margin of his copy of the text. The notes were written in English, Bengali, and Sanskrit in his handwriting over years of study. I deciphered the tiny English and Sanskrit writing and Bidyut Bose kindly translated the Bengali. He has my gratitude and appreciation for his efforts. Bidyut noted that in the last few chapters the Swami had translated the text into Bengali rhyming couplets. We who knew Swami Shraddhananda as a poet and singer can only surmise that he did that in order to chant or sing these verses.

The Swami shared these notes with many students of Vedanta and encouraged them to make photocopies. Although many people have copies of these notes, I don't know that anyone else has translated and typed them up. These notes are unedited, as Swami Shraddhananda wrote them in the margins of the text at the time of the Study Circle and over the years of his study. Except for a few inclusions and notes, which are bracketed for identification, I did my best to preserve the unique tone of the swami for the readers. I made changes in the punctuation in order to facilitate the reader's ease and comprehension. I thought it was interesting to note which words the swami wrote in his native Bengali, and those in Sanskrit, and they are thus marked. Translations of Sanskrit words are in parentheses.

Please feel free to print out and email/share these notes with any other students of Vedanta. Revered Swami Swahananda, the Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, has agreed to make these notes available on the Vedanta Society website [[vedanta.org](http://vedanta.org)] for downloading.

Most of these notes were written while Swami Shraddhananda was a young monk at the renowned Mysore Study Circle from 1937-39. The

famous Mysore Study Circle was taught in English by the South Indian scholar, V. Subrahmanya Iyer, pundit to the Maharaja of Mysore, Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur IV. His Highness' father encouraged Swami Vivekananda to attend the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. This Study Circle was composed of the most intellectual swamis of the Ramakrishna Order and was supported by the patronage of the Maharaja. Swami Shraddhananda stayed an additional year in the study circle, imbibing the Vedantic analysis. He developed a deep friendship with the great pundit who encouraged him in his studies and practice of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy.

V. Subrahmanya Iyer, however, was not just a dry philosopher, but also a devotee. Swami Shraddhananda often quoted the pundit saying "Sri Ramakrishna was the greatest philosopher of all time" and that "none of the direct disciples understood Sri Ramakrishna's depth but Swami Vivekananda." When Mysore devotees travelled north to Calcutta, they asked the Pundit if they could bring him any souvenir. He replied, "Bring me a twig from the Panchavati"-- the wooded wilderness area along the Ganges in the Dakshineswar Temple compound where Sri Ramakrishna lived and meditated. The pundit, although a householder, lived the philosophy he taught. A profound thinker and scholar, Pundit Iyer taught the swamis of the Study Circle for many years. This group of swamis in the Mysore Study Circle included some of the most scholarly monks of the Ramakrishna Order, including Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, New York and Swami Ranganathananda, previous President (died 2005) of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission headquartered at Belur Math, India. It is from this Mysore Study Circle that the current Monastic Training Center evolved at Belur Math.

For a biographical sketch about Swami Shraddhananda, please read his book of essays entitled, *Seeing God Everywhere, A Practical Guide to Spiritual Living*, edited by Pravrajika Vrajaprana, published by Vedanta Press, Hollywood, ISBN 0-87481-052-3. I am grateful that an excerpt of that biography is attached to this article, by permission of the editor.

My thanks for proof reading go to Cleo Satyamayee Andersen and Amrita Salm. Out of love and devotion to the memory of Swami Shraddhananda, you are offered these study notes.

## How To Use These Study Notes

To use these notes, read each verse and translation in your text, and then read these numbered notes that correspond to the verses in the text for further explanation of the text.

The *Ashtavakra Samhita* text where the swami wrote these notes is a 1936 edition translated by Swami Nityaswarupananda of the Ramakrishna Mission. Pundit V. Subrahmanya Iyer wrote the Introductory Notes for the text on this edition. The chapter titles on these notes are taken from that 1936 text and are interesting and somewhat different from the current edition of the same text currently published by Advaita Ashrama. Just follow the number of the chapters and verses, which in both editions are the same. Since not every chapter or verse has a note, there are some empty spaces in the numbering.

The italicized words indicate that those words are from the text were marked and expounded upon in the notes by Swami Shraddhananda. The underlined words were underlined by the swami.

The translated Bengali words are preceded by [B] indicating it was written originally in Bengali and the translated Sanskrit is denoted by [S]. The translations of Sanskrit words have been placed in parentheses to find them more easily. Words in brackets are added for clarity by the proofreaders. I have included the quotes from other texts that are cited.

May our study of the Vedanta be fruitful in the realization of Truth.

