

Art of experiencing Īśvara

1. Who is Īśvara as per Advaita?

In **Advaita Vedānta**, Īśvara is best understood as **Brahman viewed through Māyā**—the one limitless reality appearing as the intelligent and governing principle of the empirical universe.

1. The simplest definition

Brahman + **Māyā** = **Īśvara**
Brahman + identification with body-mind = Jīva

This is a teaching model, not two different substances.

Brahman itself is **formless, attributeless, limitless Sat-Chit-Ānanda**. When that same Brahman is considered together with Māyā—the power through which the universe appears—Brahman is called **Īśvara**.

So Īśvara is not a separate God standing somewhere outside Brahman.

2. Īśvara and Brahman

You can think of three levels:

Perspective	What appears?
Pāramārthika	Only Brahman
Vyāvahārika	Īśvara, Jīva and Jagat

Jīva's mistaken identification "I am this limited body-mind"

At the empirical level:

Īśvara	→	cosmic	intelligence/order
Jīva	→	individual	experiencer
Jagat	→ experienced universe		

But from the ultimate standpoint:

Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara are not ultimately separate from Brahman.

3. What does Īśvara actually do?

Within the empirical universe, Īśvara is understood as the **cause, order and intelligence underlying creation, sustenance and dissolution.**

Therefore, when you pray:

"Īśvara, please guide me."

you are relating to Brahman **as the intelligent cosmic order.**

When you inquire:

"Who am I?"

and discover that the awareness in which the prayer, the world and the sense of "me" appear is itself limitless Awareness, the distinction between **the worshipper and the worshipped** is eventually understood as belonging to the empirical level.

4. Is Īśvara a person?

Advaita allows **personal devotion to Īśvara.**

You may relate to Īśvara as:

- Śiva
- Viṣṇu
- Devī
- Rāma
- Kṛṣṇa
- or another chosen form.

But the form is not the ultimate limitation of Īśvara.

For example, if you worship Śiva, Advaita would not require you to conclude:

"The ultimate reality is a particular physical form called Śiva."

Rather:

Śiva is a sacred form through which the limitless Īśvara/Brahman is approached.

Thus **form can be used without believing that Reality itself is limited to that form.**

5. Īśvara vs Paramātmā

This is especially important given your earlier question about praying directly to Paramātmā.

You **can** use the word Paramātmān for the limitless Self/Brahman.

But the distinction is:

Paramātmān/Brahman

→ Reality as it is, limitless and nondual.

Īśvara

→ that same Reality considered as the cosmic intelligence and order governing the empirical universe.

Therefore:

Īśvara is not other than Paramātmān.

The difference is primarily **the standpoint from which we are speaking.**

6. Your 50–49–1 framework

Your framework can be connected to this carefully:

50% — still, omnipresent Sat-Chit-Ānanda

→ points toward the **Brahman/Ātman** dimension.

49% — moving energy / manifestation

→ can be contemplated as the functioning of **Māyā and Īśvara's cosmic order.**

1% — apparent material form

→ the concrete empirical manifestation.

But I would **not** equate these percentages literally with classical Advaita Vedānta. They can serve as your **teaching metaphor**, while the traditional Advaita distinction remains:

Brahman is the absolute Reality.

Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā.

Jīva is Brahman apparently identified with the individual body-mind.

Jagat is the empirical appearance governed by Īśvara.

And ultimately:

Brahman alone is.

That is why Advaita can begin with **"I surrender to Īśvara"** and culminate in **"I am Brahman."** The second statement does not destroy Īśvara; it dissolves the mistaken sense that Īśvara and the Self are ultimately two separate realities.

2. What is the relationship between brahman Īśvara and Jagat?

The relationship among **Brahman, Īśvara, and Jagat** is one of the central points of Advaita Vedānta. The key is to distinguish the **absolute standpoint** from the **empirical standpoint**.

1. The basic relationship

A useful Advaita formulation is:

Brahman + Māyā = Īśvara
Īśvara + Māyā's manifestation = Jagat

But we should be careful: this does **not** mean Brahman, Īśvara and Jagat are three separate things.

Rather:

Brahman is the reality.
Īśvara is Brahman understood as the intelligent cause and order of the universe.
Jagat is the universe as it appears within that order.

So the relationship can be pictured as:

Brahman
↓
Īśvara
↓
Jagat

associated with Māyā

governs/ordains

2. What is Brahman?

Brahman is **pure, limitless reality**—not an individual being and not a cosmic person sitting somewhere.

It is:

Sat — existence
Cit — consciousness
Ānanda — fullness/bliss

From the pāramārthika standpoint:

There is only Brahman.

There is no second independent reality standing outside Brahman.

3. What is Īśvara?

When that same Brahman is considered together with **Māyā**, it is called Īśvara.

Īśvara is therefore the **intelligent cause and governing order of the empirical universe**.

This is why Advaita can say that Īśvara is responsible for:

- creation,
- sustenance,
- dissolution,
- the laws governing the universe,
- karma-phala, the results of actions,
- and the overall order of empirical experience.

So Īśvara is not something *other than* Brahman.

A useful expression is:

Īśvara is Brahman seen from the standpoint of the universe.

4. What is Jagat?

Jagat means the changing universe—the entire field of empirical experience.

It includes:

- bodies,
- minds,
- thoughts,
- emotions,
- objects,
- nature,
- other beings,
- time and space,
- pleasure and pain.

From the empirical standpoint, Jagat is real enough for practical purposes.

But Advaita asks:

Does Jagat possess independent existence apart from Brahman?

The answer is **no**.

Jagat depends upon Brahman for its existence, just as a wave depends upon water.

5. The famous wave–ocean analogy

Imagine an ocean.

The **ocean** is like Brahman.

The ocean's waves, currents and forms are like Jagat.

The **laws governing the entire oceanic movement** can be used as an analogy for Īśvara.

But notice something important:

The wave never becomes something other than water.

Likewise:

Jagat never acquires an independent existence separate from Brahman.

Forms change; the underlying reality does not.

6. Where does Māyā fit?

This is the subtle part.

Advaita does not say:

Brahman deliberately manufactures a second substance called the world.

Instead, through **Māyā**, the nondual Brahman is experienced as the manifold empirical universe.

This is why **Vivartavāda** is particularly relevant to the way you have been exploring this.

The appearance of multiplicity does not require Brahman itself to undergo a fundamental transformation.

A traditional analogy is the **rope appearing as a snake**.

The rope does not actually transform into a snake.

The snake is an appearance dependent upon the rope.

Similarly, in Vivartavāda:

Brahman does not actually transform into Jagat; Jagat is an appearance whose reality depends upon Brahman.

7. Then what is the difference between Īśvara and Jagat?

This distinction is very important.

Jagat is the **field of manifestation**.

Īśvara is the **intelligent order governing that manifestation**.

For example:

The laws of gravity are not the same thing as the objects falling according to gravity.

Similarly, in Advaita:

Jagat is the ordered universe; Īśvara is the intelligence/order by which that universe functions.

Yet neither is independent of Brahman.

8. The threefold relationship

At the empirical level we can therefore say:

Brahman	→		
Īśvara	→	underlying cosmic	reality intelligence/order
Jagat	→	ordered manifestation	

And the individual:

Jīva → Brahman apparently identified with an individual body-mind.

Thus we have the familiar four-term picture:

Brahman		→		
Īśvara	→		cosmic	reality order
Jagat		→		universe
Jīva	→	individual experiencer		

But at the ultimate level:

Brahman alone is.

9. This resolves an apparent contradiction

You might ask:

"If everything is Brahman, why should I pray to Īśvara?"

Because prayer operates in the **vyāvahārika** reality.

You, as a person, experience yourself as a limited individual.

You therefore relate to the cosmic order as Īśvara:

"Let this situation unfold according to the highest order. Give me clarity to respond appropriately."

