Introduction
This Stotra is composed on Sri Adi Sankaracharya; its author is not known. It is unique in that it has been made as an erudite summary of all the essential principles of Advaita Vedanta. Pujya Sri Kumbakonam Swamiji (Sri Atmabodhatirtha Swamiji) discovered this text, published in 1925, together with a brief Tamil translation by Sri Brahmananda Swamigal of Thanjavur.

Advaita Vedanta was established by Adi Sankaracharya as the ultimate Truth, which a human being should realize in his lifetime. He wrote authoritative commentaries of Prasthanatrayi – the three fundamental canonical texts of Sanatana Dharma – Upanishads, Brahma Sutra of Veda Vyasa and Bhagavad Gita. He thus put Advaita Vedanta on an unassailable pedestal. Advaita has since then come to be accepted by all seekers in all parts of the world as the summum bonum of human pursuit.

Adi Sankara proved by logic derived on Vedic authority that Brahman is unitary and the only Truth; all else is false appearance. He made a telling statement summarizing the essence ofAdvaita:

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामम ककमर्थं ग्रन्र्थकोटिमभिः
ब्रह्म सत्यं जगमन्मथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः

“Let me bring out the Truth in half a verse; where is the need for crores of texts. Brahman is Truth; Jagat (the created universe) is a false appearance; Jiva (the embodied soul) is none other than Brahman.” Sri Gurubhujanga Stotram covers all the theory of Advaita in a very crisp and concise manner – Maya, Vivartavada, examples of rope appearing as snake etc., Gnana alone (and not Karma) being efficient in attaining Liberation, Gnanamarga consisting of Sravana (listening to Mahavakyas of Upanishads from Guru), Manana (cogitation of the teachings, clearing of doubts with Guru and being sure of the purport) and Nididhyasana (deep contemplation of the teaching resulting in complete assimilation), status of Jiva and Jagat, and Jivanmukti (Liberation while in this body).
The unique Stotra format, in which the teachings are brought out, holds the reader’s interest in an unparalleled intensity. The Stotra praises Adi Sankaracharya as none other than the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta, having assumed human form out of compassion in order to pull people out of the morass of Samsara. Viewed that way, this Stotra is a beautiful elaboration of the well known verse on Adi Sankaracharya:

अज्ञानान्तर्गतम्-पतितान्-आत्मविद्योपदेशेः:  
व्यक्तवा मौने वेदविद्विदिनो मूलतो निईरन्ती  
शम्भोमूर्तिःश्रवणरति भुवने श्रूकराचार्यरूपम् ।

"The very form of Siva (Dakshinamurthy) emerged from the foot of the banyan tree, abandoning silence, in order to save the worlds, fallen into the deep forests of Agnana (ignorance) and being roasted in the terrible fire of Samsara, through the teachings of Atman. That form is moving about in the world in the form of Sankaracharya."

Let us remember the well laid path of Adi Sankaracharya for humans to attain Atmagnana. The path consists of performing one’s Svadharma (duties of varna and asrama) properly with the constant attitude of surrender of fruits of karma to Iswara with no sense of doership; this will develop devotion and love for Iswara and corresponding distaste and dispassion for Samsara; this will lead to Grace of Guru and Iswara and dawn of Atmagnana and Liberation.
Sruti (Veda) describes Brahman as ever-existent, unique, the highest, alone, changeless, formless, only bliss, pure, self-luminescent, indescribable and like space (omnipresent).

Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman. (1)

Mundaka Upanishad says:

“The wise realize everywhere that which cannot be perceived and grasped; which is without source, features, eyes and ears; which has no hands nor feet; which is eternal, multiformed, all-pervasive, extremely subtle, and undiminishing; and which is the source of all.” (1.1.6).

Sruti also describes Brahman as Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Consciousness-Bliss) in many places.

Maya is the inseparable Power of Atman. This Power of Great Delusion projects a false world of objects and experiences. Atman enters, as it were, all objects in the created world. There is no Time or Space where Atman is not present. But Maya being Trigunatmika - consisting of Satva (virtuousness), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (lethargy), there is unending variety in created objects, depending on the proportion of the three Gunas or attributes. Jiva
is the living entity with consciousness in this creation. Jiva is the reflection of Atman in the Malina (stained- with Rajas and Tamas) aspect of Maya. Reflected image appears stained. But in essence Jiva is no different from Atman. Turiya means the fourth. It refers to the fourth state of Brahman, the state of Pure Awareness, beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, the three states common to all Jivas. Taittiriya Upanishad says:

"He (Brahman) wished: 'Let me be many, let me be born. He undertook a deliberation. Having deliberated, he created all this that exists. Having created, Brahman entered into that very thing. And having entered there, he became the formed and the formless, the defined and the undefined, the sustaining and the non-sustaining, the sentient and the insentient, the true and the untrue. Truth became all this that there is.” (2.6.1)

Brahman is indeed non-different from the seer and the knower anywhere; or, it is the highest seer and knower. It has pervaded all intellects (of all creatures) in the form of Jiva. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman. (3)

In the previous verse it was taught that Brahman has entered and pervaded all individual Jivas. Here it is clarified that it is Brahman who is the real power behind various organs in the human body, which makes them function. Brahman is the power of the intellect, mind, sense-organs and organs of action in the body. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states:
“He is never seen; but is the Seer. He is never heard; but is the Hearer. He is never thought of; but is the Thinker. He is never known; but is the Knower. There is no other Seer than He; there is no other Hearer than He; there is no other Thinker than he; there is no other Knower than he. He is the inner controller- your own Atman and immortal. All else but he is perishable.” (3.7.23)

मुखाद्यपणे दृश्यमानो न भिन्नो मुखाभास एवं चिदाभास ईशः।
चितो नैव भिन्नोस्ति मायास्थितो योऽपरेशाय तस्मै नमः केवलाय। ॥ ४ ॥
The reflected image of the face seen in the mirror is not different from the face itself. Similarly Iswara, who is the reflected image of Chit, the unique Awareness in the mirror of Maya, is no different from Brahman. Obeisance to you, who are that supreme Iswara. (4)

Here the subject of Iswara is introduced. Iswara is the reflected image of Brahman in Maya. Maya is the indivisible power of Brahman, the power of delusion; it has three constituents - Satva (tranquility and harmony), Rajas (action, desire, anger etc.) and Tamas (lethargy, violence etc.). Iswara is the reflected image of Brahman in Suddha Satva (purest Satva) aspect of Maya. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Sadachara’:

कार्यकारणवाच्यांशो जीवेशो यौ जहच्च तौ।
अजहच्च तयोलक्ष्यो चिद्शावेकरूपिणां। ॥ (२६)

“The cause-and-effect relationship between Iswara and the Jiva, which is indicated according to the direct word meaning, should be discarded, and the implied meaning of the two, i.e. that both are of the nature of Consciousness, should be retained (in arriving at the identity between the Jiva and Iswara).” (26)

Brahman is Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Awareness-Bliss. Brahman alone exists at all places and times; Brahman is all Awareness, Gnana; Brahman is all Bliss, Ananda. Whenever Chit (Awareness) is mentioned here, the reference is to Brahman alone. Chit is mentioned only to invite our attention to the Awareness aspect.
Surya is one; though his reflected images in many reservoirs of water are many, he is changeless. Similarly, Atman, who is the Pure Awareness, though present in many intellects created by himself, is eternal. To you, who are that Atman of Pure Awareness, my obeisance. (5)

Atman guides the intellect and mind and other organs, himself remaining in the body as pure and changeless. Surya appears to be clean, dirty, wavy, flowing etc. in different waters, depending on the condition of water; but the original Surya in the sky as well as the image are unaffected by the condition of water. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

“No one can show by demonstration that the essence of a mud-pot is other than the mud. Therefore the pot is merely imagined through delusion, and the mud-aspect alone is the enduring Reality in the mud-pot.” (231)

This Jiva, existing in many intellects, is indeed one and omnipresent. As the cause is one, there is no (real) multiplicity here (in creation). Those, who have got rid of all desires (Eshanas), realize this truth owing to your grace. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (6)

Strong Eshanas (yearnings) are threefold as per Sastras – Putraishana (desire for son), Vittaishana (desire for wealth) and Lokaishana (desire for Svarga after death) (vide Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 3.5.1). These Eshanas bind the jiva to samsara; hence they have to be given up.

The experience of difference among various jivas and consequent multiplicity of jivas arises owing to the mind’s attachment to various mundane objects. One, who has overcome these
attachments in entirety through viveka, discrimination, does not find different jivas, but experiences all jivas as the manifestation of one Brahman. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states:

�दा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येस्य हृदि श्रिता: ।
अथ मत्योऽमृतो भवत्या ब्रह्म समशृत इति ॥
तद्यथा हिन्नार्थानी वल्मीके मृता प्रत्यस्त श्रीता, एवमेवं शरीरं शेते,
अथायमशरीरोऽभ्रोऽशये: प्राणो ब्रह्मव तेज एव ॥ (४.४.७)

“When all the desires that abide in the intellect of a man have totally left, then the mortal man becomes immortal and realizes Brahman in this very body. Just as the lifeless slough of a snake lies cast off in the ant-hill (etc.), even so lies this body. Then the Atman becomes disembodied and immortal, the Paramatman, Brahman, the Light of Pure Awareness.”
(4.4.7)

Though Jivatma, being non-different from Brahman, has no role to play in sense experiences, he appears to be active enjoyer and doer, because of the mind not cognizing the truth of Jivatma, but getting deluded that Jivatma is indeed the mind. In truth Jivatma is only Witness of mind, intellect and sense organs.

Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Atmabodha':

देहेन्द्रियमनोवुद्धि-प्रकृतिभ्यो विलक्षणम् ।
तद्वृत्तिसाक्षिणं विद्यादात्मानं राजवत्सदा ॥ (१८)
“One should understand that Atman is always like the king, distinct from the body, sense organs, mind and intellect, all of which constitute Prakriti (insentient matter); and is the Witness of their functions.” (18)

He gives several examples for the common misunderstanding of Atman being doer or enjoyer, like the moon appearing to be moving when the clouds move in the sky; the sky appearing blue etc.

By non-cognisance of your real form, the reflected image of Chit (Awareness) shines here as if he is doer. Through your intellect, this false Samsara (ever changing world of births and deaths) of the form of doer and enjoyer has emerged. Obeisance to you. (8)

When there is only One without a second, there cannot be a doer and enjoyer. Hence this Samsara is totally false; it has no real existence. It was created in the intellect of Atman. It exists in the mind of living beings.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

"The knower of the modifications of the mind and the ego, and the activities of the body, the sense-organs and vital breath, is Atman, which apparently takes their forms like the fire in a ball of iron, and which neither acts nor changes in the least.” (135)
You are rid of the bondage of Samsara by analyzing and knowing the intellects of the reflected image of Awareness, and applying the intelligence to act. You define the entire Samsara as the limit of your own discriminating power. Obeisance to you. (9)

The discriminating intellect finds that Samsara does not exist in truth, but it is only a figment of imagination of the mind. Samsara is indeed the ultimate test of one’s discriminating power. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

एवं निरन्तराभ्यस्ता ब्रह्मैवास्मीमत वासना।
हर्त्यविच्या-विक्षेपान् रोगाविव रसायनम्॥ (३७)

“The impression ‘I am Brahman’ thus created by constant practice destroys ignorance, and the agitation caused by it, just as medicine destroys disease.” (37)

न कस्यापि संसारलेशोृस्तिक दक्षिण्तस कर्त्तव्यभोक्त्वरूपो हि मिथ्या।
समस्तोऽप्ययं यत्स्वरूपाविवेकनामस्ते सदा नित्यमुक्ताय तस्मै॥ १०॥

To you there is no trace of Samsara, and the form of doership and enjoyership is false. This entire world exists only because of non-discriminating ignorance of your true form. Obeisance to you, who are ever liberated. (10)

Sri Ramana Maharishi taught repeatedly that this Samsara exists only in the mind. As it vanishes entirely in deep sleep state, it has no real existence. By Atma-Vichara, Self-Enquiry, by continuous Enquiry of ‘Who am I’, one has to preclude extraneous thoughts of Samsara and go to the root of all thoughts and experience the Atman.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

तदात्मानात्मनोः सम्यगविवेकेनैव सिद्ध्यति।
ततो विवेकः कर्त्त्वः प्रत्यगात्मासदात्मनोः॥ (२०५)

“This realization comes only through right discrimination made between Atman and Anatman (non-Atman). That is why one must try to discriminate between the indwelling Atman and false Atman (mind appearing as Atman).” (205)
The intellect is insentient; Atman is different from it (it is Awareness) and changeless. Though the reflected image of Awareness is only one (in all bodies), Jiva is indeed false. One, who realizes this through discrimination, is ever liberated by nature. Obeisance to you, who are ever changeless. (11)

Vedanta takes the disciple gradually through ascending steps of knowledge to higher and higher truths. The ultimate Truth is that Brahman alone is true; Jivas and Samsara are all false. One, who has experienced this, stands ever liberated from the clutches of Samsara. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