*Ashtavakra Samhita*  
Study Notes of Swami Shraddhananda

## **Part I. HOW TO ATTAIN KNOWLEDGE**

1. It is only those that seek knowledge, they alone take to this book. Janaka is confused. He says, “Some say [S] mukti (liberation) is attained if one goes to die in Benares, some say mukti is gotten after death. Some say it is achieved if one goes to Jerusalem, and so on. You tell me what is the true nature of [S] mukti.”

*Liberation:* From the imprisonment of ignorance. We are surrounded on all sides by ignorance. I do not know this, I do not know that. I want to know what this wall is, what this body is, what death is, this is my object. There should be nothing left unknown.

*Renunciation:* True [S] vairagyam (renunciation) is not running away from house or throwing away the cloth because even if I do so, my attachment to various things does not go.

2. Answer to the first question [in Verse 1]. Inwardness.

The object of the *Mandukya Upanishad* is this search for truth.

Truth may sometimes seem unpleasant, but we have to see it as nectar.

*Contentment:* Don't seek after this or that. Then your mind will be distracted and you will find no time for this search after [S] jnanam (knowledge).

*Truth as nectar:* If you have any other object in view, name or fame or prosperity, you may go to religion or [go off for] something else.

3. The starting point of Vedanta is [S] Drig drishya viveka (discrimination between the seer and object seen) c.f. Brahma Sutra Introduction.

Answers the second question [in Verse 1], the object of [S] mukti. Separateness from another.

You are not the body which is made of these five elements.

*Realize yourself as the seer* [not *knower* - corrected in the text] You are the [S] sakshi (witness).

*Of the nature of consciousness:* [Consciousness – the capacity to know.]

[S] Drig drishya vivek. Separate the subject from the objects.

4. Answers the third question [in Verse 1]. [S] Vairagyam cha katham praytam: spiritual consciousness.

The body may be moving, growing, changing, but you see the change.

*Intelligence:* The capacity to know. You think that you are inside your body. The scientists say that consciousness is limited in the brain. This is “bondage”—the initial stage. Other bondages are various kinds of false “ideas”. See the next sloka (verse).

5. The [S] Jnani (knower of truth) is beyond all [S] varnas (caste) and [S] ashrams (stations in life). The European must forget [the notion] that he is superior to the colored races.

*You are not visible to the eyes:* The body is visible, not the [S] Drik (seer).

Your sannyasa ashrama [renunciation stage of life] belongs to the body and not the [S] Drik.

I am the witness of the [S] avashthas. Ten years ago I was a registrar and twenty years ago another different something. I am the witness of millions of bodies. [These last two lines appear to be quotes from V. Subrahmanya Iyer, who was a registrar.]

Detachment – the first exercise.

6. Ideas, thoughts, internal [S] Drishyam (objects).

*O All-Pervading One:* In the third and the fourth sloka it has already been stated that you are not confined to the body. When you identify yourself with the body you become the ego and as such the doer and the enjoyer. If you give up the body idea, you become the witness.

7. If you think you are Shraddhananda, you are in bondage. The name belongs to the body.

How can the “seer” in you be different from the “seer” in the ass?

I may see different bodies, but how do I know that there are different souls -different seers.

*Free:* when you think that you are confined in the body, then you are not free.

8. [B] Analyze deeply every action, every question, every opinion, every thought—try to find where this “I” is lurking. “This is so beautiful” in this innocent statement lurks a big ego. Maybe its beautiful from your point of view; have you thought whether its beautiful from everyone’s viewpoint?

9. Grief, happiness and all other things come and go.

10. *Supreme Bliss:* Means there is absolutely no grief.

Illustration: The whole world is in the mind of the dream. This same thing is to be known in the waking state.

11. *True:* This can be verified. This moment you think of the seer. You will be immediately convinced that you are not limited.

12. Perfection only in [S] Drik. All [S] Drishyam imperfect.

*Desireless:* Everything is in it, therefore desireless.

*Quiet*: Nothing to be achieved; therefore, desireless.

*Illusion*: Imagination.

*Actionless*: The witness does not produce anything.

[B]Question: I didn't create the world. Answer: I'm not saying that. But the world is of the nature of ideas, therefore, not the mind. Then, when the burden of "causality" drops off, the question of where this world came from will not arise. You will see that you and the world are inseparable.

13. You think that you are one, Brahman is One. This is an imagined Brahman. You have to know that you are Brahman.

14. The realists will say - What do you mean? Here is the body. We say – better analyze the body. We find what thing is steady here. It is continuously passing away.

15. *Blemish*: is a [S] Drishyam.

*This indeed is your bondage that you practice Samadhi*: The Atman is actionless. But you by your effort for samadhi want to impose action on the Atman.

*Self-effulgent*: Known in dream; suns and moons are created.

16. *Pervade this universe...this universe exists in you* [B]You are the mind. Yet it is not known where this mind has its beginning or its end. Therefore, what right do you have to say that you are limited? Since you cannot measure the mind with a measuring stick, then you (come to) speak the truth.