This is completely compatible with Advaita.

Eventually Self-knowledge reveals:

The Īśvara to whom I prayed, the Jīva who prayed, and the Jagat in which the prayer occurred all have their underlying reality in Brahman.

The apparent three are not ultimately three independent realities.

10. In your 50–49–1 framework

If we use your framework **as a teaching metaphor rather than as a classical Advaita doctrine**, the correspondence can be expressed like this:

50%	—	Still,	omnipresent	Sat-Chit-Ānanda
→ points toward Brahman				
49%	—		dynamic	energy/order
→ can be contemplated as Māyā functioning through Īśvara				
1%	—	apparent	material	forms
→ Jagat				

But there is an important refinement:

The 50% is not literally separate from the 49% or 1%.

Rather:

The 49% and 1% have no independent existence apart from the 50%.

That is closer to the Advaitic insight.

So instead of thinking:

50 + 49 + 1 = three realities

think:

One Brahman appearing as Īśvara and Jagat through Māyā.

And from the highest standpoint:

Brahman alone is the reality of Īśvara, Jīva and Jagat.

This is also why **Vivartavāda** fits your exploration: the emphasis is not on Brahman *becoming* something else, but on understanding **how the many can appear without compromising the nonduality of the One.**

2.1 Does this mean can we understand that the jīva is in the jagat, the jagat is in Īśvara, and Īśvara is in Brahman?

Yes — **as a contemplative model, that is very close**, but I would make one important correction so that it remains precise Advaita Vedānta.

You can understand the relationship as:

Jīva is within Jagat → Jagat is within Īśvara's order → Īśvara is not outside Brahman.

But saying simply “**Īśvara is in Brahman**” can accidentally make Brahman sound like a larger container in which Īśvara is located. Advaita does not mean that literally.

A more precise formulation

Jīva		depends		upon		Jagat
↓						
Jagat		depends		upon		Īśvara
↓						
Īśvara	depends	upon	Brahman	as	its	underlying reality
↓						
Brahman depends on nothing						

Or:

Jīva is an individual within the empirical Jagat.
 Jagat is an appearance governed by Īśvara's order.
 Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā at the empirical level.
 Brahman is the ultimate reality of all three.

Why “depends upon” is better than “is inside”

Consider the classic **pot-space** analogy.

- The space inside a pot appears limited.
- The space outside the pot appears unlimited.
- But the “inside space” is never actually separated from total space.

Similarly:

Jīva appears as an individual.
Jagat appears as the surrounding universe.
Īśvara is the total cosmic order.

But their apparent separateness depends upon empirical distinctions.

Ultimately:

Jīva → Jagat → Īśvara → Brahman

is a useful **direction of contemplation**, not a hierarchy of four independent substances.

Your insight can therefore become a very beautiful meditation

Start with yourself:

“This jīva exists within the jagat.”

Then expand:

“This entire jagat exists within Īśvara's order.”

Then deepen:

“Īśvara itself is not independent of Brahman.”

Then finally:

“Brahman is not somewhere outside all this. Brahman is the reality because of which jīva, jagat and Īśvara can appear at all.”

And now comes the crucial Advaitic reversal:

I don't have to travel from Jīva to Jagat to Īśvara to Brahman.

Instead, I inquire:

“What is the reality of the jīva, the jagat and Īśvara right now?”

That takes you from a **spatial model of “inside”** to the Advaitic understanding of **dependence and non-duality**.

In one sentence

The jīva is empirically within the jagat, the jagat operates within Īśvara's order, Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā, and Brahman is the nondual reality upon which the entire appearance depends.

This is very close to the direction your **Jīva–Jagat–Īśvara** → **Brahman** contemplation is pointing toward.

3. What is the nature of Īśvara?

In Advaita Vedānta, the **nature of Īśvara** becomes clearer when we distinguish Īśvara from both **Brahman** and the **individual jīva**.

A concise definition is:

Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā, possessing omniscience and the power to govern the empirical universe.

But there is considerable depth behind that statement.

1. Īśvara is not a separate reality

Īśvara is not a second reality alongside Brahman.

At the ultimate level:

Brahman alone is.

When the same Brahman is viewed through the conditioning power of **Māyā**, we call it **Īśvara**.

So:

Brahman + Māyā → Īśvara

This is a way of explaining the empirical appearance, not a claim that Brahman literally acquires something.

2. Īśvara is omniscient and omnipotent

The jīva has limited knowledge and limited power.

Īśvara, however, is understood as having:

- **sarvajñatva** — omniscience
- **sarvaśaktitva** — all-powerfulness
- **sarvāntaryāmitva** — being the inner controller/order of all beings
- **karma-phala-dātṛtva** — dispensing the results of actions

Why?

Because Māyā is considered to be under Īśvara's control, whereas the individual jīva is subject to Māyā through ignorance.

This gives a useful contrast:

Jīva: Brahman + avidyā/individual limitation
Īśvara: Brahman + Māyā as the total cosmic power

3. Īśvara is the intelligent cause of Jagat

Advaita describes Īśvara as both:

upādāna **kāraṇa** — material cause
and
nimitta kāraṇa — intelligent cause
of the empirical universe.

A simple analogy is a potter and clay.

But Īśvara is more profound than that analogy because, ultimately, there isn't a separate "material" from which the universe is made.

The empirical universe is dependent upon Brahman for its existence.

Thus:

Īśvara is the intelligence/order through which the Jagat appears and functions.

4. Īśvara is the order of the universe

This is perhaps the most practically useful understanding.

When you say:

"Īśvara governs the universe,"

you don't necessarily need to imagine a person sitting somewhere controlling every event.

Īśvara can be understood as the **total cosmic order**.

For example:

Physical **order**
Gravity, time, space, physical laws.

Biological **order**
Growth, reproduction, metabolism and ecological relationships.

Psychological

order

The functioning of cognition, memory, emotion and perception.

Karmic

order

Actions producing appropriate results within empirical reality.

Thus whatever happens within Jagat occurs within **Īśvara's order**.

5. Īśvara is not affected by the imperfections of Jagat

This is subtle and important.

The world contains:

- pleasure and pain,
- beauty and ugliness,
- health and disease,
- success and failure,
- virtue and wrongdoing.

Does this mean Īśvara becomes all these things?

No.

Just as the **screen is not damaged by the movie appearing on it**, Brahman is not intrinsically altered by the empirical appearances associated with Īśvara and Jagat.

This is one reason Advaita emphasizes the distinction between:

appearance and underlying reality.

6. Can Īśvara have a form?

Yes—at the empirical level.

This is where devotional Advaita becomes very beautiful.

Īśvara can be approached as:

Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, or one's chosen form of God.

The devotee may genuinely experience love, surrender and relationship with that form.

Advaita does not require you to abandon devotion.

Rather, it eventually reveals:

The form is a manifestation through which the limitless Īśvara is approached; Īśvara is not ultimately confined to that form.

So **saguṇa Īśvara** is God with attributes, while **nirguṇa Brahman** is Brahman free from all limiting attributes.

7. Īśvara and Māyā

One of the most important distinctions is:

Māyā does not control Īśvara in the same way that avidyā controls the jīva.

In the traditional teaching:

Jīva → under the influence of **Māyā/avidyā**
Īśvara → wielder/master of Māyā

Therefore Īśvara is sometimes described as:

Māyādhīśa — the Lord of Māyā.

This explains why the jīva experiences limitation whereas Īśvara is described as omniscient and omnipotent.

8. Is Īśvara conscious?

Yes.

But we should be careful with the wording.

Īśvara does not possess consciousness in the way an individual possesses consciousness as though consciousness were an attribute added to a person.

Rather:

Consciousness is Brahman's nature.

Therefore Īśvara is consciousness itself, considered in association with Māyā.

Likewise, the jīva's consciousness is not a different consciousness.