“Brahman is other than the universe. There exists nothing that is not Brahman. If any object other than Brahman appears to exist, it is unreal like the mirage.” (63)

Here it is emphasized that Brahman, Iswara and Jivatma are one and the same. Iswara and Jiva are just reflected images of Brahman in varying types of Maya. Iswara is the reflection in Sudha Satva aspect of Maya, whereas Jiva is the reflection in Malina (impure) Satva. Atman is also another name of Brahman.
Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Atmabodha':

स्वयं-अन्तर्बहिः-व्याप्य भासयन्नखिलं जगत् ।
ब्रह्म प्रकाशते वहिन-प्रतसायस-पिण्डवत् ॥ (६२)

“Pervading the entire universe outwardly and inwardly, Brahman shines like a red-hot iron ball heated in fire.” (62)

यद्जानातो जीवनानात्वमाहृत्तंहामायया मोहिता वाददकः।
विवेकी वदत्येकमेवात्र जीवं प्रत्यक्तवादो नमस्ते। तस्मै ॥ (१३)

Through ignorance of Atman, those proficient in debate maintain the multiplicity of jivas, being deluded by Mahamaya. One, who is discriminate and has abandoned debate, accepts only one Jiva here. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (13)

Mere intellectual debate does not lead one to Truth. Debate, guided by humility, and enjoying the grace of Iswara and Guru, will alone reveal the Truth. Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Viveka Chudamani':

अहमोत्यन्त-निवृत्ता तत्त्व-धीराविवेकल्प-संहृत्या ।
प्रत्यक्त-तत्त्व-विवेकाकू अयं-अहमस्मीति विन्दे तत्त्वम् ॥ (३०४)

"By the complete cessation of the ego-sense, gained by restraining the diverse mental waves, created by the ego itself, and through discrimination of the indwelling Reality, one experiences Reality as ‘I am this’. (304)

चिदाभास एकोऽर्थवा नेति सवेष्वरेव विमुहस्ति वेदान्तिनोपय्यत्त्वकः।
तथायेक एवेति धीराविवेकल्पाय आत्मा स्वभक्तस्य तस्मै नमस्ते। तस्मै ॥ (१४)

Even Vedantis, who are devoted to other ideas, get deluded as to whether the reflected image of Awareness is only one or not. It is Atman who bestows firmness of intellect on his devotee that Atman is only one. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (14)
Here the necessity of Grace of Atman is brought out. Atman’s grace is secured only through constant efforts at discrimination and the blessings of Guru. One has to concentrate on the Truth without getting distracted by a host of contradictory elucidations of principles. Kathopanishad states:

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेध्या न बहुना श्रुतेन्।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तवृण्येष्वात्मा विवृणुते तर्नूःस्वामः॥ (१.२.२३)

“Atman is not attained through discourses, or through intellectuality, or through much learning. It is gained only by him who longs for it with the whole heart. For, to such a one, Atman reveals its own nature.” (I.2.23)

मुखादशगयोरेक एवैकतायां मुखाभास एवं चिदाभास एकः।
स्वचिद्रूढविवैक्याध्यक्तायों यदशोधिलेशो नस्तेस्वस्तु तस्मै॥ (१५)

Like the reflected image of the same face in many mirrors being the same, the image of Brahman of Awareness in many projections of the same Maya (equivalent to mirror) is the same. The image of Awareness, who is also the Iswara of all worlds, is only one. Obeisance to you, who are that Awareness. (15)

Brahman and Maya (which is the inherent power of Brahman), and Iswara, who is the reflected image of Brahman in Maya are one and the same; this is the intent.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Tatvabodha’:
एवं उपाधिभेदात् जीवेश्वर-केद-दृष्टि: यावत्प्रयृतिः तिष्ठति
तावत्प्रयत्नं जन्म-मरणादिरूप-संसारो न निर्वर्तते।
तस्मात्-कारणात्म जीवेश्वरयोग-केदवृद्धः स्वीकार्यः॥

“So long as the notion, which arises due to difference in the conditionings, that Jiva and Iswara are different, remains, until such time, there is no redemption from Samsara, which is of the form of repeated birth, death etc. Hence the notion that Jiva is different from Iswara should not be accepted.”
Sruti (Veda) declares the unitary nature of Brahman, devoid of differences like Sajatiya. Hence it is established even through logic that the Maya of Brahman is also only one. Obeisance to you, who are that eternal unitary form. (16)

Even while considering a single tree, there are differences between its various parts like roots, trunk, branch, leaves etc. This type of difference is known in Vedanta as Sajatiya bheda. In a garden, there are different types of trees like bilva, mango etc. This difference is known as Vijatiya bheda. Here it is brought out that such Sajatiya or Vijatiya bhedas do not exist in Brahman. Hence there are again no real differences in Maya also, Maya being the inherent, inseparable power of Brahman.

Adi Sankaracharya exclaims in 'Viveka Chudamami':

"What indeed can manifest That, whose effulgence, like Surya, causes the entire fallacious, unreal and unimportant universe to appear at all?" (534)

Maya is not manifold; if it were so, many Iswaras will result; this is not the case. It is also not proper to consider many Mayas. Obeisance to you, who are that cause of the created universe. (17)

Sruti declares in many places that there is only one Iswara. Hence Maya is also only one. Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Viveka Chudamani':

"What indeed can manifest That, whose effulgence, like Surya, causes the entire fallacious, unreal and unimportant universe to appear at all?" (534)
“Maya is Nescience (Avidya), also called the Unmanifest (Avyakta); it is the power of the Supreme Iswara. It is beginningless; it comprises the three attributes (Satva, Rajas and Tamas) and is superior to their effects. It is to be inferred only by one, who has a clear intellect, from the effects it produces. It is this Avidya, which projects the entire universe.” (108)

न मायां विन यस्य कर्तृत्वमस्ति प्रवेषोषि तस्मात्समस्तं मृष्पेव।
महामायिने निर्विकाराय तस्मै नमो ब्रह्मरूपाय शुद्धाय तुभ्यम्॥१८॥
Without Maya, there is no doership and entry (and pervasiveness) for Brahman. Therefore all (that is seen and experienced) is only unreal. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman, wielder of that Mahamaya, free from modification, and ever pure. (18)

As Brahman does not act, the universe is the exclusive creation of Maya in the presence of Brahman. Hence all that is seen and experienced in the universe is nothing but unreal superimposition on the real Brahman.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

शुद्धाय-ब्रह्म-विबोधनाश्या सर्प-भ्रमो रज्जु-विच्छेदको यथा।
रजस्तमःसत्वमिति प्रसिद्धा गुणास्तदीया: प्रथितैः: स्वकारः॥ (११०)

“By realization of the pure, non-dual Brahman, Maya can be destroyed, just as the illusion of the snake is removed by the discriminative knowledge of the rope. Its attributes are Rajas, Tamas and Satva, distinguished by their respective functions.” (110)

य आत्मा दृष्टं वासः दृष्टं त्वनात्मा विवेकाहृयोरात्मदृष्टि: सदृष्ये।
विनिवेकाः भवेस्सा दृशिः स्वस्वरूपे नमस्ते दृष्टं नामस्वरूपाय तस्मै॥ १९॥
Atman has always been the seer; that which is seen is Anatman (non-Atma). By use of discrimination, the experience of Atman is obtained. Anatman is destroyed in (the
experience of) the true form of the seer, Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the seer. (19)

Drig-Drisya Viveka (discrimination of Seer and the Seen) is a common subject of interest in Vedanta. The very first verse in the book “Drik-Drisya-Viveka” states:

रूपं दृश्यं लोचनं दृक्क तददृश्यं दृतकु मानसम् ।
दृश्या धीवृत्तयस्साक्षी दृष्टे न तु दृश्यते ॥ (१)
“The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. The eye is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modifications is perceived and the Witness (Atman) is verily the perceiver. But the Witness is not perceived (by any other).” (1)

स दृष्णिर्विकरः स्तवाया जडाभास एको मृष्केवेति यस्य ।
जगाक्तृता ताल्लिकी नास्ति तस्मै नमः केवलाकर्तृरूपाय तुभ्यम् ॥ २० ॥
That seer is changeless; his Maya, which is this (world) is insentient. For the seer, the reflected image of seer is indeed false. For the seer, the act of creation of the universe is not true at all. Obeisance to you, who are that unitary non-acting seer. (20)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

मयाध्यक्ेर्ण प्रकृति: सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगमिपटरवत्ते ॥ (९.१०)
"Under my supervision, Prakriti (Maya, nature) produces the moving and the non-moving objects; because of this, O Kaunteya, the universe keeps revolving.” (9.10)

अमाय्येव मायी विभु: शुद्ध आत्मा सृजत्यत्क्तयत्वतान्तदानन्त्व: ।
न मायां विना चक्ष्ट्यात्मकी वा विशुद्धात्मनो यस्य तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ २१ ॥
This omnipresent pure Atman, who is full of Bliss, wields Maya, does creation, protection and destruction (of the world) as if he were not using Maya. Without Maya, there is no act of
creation or being witness (to the acts of created beings). Obeisance to you, who are that ever pure Atman. (21)

Maya is the indefinable power by which Brahman, while remaining himself changeless, appears as the changing universe. Svetasvatara Upanishad declares:

अस्मान् मायी सृजते विष्वमेतत्-
तस्मिनःश्रायन्यो मायया सतिर्दुः: ॥ (४.९)

“The ruler of Maya projects this universe. And because of Maya he (Atman) becomes bound in it as a separate entity, as it were.” (4.9)

The reflected image of Awareness possesses all attributes and is the only witness to all acts. He is known by the names of Jiva and Iswara. He is indeed part of Awareness and the Atman in all beings. Obeisance to you, who are that ever pure Atman, non-different from Jiva or Iswara. (22)

The ever pure Atman is attributeless and actionless. With the help of his innate power of Maya, he assumes attributes (like compassion) and performs actions. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

सवोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं संविद्रानन्दमद्वयम् ।
भावयात्मानमात्मस्थं न भूयः कल्पसेऽध्वने ॥ (४१३)

“Meditate in your own Self the Atman, free from all conditionings, non-dual, of the form of Bliss; you will not again get caught in the wheel of Samsara.” (413)
The wise man knows his true form by knowledge of the true intent of the statements of Vedanta and realizes that he is indeed Atman, Existence-Awareness-Bliss, ever pure and ever liberated. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, higher than the highest. (23)

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:
बाह्यामनत्यसुखासनक्तं हित्वासुखमुखनिर्वृत्त: ।
घटस्थदीपवतस्वस्त: स्वान्तरेव प्रकाशते ॥ (५.१)

“The self-abiding Liberated person, relinquishing all his attachments to the illusory external happiness, and satisfied with the Bliss derived from Atman, shines inwardly like a lamp placed inside a jar.” (51)

स्वमायापरिभ्रान्तचित्ता अजस्वं परागवस्तु पश्यति न प्रत्यगर्भम् ।
मुमुक्तस्वं यं पश्यति प्रत्यगर्भं परत्रहृदस्पूपाय तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ २४ ॥
Those, whose minds are deluded by their own innate Maya, constantly see outside objects; not the inner latent Power. One, who is intent on Liberation, sees that inner latent Power. Obeisance to you, who are that Supreme Brahman. (24).

Kathopanishad declares:
पराश्र्व खानि व्यतृणत् स्त्रयम्भूस्तस्मात्-पराइपश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
कष्टिध्रौर: प्रत्यगात्मानं-ऐश्वदात्रूत्तचक्षुं-अमृतत्तं-िच्छन् ॥

“The self-existent Brahman has rendered the senses defective such that they go outward, and hence man sees the external and not the internal Atman. Only, perchance some wise man desirous of immortality turns his eyes inward and beholds the inner Atman.”(II.1.1)

उपास्योजन्य ईशोस्त्यहं त्वन्य ईशात्यशुरेव नैनं भजत्यत्र योःस्मात् ।
विवेकी स एवाहमस्मीतयुपास्ते यमात्मानमीश्च नमस्तेःस्तु तस्मै ॥ २५ ॥
One, who is bound, identifies Iswara, whom he worships, and himself as different entities. The discriminating person does not think of Iswara in this manner; he worships Iswara with the realization that he, the Atman, is indeed Iswara. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (25).