How to know? Go to dream.

*Do not be small-minded*: No proof for small-mindedness. Don't be carried to dogma - many souls etc.

17. The European [Western philosophy] has

no idea of the seer at all. And so [they have] many millions of confused theories of the mind.

*Unconditioned*: No limit to you.

*Immutable*: No change in you, though you see changes.

*Formless*: You see forms in the [S] Drishyam, but however you may try, you cannot see the form of [S] Drik.

*Unfathomable intelligence*: You do not know how many things you have the capacity to know. You may see and know the Himalayan mountains, the scientific discovery.

*Unperturbed*: The mind is perturbed. The seer sees the perturbed condition of the mind.

*Chit*: The essence of the mind which has the capacity to know.

18. *Unreal*: Going away every second.

*Spiritual*: Unhappy word. [S] *Tattvopadesh*: knowledge of truth, instruction in truth.

*Escape the possibility of rebirth*: It is not a religious ‘gaffe’. It is a fact. It is the [S] Drishyam that is born and reborn. The [S] Drik is never born.

[B] When we see something, then we say it is “changing,” and when it goes away, then we say, it went away, it is “unreal.”. The body has birth and death, but I exist. There is nothing called the body – the body, too, is the indestructible soul.

19. *Supreme Lord* : Mind.

20. He started with reference to [S] Atma and concluded with [S] Brahman. This chapter is a commentary on [S] ayam atma brahma.



## Part II. STATE OF REALIZATION

1.Cf. 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the *Gita*. That which comes and goes. Going is more important. But I am permanent. Then, subsequently, I will see that even nature is myself.

*Nature*: Sense objects.

*Illusion*: i.e. which goes and comes and goes away. Inside thoughts come and go, and outside, if you have studied science, you will see that every particle changes.

2.Cf. Berkeley: “To exist is to perceive.”

*Mine is all this universe*: Waking and dream.

*Or verily nothing is mine*: Non-ideation [S] namadhi.

“I, as the revealer of this body, am Viswa. As the revealer of the universe, I am Virat”. - Shyamlatlal, July 11, 1941.

“The universe and the body are both simultaneously revealed to me. I have no right to say that the body is mine and the universe is not mine. Both are mine because both are revealed to me”. - Kurseong, July 3, 1940. [It is assumed these words were written down on these dates at these Himalayan retreats quoting Revered Swami Virajananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order from 1939-1951, while Swami Shraddhananda was serving as his private secretary.]

3.*Renounced the universe*: Giving up the idea of its separate existence apart from me.

*I am now perceiving*: Supreme authority--verification. The Guru is required for this – the pupil may imagine anything to be the Self. The Guru will point out the true Self. The pupil may imagine some vision in Yoga. All that nonsense. “The Salem Ashrama report has come. I had a vision of Guru Maharaj to start a separate organization and so I am starting this under his inspiration!”

[B] I don't have the intellect to take on the difficult task of giving up this world. Finally, today, by what trick did I see the formless Supreme Being.

4. Because foam, bubbles, etc. appear and disappear into water.

*Emanating*: You must be seeing the waves, foam and bubbles and then say they are all water. So see everything in this universe and know that everything is Brahman.

*Atman*: How? In dream. Modern science says that the world is a series of ideas. No difference between waking and dream.

5. *Analyzed*: Analyze this universe into atoms and electrons, etc.

In religion you may go without analysis. You may imagine anything you like. But in Vedanta, analysis is unavoidable. Analyze everything.

*Duly considered* [Underlined twice in red ink.]

6. Even in the waking [state] when you think of a napkin, which part of the napkin is not in your mind?

But you must not confound this mind with the mind of the [system of] European psychoanalysis or that of some Indian thinkers. (Cf. dream).

7. *Disappears*: i.e. ceases to appear as a separate reality apart from the Self.

[B] Without the knowledge of the rope, the "snake" engenders fear; with familiarity, that misunderstanding clears. As the world floats, the true nature of Atman awakens that note of fearlessness - once you have the knowledge of the Atman - the world is nothing but Atman.

8 *Light*: The capacity to know.

C.f. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 4.3.6. [S] atmaivasya jyotir bhavati (The Self is his light). [‘When the sun and the moon have both set, the

fire has gone out, and speech has stopped, Yajnavalkya, what exactly serves as the light for a man?’ ‘The self serves as his light. It is through the light of the self that he sits, goes out, works and returns.’ ‘It is just so, Yajnavalkya.’ Translated by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.]

*When the universe manifests itself, verily then it is I that shine: in waking and dream.*

[B] My true nature is illumination. There is nothing else. Yet, when you reveal yourself, I am behind that. When you say that if the electric light fails, I can't see, then you are already sitting holding a basket of preconceptions. “I need physical light to see this world.” Waking bias – drop that preconception – you will see that every idea has to be illumined by the Atman.