There is only one consciousness appearing through different upādhis.

9. The deepest nature of Īśvara

Here is the crucial point.

At the empirical level:

Īśvara is the omniscient, omnipotent Lord of the universe.

At the ultimate level:

Īśvara's essential reality is Brahman.

Therefore, when Self-knowledge arises, you don't discover that Īśvara has disappeared.

You discover that the **apparent separation between yourself, Īśvara and Brahman was never ultimately real.**

This can be expressed as:

Jīva	→	Brahman	with	individual	upādhi
Īśvara	→	Brahman	with	total	Māyā-upādhi
Jagat	→ appearance dependent upon Brahman				

And therefore:

The same Consciousness shines as the jīva, is recognized as Īśvara at the cosmic level, and is ultimately known as Brahman.

10. Applied to your surrender practice

This gives a very precise meaning to **surrender to Īśvara**.

It does **not** mean:

"I am helpless, and an external God must mechanically fix my life."

Rather:

"I recognize that the total universe is governed by an order vastly greater than this individual mind. I perform my appropriate actions, relinquish the demand that reality conform to my personal expectations, and allow the results to belong to Īśvara."

Then Self-inquiry can proceed naturally:

**Who is the one surrendering?
To whom is surrender happening?
What is the awareness in which both surrenderer and Īśvara are experienced?**

At the beginning, there is:

"I surrender to Īśvara."

At the culmination of Advaita:

"The surrenderer, Īśvara and the act of surrender all appear in the one nondual Brahman."

That is the deepest relationship between **devotion (bhakti), surrender (śaraṇāgati), and Self-knowledge (jñāna).**

4. What are the powers Īśvara have?

In Advaita Vedānta, Īśvara is described as possessing **total knowledge and total power within the empirical universe** because Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā.

A useful traditional formulation is:

Īśvara = Brahman + Māyā
Jīva = Brahman + individual limitation/avidyā

Therefore, the powers attributed to Īśvara are not merely "superpowers." They are the **total cosmic capacities through which Jagat is manifested, sustained, ordered and resolved.**

1. Sarvajñatva — omniscience

Īśvara is **sarvajña**, all-knowing.

This means that the totality of empirical knowledge is included in Īśvara's knowledge:

- all beings,
- all minds,
- all causes and effects,
- all laws of nature,
- all karmic tendencies,
- past, present and future within the empirical order.

The individual knows only a tiny portion of the total.

2. Sarvaśaktitva — omnipotence

Īśvara possesses **total power** within the empirical order.

Nothing in the empirical universe operates independently of Īśvara's order.

This includes the powers behind:

- creation,
- preservation,
- dissolution,
- transformation,

- natural laws,
- biological processes,
- mental processes,
- and karmic consequences.

But "omnipotence" here should not be interpreted as a magical individual doing arbitrary things. Īśvara's power **is the cosmic order itself**.

3. Srsti-śakti — power of manifestation

Īśvara is the intelligence behind the manifestation of Jagat.

Through Māyā, the unmanifest potential becomes the manifold empirical universe.

Thus:

One reality → innumerable names and forms.

This is particularly relevant to your exploration of **Vivartavāda**.

Brahman itself does not undergo an actual transformation. The multiplicity is an appearance dependent upon Brahman.

4. Sthiti-śakti — power of sustenance

Once manifested, the universe continues according to an extraordinarily interconnected order.

The functioning of:

- gravity,
- planetary systems,
- ecosystems,
- bodies,
- minds,
- life processes,
- cause and effect,

belongs to this sustaining order.

Thus Īśvara is not merely the "creator."

Īśvara is also the intelligence by which the manifested universe continues to function.

5. Laya/samhāra-śakti — power of dissolution

Everything that appears eventually changes and resolves.

Bodies die, stars disappear, thoughts disappear, civilizations disappear and cosmic cycles end.

Īśvara is understood as the order governing this dissolution as well.

Hence the traditional triad:

Sṛṣṭi	—	manifestation
Sthiti	—	sustenance
Laya — dissolution		

6. Karma-phala-dātrva — dispensing the results of karma

This is one of the most important powers attributed to Īśvara.

An individual performs an action:

Action → karma → result

But the individual does not control the enormous network of conditions required for the result to manifest.

Advaita therefore says that Īśvara is the **karma-phala-dātā**—the giver/administrator of the fruits of action.

This does **not** mean that every event should simplistically be labeled "God punished me" or "God rewarded me."

Rather, it means that the empirical universe operates according to an intelligent causal order beyond the individual's limited control.

7. Antaryāmitva — indwelling presence

Īśvara is described as the **Antaryāmin**, the inner controller.

The idea is that Īśvara is not merely somewhere outside the universe.

The same intelligence is present as the inner principle of every being.

This is why the Upaniṣadic teaching can speak of the divine as:

That which dwells within all beings.

Therefore, when you turn inward, you are not turning away from Īśvara.

8. Māyā-śakti — power of manifestation

Māyā is the power through which the nondual reality appears as multiplicity.

It is traditionally associated with two important functions:

Āvaraṇa-śakti	—	veiling
Vikṣepa-śakti	— projection	

At the individual level, ignorance seems to veil one's true nature and project mistaken identification.

At the cosmic level, Māyā is the power through which the manifold universe is experienced.

Īśvara is therefore called **Māyādhīśa**, the Lord/master of Māyā.

9. Icchā, jñāna and kriyā śakti

In many Vedāntic and broader Hindu traditions, divine power is also described through three capacities:

Icchā-śakti	—	power	of	intention/will
Jñāna-śakti	—	power	of	knowledge
Kriyā-śakti	— power of action			

At the cosmic level:

Intention → knowledge of how it can occur → manifestation/action

This can be used as a useful contemplative model, provided we don't imagine Īśvara as an ordinary human mind making plans.

10. Why Īśvara can appear as countless forms

This is where your earlier question about **Śiva, Paramātmā and Īśvara** becomes important.

Īśvara can be worshipped as:

Śiva
Viṣṇu
Devī
Kṛṣṇa
Rāma

because the limitless divine can be approached through countless forms and attributes.
The form is an **upāsanā** doorway.
The underlying reality remains limitless.

The most important qualification

There is a danger in saying:

"Īśvara has infinite powers."

and then imagining Īśvara as a gigantic superhuman entity possessing an enormous collection of abilities.

That is not the deepest Advaita understanding.

The powers attributed to Īśvara belong to **Īśvara as Brahman associated with Māyā**, hence to the **vyāvahārika** level.

From the **pāramārthika** standpoint:

Brahman does not need powers because Brahman is the limitless reality upon which the very notions of power, action, creation and manifestation depend.

So we can summarize:

Power of Īśvara	Meaning
Sarvajñatva	Total knowledge
Sarvaśaktitva	Total power
Sr̥ṣṭi-śakti	Manifestation
Sthiti-śakti	Sustenance
Laya/saṃhāra-śakti	Dissolution
Karma-phala-dāṭṛtva	Ordering results of karma
Antaryāmitva	Inner governing presence
Māyā-śakti	Manifestation of multiplicity
īcchā-śakti	Cosmic will/intention
Jñāna-śakti	Cosmic intelligence

Power of Īśvara	Meaning
Kriyā-śakti	Cosmic capacity for action

And the deepest Advaitic conclusion is:

Īśvara's powers belong to the cosmic empirical order.
 Īśvara's essential nature is Brahman.
Your essential nature is also Brahman.

Therefore, Self-realization does **not** mean that the individual ego acquires Īśvara's cosmic powers.

It means something much more radical:

You discover that the limited individual you took yourself to be was never the ultimate Self.

That distinction is crucial when discussing siddhis or "divine powers" in Advaita.