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Sadachara’:

\[
देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो देही देवो निरञ्जनः।
अर्चिते सर्वभावेन स्वातुभूत्या विराजते॥ (१३)
\]

“The body is said to be the temple of Iswara; the pure embodied Atman is Iswara. When Atman is experienced as pervading everything that exists, that is worship.” (13)

\[
भयं भेददृष्टेभगवत्युल्बर्णं वै महान्तो न भेदं प्रपश्यन्ति तस्मात्।
यदज्ञातो दृश्यते भेद एवं भिदामोहत्रेन नमस्तेत्स्तु तस्मै॥ २६॥
\]

Strong fear is generated by the vision of difference. Hence great men do not see difference. Obeisance to you, who are that destroyer of delusion arising out of difference, whose ignorance leads to the vision of difference. (26)

Gnanis see the entire creation as the manifestation of the one Atman; as they do not see ‘the other’, they have no fear. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad states 'द्वितीयाद्वै भयं भवित' (1.4.2). Isa Upanishad says:

\[
यस्मिन्स्वार्णि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूतिः।
तत्र को मोहः के शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः॥ (७)
\]

“When, to the man of Self-Realisation, all beings become the very Atman, then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that seer of oneness?” (7)
Atman creates Brahma, Indra, Surya, Agni, Rudra, Chandra, Vishnu and others; but remains non-dual and witness of all, and rotates the wheel of Jagat, the created universe. But he is not seen by anyone. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (27)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

“Iswara is seated in the hearts of all beings. Through Maya he causes them all to revolve, as though they are mounted on a machine.” (18.61)

Atman witnesses the gross world in waking state; the world equal to this, created out of mental tendencies, while in dream state; enjoyable sleep during the state of deep sleep. Atman is ever blissful and is itself Turiya, the fourth (beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep). Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (28)

Vedanta states that the gross body is active while awake, the subtle body in dream state and the causal body in deep sleep. Atman is beyond these three ‘Upadhis’ (conditionings) and is Turiya, the fourth, to be attained. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

“That which clearly manifests itself in the waking, dream and deep sleep states, that which shines always inwardly in the root form of ‘I’, that which witnesses the ego, the intellect etc.
which are of different forms and modifications; that which is felt as Existence-Awareness-Bliss Absolute; know this Atman within your heart as your own Self." (219)

समस्तादमपि स्थूलसूक्ष्माच्छरीरात्परः कारणाश्चाय आत्मा समीपे ।
य एको बिद्वैरुपिन्तिष्ठन् जनानां महिमिः स्वकीये च तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ २९ ॥
Atman is different from all gross and subtle bodies and is also different from the causal body; it is near and yet far from people. It exists in its own glory. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (29)

Kathopanishad says:

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रिः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये समन्नमवष्टिः ।
तं स्वाच्छरीरात्प्रवृहेन्मुञ्जाकदवेषीकां धैर्यं ।
तं विद्याच्छुिममृतम मवद्याच्छुिमममत ॥ (१७)
“The Purusha, the indwelling Atman, of the size of a thumb, is ever seated in the hearts of men. One should unerringly separate him from one’s body like a stalk from the Munja grass. Him one should know as pure and immortal. Him one should know as pure and immortal.” (17)

यमाश्रत्य नास्तीमत चास्तीमत वेदे प्रवृत्तो विद्वैरुपिकारवुद्विलात्मा ।
नमस्तेनिःऽ प्राणयादिन्तीणाय नित्यं समस्ताधिक्रयायादिन्त्यकाय तस्मै ॥ ३० ॥
While dealing with Atman, Veda enters upon contrary arguments saying that Atman in all beings exists, and does not exist. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is devoid of feet, hands etc. and ever having feet, hands etc. (30)

Vedas and Upanishads appear on the surface to propose contrary theories. It is stated in one place that Brahman is formless, attributeless and changeless; and, in another place, that Iswara should be praised with form as described and as being full of compassion and prayed to for mercy; Karmakanda is full of rituals in praise of Iswara. Brahman is similarly said to be very far beyond one’s reach, and, also extremely near, right in one’s heart. These
statements are all true; but made with different Adhikaris (qualified aspirants) in view. It is only through Guru’s guidance that appropriate path can be chosen and followed profitably, suited to one’s equipment and needs. Adi Sankaracharya says in Viveka Chudamani:

सत्यं यदि स्याजगदेतदात्मनोःनन्तत्व-हानिर-निगमाप्रमाणाति ।
असत्यवादित्वमपीशितु: स्याप्रत्येकं साधु हितं महात्मनामू ॥ (२३४)
“If the universe is real, the Atman would not be infinite; the Vedas would lose authority; Iswara (Bhagavan Krishna) would be guilty of speaking untruth (in Bhagavad Gita). These three matters are neither desirable nor wholesome for the pure-minded persons.” (234)

योज्योरोणीयांसमात्मानमें क महत् महद्वुत्तृत्ते नभ्यं ।
परं चेतनं निद्यतो वेद निद्यतं यमेष्वे विद्वाच्यमेनः स्तम्भ॥ ३१॥
Atman is tinier than atom, and larger than the largest; more sentient than all sentient beings; more eternal than all eternal beings; unique; equal. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, whom the wise man knows here thus. (31)

The Vedic contradictions referred to in the earlier verse are pointed out here. The wise man realizes the uniqueness of Atman, whom words cannot describe, and mind cannot reach.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

अनूपमेऽचालो-अहार्य-अदीर्घ-अर्ज-अव्ययम् ।
अरूपगुर्णवर्णागख्यं तद्ब्रह्मेत्यवर्धारयेत् ॥ (६०)
“Realise that to be Brahman, which is neither subtle nor gross; neither short nor long; without birth or change; without form, qualities, colour and name.” (60)

यदानन्दलेशोपभोगॆन सवे सदानन्दिन: संभवत्यत्र तस्मै ।
सदानन्दसंदॊहपूर्णागर्णवाय प्रसन्नाय तुभ्यं नमः केवलाय ॥ ३२॥
By enjoying a tiny part of the Bliss of Brahman, all beings here feel extremely happy. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman, who is the ever full unique ocean of Bliss, ever delightful. (32)

After mentioning the Sat and Chit aspects of Brahman in the last verse, the Ananda aspect is taken up here. Lalitasahasranama says:

स्वात्मानन्द-लवीभूत-ब्रह्माद्यानन्दसंतति: ।

“The successive happiness of beings from Brahma downwards is indeed a tiny part of one’s own Atmananda, Bliss of Atman.” Anandavalli in Taitriyopanishad and Kathopanishad go so far as to actually measure the happiness quotient of beings starting from the happiest man on earth and proceeding on to Devas in intermediate regions and Swarga, and right up to Brahma. Each higher being enjoys happiness hundredfold that of the next lower being in hierarchy. The relevant conclusion is that the Bliss of Atman enjoyed by the Gnani is immeasurably richer than all the happiness of all the created beings right up to Brahma.

यमुत्सृज्य मत्याग भजत्यन्यदेवान्न ते षां मवमुमक्तिः फलं ककं तु तुच्छम् ।
श्वपुच्छं गृहीत्वा तटरष्यमन्ते वा समुद्रं ह्यपारं नमस्तेऽस्तु ॥ ३३ ॥

Those, who adore other Devas after discarding Brahman, do not attain to Liberation; their fruit is small. Is it possible to cross the ocean by holding on to the tail of dog? Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman. (33)

We find a similar reference in Bhagavad Gita. When we worship Iswara with the conviction that he is indeed the formless, attributeless Brahman, the benefit is immense. We are frequently warned not to worship ‘Tuccha’ (inferior) Devatas like Yakshas. Svetasvatara Upanishad states:

यदा चर्मवद-आकाशं वेष्टिण्यन्ति मानवः ।
तदा देवं-अविज्ञाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥ (६.२०)
“When men will be able to roll up the sky like leather, then there will be an end of sorrow without knowing the Effulgent One.” (6.20)

यथा विद्रुपास्तो फलं दास्यतीशस्तथा विण्णुरुद्वन्दवहन्यादुपास्तो।
फलं दास्यति ब्रह्म यद्वीशसंजः स्करमानुसारं नमस्ते तस्मै। ॥ ३४ ॥

Brahman, with the name of Iswara, confers fruit in accordance with one’s action, when Brahma is worshipped, and similarly when Vishnu, Rudra, Indra, Agni and other Devatas are worshipped. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahma. (34)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

मतया यद्यया यूक्तस्त्वार्धाधानमीहिते।
लभते च ततः कामान्यैव विहितानि तान्। ॥(७.२२)॥

“Imbued with that faith, he engages in the worship of that Devata; from him he obtains fulfillment of his desires; all these being ordained by Me (Brahman) alone.” (7.22)

न यद्वस्त्वः मोक्षस्य भवान्ति चित्विशिद्धिनेव मुक्तिप्रवेण ज्ञानमेकं।
न मोक्षकृत्यामध्यता कर्मशात: कर्तृत्र प्रपञ्चार्थैर्हन्ते नमस्ते तस्मै। ॥ ३५ ॥

Moksha (Liberation) is not attained by karma. Brahma confers Mukti here itself when Gnana is present, and never without Gnana. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahma, the destroyer of misery of those who take refuge in you. (35)

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

बोध्योज्यसाधनानेभ्यो हि साधनां-मोक्षायक-साधनम्।
पान्नत्वः विनन्विज्ञानां विना मोक्षो न सिद्धितसिद्धार्थ। ॥
अविनोधिताय कर्म नानाविद्यां विनिवर्त्येत्।
विनाविद्यां निहित्येव तेजस्तिर्मित्र-साद्यवत् ॥ (२,३)॥

Page 23 of 71
“Just as fire is the direct cause for cooking, so without Knowledge, Moksha is not attained. Compared with all other forms of discipline, Atmagnana is the one direct means for Liberation.”

“Karma cannot destroy ignorance, for it is not opposed to ignorance (it being insentient). Knowledge does verily destroy ignorance as light destroys intense darkness.” (2, 3)

“Neti Neti” (Not this, Not this) is a celebrated declaration expounding Vichara Marga in Brihadaranyakopanishad, cited by the author here.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

"By the process of negation of the conditionings through the help of the Upanishadic statement ‘it is not this, not this’, the unity of the individual Atman and the Supreme Atman, as indicated by the great Upanishadic declarations (Mahavakyas), has to be realized.” (30).

One of the four Mahavakyas is ‘Tattvamasi’, meaning 'You are That'.

He, who abandons proper enquiry of Truth and proceeds on pilgrimage to Tirthas, Japa (repeated chanting of mantra) etc., is like the one who throws away the food in his hand and
then starts to lick his own hand. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman, whose dawn in the mind of such a person does not happen. (37)

Through a telling example, the author brings out the efficacy of the direct and the most fruitful path of Self-enquiry, the Gnanamarga, as opposed to the external paths of devotion. This should not be taken as decrying the path of devotion, but as emphasizing the fact that all devotion has necessarily to culminate in Vignana, the Self-experience, without which there is no Liberation. When devotion is ripe, it draws Iswara's grace, who bestows Vignana on the aspirant. One cannot but recall the repeated insistence of Sri Ramana Maharishi on Self-enquiry in this regard. Ramana Gita says:

अद्भुताः सिद्धः साध्या उपायान्तरतं तः।
ता: प्रासोंजपि भवत्यते बिचारेर्घेव निर्वृत्तः ॥ (7.7)

“Marvellous occult powers may be had through other means. But in the end freedom can come only through Self-enquiry.” (7.7)

न चेत्राणवर्गेज्ञायं स्याज्जडत्वातः प्राणनाडी क्रियाकारितेष्वाम्।
अतो यस्य सिद्धा स्थिता युक्तिः जपि प्रप्राप्काशां तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ३८ ॥

In living beings, if Atman were not present, how would Prananadi (nerve of life-breath), being insentient, perform actions? Thus the presence of Atman is also deduced by logic and by the lighting up of the created universe. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (38)

The difference between the living and the dead is generally considered to be Prana, life-breath. But Prana is itself insentient. It belongs to Sukshma Sarira, the subtle body. It is the power of Atman that propels Prana also into action. Kenopanishad says:

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यदू वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः।
चक्षुपश्चक्षुप्रतितिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकाद्भूतां भवति ॥ (१.२)
“Since Atman is the Ear of the ear, the Mind of the mind, the Speech of the speech, the vital breath (Prana) of Prana, and the Eye of the eye, therefore the intelligent men after giving up (self identification with the senses) and renouncing the world, become immortal.” (1.2)

When the intellect assumes body as I, fear follows. For those who know Atman, there is no fear; Vayu, Mrityu and other gods in fact fear Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is free from fear and who has no body (also meaning body-consciousness). (39)

Taittiriya Upanishad states:

“Out of fear of Atman, the Wind blows; out of fear Surya rises; out of fear of Atman, Agni and Indra, and Death, the fifth, run.” (2.8.1)

Atman, who is Iswara, is known well (experienced) by those who have bhakti towards Guru; in the absence of Guru bhakti, Atman cannot be known even in a crore of years by one, who is alone and who uses his own intellect. Obeisance to you, who are Atman, who is loved by one and all. (40)

The necessity of having a good Guru is emphasized in all scriptures. Veda says:

Knowledge (of Brahman) can be obtained only from Acharya”. Adi Sankaracharya says:
“Even if one is master of Sastras, he should not enquire after Brahman on his own.”

Swami Vidyaranya says in ‘Anubhuti Prakasam’:

वेदान्तानां अनेकत्वात् संशयानां बहुत्वः।
वेद्यात् अतिसूक्ष्मत्वात् न जानाति गुरुं विना॥

“Owing to multiplicity of Vedantic principles and doubts arising during study of Vedanta, and the extreme subtlety of the object to be known, viz. Brahman, one cannot get that knowledge without Guru.”