9.The universe is the subject of enquiry.

The most important thing is that even when I imagine something, it may appear as something external to me. Even when Ganesha or Sri Krishna appears before me, they are in my mind only.

[B] Imagined is this wide world, enhancing my beauty by my illusion.

10.In fact, everyday in sleep it [the world] dissolves in me and again emerges in waking and dream.

[B] My creation, this universe, in me shall dissolve, just as a pot in clay, a wave in water, a bangle [in gold].

11.*No decay*: I have seen the decay of other things but not of myself.

*Brahma*: The creator, the God of all religions.

In fact, such destruction actually happens everyday. I as pure consciousness remain unaffected.

12.[B] Salutations, salutations to my true nature.

13. *Bearing the universe*: Compare dream.

The body is not outside me. It is inside – it is the body. But this mind is not the ‘Western’ mind - it is not confined within the brain.

14. *Nothing*: Outside me.

[B] Salutations, Salutations to my true nature – I, who have lost everything beyond mind and speech – I am again this entire universe. Just as all nerves meet in the brain, so also all things expressed by words and thoughts are centered in me. I am the refuge of all.

15. *Exist*: Apart from the Atman.

*Appears*: Just as the triad [knowledge, knower and knowable] appears in dream.

[B] Knowledge of oneness (unbroken) is without blemish. The sense of subject and object (duality) is multiplicity (broken) and is blemished.

16. You want something. You don't want to lose something – The cause of misery.

*All objects known*: Objects are known, seen, but known to be unreal.

How to know that objects are unreal? Study the world.

17. *I have imposed*: Why I say that I have imposed? Because I have not seen anybody else imposing on me.

*Absolute*: that which cannot be negated but which cannot be described. Exercise – Always think ‘I am not limited, I am in all’ and the best practical way is to do service to others. Because you are in all.

[S]

: Ideation. Constantly keep yourself aloof from ideation.

18. *Freedom*: Liberation.

The last position – when you do not even think that the universe exists in you. Then, what is, is. [S] Neti neti (not this, not this)

Not that you do not see the universe. No question of Nirvikalpa samadhi. That is not the highest. You will see the universe, but have known that it is your Self.

[B] When I think/imagine, then the world appears; when I don't, the world disappears.

19. *Pure intelligence*: pure consciousness.

The ultimate truth – Everything is Atman. No ideas superimposed on the mind even.

But in the highest stage - we ask what is the essence of ideas? And we see - mind.

20. *All these*: Which come and go.

*Chit*: [S] Drik.

21. *Desert* [crossed out and replaced with] wilderness: that which puzzles you.

This is the standpoint of the [S] sannyasin, to be steady in your conviction of the world as unreal.

[B] This standpoint is the second thorn [Note: Remember Sri Ramakrishna's use of the thorn to take out another thorn?] If you can see the world as Brahman, then no longer this standpoint. Then, all is Brahman – no wilderness – then there is nothing to leave out.

22. This is an exercise.

*Body*: The body is not something different from the mind.

*Mine*: I have no 'I' so I can't say the body is mine.

*Chit*: the seer of the Jiva.

*Life*: Bodily enjoyment. When I am the Seer, all bodies are equal to me. I can not say this or that body is mine.

23. *Wind of the mind*: thinking.

The purport of the sloka is to show that ‘nothing is lost’. Appearance and disappearance [are] also in me.

24. *Jiva*: the ego

In sushupti, no ego.

25. *Individual selves*: the Jivas, the egos.

*In me*: Atman.

Disappear: in [S] sushupti.

### **Part III. SEEKER’S STEPS**

1. *Known yourself*: Theoretically, convinced but not realised finally.

*Attached*: When the thought of the acquisition of wealth comes, think of the nature of Atman. That is what the author means.

2. *Attachment*: Not that in [S] jnanam objects will not be there. They will be, but will seem unreal.

4. *Surpassingly beautiful*: No other beauty besides it. The most beautiful thing is also my own Self; as in dream.

*Unclean*: Going to the depths of ignorance and duality.

5. I do not want a house, I don’t want this or that. That is the sannyasi stage – lower stage. But a Jnani sees everything is [S] Brahman, no [S] tyajya (giving up), no [S] grahya (holding).

10. *His own body acting as if it were another's*: As the [S] Drik, you see all the bodies. Your body is only one of them.

The yogis want to get rid of the body. The Jnani sees the body. He is not impatient over it. He sees it as Brahman.

*Praise or blame!*: They attach to the body. You must try to bring this attitude as often as you can. That is what Ashtavakra [the author] means.