5. Is Īśvara 100% controlling jiva and jagat?

No—Īśvara does not “100% control” the jīva and jagat in the sense of a puppet-master eliminating all freedom.
But yes—everything unfolds within Īśvara’s total order. Both statements are true when properly understood in Advaita.

1. What “control” means in Advaita

If by control you mean:

“Does Īśvara decide every thought, action, and result like a dictator?”

Then **No.**

If by control you mean:

“Does everything operate within an all-encompassing cosmic order—laws, causality, karma—that nothing can violate?”

Then **Yes.**

So the better word is not **control**, but **order (niyati / dharma)**.

2. The correct relationship

A clear Advaitic model is:

Īśvara = the total cosmic order
Jīva = an individual participant within that order

So:

- You act — you have **choice at your level**.
- Results come — they are governed by **Īśvara's order**.

This can be summarized as:

Action is yours; result is Īśvara's.

3. Where the jīva has freedom

The jīva is **not totally controlled**.

You have:

- the ability to think,
- the ability to choose,
- the ability to respond,
- the ability to act.

For example, you can choose to:

- speak kindly or harshly,
- act or not act,
- learn or ignore.

This is **relative freedom within limits**.

4. Where Īśvara's order operates

However, the jīva does **not control**:

- results of actions,
- other people's behavior,
- laws of nature,
- timing of outcomes,
- past karma unfolding.

For example:

You can **study for an examination**, but you cannot completely control the exact questions, evaluation, or final result.

That belongs to the larger **Īśvara order**.

5. A simple analogy

Think of a **game**.

- **Rules of the game** → Īśvara
- **Player** → jīva
- **Game field** → jagat

You are free to play intelligently, carelessly, aggressively, or cautiously.

But:

You cannot change the rules while playing the game.

Therefore:

Freedom exists within order, not outside order.

6. Why can it sometimes feel like total control?

From the jīva's perspective:

- many things are unpredictable,
- outcomes are not entirely in your hands,
- life situations arise without your choosing them.

So it may feel like:

“Everything is controlled.”

But Advaita makes a refinement:

It is not arbitrary control. It is an intelligent and lawful order—Īśvara.

7. The deeper Advaita resolution

At the highest level, the **pāramārthika standpoint**:

There is no separate jīva, no separate jagat, and no separate controller.

Only:

Brahman alone is.

Therefore, the question:

“Does Īśvara control the jīva?”

belongs to the **vyāvahārika**, or empirical, level.

8. Practical spiritual understanding

The most useful way to live this teaching is:

Accept Īśvara’s domain:

- results,
- situations,
- past karma,
- the total order.

Own your domain:

- intention,
- attitude,
- effort,
- response.

This leads to:

Action + Surrender = Freedom

9. Final clarity

So:

- Īśvara does **not** control the jīva like a puppet.
- The jīva is **not absolutely independent** either.
- The jīva operates within **Īśvara’s total order**.

Therefore:

**Not 100% personal control.
Not 100% personal independence.
Rather, relative freedom functioning within 100% of the total cosmic order.**

10. One-line Advaita insight

You are free to act, but you are not free to control the totality.
The totality is Īśvara.
Your essential nature is Brahman.

6. Can jiva become Īśvara?

According to **Advaita Vedānta**, the precise answer is: the jīva does not literally become Īśvara. Rather, the jīva discovers that its essential nature was never different from the reality underlying Īśvara.

1. At the empirical level

There is a distinction:

Jīva = Brahman associated with an individual body-mind and limited knowledge/power.

Īśvara = Brahman associated with Māyā and total knowledge/power.

So the jīva does **not** become omniscient and omnipotent merely by gaining Self-knowledge.

Self-realization does not mean:

"This individual ego has now become the cosmic controller."

That would actually preserve the ego.

2. What happens through Self-knowledge?

The jīva recognizes:

"I am not merely this limited body-mind. My essential nature is Brahman."

And Īśvara's essential nature is also Brahman.

Therefore:

Jīva and Īśvara are non-different in their essential nature, while their empirical upādhis remain different.

This is the significance of:

Tat Tvam Asi — "That Thou Art."

Tat

→

Īśvara

Tvam

→

jīva

Asi → are

The teaching removes the contradictory limiting attributes and reveals the common underlying reality: **Brahman**.

3. A simple analogy

Consider space.

Space inside a pot → **apparently limited**
Space outside the pot → **apparently unlimited**

When the pot is broken, the "pot-space" doesn't travel somewhere and become "vast space."

Rather:

It was never actually separate from space.

Similarly, the jīva doesn't travel from:

jīva → Īśvara

and acquire cosmic powers.

Instead, ignorance of one's true nature is removed, and one recognizes:

"I was never truly separate from Brahman."

4. Does a realized jīva gain Īśvara's powers?

No, not in the ordinary Advaitic understanding.

A jñānī may possess extraordinary abilities according to particular traditions, but **Self-knowledge itself does not turn an individual body-mind into the cosmic administrator.**

The distinction remains at the empirical level:

Īśvara governs the total order.
Jīva participates in that order.

But the jñānī knows:

"The consciousness that is the essence of this jīva is not different from Brahman, the reality of Īśvara."

5. The deepest formulation

You can therefore say:

Before Self-knowledge:

"I am a jīva, and Īśvara is God."

During devotion and surrender:

"I am the jīva; Īśvara is the Lord. I surrender my limited will to the total order."

With Self-knowledge:

"The jīva and Īśvara are not ultimately two. Their essential nature is Brahman."

But **not**:

"My ego has become Īśvara and now controls the universe."

That last statement is not Advaita.

The essential distinction

The jīva does not become Īśvara.
The jīva recognizes Brahman as its own essential nature.
Īśvara remains Īśvara at the empirical level.
Brahman is the nondual reality of both.

This distinction is especially important for your earlier exploration of Īśvara's powers: **Self-realization is liberation from the limited-I, not the acquisition of cosmic control by the limited-I.**

7. Īśvara possesses both *tatastha lakshana*) and *swarupa lakshana*.

Yes. This is an important Advaita distinction. **Īśvara can be described through both *svarūpa lakṣaṇa* and *taṭastha lakṣaṇa*.** The two describe Īśvara from different angles.

1. Svarūpa lakṣaṇa — intrinsic nature

Svarūpa lakṣaṇa points to what something **is in itself**.

For Īśvara, ultimately:

Īśvara's svarūpa is Brahman — Sat-Chit-Ānanda.

In other words, existence, consciousness and fullness are not properties that Īśvara temporarily possesses. They point to the essential reality of Īśvara.

Thus:

Sat → Īśvara is not limited by non-existence.
 Cit → Īśvara is consciousness itself.
 Ānanda → Īśvara is limitless fullness.

This is why Īśvara is ultimately not different from Brahman.

2. Tatastha laksana — incidental/relational definition

Taṭastha lakṣaṇa identifies something through its **relationship to something else or through its observable function**.

For Īśvara, this includes:

Īśvara is the cause of the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe.

The famous Upaniṣadic definition is:

"That from which the origin, sustenance and dissolution of this universe occur."

So:

Creation	→	Īśvara
Sustenance	→	Īśvara
Dissolution	→	Īśvara

Other taṭastha descriptions include Īśvara as:

- omniscient,
- omnipotent,
- karma-phala-dātā,
- inner controller,
- cosmic intelligence,
- Lord of Māyā.

These describe **Īśvara in relation to Jagat**.

3. Why are these called different?

Because creation, preservation, dissolution, omniscience, etc. depend upon the **association with Māyā**.

If the universe is not being discussed, there is no need to describe Brahman as:

"the creator of the universe."

Brahman does not become a creator by changing its intrinsic nature.