समस्तात्मियो देह एवाक्षमस्मात्त्रित्यं प्राण एवाक्षतोजपि प्रियोतः।
प्रियः प्रत्यगात्मेव भोक्ता परो यः स्वतोजतिप्रियायेह तस्मै नमस्ते॥ ४१॥

Body is the most loved; sense-organs are even more loved; Prana (life-breath) is even more loved than sense-organs. But even more loved is the higher indwelling Atman, who is the true enjoyer. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is intrinsically the most loved. (41)

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says in a well-known passage:

न वा अरे भूतानां कामाय भूतानि प्रियाणि भवन्ति, आत्मस्तु कामाय भूतानि प्रियाणि भवन्ति।
न वा अरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवं भवति, आत्मस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवं भवति। ॥ (२.४.५)

“Yagnavalkya said: “Verily beings are dear not for the sake of beings, my dear, but it is for one’s own sake that they are dear. Verily all is dear not for the sake of all, my dear, but it is for one’s own sake that all is dear.” (2.4.5)

प्रियादात्मनोऽन्न विचेत किंचित्क्रितिकारणाश्रेयं भिचेत कार्यम्।
य आत्मा समस्तस्य हेतुर्मस्ते निदानाय सर्वस्य दृश्यस्य तस्मै॥ ४२॥

There is nothing more loved than Atman. Nowhere is the effect different from the cause. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is the cause of everything and is the substratum of all things seen. (42)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:
अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो भव विषय
इति मतव भजन्ते मां बुध्या भावसम्बन्धिता: ॥ (१०.८)
“I (Brahman) am the source of all; from me everything evolves; understanding thus, the
wise worship me with love and conscious identity.” (10.8)

समस्तं जगत्कारणाश्रेय भिन्नं समस्तातम्: केवलाद्वितीयात् ।
परब्रह्म प्राक्षेरूतेषां यस्मातामस्ते धृत्याश्रयार्थापि तस्मै ॥ ४३ ॥
The entire universe is non-different from the all-pervading Supreme Brahman, who is
singular, non-dual, Iswara, the fundamental cause. Obeisance to you, who are that
Brahman, who is the decaying effect and the non-decaying cause. (43)

The ‘Kshara’, decaying universe created by the ‘Akshara’, non-decaying Brahman is also
viewed as ‘Kshetra’, field of action pervaded by ‘Kshetragna’, the knower of Kshetra.
Bhagavan Krishna identifies the characteristics of Kshetra and Kshetragna in Gita and says:
अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तविभिन्नं च स्थितम् ।
भूतभतृग्न्तर्थे ग्रस्तिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ (१३.१७)
“Undivided, Brahman exists as if divided in beings. He is to be known as the supporter of
beings; he devours and also generates.” (13.17)

यति कारणाश्रेय कार्य विभिन्नं ततो ब्रह्मणो नैव भिन्नं जगत्स्यात् ।
समस्तं जगद्वर्गाभ्रों तत्समास्मि विद्वलावपास्ते यमेकं नमस्तेऽस्तु तस्मै ॥ ४४ ॥
As effect is not different from cause, the created universe is not different from Brahman. The
wise man worships that unique Brahman with the conviction “I am indeed this entire
universe.” Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman.

Adi Sankara says in ‘Atmabodha’:
स्वयं-अन्तर्विशिष्ट-व्याप्य भास्यनानबिलं जगत् ।
ब्रह्म प्रकाशते विन्प्रतमायस्त-विण्डवत् ॥ (६२)
“Pervading the entire universe outwardly and inwardly, the Supreme Brahman shines of itself, like the fire that permeates a red hot iron-ball and glows by itself.” (62)

यथा मृदिकारो मृतो नैव भिन्नस्तथा चिन्द्रिकारश्चितो नैव भिन्नः।
अतः सर्वंतिरिवेदिति विद्वान्निजानाति यद्भवः तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ४५ ॥
Just as the modification of soil (like earthen pot) is soil alone and non-different from it, the modification of Chit, the Supreme Consciousness, viz. the universe, is Chit alone and not different from Chit. Hence the wise man knows that all this is nothing other than Chit. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman shining as Chit. (45)

Mandukya Karika says:

मृल्लोहपुलिङ्गायः सृमष्टयागः।
उपायः सोऽवताराय नास्ति भेदः कथ्याचन ॥ (३.१५)

“The creation that has been multifariously set forth with the help of the examples of earth, gold, sparks etc. is merely by way of generating the idea (of oneness of the individual and the Supreme Atman); but there is no multiplicity in any way.” (3.15)

जगद्य स्य शरीरं जगन्न प्रमातृप्रमार्णप्रमेयात्मको यः।
समस्तान्तरायाखिलेशाय तस्मै नमः सब्जिथानन्दरूपाय तुष्म्यम् ॥ ४६ ॥
Brahman has got the universe as his body. Brahman, who is of the form of authority, proof as well as thing to be proved, is himself not the universe. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is the indweller of all, lord of all and of the form of Existence-Awareness-Bliss. (46)

Sri Krishna declares in Bhagavadgita:

मया तत्तत्मिदं सर्वं जगद्व्यक्तमूर्तिना।
सत्स्यानि सर्वभूतानि न चाह्ने तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ (९.४)
“All this universe is pervaded by me in my unmanifest form (aspect). All beings exist in me,
but I do not dwell in them.” (9.4)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिन्नतं परमेश्वरम् ।
विनश्यत्वविनश्यन्ति यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ (१३.२७)
“He sees, who sees the Supreme Iswara existing equally in all beings, the unperishing
within the perishing.” (13.27)

The wise man knows that he is not the body, sense organs, life-breath, intellect, group of
living entities, nor is he the Samsari (one who travels from birth to death to another birth);
but he is the unique Consciousness alone; he is Brahman, who is both the higher and the
lower (beings or knowledge) and is ever pure. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman.
(48)

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

देहान्यत्वाच्च मे जनम-जरायश्चतुयय: ।
श्वदादिविपयैः सह्यो निरिन्द्रियतया न च ॥ (३२)
"I am different from the body and hence I am free from changes such as birth, old age, senility, death etc. As I am without sense organs, I have nothing to do with the sense objects such as sound etc." (32)

यथा स्वप्नदृष्टा च हस्त्यादि मिथ्या तथा सर्वेतजगद्ध्वाति मिथ्या।
अधिष्ठानमात्रं जगद्वृष्टं च यद्रह्मू तस्मे नमस्ते। (४९)

Just as elephant etc. seen in dream is all false, this entire universe shines falsely. Brahman is alone the substratum, the seer of the universe, the Truth, the pure. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman. (49)

Adi Sankara says in Dakshinamurthy Stotram:

विश्रं दर्पण-दृश्यमान-नगरी-तुल्यं निजान्तर्गं
पश्यन्तात्मनं मनववेदेऽभृतं यथा निद्रया।
यस्सा कुस्ताकृते प्राध्यासमये स्वात्मानमेवात्रयं
तस्मे श्री गुरुमूत्येये नम इर्ष श्रीदक्षिणामूत्येये। (१)

"To him who sees the universe like a dream existing within oneself or like a city seen in a mirror but appearing externally due to Maya; who upon enlightenment, beholds the universe directly as his own non-dual Atman – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti, who has taken the form of my Guru.” (1)

परा चापरा यस्य माया द्विधेयं जगत्कर्त्तामिनिःस्यात्मनोति।
स्वतो द्रष्ट्वा वायतिरिक्तय तस्मै नमः केवलायात्मनात्मनेनस्तु। (५०)

The Maya of Atman is twofold- the higher and the lower; it bestows apparent doership of this universe on Atman, who is non-doer. However Atman is by nature beyond the seer and the seen, is alone and decayless. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (50)
The higher Maya is the manifestation of Iswara, who is Suddha Satva (pure goodness). The lower Maya is the manifestation of the universe, which is of three attributes (Satva, Rajas and Tamas). Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

कर्मण्यकर्म याः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म याः ।
स बुद्धिमान मनुष्येषु स युक्त कृत्वकर्मकृत्व || (4.18)

“He, who recognizes inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men. He is a Yogi and a true performer of all actions.” (4.18)

विशुद्धात्मत्वापरिजानमूलं विशेषावभासं सुखित्रादिरुपम् ।
विशुद्धात्मत्वेव परिजात एतत्कृत्विचारस्ति यस्मिन्मस्तेस्तु तस्मै || ५१ ||

The special appearance of forms like feeling of pleasure etc. has its root in non-cognisance of the truth of the ever-pure Atman. Once the truth of the ever-pure Atman is cognized, this appearance is felt nowhere in Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (51)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

इन्द्रियस्यनित्रियस्यार्थे रागस्याः व्यवस्थितो ।
तयों वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपल्लितीनौ || (३.३४)

“Attachment and aversion for the objects of the senses abide in the sense. One should not come under their sway; for, they are his foes.” (3.34)

नहित्वपरिजातं: सर्पभानूं कुचिपितंते सर्पता कल्पिता स्यात् ।
तथा कल्पितं सर्वभूतं यथिन्ममस्ते समस्तावभासाय तस्मै || ५२ ||

Once the twig of tree is cognized, the cognition of snake is no longer there; the appearance of snake was our imagination. Similarly this entire appearance of universe is imagined (superimposed) on Brahman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who causes all this appearance to shine. (52)
The celebrated example of twig of tree or rope appearing as snake due to false understanding, or ignorance of truth, is brought out here. Once the truth of tree branch is cognized, there is no more appearance of snake. Similarly this universe appears as true only to the ignorant. On rise of true Gnana, Brahman alone appears and the falsity of the universe becomes clear. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

स्थापानौ पुरुषव्द्वारान्त्या कृता ब्रह्मणि जीवता ।
जीवस्य तात्त्विक रूपे तत्स्मिन्दृष्टे निवर्तते ॥ (४५)

“Brahman appears to be a ‘Jiva’ because of ignorance, just as a post appears to be a ghost. The ego-centric individuality is destroyed when the real nature of the Jiva is realized as Atman.” (45)

सुपुष्मौ न संसारलेशोश्चित कश्चित्रत्वोध्येःखिलाहंकुटो दृश्यतेऽयम् ।
अतोहंकुटेऽरं संसार इत्यं न वै संमृतियस्य तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ५३ ॥

There is not even a bit of samsara (this world of experiences) during deep sleep. On waking up, with the rise of ego (Ahamkara) with all its aspects, this world is seen. Hence this samsara is only for one with ego. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who has no samsara. (53)

Mandukya Karika says:

अन्यथा गृह्णतिः स्वप्नो निद्रानं तत्ववसानातः ।
विपर्ययसे तयोः कीर्णे तुरीयं पदमशुते ॥ (१५)

“Dream belongs to one who sees falsely, and sleep to one who does not know Reality. When the two errors of these two are removed, one attains the state that is Turiya (Fourth). (15)

न शास्त्रं न शिष्यो न शास्त्रं न विश्वं नं शास्त्रं च शैवं मरं बैश्यवं वा ।
सुपुष्मौ तदानीं यदस्त्यात्मात्मांस्य स्वतः मृग्धाय तर्थम्मनस्ते ॥ ५४ ॥
During deep sleep, there is no enforcer of discipline, no disciple, no Sastra (rules of conduct), not even universe, and no sect like Saakta, Saiva or Vaishnava. At that time Atman alone exists. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who by nature has no scent of the created universe. (54)

Mandukya Upanishad says:

That state is deep sleep, where the sleeper does not desire any enjoyable thing and does not see any dream. The third quarter is Pragna, who has deep sleep as his sphere, in whom everything becomes undifferentiated, who is a mass of mere consciousness, who abounds in Bliss, who is surely an enjoyer of Bliss, and who is the doorway to the experience (of the dream and waking states). (5)

Mind, life-breath, body, sense organs and their modifications are all insentient and hence they cannot act on their own. They act on the stimulation of the omnipresent Consciousness. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, of the form of Consciousness. (55)

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

"Just as the tools of a carpenter are his instruments, this subtle body is an instrument for all the activities of the Atman, who is Awareness Absolute. This Atman, therefore, is perfectly unattached." (102)
Mind, life-breath, body, sense organs and their modifications are all by nature insentient like wood. In the presence of the supreme Consciousness, they shine as if they are sentient themselves, through delusion. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, higher than those insentient organs. (56)

Adi Sankaracharya says in Atma Bodha:

"The tremblings that belong to the waters are attributed through ignorance to the reflected moon dancing on it. Likewise, agency of action, of enjoyment and other limitations (which really belong to the mind) are delusively understood as the nature of Atman. (22)"

The intellect of living beings cognizes external objects and does not know the lord of their own life-breath, seated inside them, and the same unique Atman dwelling in all beings. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who lights up the intellect of Brahma and others. (57)

Adi Sankaracharya says in Viveka Chudamani:

"Blindness, weakness or keenness of the eye are conditions merely due to its defect or fitness. So too, deafness, dumbness etc. belong to the ear etc. And not to Atman, the Perfect Awareness. (103)"
Even Devas do not know the form of Atman. How would then humans with minds going outward know Atman? Devotees worship that non-dual Atman constantly with conviction that ‘I am That alone’. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman.