11. *Interest*: Nothing is lost. Nothing can go – nothing can come. What is, is.

“Personal interest. That which pertains to this ego.” – Shyamlatlal, July 28, 1941 [A quote from Swami Virajananda while in that Himalayan retreat].

Body is an idea. It will disappear in mind. This is the first stage.

Body as Brahman is. It will be. Nothing is lost. Nothing comes. Nothing goes – last stage.

Finally there is no distinction between the three states. All is Brahman.

13. *Nothing*: Not different from himself.

This frame of mind is what is wanted here. Distinction is due to ignorance.

14. *In his mind*: Externally, you have to give up, [in order] to train your mind.

*Opposites*: When you know the truth, the opposites are the same.

Cf. [S] *Gita* Chapter 2, Verse 64: [S] Ragadvesha viuktaistu (free from attraction and repulsion). [But the self-subjugated attains peace and moves among objects with the senses under control, free from any longing or aversion. Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, translated by Swami Paramananda, published by Vedanta Centre Publishers, Cohasset, USA. 1981].

#### **Part IV. SEEKER'S EXPERIENCE**

1. He may be enjoying, but his mind will always be in Brahman alone.

*The deluded beasts of the world* [text changed to]: these fools who are deluded by the world.

*Game of enjoyment*: [S] lila – not taking [it] seriously.

2. You have to pass through the yogi stage.

You must train your mind [in] equanimity.

Yogic discipline [training of the mind] is meant as a preparation to [S] jnanam.

Cf. *Vairagya Shatakam*, Verse 40: [There is one Enjoyment (the supreme goal) and one alone, lasting, immutable, and supreme, of which the taste renders tasteless the greatest possession, such as the sovereignty of the three worlds, and established in which a Brahma, Indra, or the gods (i.e. their positions) appear like particles of grass. Do not, oh Sadhu, set your heart on any ephemeral enjoyment other than that. – *The Hundred Verses on Renunciation*, translated by Swami Madhavananda, published by Advaita Ashrama].

3. Both are the same.

4. *Universe to be the Self*: Not that the universe will not be seen.

Cf. *Vairagya Shatakam*. [No specific verse mentioned.]

6. *He does*: He does not sit idle like an owl.

## **Part V. NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE**

1. Before you say I renounce this, that will be gone. Automatically it is being renounced.

You are the [S] Drik. [Section of unreadable Bengali]

As the Western Materialists, you see that the body and the world are constantly moving away – passing away. So why should you be attached to these?

Dissolution – converting the universe into mind.

2. *The universe rises from you*: You see this in dream. In the waking itself ideas are going and coming. If you have read enough science you will see that all this is idea and it is constantly going and coming. Depend only on religion [and] you will never get [S] jnanam – you can get peace, of course.

Existence is a “constitution” of time - space. Value is a constitution of “causality”. World Existence – Value. World cause – Time - Space – Causality. – Shyamlatl, August 3, 1941 [A quote from Swami Virajananda while in that Himalavan retreat].



*3. Even though it is present to the senses:* The universe will be there always. Then alone you will be able to investigate and enquire about the nature of the universe. You will know that this universe is Brahman. Everything is in me, Atman.

It is absurd to say that everything will disappear and then you will get [B] Brahman.

4. When death comes, you will say that the body will go to myself. Since it is an imagination.

## **Part VI. WHAT IS REAL KNOWLEDGE**

1. *Boundless:* Don't think that you are limited in your body.

Nothing is to go. To know the world, its real value – this is [S] jnanam and not shutting one's eyes.

*A jar:* Space inside and outside.

No Nirvikalpa samadhi. All that is rubbish.

2. *Like the wave:* In me.

*Nor accepted:* i.e. accepted as it is. But it must be accepted as my own Self.

You cannot give up this world and run away. Wherever you go there is the Atman.

There is nothing else than me. So what is to be accepted? I cannot destroy myself also.

4. *All beings:* How to understand this? Go to dream or Modern Science. Brahman means knowledge of the whole universe.

If anything is left out, it is not jnanam.

If you say what is the use of Science, what is the use of this or that. I shall see truth inside – you are talking nonsense. You must inquire into all that is possible to inquire into.

## **Part VII. PRACTICAL LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE**

1. *In me*: Not the ego.

The universe taken as a whole is constantly changing.

[B] I am the ocean, the entire world.

2. *I neither increase nor decrease thereby*: Mind is mind always. When you see the Himalayan mountains in a dream, your mind does not increase. If you do not see, your mind does not diminish. Mind is mind always. This is the essence of Vedanta.

When it appears it is in Brahman. When it disappears still Brahman is. A Jnani feels Brahman always. He is the last person to keep quiet even when an ant suffers.

4. If you think of the forms different from Atman, they are not in Atman. But if you think that forms also are the mind, then the forms also are in the Atman.

