

What is Advaita?

What is Advaita? What should be done to remain in the experience of Advaita constantly?

Advaita is the deepest and most profound philosophy in Indian Vedanta. The word 'Advaita' literally means "**Not Two**" (Non-duality). Here is an explanation of its essence and how to sustain this experience:

1. What is Advaita?

In simple terms: Consciousness (**Brahman**) and this Universe are not different; both are one and the same. Adi Shankaracharya explained this in a single line of a verse:

"Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya, Jivo Brahmaiva Naparah" (Brahman alone is Truth, the world is an appearance/illusion, and the individual soul is none other than Brahman.)

- **Example:** No matter how many pots are made of clay, the actual substance in them is only clay. "Pot" is merely a name and a form.
- Similarly, all the diversity seen in this creation is just different forms of that one single Consciousness.

2. How to remain in the experience of Advaita constantly?

Advaita is not just a subject to be read; it is an experience. Ancient sages suggested three primary paths to remain in that state continuously:

A. Shravana, Manana, Nididhyasana

1. **Shravana:** Listening to the truth from a Guru or through scriptures that "I am not this body, I am Pure Consciousness."
2. **Manana:** Logically analyzing what has been heard. Thinking and clearing doubts by contemplating: "If I am the body, I still exist in deep sleep when the body is not perceived, don't I?"
3. **Nididhyasana:** Meditating to bring the analyzed truth into one's own experience.

B. Sakshi Bhavam (Witness Consciousness) No matter what event occurs in life (pleasure or pain), try to remain a mere **Witness (Observer)** rather than the **Doer**.

- **Example:** Instead of saying "I am angry," feel that "A thought-wave of anger is arising in the mind, and I am observing it."

C. Seeing Beyond Name and Form We should practice looking beyond the diverse labels of name, shape, creed, and community to recognize the same universal consciousness or life force present within every individual and every object.

3. A Practical Practice

Every morning or before sleeping at night, spend 5 minutes affirming:

- I existed before birth, and I will exist after death.
- I am the 'Witness' in the waking state, the dream state, and in deep sleep.
- This world is born in me, exists in me, and dissolves back into me.

Conclusion: The experience of Advaita is not about gaining something new; it is about stopping the misunderstanding of ourselves (as the body). When your '**Ego**' (Aham) melts away, what remains is Advaita.

A Deeper Explanation of the word 'Advaita'

The meaning of 'Advaita' is not just 'One'; it is deeper than that. In Sanskrit, '**Dvaita**' means two. By adding the prefix '**A**', it becomes '**Advaita**' (That which is not two).

This can be understood through three primary perspectives:

1. Not Numerical (Not One, but Non-Dual)

Usually, we say "God is One." But Advaita says "**All is One.**"

- **Difference:** When we say "God is One," there is a subtle sense of 'two'—that God is separate and I am separate.
- **Advaita:** Here, there is no separate existence for 'I', 'God', and the 'World'. Everything that exists is one single Consciousness.
 - **The Gold Ornament Example:** Necklace, ring, bangle... though the names and forms are different, in reality, the only thing present there is 'Gold'.

2. Reality vs. Appearance (Satyam vs. Mithya)

The word '**Mithya**' is very important in Advaita. Mithya does not mean a "lie"; it means 'that which changes'.

- **Example:** Waves rise and fall in the ocean. A wave is not different from the ocean. The form of the wave is temporary (Mithya), but the water is eternal (Satyam).
- **Application:** Humans, trees, and planets in this world are like waves. They appear, but they are constantly changing. The foundation behind them (the Ocean) is the only Advaitic Truth.

3. Three Levels of Reality

Advaita explains existence in three levels:

1. **Pratibhasika Satyam:** The dream world. It is real as long as you are asleep, but disappears the moment you wake up.
2. **Vyavaharika Satyam:** Our daily life. At this level, our body, hunger, relatives, and planets are all real. Here, we must follow worldly rules like medicine or astrology.
3. **Paramarthika Satyam:** The absolute state where the individual ego 'I' does not exist. Only Pure Consciousness remains. This is the ultimate state.

4. 'Aham Brahmasmi' in Advaita

The statement "**I am Brahman**" might sound arrogant, but in Advaita, it is the ultimate humility. This is because "I" here does not refer to the body. It refers to the Witness Consciousness (Sakshi) that dwells inside the body, seeing through the eyes and hearing through the ears. That Consciousness is the same in me, in you, and even in a tiny insect.

Summary: Advaita is a state without divisions. When we transcend the limits of the 'limited-I' and realize that "Everything is within me" or "I am in everything," that is the realization of Advaita.

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