Devas are imbued with highest Satvaguna, whereas humans, as a class, possess the highest Rajoguna. When the Satvic Devas themselves find it difficult to be devoted to the pursuit of Atman, where is the question of humans succeeding in this tough venture? But some devoted humans pursue with concentration and determination and attain Atmagnana.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

“Whoever seeks to have vision of Atman, while being devoted to the care of the body, is like one, who proceeds to cross the river, holding on to a shark, which one has mistaken for a log of wood.” (86)

The omnipresent Atman is seated in all bodies and even in Surya. He is unique and the lone witness of all. Knowers of Vedanta realize that ‘He alone is myself’. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the Truth to be worshipped always. (59)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

“

(13.15)
“Making the functions of all sense organs shine, yet without the sense organs; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet their experience is Atman.” (13.15)

अहं विश्वकस्तेजसः प्राज्ञुपो विराटसूत्रमायेशरूपान्न भिन्नः।
उपाध्य विभिन्नेषो पितृवर्षिम सोहों यमेवं भजनवेद तस्मै नमस्ते॥ ६० ॥
The wise man realizes that ‘I am Visva, Taijasa and Pragna; I am no different from Virat, Sutradhari, lord of Maya; though conditionings are different, I am the essential Atman’. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, whom the wise man worships and knows. (60)

The same Atman is known as Visva when the body is in waking state; as Taijasa when the body is in dream state; as Pragna when the body is in deep sleep. Virat and Sutradhari are forms taken by Atman with the help of his innate power, Maya. These are the subtle forms projected by Atman gradually at the beginning of creation of the universe with jivas.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Tatva Bodha’:

यथा देहोः पुरुषोः ब्राह्मणोः शृद्धोः नात्रास्मीति दृढ़निधयस्तथा नाहं ब्राह्मणः न शूद्रः
न पुरुषः किंतु अस्तुः सति विद्विदातन्त्रस्वरूपः प्रकाशरूपः सत्यत्वाभाई
विद्विदाश्वरूपस्तैत दृढ़निधय रूपोऽपरोक्षज्ञानवान् जीवन्मुक्तः॥

“Just as one has the firm belief that ‘I am the body’, ‘I am a man’, ‘I am a brahmana’, ‘I am a sudra’, so also one having the firmly ascertained ‘Aparoksha Gnana’ (immediate knowledge) that ‘I am not a brahmana’, ‘I am not a sudra’, ‘I am not a man’, but ‘I am unattached, of the nature of Existence-Awareness-Bliss, effulgent, the indweller of all, the formless Awareness, is Jivanmukta (Liberated even while in human form).”

समस्तानि कर्माणि संत्यज्य विद्विदातवाहस्मीतिपावस्ते ह्राजस्मूः
यदेवाह्स्वरूपांत्यज्ञविनिः चित्तनीयाय तस्मै ॥ ६१ ॥
Abandoning all actions, the wise man worships Atman constantly with conviction that ‘I am That alone’. Atman is said to be the final aim of all Agamas and the one to be known. Obeisance to that Atman, who is ever to be meditated upon. (61)
Here abandonment of actions does not mean non-performance of any action, but only means abandoning the desire or expectation of fruit of any action performed, as well as the sense of doership of actions. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सत्तिरिष्टो मत: स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदेऽशर्महमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तलक्ष-वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ (१५.१५)

“And I am seated in the hearts of all; from me are attained the qualities of memory, knowledge and their absence. I am verily that which is to be known in all the Vedas, I am indeed the author of Vedanta and the knower of the true intent of Vedas.” (15.15)

न कृत्याकृते: प्रत्यवाय: कृत्याकृते न उत्पत्यंत: ।
अहं प्रत्यवायीति कृत्याकृते स्मारं यस्य मोहाभ्यामस्तेः सम् तस्य ॥ ६२ ॥

Non-performance of obligatory action does not result in sin. How can existence arise from non-existence? The thought that ‘I am sinner’ arises when not performing obligatory action, owing to delusion of not knowing the Truth of Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (62)

The statement that non-performance of obligatory action does not result in sin applies not to ordinary aspirants who are in early stages of Sadhana (spiritual practice), but to Gnanis. As far as ordinary aspirant is concerned, he has to keep performing the obligatory duties enjoined by Sastras till those karmas drop off on their own on dawn of Gnana. Gnani, having realized the Supreme Truth, has no need to perform Karma. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संत्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ (५.१३)

“Mentally renouncing all actions and fully self – controlled, the jiva (embodied one) rests happily in the nine-gated city, neither acting nor causing others (body and sense organs) to act.” (5.13). The body is indicated by the term ‘nine-gated city’, the nine apertures being two eyes, two nostrils, two ears and one mouth (totaling to seven in the face), and the genital and excretory organs (two in the trunk).
In the case of ordinary persons, they tend to take the path of adharma at times, justifying it as dharma, being the need of the hour. This approach arises because of selfish attachment to body-consciousness and results in sin, as Sastriac injunctions are violated in the process. In the case of Gnani, he has no attachment to body, and whatever he says or does even involuntarily becomes Absolute Truth and will never be found to violate any Sastra. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

\[ \text{नेहाभिभृत्स्य खृत्स्र्थं श्रवहाय प्रत्यवायो न विच्छिद्यते} \]

\[ \text{स्वल्पमप्य स्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात्} \] (2.40)

"In Karmayoga, there is no waste of effort; nor is there any harm, i.e. production of contrary results. Even a little of this (practice of) dharma protects one from the great fear (of rebirth)."

The Adharma described as residing in heart here is attachment to body. The purport of the verse is that devotees worship Atman all through the waking hours till death comes calling
and thus attain Mukti, earning deliverance from Samsara. Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Atmabodha':

आमवद्यकं शरीरादि दृश्यं बुद्धबुद्वत्क्षरं ।
एतद्-विलक्षणं विचारादं ब्रह्मेति निर्मलम्॥ (३१)

"The body etc. upto the Causal body, Ignorance, which are objects perceived, are as perishable as bubbles. Realise through discrimination that I am the pure, stainfree Brahman, completely separate for ever from all these." (31)

न वै बद्धता मुक्तता वा कदाचित्क्रिचिन्तित्वमुक्तस्य किं चात्मनोऽतः ।
बहिष्क्रितोत्सर्गश्च गत्यागती ते नमग्रिताविक्षेपहर्त्येःतस्मै ॥ ६५ ॥

For the Nityamukta (one who is ever Liberated), there is no bondage or liberation at any time or place. Then what to say of Atman? It is the mind which keeps travelling outward and inward. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who destroys the projections of the mind. (65)

The Jivanmukta (Liberated while still in body) is permanently rooted in Atman. He has lost all sense of doership and ego. Though his mind may do all normal human functions, he acts as true Witness of the functions of the mind and never attaches himself to them.

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इंद्रियाणीन्द्रियायांश्च तस्य प्रजा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ (२.६८)

"Therefore, O mighty-armed, his awareness is steady, whose senses are completely restrained from sense-objects." (2.68)

यथा क्षीणचित्तस्तथैवात्ममिष्ठः पुमानित्वमुक्तो भवेदद्वितीयः ।
When the mind is weakened, then the man gains concentration in Atman and becomes ever-liberated and non-dual. The weakening of mind happens due to the grace of Atman. Obeisance to Atman, who confers such grace. (66)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

"Undoubtedly, o mighty-armed one, the mind is difficult to control and is restless; but, by practice, o son of Kunti, and by dispassion, it is restrained. Yoga, I think, is hard to be attained by one of uncontrolled mind; but the self-controlled, striving person can obtain it by proper means." (6:35, 36)

Here dispassion is towards mundane objects and practice is that of constant meditation on Atman.

When you are pleased, what is not attainable for living beings? There is no gain higher than your grace. Hence the wise man always eagerly looks forward to your grace. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is pleased with those who surrender to you. (67)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

"Take refuge in him with all your being, O Bharata. By his Grace you shall obtain supreme peace and the eternal state." (18.62)
Those, who are rooted in Apara Brahman connected with earth etc., are not of consequence; for them there is rebirth here. One, who is rooted in Brahman with all limitations removed, is significant. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman, for whom there is no rebirth. (68)

Sri Vidyaranya says in ‘Panchadasi’:

अथं प्राणो मनो बुद्धिरानन्दिति पञ्च तेन कोशास्तैरावृतिः स्वात्मा मवस्मृत्या संसृनतं व्रजेत् (१.३३)

“The five sheaths of Atman are those of the food, vital air, mind, intellect and bliss. Enveloped in them, it forgets its real nature and becomes subject to transmigration.” (1.33)

For the person in deep sleep, there is nothing more significant than the substratum; for that state of deep sleep, the substratum alone is significant. Balaaki, who was conceited through ignorance, gained this knowledge from the king. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (69)

In the state of deep sleep, the mind is at rest with no activity. The only active entity is the Atman, who is the witness of deep sleep and is known as Pragna in Vedanta.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (2.1) mentions one sage Balaaki (son of the woman Balaaka), who was a descendant of the sage Garga. He was nicknamed ‘Dripta-Balaaki’ since he was a vain person (dripta means vain). He had mastered one aspect of the knowledge of Brahman. He went to King Ajatasatru of Kashi and expressed his desire to teach him. The king, who was more learned and could see through his vanity, proved his superiority. Then Balaaki became his disciple and learnt about Brahman without attributes. Ajatasatru concluded his teaching thus:
“As a spider moves along the thread it produces, or as from a fire little sparks scatter, just so from this Atman issue all organs, all worlds, all Devas and all living beings. Its secret name is the Truth of truth. The vital force is truth, and it is the Truth of that.” (2.1.20)

Atmaloka is not a physical realm, but constant experience of the Bliss of Atman. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

“Worlds upto the world of Brahma (Satyaloka) are subject o rebirth, O Arjuna. But he who attains Me (Brahman), O Kaunteya, has no rebirth.” (8.16)

Svetaketu realized on receiving instruction from his father Uddalaka that Atman, seated in him, is inexplicable and unique and is the highest Existence. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is ever of the form of Existence. (71)
Svetaketu is a great sage mentioned in Chandogya Upanishad. He was the son of Uddalaka. In his younger days he was arrogant, but had to taste defeat in the court of the king Pravahana Jaivali. Later on, his father taught him the science of Brahman. In course of time he himself became a great teacher.

The famous Mahavakya ‘Tavamasi’ occurs in the final teaching of Uddalaka to Svetaketu. The passage is as given below:

स यथा तत्र नादाल्हृतदातात्म्यमिदः सर्व तस्तत्त्वः स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति
तद्धास्य विज्ञानविचित्रि विज्ञानविचित्रि ॥ (६.१६.३)

“As in that case he was not burnt (similarly the man of Knowledge does not return, but the ignorant one does). That which is this subtle essence, all this has got That as the Atman. That is Truth. That is the Atman. **You are That, O Svetaketu.** He understood that from him. He understood that from him.” (6.16.3)

भृगुवेद पित्रोपकदष्टोऽन्तरेव प्रकृतः परब्रह्मरूपात्मलोकम् ॥
अनन्ताद्वायानन्दविश्वाय तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ७२ ॥
Bhrigu received instruction from his father and realized the world of Atman, the highest Brahman, who has no end and is non-dual, ever existent and unique, and who is experience of Bliss, inside himself. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, extremely pure. (72)

Bhriguvali in Taittiriya Upanishad starts with the request of Bhrigu to his father Varuna to teach him the science of Brahman. Stating that Brahman is that form from which all beings are born, in which they live, and to which they ultimately return, Varuna advises his son to find it out through Tapas. Every time Bhrigu returns after a brief period of Tapas, with a solution, he is sent back by Varuna, since what he has discovered is only the lower truth. After thus eliminating anna (food), prana (life-force), manas (mind) and vignana (intellect), he finally arrives at Ananda (Bliss) as Brahman, the ultimate cause of the world. The relevant Upanishadic passage is given below:
आनन्दो ब्रह्मेमत व्यजानात्। आनन्दाद्ध्येव खलिमानि भूतानि जायन्ते। आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति। आनन्द य प्रयत्नयभिसंविशन्ती। सैभा भार्यवी बारुणी विद्या। परमेव्योमन्यप्रतिष्ठिता।(३.६.१)

“He (Bhrigu) knew Bliss as Brahman; for, from Bliss, indeed, all these beings originate; having been born, they are sustained by Bliss; they move towards and merge in Bliss. This knowledge, realized by Bhrigu and imparted by Varuna (starts from the food-self and) terminates in the supreme Bliss, established in the cavity of the heart.” (3.6.1)

विहायेव कोशात्परं पञ्च वेद स्वरूपं यदानन्दकोशस्य पुच्छम। 
मुमुक्कुः सुषुप्तेरमर्थष्ठानमेकं सदात्मस्वरूपाय तस्मै नमस्ते॥ ७३ ॥

Leaving aside the five Kosas (sheaths), the sage, who strives for Liberation, realizes Brahman, who is beyond the five sheaths, who is at the base of the sheaf of bliss, the unique substratum of the state of deep sleep. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman of the form of Existence. (73)