*The Self* (as different from objects) [the swami's parentheses in this verse] *is not in the objects nor as the object* (as different from Atman) *in That which is infinite and stainless*.

## **Part VIII. IGNORANCE AND KNOWLEDGE**

1. *Bondage*: Bound by ideas.

[B] Desire, sorrow, renunciation, acceptance, joy, anger.

2. All ideas reduced to cognition only. No attachment to any idea. Let ideas come and go.

My ashrama, my [unreadable] no such thing there. "My" is the test of the Jnani.

3. You can see things, but if the "I" is not there, no harm..

Attachment involves "I". The first idea to come and the last idea to go is this "I".

4. The argument of the yogi, the religious, the practical man - Why should I worry myself with [S] jnanam or [S] danam (wealth), if there will be no "I"?

*Rejection*: Even rejection involves the expression of the ego.

## **Part IX. SEEKER AND WORLD**

### 1. Chapter on discipline.

*Renunciation:* From the standpoint of the [S] sadhaka (seeker).

*Indifference:* Who is the person who will be benefited? Ask all these questions. Then you will find that these things do not touch you.

2. *By observing:* Look at the world and examine this world. These do not lead to ultimate satisfaction. What did Napoleon achieve? What did Alexander do? Even Sri Krishna died...and so on. Beginning of [S] vichara (analysis).

3. *All this:* Everything you see in the ways of men. Worthy to be rejected: Contradiction to the position of Sloka VIII. 2. Because this is the stage of discipline.

4. This is the next stage (second stage).

5. The whole philosophy of Vedanta.

*Saints and* (your friends the) *yogis* [the swami's insert in the text].

Our idea of truth, not contradiction.

The question of questions is, "How do I know that what I know is truth?" That is the problem of problems.

6. *By means* : It is a step.

*Reasoning:* It won't do by [just] sitting in Rameshrama or Aurobindo Ashrama.

7. First of all, this analysis will show that your body also is made up of five elements. Then you will see that the elements also are ideas.

8. In this disciplinary step, when you reach the top there is no question of renunciation.

## **Part X. PEACE (REST)**

4. *Desire:* Implies ego and duality.

5. *You are One:* [text changed to] You (as the subject) are Alone.

The universe is an existent, but it is not real. It continually passes away.

*Non-Existent*: Unreal.

There is nothing different for you to know. But this will come after you have analyzed and known the world.

6.Cf *Vairagya Shatakam* Verse 12: [The objects of enjoyment, even after staying with us for a long time, are sure to leave us sometime; then what difference does their privation in this way make to men, that they do not of their own accord discard them? If the enjoyments leave us on their own initiative, i.e. if they tear themselves from us, they produce great affliction of the mind; but if men voluntarily renounce them, they conduce to the eternal bliss of self-possession. Ibid.].

7.Pessimism is as important as optimism. Optimism is only one aspect of life. The Jnani must take all aspects.

## **Part XI. WISDOM IN LIFE**

1.The point is appearance, disappearance, change—they necessarily come and necessarily happen. You cannot prevent them. This chapter shows how you can pacify your mind, seeing that events are not in your control.

*Pain*: Not a happy translation. [The word] [S] klesha also refers to mental suffering.

2.The religious attitude.

3.*Fate*: That which is unknown to us and upon which we have no control.

8.*As if nothing exists*: Not separate from me.

Manifoldness and wonder are fictions of the mind resulting from its causal instinct.- Shyamlatl, June 6, 1942 [A quote from Swami Virajananda while in that Himalayan retreat].

## **Part XII. STEPS LEADING TO WISDOM**

1.Janaka narrates the stages of discipline.

I want to know an idea of [S] Drik, the inmost thing. So I have to detach myself from the [S] Drishyam.

*Intolerant:* I don't allow them[objects] to interfere with my knowledge of [S] Drik. Action, speech, thought, these are all [S] Drishyam.

4. When the thought of Brahman comes to me.

Rejection or acceptance [are] possible when you see difference.

6. When there is a sense of duality, then alone one can "give up".

An ignorant man only will think of giving up and shutting himself up. When you have attained [S] jnanam you have nothing to "give up". Everything is only Atman.

7. Exuberance of words and the man is only in the world of [S] Drishyam only.

8. *By Nature:* This [S] jnanam has been a part and parcel of his life. It is always with him.

### **Part XIII. BLISS**

1. *Loin-cloth:* If to you this is something other than yourself. You must be able to see everything as Brahman. Then, you will get perfect calmness of mind.

2. Think of the body—there will always be some trouble.

*Trouble of the mind:* These thoughts worry you – those thought trouble you. I have not this. I have not that and so on. So give them up as [S] Drishyam. Don't attach yourself to them.