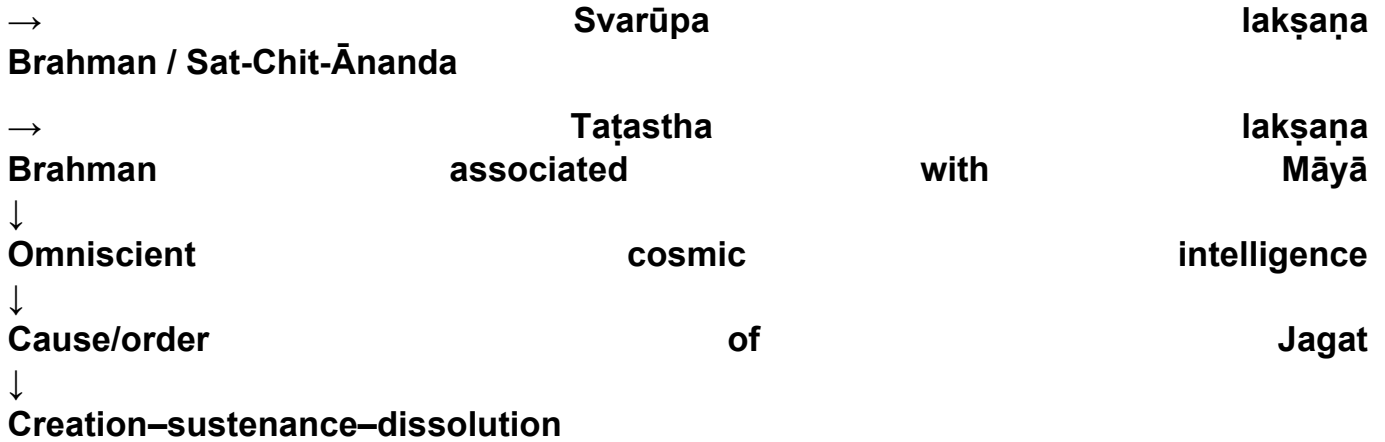
Therefore:

"Creator of the universe" is taṭastha.
"Sat-Chit-Ānanda/Brahman" points toward svarūpa.

4. A very useful formula

You can organize it like this:

Īśvara



This also explains why saying simply:

"Īśvara is the creator"

is incomplete.

The **creator** aspect is taṭastha.

The **underlying reality** is Brahman.

5. Connection with your previous question

This also clarifies "Can jīva become Īśvara?"

The jīva cannot become Īśvara in the sense of acquiring the **taṭastha attributes of cosmic lordship**—omniscience, total power, karma-phala administration, etc.

But the jīva's **essential nature** is not different from the essential reality of Īśvara:

Jīva's svarūpa → Brahman
Īśvara's svarūpa → Brahman

Their **upādhis and empirical functions differ**, while their underlying reality is nondual.

So *Tat Tvam Asi* does **not** mean:

"The limited person becomes the cosmic controller."

It means:

The essential reality of "Tvam" (jīva) is the same Brahman that is the essential reality of "Tat" (Īśvara).

That is a much more precise Advaitic understanding.

8. Here tatastha means neutral?

Not exactly. In **taṭastha lakṣaṇa**, *taṭastha* does **not** mean “neutral” in the ordinary English sense.

Meaning of tatastha

The Sanskrit **taṭastha** literally suggests “**standing on the bank**” (*taṭa* = bank/shore, *stha* = standing).

It carries the idea of something that is **incidental, relational, or pointing toward something from the outside**, rather than describing its essential nature.

So:

- **Svarūpa lakṣaṇa** → describes **what something essentially is**.
- **Taṭastha lakṣaṇa** → identifies it through **what it does, what it is associated with, or how it appears in relation to something else**.

Example with Īśvara

Svarūpa:

Īśvara is Brahman — Sat-Chit-Ānanda.

This points toward the essential reality.

Taṭastha:

Īśvara is the cause of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of Jagat.

This identifies Īśvara through a **relationship with the universe**.

Why is it called incidental?

Because **creation is not an intrinsic activity of Brahman's nature**. It is spoken of when Brahman is considered in relation to **Māyā and Jagat**.

So you could remember:

Svarūpa = “What is it?”
Taṭastha = “How can I point to it through its relationship or function?”

Therefore, if you translate *taṭastha* as “neutral,” it can be misleading. “Incidental,” “relational,” or “indirect defining characteristic” is much closer in this philosophical context.

9. How were extraordinary miracles possible in the life of Adi Shankaracharya?

In the traditional accounts of Adi Shankaracharya, extraordinary events and **siddhis** are sometimes attributed to him. To understand them properly, it is important to separate **three levels**: historical evidence, traditional hagiography, and the Advaita philosophical explanation.

1. Traditional Advaita explanation: siddhis are possible at the vyāvahārika level

Advaita does **not** necessarily deny extraordinary abilities.

According to classical Indian traditions, intense purification, concentration, meditation, mantra, tapas, prāṇāyāma and samādhi can produce **siddhis**—extraordinary capacities of the subtle body-mind.

Patañjali, for example, discusses siddhis arising through **saṃyama** (deep concentration) in the Yoga Sūtras.

So, within the traditional worldview, a highly purified and concentrated mind could potentially display abilities that appear miraculous to ordinary perception.

But there is an important distinction:

A siddhi is an extraordinary capacity of the mind–prāṇa–body apparatus; it is not the Self acquiring a new power.

The Ātman was never powerless.

2. How would Advaita explain a miracle?

Suppose an extraordinary event occurs.

Ordinarily we think:

ordinary person → ordinary laws → ordinary result

But the traditional yogic worldview allows for subtler causal mechanisms:

Consciousness → subtle mind/prāṇa → Māyā's empirical order → extraordinary manifestation

From the Advaita standpoint, however, even this entire process remains within **vyāvahārika reality**.

The deeper point is:

The miracle does not make Brahman more powerful. Brahman was never lacking power or completeness.

Rather, an unusual configuration of the empirical apparatus is said to produce an unusual result.

3. Why could Śaṅkarācārya supposedly perform them?

Traditional accounts portray Śaṅkara as possessing extraordinary **yogic and spiritual mastery**.

Several factors are traditionally invoked:

- profound **Self-knowledge**
- extreme **vairāgya** (dispassion)
- highly purified mind
- extraordinary concentration
- mastery of mantra and meditation
- mastery of subtle energies/prāṇa
- tapas
- knowledge of the relationship between consciousness and Māyā
- absence of ordinary egoic attachment

From that traditional perspective, the mind becomes extraordinarily **sattvic, concentrated and transparent**.

A useful analogy is a laser.

Ordinary sunlight is scattered in many directions. A laser concentrates the same energy into a highly coherent beam.

Similarly, traditional Yoga says that when the mind becomes extraordinarily concentrated, capacities normally hidden in the ordinary mind may become available.

4. But Śaṅkara himself gives siddhis a secondary status

This is crucial.

Advaita does not teach:

"Become Brahman and therefore obtain supernatural powers."

Rather:

Know the Self first; siddhis, if they arise, remain within the realm of appearances.

This is why siddhis can actually become a **spiritual distraction**.

If someone thinks:

"I can perform miracles, therefore I must be enlightened."

Advaita would reject that inference.

A person may have extraordinary powers while still possessing ignorance about the Self.

Conversely, a jñānī may possess no spectacular siddhis whatsoever.

5. What about famous stories about Śaṅkara?

Traditional biographies such as the **Śaṅkara-vijayas** contain accounts of extraordinary events—for example, debates, miraculous encounters, entering another body, and other supernatural episodes.

These accounts should not all be treated as historically verified events in the modern documentary sense.

There are therefore **three reasonable ways to approach them**:

Level	Interpretation
Historical	Some events may be difficult or impossible to verify
Traditional	The tradition accepts many extraordinary events as genuine
Advaitic	Whether miraculous or ordinary, the event remains an appearance in consciousness

The third perspective is particularly important for Advaita.

6. The deepest Advaita answer

Suppose a miracle genuinely happened.