As per Vedanta, the Kosas hiding our true nature are five: the physical body, which is a product of anna or food; prana or vital energies activating the sense organs and other internal processes within the body; manas or the mind; vignana or the intellect; agnana or basic ignorance, also called anandamaya kosa (apparent happiness). Anandamaya kosa is the closest to Atman and is enjoyed during deep sleep; but that is also ignorance, preventing us from experiencing the true Bliss of Atman. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

वपुस्तुषाकदमभिः कोशैयुगक्तं युक्तत्यावघातं। 
आत्मानमन्तरं शुद्धं मवमवच्यात्तण्डुलं यर्था॥ (१६)

“Through discriminative self-analysis and logical thinking, one should separate the pure Atman within from the (five) sheaths, as one separates rice from the husk, bran etc., that are covering it.” (16)
Though Sage Narada studied endless Sastras, he did not come out of the state of misery, as his knowledge was limited to Anatma (non-Atma). He then learnt from the mind-born son of Brahma, Sanatkumara, the science of Atman, which destroys all grief. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is omnipresent and pool of happiness. (74)

The seventh chapter in Chandogya Upanishad teaches Bhuma Vidya, knowledge of the Infinite. Narada, though himself a great and erudite sage, approaches the Self-realised sage Sanatkumara with a heavy heart seeking peace and happiness. Sanatkumara takes him step by step through meditations on fifteen objects like name, speech, mind and so on, to Bhuman, the Infinite. Bhuman, which is everywhere, which is established in its own glory, after knowing which there is nothing else to be known, is the Atman of all beings. One, who realises it, becomes ‘Svarat’. Like a king, he will have full freedom in all the worlds. To obtain this knowledge, purity of mind obtained through purity of food and purity of sense-experience, is necessary. The relevant Upanishadic passage is given below:

“Sir, you ask me on this subject: ‘What is That which is established in its own glory, or not even in its own glory.’ (7.23.1)

“The Infinite is that where one does not see anything else, does not hear anything else, and does not understand anything else. That which indeed is the Infinite, is immortal. On the other hand, that which is finite, is mortal.” “O venerable sir, on what is That established?” “In its own glory, or not even in its own glory.” (7.23.1)

King Videha (Janaka) learnt well about Brahma, the Abhaya (fearless) from Rishi Yagnavalkya and became himself that Abhaya Brahman, known only by Vedas. Obeisance to you, who are that Brahman, the fullness of Abhaya. (75)
Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, chapter 4, mentions that king Janaka received spiritual wisdom from sage Yagnavalkya. Abhaya Brahman here refers to Brahman, free from all conditionings and their effects; in short, beyond nescience, Agnana. Janaka, though a king, was a Jivanmukta. His is the only name to be cited by Bhagavan Krishna in Bhagavadgita as an example of an ideal Karmayogi. Mahabharata and Devi Bhagavatham describe how sage Vedavyasa despatched his wise son Suka from his asrama in the Himalayas to Mithila to meet king Janaka and receive Brahmagnana.

The final teaching of Yagnavalkya to Janaka is given below:

```
स वा एष महानज आत्माजरोपमृतोभयो ब्रह्म; अभयं वै ब्रह्म; अभयं हि वै ब्रह्म
भवति य एवं वेद ॥ (४.४.२५)
```

“That infinite, birthless, undecaying, indestructible, immortal and fearless Atman is Brahman. Brahman is indeed fearless He who knows Atman as above indeed becomes the fearless Brahman.” (4.4.25)

If the sins of the knower of Pranavidya are destroyed, where is the need to speak of destruction of sins by knowing the Infinite Brahman. The wise one therefore neglects Pranavidya and worships Iswara. Obeisance to you, who are that Iswara. (76)

Upanishads mention several Vidyas or Upasanas. Kausitaki Brahmana Upanishad (3) refers to one such Vidya called Pratardanavidya, known also as Pranavidya. Indra teaches this Vidya to king Pratardana in Swargaloka. In this, one’s identity with Atman, who is Mukhyaprana (chief life-force) and Pragna (pure consciousness) is contemplated upon and realized. Adi Sankaracharya stresses the need for removal of mental impurities in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

```
जलं पंकवदत्यन्तं पंकापाये जलं स्फुटम् ।
यथा भाति तथात्मापि दोषाभावे स्फुटप्रभः ॥ (२.०६)
```

Page 47 of 71
“Water, which is extremely muddy, appears as transparent water, when the mud has been removed. So too, the Atman manifests its clear lustre when the impurities have been removed.” (206)

Janasruti discarded the continuous gift of Anna (food), which he was practising and attained unity with Brahman after hearing the words of swans. He became knower of Prana (life-force) and of that which is higher than Prana, viz. Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, higher than Prana. (77)

Janasruti Pautrayana was a noble king, well-known for his generosity, especially for distributing food to the needy. Once he heard from some swans flying over his palace that the greatness of sage Raikva far exceeded his own. After a vigorous search, he located the sage sitting under a cart. On the king's plea for bestowing wisdom on him, Raikva taught him the Samvargavidya. Samvarga means the ultimate substratum, which absorbs everything into itself. Vayu, the cosmic air is the Samvarga in the external world since Agni (fire), Chandra (moon), Surya (sun) and Apa (water) get absorbed into it at the time of dissolution. Mukhyaprina (chief vital air) is Samvarga in the body since, in deep sleep, the sense-organs and the mind get dissolved in it. Identifying Mukhyaprina with Vayu and meditating on it as Virat (the cosmic Being) leads to realization of Atman. This is Samvargavidya in essence. This story is described in Chandogya Upanishad as well as in Skanda Purana.

Bhagavan Krishna stresses the necessity of rising above karmas and acquiring Atmagnana in Gita:

प्रकृत्याय च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः।
यः पश्यति तथा तात्मज्ञ-अकर्तरं स पश्यति॥ (१३.३०)
“He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by Prakriti (Nature consisting of Satva, Rajas and Tamas) and that Atman is actionless.” (13.30)

रवीन्द्रप्रितेजो जगद्रासक चेन्तरतयापि वित्सनिधानेन तत्स्यात्।
न यत्ससनिधानं विचिंचिदिस्त क्षणिन्द्रस्तु तस्मै नमो ज्योतिष्ये च॥७८॥
It is not that the radiance of Surya, Chandra and Agni brightens the world. The radiance is there owing to the presence of Chit, the Awareness. There is no object anywhere in the absence of Atman, the source of radiance. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the great Radiance. (78)

Svetasvatara Upanishad says:

न तत्र सूयो भानि न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विच्युतो भानि कुतोऽयमम्भो:।
तमेव भान्तं-अनुभानि सर्वं तस्य भाना सर्वमिदं विभानि॥ (६.१४)

“There the Sun does not shine, neither do the moon and the stars; nor do these flashes of lightning shine. How can this fire shine? After Him, all these shine; through His lustre all these are illumined.” (6.14)

परं ज्योतिष्यां ज्योतिरात्माण्यसत्त्रात्मान्याविदेश्यादिविच्छेदं यत्।
विदित्वैव नूनं नरो भ्रात्राण: स्वादर्शिः तस्यमा नमः स्वात्मने ते॥ ७९॥
This Atman is indeed the source of light of the most radiant objects and is what illumines Surya, Chandra and others and also intellect etc. By knowing this Atman alone, man becomes brahmana (rooted in Brahman) and deathless. Obeisance to you, who are that indwelling Atman. (79)

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

यद्रासा भास्येतकांदिभास्येभ्यंतु न भास्येत।
येन सर्वमिदं भानि तद्भद्रोऽवधारिणेत्॥ (६.१)

Page 49 of 71
“That, by the light of which the luminous orbs like Surya and Chandra are illuminated, but which is not illumined by their light - Realize that to be Brahman.” (61)

वर्षाक्तयुक्ते स्वदेहे च तुल्यं स्वेकावश्वबीद्रामुदेवोजुनाय ||
तथा यस्य साम्यं विज्ञानाति विद्वानस्मे समस्तात्मरूपाय तस्मै || ८० ||

Bhagavan Vasudeva has himself told Arjuna that he resides equally in the fig tree as well as in his own body. In the same way, the wise man knows the equal presence of Atman everywhere. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the indweller in all. (80)

Bhagavan says in Gita: अश्वत्थिः सवगवृक्षाम् – Among trees, I am the holy fig. In the course of narration of his Vibhutis (divine splendours), Krishna mentions the fig tree as his abode.

Svetasvatara Upanishad says:
यस्मात्परं नापरममस्त भजस्मान्नार्णीयो न ज्यायोऽमस्त कमश्चत्
वृक्ष इव स्तव्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकस्तेनैर गृहं पुरुषेण सवर्मम् || (३.९) ||

“By that Person is filled all this, in relation to whom, there is nothing superior or inferior, nothing smaller or greater, and who exists alone in his own effulgent glory, unmoving like a tree.” (3.9)

द्विजे पुल्कसे हस्तिनि स्वेशरीरं समः साल्विके राजसे तामसे च
य आत्मा गुणैस्तैरसंस्पृष्ट ईशो नमस्ते सदा निर्जलङ्काय तस्मै || ८१ ||

Iswara, the Atman, is equally present in brahmana (who is keen on contemplation of Brahman), Chandala, elephant and in one’s own body, as well as in the (varying) qualities of Satva (virtuousness), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (laziness and violence), and is also beyond and untouched by those qualities. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is ever free from taint. (81)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:
The wise men perceive the same Atman in brahmana, rich in knowledge and humility, cow, elephant, dog and dog-eating outcaste. (5.18)

That which someone talks of as a marvel, another hears of it as a marvel, the man of tranquility knows; the man, who has no tranquility, does not know; even after knowing, someone directly experiences his own existence as none other than that Chit, Pure Awareness. Obeisance to you, who are that Awareness, which is taught (to qualified aspirants) by you. (82)

Bhagavan Krishna makes a similar statement in Gita (2.29). Till one gets actual experience of Atman, it remains hearsay and subject of wonder. Bhagavan states clearly in Gita that tranquility results only after senses are controlled and intellect is directed to contemplate with concentration on Atman and that the bliss of Atman is experienced only by such a man of tranquility. Even in the path of Gnana, the third stage of 'Nididhyasana' means assimilation by deep contemplation. It comes after 'Sravana', listening of teaching from Guru, and 'Manana', reflection and ascertainment by clearing of doubts. Adi Sankaracharya emphasises the need for immediate knowledge in a telling verse in 'Viveka Chudamani':

“A disease is not cured by merely uttering the name of the medicine and without actually taking it. Without direct realisation, by a mere utterance of the word 'Brahman', none can be liberated.” (64)
The lords of Devas and Daityas (Indra and Virochana) heard the science of Atman from Brahma four times. One of them (Virochana) still did not know, but the other (Indra) knew. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is beyond debate. (83)

Chandogya Upanishad (8.7) tells the story of how Virochana and Indra approached Brahma for getting the knowledge of Atman. Virochana returned satisfied after the first visit that the body is indeed Atman. He taught accordingly to Daityas, who became thorough materialists. Indra went to Brahma four times and finally gained the true knowledge of Atman that Atman is eternal and indestructible, and body is transient and given to death. The final teaching:

मघवन्मत्यं वा इदः शरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रियाभ्यां न वै सशरीरिः प्रायोपह्यतिरस्यशरीरं वाव सन्तं न प्रियाप्रियेः स्पृशतः: || (8.12.1)

“O Indra, this body is indeed mortal. This is covered by death. That is the seat of this Atman, which is immortal and not having body. Anything embodied is within the range of the desirable and the non-desirable. Surely, for that which remains embodied, there can be no elimination of the desirable and the undesirable. But the desirable and the undesirable cannot surely touch Atman, which is unembodied.” (8.12.1)

Those, who are deluded owing to ignorance of Atman and are incapable of proper intellectual analysis and are conceited, talk of Atman as either body, sense organs, vital breath, specialized knowledge or emptiness. Obeisance to you, who are that true Atman. (84)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

अन्तवन्त इमेदेहा नित्यस्योक्ता: शरीरिः ||
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ (२.१८)

“These bodies of the embodied Atman are said to have an end. The Atman is eternal, indestructible and incomprehensible. Therefore, fight, O Bharata.” (2.18)

अनेकवकृतवर्गोत्कृतवर्गः स आत्मा विमुखतःसुण्डरस्य केहिः ॥
न कर्त्यं भोक्ता क्रियश्चति चाव्ये यद्जः वदन्तीहृ तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ८५ ॥

Some say that Atman is of the nature of multiplicity, doer and enjoyer, is omnipresent and has awareness as an attribute. Some say that Atman is not the doer, but enjoyer in some places. They are unaware of the truth of Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that true Atman. (85)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

प्रकृते: क्रियमाणानि गुणे: कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ (३.२७)

“Actions are performed in all cases merely by the qualities of Nature (Satva, Rajas and Tamas). He, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks ‘I am the doer’.” (3.27)

अनेकात्मना प्रेरकोऽन्यो न हीशोष्ट्विति प्राहोऽस्तु न चास्तीति चाव्ये ।
विवादाद्यां नैव माया विना यज्ञमस्तेऽस्तु तस्मै विवादात्यराय ॥ ८६ ॥

Some say that the one who stimulates the jiva in many forms is Iswara and not anyone else; others say that he is not Iswara. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, without whom Maya would not be the subject of debate and who are beyond all debate. (86)

In the last three verses, the author brings out various kinds of misrepresentations of Atman. Atman is indeed none of those and is beyond all debate. That is why Upanishads emphasise that Atman is beyond the scope of mental cogitation and also speech.