3. There is nothing outside the Self.

7. When you are in practicing stage, you have to renounce.

### **Part XIV. BLISS TESTED**

1. *Emptied of (worldly) thoughts:* Necessary at one stage.

*Awake though asleep:* Even when you see a second thing, your mind does not take it as real.

3. Nobody has seen a God except in imagination. The true God is the [S] Drik.

4. The [S] Jnani knows all is Brahman. No second thing and hence, no doubt.

## **Part XV. SELF REALIZATION**

1. *Intellect*: [text changed to] Determination [S] Buddhi.

2. *Distaste for sense-objects*: This comes when they are known to be unreal.

[B] Liberation says detachment...attachment, this is the essence of wisdom; now do as you please.

3. [B] There is no use for the knower of truth to be eloquent. Who will understand? You have to know that worldly enjoyments are lifeless.

4. *You are not the body*: This is known in the waking state from the fact that the body is continuously changing. But you see the changes.

*Nor is the body yours*: You cannot claim this body to be yours. The body of the years back is no more now. It is continuously passing away. The body sense prevents you [from seeing] the universal Self – the eternal witness.

*Witness*: The witness in him, the witness in me, the witness in you – all are the same.

6. *Free from egoism*: First condition of Indian Philosophy.

7. *Indeed*: Undoubtedly.

8. *You*: Whom you call “I” for I.

*Knowledge*: Not of the nature of “known”.

*Nature*: To which you are attached.

9. The waves go back to the ocean, so the body goes back to yourself.

Body may be changed, but the real “I” is never changed.

Mountains may have appeared and disappeared in dream. Where is the increase or decrease of the mind?

Destruction is an impossibility. Nothing is ever lost – not even a pin's point. When you understand that which is permanent, then you will see that even this body is never lost.

10.*You*: Not the ego. The real I, that is found in him, in you, in A, B, C,-- all. How can this true "I" go?

*Pure Intelligence*: If you think that you are body, then your misery will not go.

11.*In you*: Go to any part of the world – people will say "I", "I". So no limit to this "I". It is infinite.

12.*This universe is nothing different from you*: Sri Ramakrishna realized himself as being present everywhere.

13.*Birth*: Who has seen the birth of the mind?

*Egoism*: Where does this Subrahmanya Iyer go in sleep?

"Know Thyself" as Socrates had said.

There is no harm in studying the external world, but go to the root of the thing.

14.The preceding thought is further developed here.

You need not be afraid of losing anything. Everything will be your own Self. No reason for you to be miserable in this world. (Cf. dream). If you want satisfaction, this is the only way. If you want truth, this is the only way.

15.*Consider all as the Self*: This person or that person. The highest. It is not mere religious faith. It is a fact.

16.*Exists*: Has a reality independent of you.

*Jiva*: Individual soul. No proof. Can you measure your soul – how many miles it extends? You can imagine as you like.

*Iswara*: As you imagine. I see only "many" bodies, but not many souls.

17.*Nothing exists*: Other than him.

18.*Live*: Don't run away from this world. Live like all men.

You are eternal.

*Contented*: Discontent – when you have not attained this or that. If you have become sannyasins, it is to render service to humanity, and not to get prostrations.

19. *O Pure Intelligence*: The thing we have to think twenty-four hours. I am not the body, but the perceiver of the body.

*Right*: The use of right thoughts are to get rid of the wrong thoughts. Then the right thoughts [will] also have to go.

*Bliss*: If there is no sense of duality, there will be nothing to make you miserable.

20. *Contemplating*: Thinking – Duality – Sorrow.

*Self*: The only existing entity – the eternal – the ever blissful.

*Thinking*: Thinking is necessary until you have reached Atman. [See Part II. Verse 5] We have to “duly consider” the universe and know it to be Atman. Duality to the scientists is “mystery”, to the religious, “God’s Will”. We don’t want either mystery or God’s will, we want Truth.

## Part XVI. SPECIAL INSTRUCTION

1. You must begin by studying scripture.

3. *Exert*: With the idea of getting something or to get rid of something, there will be duality and he will be unhappy. The word “exert” cannot be used in the case of the Jnani because he sees no duality, though he works.

4. *Closing and opening*: Things must go naturally without “your” sense of exertion. Everything is yourself, a part of yourself, goes on naturally without your special attention, as you do not pay any attention to the winking of [your] eye. If you can get this attitude, you will be happy. Complete identification with the whole universe. Nothing is foreign to him. So nothing pains him. Everything is natural and smooth.

5. You become indifferent to the whole thing because the whole thing is Brahman. The thought of liberty [liberation] is only a thought.

6. *Abhors sense-objects, avoids*: Because still there is idea of duality. Mix a little “Brahman” with everything you eat. [S] Raga desha (attachment/avoidance) both imply duality.