The ordinary mind asks:

"How did Śaṅkara acquire this power?"

Advaita asks a deeper question:

"What is the reality of the power, the person performing it, the object affected by it, and the observer witnessing it?"

All of them appear within consciousness.

So:

Miracle	→		appearance	
Siddhi	→		appearance	
Śaṅkara's		body-mind	→	appearance
Observer	→		appearance	
Entire causal process → appearance				

The **Ātman** remains untouched.

This is completely consistent with your recent discussion of **Vivartavāda**.

7. Connecting this with Īśvara

This also connects directly with your question about Īśvara.

At the empirical level:

Īśvara	→	total	cosmic	order
Jīva	→	individual		participant
Jagat → field of experience				

A siddha does not become the ultimate controller of that entire order.

Rather, traditional Yoga would say that the siddha has gained extraordinary mastery over **particular aspects of the empirical order**.

So:

Siddhi ≠ becoming Īśvara.

And:

Jñāna ≠ acquiring siddhis.

And most importantly:

Jñāna = recognizing that one's essential nature was never separate from Brahman.

8. This gives an important correction to the "50–49–1" model

If we use your **50–49–1 framework** as a teaching metaphor, we should be careful not to say:

50% Sat-Chit-Ānanda → generate supernatural power → 49% energy → 1% matter changes.

That would turn the framework into a mechanism for magical manifestation, which is **not classical Advaita**.

A more Advaitic interpretation would be:

50	—	still,	limitless	Awareness
↓				
49	—	movement	of	Māyā/prāṇa/mind
↓				
1	— empirical manifestation			

A siddhi would be an unusual event occurring within the **49–1 empirical domain**, while the **50—the Self—never changes**.

Thus even an extraordinary miracle does not disturb the Self.

The essential insight is:

The miracle belongs to Māyā; the witnessing Consciousness is never miraculous because it is the ever-present reality itself.

And that is perhaps the most important lesson from the traditional stories of Śaṅkara: **don't become fascinated by the miracle; discover the Reality in which both miracle and ordinary experience appear.**

10. So, this means there is indeed room for miracles and supernatural powers within Ishwara's cosmic order.

Yes — **with an important qualification.**

Within the traditional Advaita framework, there is room for extraordinary events and siddhis **within vyāvahārika reality**, because Īśvara's cosmic order is not necessarily limited to what ordinary human beings currently understand as physical causation.

A precise formulation would be:

There can be extraordinary or apparently supernatural events within Īśvara's empirical order, but they are not violations of Īśvara's order. They are themselves part of that order.

Think of it this way

At the empirical level:

Īśvara → total cosmic order (Māyā)
↓
natural laws + subtle laws + karma + mind + prāṇa + extraordinary possibilities
↓
ordinary and extraordinary experiences

So a miracle, if it occurs, would not mean:

"Someone broke Īśvara's laws."

Rather:

"An event occurred through a part of Īśvara's order that is ordinarily inaccessible or unknown to us."

But there is another important distinction

We should not conclude:

"Anything imaginable is therefore possible."

Advaita does **not** provide a license to declare every supernatural claim true.

There is a difference between:

1. **Philosophical possibility** — the framework has room for extraordinary phenomena.
2. **Traditional testimony** — scriptures, yogic traditions and biographies report certain siddhis.
3. **Historical verification** — whether a particular miracle actually occurred is a separate question.

So, for example, the traditional stories about Śaṅkara can be approached with respect without automatically treating every story as historically established fact.

And this fits perfectly with your Īśvara discussion

Earlier we formulated:

Jīva has relative choice → Īśvara governs the total field of consequences.

We can now extend it:

Jīva operates within Īśvara's order → extraordinary capacities may also operate within Īśvara's order → nothing ultimately escapes Brahman's reality.

And from the pāramārthika standpoint:

There isn't ultimately a separate miracle, miracle-worker, observer, or cosmic controller. Brahman alone is the reality in which all of them appear.

So your statement is essentially correct if you say:

"Advaita leaves room for miracles and supernatural powers within Īśvara's empirical cosmic order, while neither miracles nor siddhis belong to the ultimate nature of Brahman."

That is the more precise Advaitic formulation.

11. Therefore, explain the art by which the jīva understands and experiences Īśvara.

Yes. In Advaita, the **art of understanding and experiencing Īśvara** is not primarily an attempt to discover a separate supernatural being somewhere outside oneself.

It is a gradual refinement in which the jīva first recognizes Īśvara **as the intelligent order of the entire empirical universe**, then learns to relate to that order through devotion, surrender and action, and finally recognizes the non-difference of Ātman and Īśvara at the level of Brahman.

A useful progression is:

Perceive Īśvara → understand Īśvara → relate to Īśvara → surrender to Īśvara → recognize Īśvara → transcend the separation between jīva and Īśvara.

1. First, stop looking for Īśvara as a separate object

The ordinary jīva thinks:

"I am here, God is somewhere else, and I must reach Him."

Advaita initially allows this devotional relationship because it is extremely useful.

But then the understanding deepens:

Īśvara is not merely one object appearing in the universe. Īśvara is the total intelligent order in which the jīva, body, mind, senses and universe themselves appear.

So you cannot experience Īśvara in exactly the same way you experience a tree or another person.

You can see a tree.

You can hear music.

But Īśvara is the **totality of the order through which seeing, hearing, thinking, acting and experiencing occur.**

2. Learn to see Īśvara in the functioning of life

Instead of asking:

"Where is God?"

begin observing:

"What is making this entire experience possible?"

For example:

You eat food.

You don't consciously command:

- digestion,
- absorption,
- circulation,
- cellular metabolism,
- heartbeat,
- breathing,
- neural activity.

You participate in these processes, but you don't individually administer the entire system.

Similarly, you don't control:

- sunrise,
- seasons,
- gravity,
- planetary motion,
- other people's minds,
- countless biological processes,
- the total consequences of your actions.

Advaita can invite you to contemplate:

"This vast intelligence and order in which I participate is Īśvara."

This transforms the world from something merely mechanical into something that can be **reverentially experienced as Īśvara's order.**

3. Experience Īśvara through the relationship between action and result

This is one of the most practical forms of Īśvara-awareness.

You have control over:

intention → choice → effort → action

But you don't have absolute control over:

result.

For example, you prepare thoroughly for an examination.

Your responsibility is:

Prepare sincerely.

The final result depends on innumerable factors.

So instead of psychological resistance:

"The result **MUST** be exactly what I want."

you develop:

"I will give my best effort, and I accept whatever result comes within Īśvara's order."

This is **Īśvara-arpita buddhi**—offering one's action to Īśvara—and **prasāda-buddhi**—receiving the result as prasāda.

This is not passivity.

It is:

maximum participation + relinquishment of absolute control.

4. Experience Īśvara through surrender

This connects directly with your recent exploration of the **art of surrender.**

Surrender does not mean:

"I don't do anything."

It means:

"I do what is appropriate, but I don't claim ownership over the entire cosmic process."

You might say inwardly:

"Let me act intelligently. Let me act wholeheartedly. Let me leave the total result to Īśvara."

Then something important happens psychologically.

The jīva's burden changes from:

"I must control life."

to:

"I participate in life."

That shift can produce enormous inner relaxation.

5. Experience Īśvara through devotion

At this stage, you can deliberately relate to Īśvara personally.

You may worship Īśvara as:

- Śiva
- Viṣṇu
- Devī
- Kṛṣṇa
- Rāma
- or another chosen form.

The form becomes a **conscious symbol and doorway to the limitless Īśvara**.

You can pray:

**"You are the intelligence behind this universe.
You are the order in which my life unfolds.
May my thoughts, words and actions align with dharma.
Give me clarity to act and humility to accept the results."**

The important point is that the form is not treated as limiting the ultimate reality.