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:
“Actions do not taint me (Brahman), nor have I any desire for the fruits of actions. He who knows me thus is not bound by his actions.” (4.14)

By the grace of Atman, when the true form of Iswara, the protector of the world, becomes distinct, all debate ceases. Once debate ceases, the jiva does not get deluded again in the world. Obeisance to you, who are that non-dual Atman. (87)

Mundaka Upanishad says:

"When that Atman, which is both high and low, is realized, the knot of the heart gets untied, all doubts are resolved and all of one’s actions become dissipated." (2.2.8)

Vedas describe Atman as omnipresent, of the size of thumb, ancient Purusha. Atman resides with the size of thumb in the hearts of people. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who is not just of the size of thumb. (88)

Vedanta sometimes describes Atman in conflicting terms – distant and yet near, tinier than atom and larger than the largest etc. This means that Atman cannot be described in words as it is beyond the ken of words as well as mental imagination. The apparent conflict in qualities is on account of relating Atman to worldly objects, which are products of time and
space. Time and space are products of Maya and Atman is beyond them. The description here of Atman as being of the size of thumb in human hearts, and at the same time, as not being of the size of thumb, is an example of the conflicting presentation of Atman. The omnipresent Atman, not limited by time and space, is what activates the insentient human body. To make this clear, Vedanta says that Atman resides in human heart with the size of thumb.

Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

अत्रैव सत्त्वात्ममन धीगुहायां-अव्याकृतात्माकेः उक्षत्रकाश: ।
आकाश उच्चै रविवत्रकाशाय स्वतेजसा विश्वमिन्द्र प्रकाशयन् ॥ (१३४)

“In this very body, in a mind full of Satva, in the cave of the intellect, in the atmosphere of the Unmanifest, the Atman, of captivating glory, shines like Surya, high in the sky, illumining the universe by its effulgence.” (134)

भ्रुवोमगध्यमेवामनुभिः सुनितानं महाक्षेत्रमित्यत्र बुद्धे: श्रुतश्रु ।
न वा वारणासीपुरं गन्तुममच्छेत्स्वरूपे मस्र्थतो यस्य तस्मै नमस्ते ॥ ८९ ॥
One, who is established in his true nature of Atman, focused by sages by concentrating on the space between eyebrows with the help of their intellect, which is Avimukta Mahakshetra, and by means of Sruti (Veda), would not like to go to the city of Varanasi. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (89)

Sages concentrate on Atman by focusing their attention on the space between eyebrows as guided in Vedas and Yogasastras. They control their wavering minds with the help of intellect, which is described here as Avimukta Mahakshetra, which means the great spiritual centre, never left by Iswara. Avimukta Mahakshetra is the name of Kashi, which is never abandoned by Siva even in times of the great dissolution. Similarly the human intellect is never abandoned by Atman; otherwise it would be dead. Intellect and, indeed all body organs function only in the light of Atman.
One, who is established in Atman, does not find it necessary to go to Kashi for attaining Gnana and Liberation. The Liberation desired in Kashi is already attained by him. In a beautiful verse in ‘Atmabodha’, Adi Sankaracharya says:

तीत्वाग मोहार्णगवं हत्वा रागद्रेष्टादिराशक्षान्।
योगी शान्तिसमायुक्: आत्मारामो विराजते॥ (५०)

“After crossing the ocean of delusion and killing the monsters of likes and dislikes, the Yogi, who is united with peace, dwells in the glory of his own realized Atman, as an Atmarama.” (50). By a metaphorical reference to the story of Ramayana, the great Acharya tellingly brings out the glory of Atma-Vichara, Self-enquiry.

शरीरे यथाज्ञंमति: सर्वजन्तोस्तथा मुक्तिबुद्ध्यः काशीमृतेव।
स्वरूपप्रकाशं विना यस्य मुक्तिन्वै सम्भवेत्क्रापि तस्मै नमस्ते॥ ९०॥
The sense of I is there for all beings in their own bodies; similarly the sense of liberation is there for one, who dies in Kashi. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, without whose light of true nature, liberation is not possible anywhere. (90)

‘ज्ञानादेव हि कैवल्यम्’ - Liberation is attained only by true knowledge of Atman– this is what Upanishads teach. But scriptures state that Liberation is assured for those who shed their bodies in Kashi. This only means that Siva, in his great compassion, bestows that Gnana on the dying mortal and makes him immortal. This is similarly true of any aspirant, who is into spiritual practice. His devotion is crowned by the compassion of Atman, who showers him with Gnana and then bestows liberation on him. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रसिद्ध विद्वाते।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मसिद्धिनि विन्दति॥ (४.३८)

“Certainly there is no purifier in this world like Gnana. He who is himself perfected in Yoga finds it in Atman in time.” (4.38)
Deep contemplation of the import of lofty Vedanta texts paves the way for attaining the light of one’s true nature, viz. Atman. Hence the discriminating aspirant remains established constantly in Vedanta for attaining that light. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (91)

In Vicharamarga, the path of enquiry, three steps are enunciated in Vedantic texts: Sravana (listening to Guru’s teaching), Manana (contemplation including getting doubts cleared from the Guru and firming up the knowledge) and Nididhyasana (absorption of the truth into self). Thus the aspirant experiences his non-different, non-dual Atman in himself by deep contemplation. Adi Sankaracharya expounds the significance of contemplation in ‘Viveka Chudamani’:

"The fear and sorrow created by the delusory serpent on the rope can be ended only after fully ascertaining the truth of the rope, which is available for recognition only through steady and balanced thinking.” (12)

Some, who are focused on Vedanta, and Devas like Rudras, who talk of the principle of Atman, do not know it in truth. The aspirant therefore leaves them aside and gets established in Vedanta for knowing Atman. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (92)

The import is that even Devas hanker after non-Atman attainments like victory over Asuras etc. The dedicated aspirant is focused only on Atman. (The Rudras indicated here are divine
beings, not blessed with the grace of Gnana by Siva, and hence not Self-realised). Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्वन्त्यत्प्रेतंद्रिष्टाम् ।
देवान्त्ये देवयजो यान्ति मद्युक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ (७.२३)
“The fruit (of Karmas) that accrues to those men of little intelligence (worshipping Devas for petty ends) has an end. The worshippers of Devas proceed to Devas; My devotees come to Me.” (7.23)

Devendra realized the true nature of Atman and got relieved of all sins like killing of Vritra etc. and became established in Vedanta and remained blissful, having got rid of selfish attachment. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman. (93)

Devendra committed many grave sins like killing of Visvarupa, Vritrasura and others in a stealthy manner. He got rid of all the sins by undertaking penance for long periods of time, worshipping Isvara and realizing Atman. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

यथेधांसि समिद्र्द्विग्रंथिरस्मसात् कुरुते ॥
ज्ञान准ः सर्वकर्माणि सर्वसामक्रुरः तथा ॥ (४.३७)
“As the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, so does the fire of Gnana reduce all actions to ashes.” (4.37)

By constantly enquiring of the real nature of Atman, one becomes very pure and worthy of worship by Devas headed by Indra. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the bestower of worthiness of worship by Devas, and purity. (94)
Maharishis were all human beings. They had attained purity and realized Atman and hence they were all worshipped by Indra and other Devas. We find many occasions in Puranas, where Devas came down to earth and offered worship to Maharishis. Srimad Valmiki Ramayanam refers to Devendra coming down to earth and worshipping sages Sutikshna and Sarabhanga. There are instances where the lord of Devas, Indra was cursed by Maharishis too. Sage Goutama cursed Indra to become impotent, when the latter assumed the form of the sage and violated Ahalya, the sage’s wife. Sage Chyavana cursed Indra to become paralysed in his arm, when the latter tried to prevent him from offering Somapanam to Asvini Devatas. Such is the power of Self-realised humans.

Srimad Ramayanam refers to sage Visvamitra’s severe austerities for acquiring the state of Brahma. Brahma finally said to him:

ब्रह्मशे स्वा गतं तेऽस्तु तपसा स्म सुतोष्टिता: ॥
ब्राह्मण्यं तपसोग्रेर्ण प्राप्तवानसि कौशिक। (१.६५.१९)

“Brahmarishi! We are very happy with your austerities. You are welcome (to become Brahmari). Kousika! You have acquired the quality of brahmana (Brahmagnana) through severe austerities.” (1.65.19)

स्वयं शुद्ध एवान्यशुद्धिं ददामत वमचन्न
ह्यशुद्धोऽन्यशुमद्धप्रदिः
स्यात् ॥
स्मृतिः शुमद्धदिः
सवगजंतोयग
आत्मा
वशुद्धिः
पवत्राय
तस्मै
नमस्ते ॥ ९५ ॥

One, who is pure himself, can alone bestow purity on another. Nowhere can an impure person give purity to another. Obeisance to that Atman, who is sacred and very pure, and, who imparts purity to all beings, when thought of by them. (95)

Kathopanishad says:

न नरेणावरेण प्रोक्तः एप सुविजेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः ।
अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अपीयानु द्वातकर्य-अणुप्रमाणात् ॥ (१.२.८)
“Atman is certainly not known adequately when spoken of by an inferior person; for, it is thought of variously. When taught by one, who has become identified with it, there is no further cogitation with regard to it. For, it is beyond argumentation, being subtler than the size of the atom.” (1.2.8)

सकृत्संस्मृतश्चेत्रस्मति च पापं दहत्यमिव दीप्तिः।
चिदेवाहिमित्येव बुद्धौ प्रवेशस्वदीसिन्मस्तेःस्तु तस्मै महिसे॥९६॥

Once one remembers the radiance, which induces the thought ‘I am only Chit (Awareness)’, it burns away here all sins like fire, with tremendous brilliance. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman of such glory. (96)

Karmas are categorized into three: Sanchita, Prarabdha and Agami. Sanchita is the karma, accumulated over countless births in the past. Prarabdha karma is that part of the Sanchita karma, which is ordained to bear fruit in the present birth. Agami is karma accumulated in the present and future births. Both Sanchita and Agami karmas are destroyed on the dawn of Gnana. Prarabdha karma continues to operate on the body till the body drops, but it has no bearing on the Gnani, as he is totally free from attachment to body. Thus the Gnani is free from the clutch of all karmas. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Tattva Bodha’:

समञ्चतं कर्म ब्रह्मैवाहमममति नित्यसामस्यवाहितमकजानेन नश्यति ।
आगामिः कर्म अपि जानेन नश्यति, चिन्च आगामिः कर्मणां नलिनीदलगल-जलवत् जानिनां सम्बलं नास्ति ।

“The Sanchita Karma is destroyed by the knowledge ‘I am Brahman’. The Agami karma is also destroyed by Gnana; and the Gnani is not affected by it just as a lotus leaf is not affected by the water on it.”

नहि स्मानदानादिना पापनाशे तु तत्संस्कृति: क्रापि नश्येकल्कापि ।
विना यत्स्मृति स्मृत्युपायं च मुक्त्वा स्मरत्यापहन्वे नमस्तेःस्तु तस्मै॥९७॥
Though performance of holy bath, ceremonial gift etc. without remembering Atman as well as the means of remembering Atman, will destroy sins, the latent impressions of sins will never be destroyed. Obeisance to Atman, who destroys sins, once remembered. (97)

Any action, once performed, has two effects: one is, the Punya (religious merit) and Papa (sin) resulting from the nature of that action; the second is, the latent tendency the action creates in the mind, which generates the urge to repeat the act in a given circumstance. Though sin is destroyed by taking sacred bath in a holy river, ceremonial gift etc., the latent tendency to commit the same sin under a given circumstance is not removed. The latter is eliminated only by the grace of Atman, earned by prayer and surrender. Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:

विषया विनिवर्तते निराहारस्य देहितः।
रसवर्ज रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते॥ (२.५९)

"The objects of the senses turn away from the abstinent man leaving the longing (behind); but his longing also leaves him on seeing the Supreme." (2.59)

अनात्मन्यहन्तामभमानं निरस्य स्वरूपप्रकाशस्तः सर्वपापम्।
न संस्कृत्यनात्माश्रयं स्मृतेऽपि तु तस्मै नमस्ते॥ ९८॥

When the light of one's true nature shines, the attachment to the sense of 'I' in Anatma (objects and experiences other than Atman) drops off. Hence all sins rooted in Anatma and Samskriti (latent tendencies left by actions) are removed; the memory (of Anatma) is destroyed. Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the source of that radiance. (98)

Adi Sankaracharya says in 'Viveka Chudamani':

अनात्मवासनाजालस्तिरोभूतात्मवासना।
नित्यात्मनिष्ट्या तेषां नाशे भाति स्वयं स्फुटा॥ (२७५)

Page 61 of 71
“Innumerable desires for things that are the non-Atman cloud the desire for Self-realisation. When these have been destroyed by being constantly established in Atman, the Atman manifests all by itself.” (275)

Adi Sankaracharya, out of boundless compassion for the misery-struck humanity, wrote the commentary on Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita, referred in totality here as Vedantabhashya. By teaching this commentary to disciples, he reestablished the truth of Advaita Vedanta. Without proper comprehension of Advaita Vedanta, the natural human outward propensity towards objects and experiences, promoting attachment to Anatma and disinterest in Atman, cannot be overcome. Hence Adi Sankara is hailed here as the personification of compassion. (99)

“The way Sankara, the incarnation of Siva, has authored commentaries explaining the import of Sruti (Veda –Upanishad) and Veda Vyasa’s Brahmasutras, he has declared the correct interpretation of those texts.”
Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, who bestows the knowledge of unitary nature of the Atman, and who himself incarnated as Sankaracharya, desirous of expatiating on the purport of all Sastras, and who wrote commentaries on Vyasa’s Brahma Sutras etc.