8.If you like anything, it is Brahman. If you don't like it, it is Brahman. As in a dream.

*Child:* The child has no premeditated effort. You do not think that there is something different from Brahman to be done. The key is – “He sees everything as Brahman”.

9.*One who is attached to the world:* Who thinks that this world is real.

*Even there:* In the world. The Jnani will never run away from the world.

10.It is only the Jnani who can see even the body is Brahman.

[B] Whoever has pride or attachment to [the] body, is not a knower of truth; their practice of yoga is fruitless, mere toil, they get only sorrow.

## **Part XVII. KNOWER OF TRUTH**

1.*Purified senses:* See everything but without any desire of possession.

2.*In this world... Whole universe:* Not the universe of the yogi seen by shutting one's eyes, but this wide world of joys and sorrows.

3.The ignorant man will look at sense objects with a hankering. The Jnani enjoys the world but his enjoyment is different from the enjoyment of worldly people.

4.Sense of duality should go. That payasam [rice pudding] came that day – alright – that was good, I enjoyed it. Today this thing has come – alright this is also Brahman. This should be the attitude.

6. *Broad-minded:* So broad as to cover the whole.

*Dharma, artha...death:* These are mere ideas.

7. Sri Ramakrishna never went to Badarikashrama [an ancient Vishnu temple, one of the four sacred Himalayan pilgrimage spots. The other three being Kedarnath (ancient Shiva temple), Gangotri (the source of the river Ganga), Yamunotri (the source of the river Yamuna)].

The illumined man does not want the world to disappear because its presence is no source of disturbance to his mind. He lives as he is given to live, blessed and contented.

8.The Jnani does not wear any external peculiar dress. Absolutely no distinction between a Jnani and an ordinary man [in their external dress or clothes].

9.*Objectless*: He does not see a second object as reality. The meaning is his mind does not make him think that the objects and actions are real. Non-attachment is the medicine for attachment. But if you do not see a second thing – non-attachment also has no meaning.

10.Awake has meaning with reference to sleep. To the Jnani waking and sleep both are Brahman. He always thinks of oneness.

*Anywhere*: So the Jnani will not run away from the world.

11.[B] Him I consider free, whose bonds of desire are broken; wherever he stays or eats, he abides in himself, his heart pure.

12.The Jnani is like every other person [from the outside].

14.[B]His mind is unperturbed by an infatuated woman, and on impending death; he remains immersed in his own true nature, the joy of liberation, the great knower of truth remains calm.

### **Part XVIII. KNOWER OF TRUTH**

2.[B] Acquiring many things, we get lots of enjoyment; without renouncing gross and subtle pleasures, peace is far away.

3.If your mind has been agitated with this and that woman or this desire, that desire, [there is]no objection if you go to Mount Kailasa [pilgrimage place in the Himalayan Mountains].

4.*Those self-existing beings*: That which knows.

7.If you cannot take the trouble to find out the nature of the world, you will say “it is all maya;” the grapes are sour!

*Knowing all*: You must “know” the world as imagination and not simply “say” that it is all idea; it is all idea.

*Act like a child!*: The mind must be devoid of the sense of individuality.

8.Existence and nonexistence predicate [are attributes of] objects only. [B] Atman which is [S] Drik is beyond such predication.

*Figments*: Ideas.

*Know, say or do!*: The whole of man's life.

9. Just as religion is a necessary discipline, so yoga also is a necessary discipline.

*Faint*: Gradually falls away.

*Yogi*: This yogi has become a Jnani.

10. *No concentration*: Brahman everywhere. Nothing to be concentrated upon.

14. [Corrected text] *Where is...where is* the state of ...*liberation* for the *great-souled one who is resting beyond the realm of all imaginations*.

29. [Corrected text] *He who has egoism in him, acts or does not act. The wise one who is free from egoism, cannot be said to do anything or not to do anything. Action or inaction can not be predicated by him.*

34. *Inaction*: Shutting in a cave like an owl. *Action*: Performing ritual, church going, etc.

43. *Intellect*: Determination.

63. *Unconsciousness*: Not thinking.

73. *Maya*: Ideation.

75. When you rise above dullness you see that what you are trying to avoid is also your self. No question of control comes. You cannot drive away your own self.

76. Cf. *Gita* Chapter 2, Verse 59 [The embodied, through the practice of abstinence (i.e. not giving food to the senses), can deaden the feelings of the senses, but longing still lingers in the heart; all longings drop off when he has seen the Supreme. Ibid.].

91. *Sense of good and evil*: Pleasant and unpleasant.

## **Part XIX. SEEKING REST IN ATMAN**

## **Part XX. REALIZATION AND LAST STAGE OF LIFE**

14. *Nothing emanates from me*: Because everything is Me (mind). There is no causality.