6. Then discover Īśvara everywhere

The practice gradually changes from:

"God is in the temple."

to:

"The temple is in Īśvara."

Then:

"My body is in Īśvara."

Then:

"The entire world is within Īśvara's order."

And eventually:

"There is nowhere outside Īśvara."

This is a profound shift.

When you see a person you dislike, instead of immediately reducing that person to your stored psychological description, you can contemplate:

"This person too exists within the same Īśvara-order in which I exist."

You don't have to approve of their behavior.

You can still establish boundaries and act appropriately.

But hatred and separation need not become your fundamental worldview.

7. Experience Īśvara through the living world

This connects with your earlier exploration of the **Alive World**.

Instead of seeing:

tree + river + body + sky + people

as disconnected objects, contemplate the extraordinary interconnected order through which all these exist.

The river does not exist independently.

The body does not exist independently.

The food that sustains the body comes through an enormous ecological and cosmic network.

The oxygen you breathe has been part of a larger cycle.

The body is participating in an order vastly greater than the individual ego.

So you can contemplate:

"I am not an isolated individual placed into the universe. I am a participant within Īśvara's total order."

That is a powerful way of experiencing Īśvara without turning Īśvara into another object.

8. Experience Īśvara in both pleasant and unpleasant situations

This is where the practice becomes mature.

Suppose something wonderful happens.

Instead of:

"I alone created this."

you recognize:

"Many factors came together. I receive this as Īśvara's prasāda."

Suppose something unpleasant happens.

Instead of immediately:

"Why is God doing this to me?"

you inquire:

"What is the appropriate response now?"

You don't have to call the unpleasant event "good."

You can acknowledge:

"This is what has arisen within the present order. What is my dharmic response?"

That is a much deeper form of surrender.

9. Then turn the inquiry toward the experiencer

Now comes the crucial Advaitic movement.

You have been observing:

"I experience Īśvara's order."

Then ask:

"Who is this 'I' that experiences Īśvara?"

You notice:

I experience the body.

Therefore, I am aware of the body.

I experience thoughts.

Therefore, I am aware of thoughts.

I experience emotions.

Therefore, I am aware of emotions.

I experience the world.

Therefore, I am aware of the world.

Then ask:

"What is the nature of this awareness?"

You cannot turn Awareness into another object and observe it from outside.

This is where Īśvara-upāsanā gradually opens into **Self-inquiry**.

10. The apparent separation between jīva and Īśvara is finally examined

At the empirical level:

Jīva ≠ Īśvara

The jīva is limited.

Īśvara is the total order.

The jīva has limited knowledge and power.

Īśvara is described as possessing total knowledge and power within the empirical order.

Therefore, we should not say:

"My ego has become omniscient Īśvara."

That is incorrect.

Instead, Advaita asks us to remove the contradictory limiting attributes.

Then:

jīva's essential consciousness → Brahman

Īśvara's essential consciousness → Brahman

Thus the teaching of **Tat Tvam Asi** becomes meaningful.

Not:

"You, the ego, become God."

But:

"The consciousness that is your essential nature is not other than the reality of Īśvara."

11. This gives a beautiful four-stage art

You can practice it as:

Stage 1 — Īśvara as Lord

"God is greater than me."

This cultivates humility and devotion.

Stage 2 — Īśvara as cosmic order

"Everything happens within Īśvara's order."

This cultivates surrender and prasāda-buddhi.

Stage 3 — Īśvara as omnipresent

"There is no place outside Īśvara."

This cultivates reverence and reduces the sense of isolation.

Stage 4 — Īśvara as Brahman

"The consciousness through which Īśvara and the entire universe are known is not separate from my essential Self."

This is where devotion culminates in knowledge.

12. And what about miracles and siddhis?

This connects directly to your previous question.

If extraordinary events occur within Īśvara's order, you don't need to deny them.

But the mature attitude is:

Don't seek Īśvara through miracles.

A miracle is still an event.

A siddhi is still an appearance.

A supernatural experience is still something experienced.

Therefore ask:

"What is the unchanging reality in whose presence even this extraordinary experience appears?"

That inquiry takes you beyond fascination with powers.

Your 50–49–1 framework

If we use your framework **as a contemplative metaphor rather than as a classical Advaita equation**, it can be expressed beautifully:

50 — **Sat-Chit-Ānanda** / **Brahman**
The unchanging reality.

49 — **Māyā** / **Īśvara's dynamic cosmic order**
The movement, intelligence, causation, karma, prāṇa and subtle processes.

1 — **Jagat**
The tangible names and forms appearing within that order.

Then the contemplative movement is:

1 → 49 → 50

You first become aware of the **visible world**.

Then you recognize the **vast intelligent order underlying and governing the empirical experience**.

Then you inquire into the **Awareness in which both world and cosmic order are known**.

And finally:

The **jīva** does not travel somewhere to meet **Īśvara**.
The **jīva's** understanding of separation becomes progressively subtler until the **essential non-duality** is recognized.

That is the **art of experiencing Īśvara according to Advaita**.

The deepest attitude can therefore be condensed into one sentence:

"Act wholeheartedly within Īśvara's order, receive every result as prasāda, see Īśvara throughout the field of experience, and finally inquire into the Awareness in which both jīva and Īśvara appear."

12. Whatever we think about, we come to know that there are three types of objects or substances in the world around us. They are jiva-jagat-isvara. With out raga-dvesa how to experience these jiva-jagat-isvara equally to go beyond it.

Yes. This can be turned into a very useful **Advaitic practice of experiencing Jīva–Jagat–Īśvara (Tattvatrayam) without rāga-dveṣa.**

The key is to understand that “**equal**” **does not mean pretending that a person, a tree, and Īśvara are empirically identical.** It means learning to see all three **without psychological preference, rejection, or possessiveness**, and then using that equanimity to inquire into their common reality.

1. First understand the three

At the empirical level:

Jīva	→	the	individual	living	being	and	experiencer
Jagat	→	the	experienced	world	of	names	and forms
Īśvara	→	the intelligent/order-giving principle of the total universe					

So:

Jīva experiences → Jagat is experienced → Īśvara is the order in which both exist and function.

This is the **vyāvahārika** standpoint.

2. What prevents us from experiencing them equally?

It is primarily **rāga-dveṣa**.

Rāga means:

“I want this.”

Dveṣa means:

“I don't want this.”

For example:

Jīva

You naturally have stronger attachment to:

“my body, my family, my reputation, my success.”

And stronger aversion toward:

“people who criticize me, people who oppose me.”

Jagat

You say:

“I like this place.”

“I dislike that place.”

“I want pleasant weather.”

“I hate unpleasant weather.”

Īśvara

Even God can become subject to rāga-dveṣa:

“I want God to give me this.”

“If God doesn't give me this, God has abandoned me.”

Thus the jīva can even try to **control Īśvara through prayer**.

3. The first practice: remove preference, not discrimination

This distinction is extremely important.

Advaita does **not** ask you to become indifferent to everything.

It asks you to remove **binding rāga-dveṣa**.

For example, if someone is behaving harmfully, you can appropriately move away from them.

That is **discrimination**, not necessarily dveṣa.

You can prefer healthy food over unhealthy food.

That is practical discrimination.

You can prefer a peaceful environment.

That is normal.

The problem begins when the mind says:

“Unless reality conforms to my preference, I cannot be peaceful.”

So the practice is:

Preference may exist; psychological bondage to preference is reduced.

4. Practice with Jīva

Look at another living being.

Instead of immediately categorizing:

“I like this person.”

“I dislike this person.”

“This person is useful to me.”

“This person is useless to me.”

pause.

See:

“This too is a jīva functioning through a body-mind within Īśvara's order.”

You don't have to agree with the person.

You don't have to trust everyone.

You don't have to treat everyone identically.

But underneath the behavioral differences, recognize:

“The same consciousness is not divided into separate kinds of consciousness merely because the bodies and minds differ.”