Kurma Purana refers to the conversation between Siva and Parvathi on the advent of Sankaracharya on earth as Siva’s Amsavatara. Siva says:

उपदेक्ष्यमत् तद्ज्ञानं मशष्यार्णां ब्रह्मसंमज्ञतम्।
सर्वविदांतसारं हि सर्वस्माच्छु तु दर्शनात॥

“Sankara will teach the knowledge of Brahman to his disciples. That will be the essence of all Vedanta and all philosophies.”

Adi Sankaracharya had hundreds of disciples, four of whom are regarded as preeminent; they are Sureswaracharya, Padmapadacharya, Totakacharya and Hastamalakacharya. Bhavishyottara Purana says:

कल्यब्दे द्विसहस्रान्ते लोकानुग्रहकाम्यया।
चतुर्भगस्सह शिष्यस्तु शाङ्करोऽवतटरष्यमत॥

“Sankara will incarnate on earth with four disciples at the close of 2000 years after Kaliyuga begins, with the desire to bless the people.”

विराटसूत्रमायेशतुर्यस्वरूपे: क्रमातोटकाचार्यनामादिसंज्ञेः।
चतुत्त्वृह्नेपे: स्वशिष्येयुर्तायात्रवयायात्मने ते नमो निर्गुणाय॥ १०२॥
Obeisance to you, who are that non-dual Atman without attributes, and who is accompanied by four disciples with names of Totakacharya etc., representing respectively Virat (Cosmic whole); Sutratma; Iswara, the lord of Maya; and Turiya (the fourth). (102)

Turiya, the fourth is indeed the formless, attributeless Parabrahman. Iswara, Sutratma and Virat are the successive stages in the creation of the universe, moving from subtle to gross. Adi Sankaracharya says in ‘Atmabodha’:

जगदिर्लक्षणं ब्रह्म ब्रह्माणोन्यत्र किदम्।
ब्रह्मान्यन्याति चेन्निधिया यथा मरमरीचिका॥ (६३)

"Brahman is other than this, the universe. There exists nothing that is not Brahman. If any object other than Brahman appears to exist, it is unreal like the mirage." (63)

अजं कर्मणां विश्वरूपं विदित्वा तुरीयाश्रमम् चाथ तस्मै प्रदाय।
व्यधादृश्यशृङ्गाश्रमे शारदाचार्यम् तत्त्वरक्षाय तस्मै नमस्ते॥ १०३॥

Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, the protector of the true principle, who granted the fourth Asrama, Sanyasa to Visvarupa, knowing him as the incarnation of Brahma and engaged in Karmamarga, and appointed him in the asrama of Rishyasringa in the service of worship of Sarada Devi. (103)

Visvarupa, otherwise known as Mandana Misra, became Sureswaracharya on receiving Sanyasa diksha from Adi Sankaracharya after being defeated by him in philosophical debate. He was appointed as the first Mathadhipati of Sringeri Sarada Peetham. Sringeri was in earlier times the place where the asrama of sage Rishyasringa was located. Sankara Vijayam records the establishing of Sringeri Matham:

श्रीमच्छङ्करदेशिको मुनिवरः श्रीत्रैयाविवाचारिनिका
श्रीचक्रोपिरं भावयतं भगवतं श्रीशारदामभविकाम्।
तां संस्थाप्येहि मन्दिरेंजजिम्मिति शृङ्गाचलस्थेन्नान्यां
स्वातेवासिवरं सुरेशमपि तत्पूजार्थ-आजिजिपत॥
“The great sage and Guru Sri Sankara invoked Sri Brahmavidyasvarupini in Srichakra, meditating on Bhagavati Sri Saradambika and established her in a grand temple in Sringagiri and worshipped her. He bade his best disciple Sureswaracharya to perform Puja there (and function as the head of Sri Sarada Peetham).”

Obeisance to you, who are that Atman, worshipped by all, and specially worshipped as Guru and Atman by the knowers of Atman, who have attained their true nature of bliss in themselves by studying the commentaries of Acharya Sankara. (104)

A famous verse in praise of Adi Sankaracharya says:

“Just as Lakshmi sprang from the ocean and embraced the most glorious form (of Vishnu) in all the worlds, Sankara extracted the essence from the ocean of the Vedas and wrote clear commentaries and handed that knowledge, which provided succour to the entire world without exception.”

O Sankaracharya, prostrations to you from the front, from the back, on the sides, below and above. Prostrations in all directions to you, who are that Brahman, shining in all forms and remaining very pure. (105)

Though Brahman shines in all bodies in the form of Jivatma, he is not tainted by the deficiencies of the jiva’s mind and body, and remains established in his very pure state. Svetasvatara Upanishad says beautifully about the relationship of Jivatma with Brahman (or Paramatma):
“Two birds that are ever associated and have similar names, cling to the same tree. Of these two, one eats the fruit of divergent tastes, and the other looks on without eating. On the same tree the Jiva remains drowned as it were; and so, being deluded, it moans because of its impotence. When it realizes thus the other, the adorable Iswara, and his glory, it becomes liberated from sorrow.” (4.6,7)

So long as body-consciousness remains, one has to do all ordained Karmas as a slave of Iswara. As bhakti develops, one becomes closer to Iswara and feels that he is a part of Iswara. When Atmagnana ripens, he becomes one with the omnipresent Brahman and realizes no difference from Brahman.

There is a famous verse of similar expression from Hanuman to Rama:

“I remain your slave from the point of view of body; I remain a part of yourself from the standpoint of Jiva; I am no different from you from the viewpoint of Atman. This is my conclusive view.”
गतिर्न्यथा मे समस्तापराधं क्षमस्वाखिलात्मनमस्तेःस्तु नित्यम्॥ १०७॥

In my end time, may the purport of your commentaries, which is the seer of the sense of the image of Awareness, shine quickly in me. I have no other retreat. You are the Atman of all, please pardon all my faults. Prostrations to you always. (107)

Bhagavan Krishna says in Gita:
अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्तत्वा कलेवरम्।
यः प्रयाति स मद्वृवं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः॥ (८.५)

“Whoever leaves his body at the end time, thinking only of Me, attains My state; there is no doubt.” (8.5). Hence the thought lingering in one’s consciousness at the last moment of his life is what determines his future life. If his thought is concentrated in the Supreme Brahman, there is no rebirth for him; he merges with Brahman. That is why the prayer for the last thought to be focused on Brahman is clearly spelt out here.

नमो भाष्यबृन्दाय भाष्योपदेष्ट्रे नमो भाष्यकृ-द्व्रयः।
नमो भाष्यवृन्दाध्याय भूम्ने मवशुद्धात्मने ब्रह्मर्णेऽस्मै परस्मै॥ १०८॥

Prostrations to the group of commentaries; prostrations to the preceptors of commentaries; prostrations to the knowers of commentaries. Prostrations to Brahman, who is the true purport of the cluster of commentaries, who is Infinite, lofty, very pure Atman. (108)

A verse in praise of Adi Sankaracharya is as follows:
वेदान्तार्थग-भाष्यकाय गुरवे शान्ताय संत्यासिने
नानावादि-नगेन्द्रसंघ-पवेय योगीन्द्रवन्ध्याय च।
मोहध्वान्त-दिवाकराय भगवत्पादार्थिनं विभ्रते
तस्मै भाष्यकृ-मे नमोऽस्तु सततं पूर्णाय बोधात्मने॥

“Prostrations always to the Guru, the great exponent of the truth of Vedanta; the Sanyasi of peace; the thunderbolt for the mountains of various disputations; worshipped by the best among Yogis; Sun for removing the darkness of delusion; holding the honorific of
Bhagavatpada; the author of commentaries of Vedanta; the ever-full; the very form of Gnana.

One, who reads with devotion these 108 verses set to Bhujanagaprayata metre, and who is indeed the reflected image of Chit (Awareness), would certainly delight in his own true nature, remembering your lotus feet, the one and only form of Chit (Awareness). (109)

A verse of prayer to Adi Sankaracharya is as follows:

“May the scripture be Advaita Vedanta, Deva be Sri Chandrasekhara, and Acharya be Sankaracharya for me in every birth.”
Though I am without doubt Brahman, I was deluded that I was not Brahman, prior to realization of my true nature. O Guru! Owing to your grace, I, who am the reflected image of Chit (Awareness), am fully liberated and I have realized that I am indeed the form of Chit, very pure Atman. (111)

Adi Sankaracharya says of the Self-realised state in ‘Atmabodha’:

“I am verily that Supreme Brahman alone, who is eternal, pure and free, unitary, indivisible, Blissful and non-dual, and of the nature of Changeless-Knowledge-Infinite.” (36)

Hence the wise person shall read this Bhujangaprayata Stotra or bring to memory the meaning of that Stotra every day for obtaining your grace. O Guru! That person, who is the reflected image of Chit (Awareness), will realize that Superior form of Chit by prostrating to you again and again. (112)

Totakacharya says in praise of Adi Sankaracharya:

“I prostrate all my life to that greatest and most glorious Sanyasi, through whose Sun-like brilliance of intellect, the deep-seated darkness inside me, which was the cause of the cycle of repeated births and deaths and children, got uprooted and destroyed totally; by taking refuge in whose feet, groups of disciples become embellished with Vedantic perception, mind-control and humility, and attain Liberation immediately.”
Desirous of praising you, who are meditated upon by ancient great Munis, and who are worthy of worship by all Devas including Brahma, where and how shall I attain you? There is nothing here. What is there in Maheswara? (113)

The idea is this: the aspirant finds now, having praised Adi Sankaracharya as Brahman himself, that there is nothing of substance in this created world. About Maheswara, he cannot find the truth. Unless you become Maheswara, you cannot imagine who he is. That is Brahmavidya. You can enjoy the Bliss of Brahman in Samadhi state. But Maheswara is Brahman with forms and attributes. How to imagine that? That is, being free of attributes and forms as Brahman, and still assuming attributes and forms as Maheswara – this state is beyond the comprehension of human being. A famous verse on Adi Sankaracharya is as follows:

वेदे ब्रह्मसमः तद्गांनिचये गर्गोपमः तत्कथा-
तात्पर्यार्थ-विवेचने गुरुसमः तत्कर्मसंकीर्तिने ।
आसीत् जैमिनिरे व सूत्रनिषिद्धस्यार्थोपसंवर्णनि
व्यासेनेन्न समस्स शंकरगुरुः जेजीयतां मानसे ॥

“Sankara is like Brahma with reference to Vedas; like Garga on the collection of Vedangas; like Guru on expounding the substance of Vedas; like Jaimini in setting out the Vedic rituals; like Vyasa in determining and explaining Vedanta through Sutras. May that Sankara Guru shine in my mind.”
O compassionate one! Your grace makes the highly deluded person into a highly pure one. It makes the dumb person into Iswara, the orator. Hence my yearning of writing this Stotra bore fruit purely by the majesty of your grace. Prostrations to you, the Atman of all. (114)

Totakacharya’s prior name was Ananda Giri. He was an extremely devoted disciple of Adi Sankaracharya; he used to engage always in attending to the Guru’s personal needs like washing of clothes etc. He was not known to be good in studies. Other students scorned him on this account. One day the Guru decided to teach them a lesson. He transferred all knowledge to Giri in no time. Giri came running, singing the famous Totkashtakam and dancing his way to the Guru and fell at his feet. Sankara Vijayam says:

"In order to remove the fault of growing conceit in his disciples, who had taken refuge in him, and goaded by very special compassion, Sankaracharya taught all the fourteen Vidyas in a moment mentally to his disciple named Giri." The fourteen Vidyas are: Vedas -4; Vedangas – 6; Mimamsa, Nyaya, Puranas and Dharmasastra – 4.

इति श्रीगुरुभुजङ्गस्तोत्रम् सम्पूर्णम् ।
ॐ तत्सत