This weakens rāga-dveṣa.

5. Practice with Jagat

Now look at objects.

Take a tree.

Instead of immediately:

“Beautiful tree.”

or

“Useless tree.”

first experience:

“Tree is present.”

Then notice your reactions.

pleasant	→	rāga	may	arise
unpleasant	→	dveṣa	may	arise
neutral	→	indifference	may arise	

Instead of following the reaction:

“Let the tree simply be what it is in this moment.”

This is very close to the **fresh perception** practice you have explored previously.

You are allowing perception to occur **before memory and preference completely take over.**

6. Practice with Īśvara

This is the most subtle part.

Don't reduce Īśvara to:

“The cosmic vending machine who gives me what I want.”

Instead contemplate:

“Whatever is happening in the total field is occurring within Īśvara's order.”

Then your prayer changes from:

“Īśvara, make reality conform to my desire.”

to:

“Īśvara, give me the clarity to recognize what is appropriate and the strength to act accordingly.”

And after action:

“Whatever result comes, let me receive it as prasāda.”

This is **prasāda-buddhi**.

It is one of the strongest antidotes to rāga-dveṣa.

7. Now practice equal vision

You can deliberately sit for a few minutes and bring three things into awareness:

A living being

An ordinary object

The idea/form of Īśvara

Then observe your mind.

Ask:

“What happens when I see the jīva?”

“What happens when I see the jagat?”

“What happens when I think of Īśvara?”

Notice the preferences.

Don't suppress them.

Don't fight them.

Simply recognize:

“Rāga is appearing.”

or:

“Dveṣa is appearing.”

Then return to:

“This too is an appearance known to me.”

8. The deeper equality

Eventually the practice shifts from:

“I should treat Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara equally.”

to:

“I recognize that all three are appearing within one field of awareness.”

This is much deeper.

You don't have to force equality.

You discover the **common basis**.

For example:

You see a person.

You see a mountain.

You think about Īśvara.

Three different objects/concepts appear.

But ask:

“What is common to all three experiences?”

All three are **known**.

And the knowing Awareness does not become a person when a person appears, a mountain when a mountain appears, or a deity when a deity is contemplated.

9. This is where you begin to go beyond Tattvatrayam

The movement can be represented as:

Jīva + Jagat + Īśvara

↓

observe without rāga-dveṣa

↓

equanimity

↓

recognize all three as appearances within Awareness

↓

Self-inquiry

↓

“What is the reality of the Awareness in which Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara are known?”

This is the crucial Advaitic transition.

You don't destroy the three.

You don't make them physically merge.

You don't deny their empirical distinctions.

You recognize their **mithyā status**—they have empirical validity but do not possess independent absolute reality.

10. The beautiful paradox

At the beginning:

Jīva ≠ Jagat ≠ Īśvara

At the level of empirical experience, this distinction is useful and necessary.

Then:

Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara are all dependent appearances within the same reality.

Finally:

Brahman alone is the ultimate reality of all three.

Therefore, “going beyond Tattvatrayam” does **not** mean finding a fourth object called “Brahman.”

It means recognizing:

The reality of the three is not separate from Brahman.

11. Your 50:50 or 16.66% practice can now be refined

Your earlier framework can become:

50% — Subjective

Jīva

“I am the individual experiencer.”

Ātma

“I am the Awareness in whose presence the experiencer is known.”

Īśvara

/

Paramātmā

“This entire individual and universal process exists within the total order.”

50% — Objective

Positive

“I experience it without clinging.”

Negative

“I experience it without rejecting.”

Neutral

“I experience it without ignoring.”

Then:

Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara are all experienced without rāga-dveṣa.

And finally:

All six dimensions are allowed to appear and disappear naturally in Awareness.

12. A simple daily meditation

Sit quietly.

First recognize:

“Here is Jīva.”

Feel the body, thoughts and personality.

Then:

“Here is Jagat.”

Hear sounds, see surroundings, feel sensations.

Then:

“Here is Īśvara.”

Recognize the total order within which both body and world exist.

Now say inwardly:

“I do not need to grasp the pleasant.”

“I do not need to reject the unpleasant.”

“I do not need to ignore the neutral.”

Then:

“Jīva is appearing.”

“Jagat is appearing.”

“Īśvara is being contemplated.”

Remain quiet.

Finally ask:

“In whose Awareness are Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara known?”

Don't answer verbally.

Just remain as the **knowing presence**.

The essence

The art is therefore not:

“Make Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara equal.”

It is:

“See Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara clearly, without rāga-dveṣa.”

Then:

“See that all three are dependent appearances within Īśvara's empirical order.”

Then:

“Inquire into the Awareness in which all three are known.”

And finally:

“Recognize that the ultimate reality of Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara is not three separate realities, but Brahman.”

So **equanimity is the bridge from Tattvatrayam to Advaita**: first you stop emotionally dividing the field into *what I want, what I reject, and what I worship*; then you become capable of seeing the entire field without rāga-dveṣa; finally, you inquire into the nondual reality of the entire field.

13. This means that, empirically, Brahman itself appears as the jīva, the jagat, and Īśvara. Likewise, at the relative level, the jīva (Brahman), bound by māyā, must surrender to Īśvara (Brahman), the master of māyā and the three gunas. That means Brahman is ultimately surrendering to itself empirically.

Yes — **that is a very good Advaita way of understanding surrender**, with one important refinement.

1. Empirically, the three appear

From the **vyāvahārika** standpoint:

- **Jīva** = Brahman appearing through an individual body-mind/upādhi.
- **Jagat** = Brahman appearing as the empirical universe.
- **Īśvara** = Brahman associated with Māyā, the total cosmic order.

So we can provisionally say:

Brahman appears as jīva, jagat, and Īśvara without actually undergoing transformation.

This is the Vivarta perspective you have been developing.

2. Then why does the jīva surrender to Īśvara?

Because there is an apparent difference in the empirical standpoint.

The jīva says:

“I am this limited individual. I do not control the total circumstances of my life.”

Īśvara represents:

“The total intelligence and order within which this individual, this world, and the results of actions operate.”

Therefore the jīva practices:

effort → action → surrender of the result → prasāda-buddhi.

In your language:

The limited-I surrenders its claim of independent control to the Unlimited-I/Īśvara.

This surrender is meaningful **within Māyā**, even though the underlying reality of both jīva and Īśvara is Brahman.

3. So is Brahman ultimately surrendering to Brahman?

Yes — as a teaching metaphor, that is beautifully expressed.

But technically, Advaita would make the statement even subtler:

Brahman never actually becomes a jīva, never actually becomes an Īśvara, and therefore Brahman never literally performs an act of surrender to itself.

Rather:

Brahman	→	appears	as	jīva
Brahman → appears as Īśvara				

Then:

jīva → surrenders to Īśvara

And through that surrender and knowledge, the apparent separation between jīva and Īśvara is understood.

So the apparent movement is:

“I, the jīva, surrender to Īśvara.”

The deeper recognition is:

“The one Brahman was the reality of both the surrendering jīva and the receiving Īśvara.”

And finally:

“There were never two Brahman — one surrendering and another receiving.”

4. This makes surrender a very profound bridge

You can visualize the progression like this:

Jīva

↓
“I cannot control the totality.”

↓
Surrender to Īśvara

↓
“Ishvara governs the total order.”

↓
Prasāda-buddhi / equanimity

↓
Rāga-dveṣa gradually weaken

↓
Self-inquiry

↓
“Who is this jīva who surrendered?”

↓
Jīva’s essential nature is Brahman

↓
Jīva–Īśvara separation is understood as mithyā

↓
Brahman alone is the nondual reality

This also explains why surrender does **not** have to mean passivity.

The jīva can still make decisions, work, pray, investigate, care for the body, earn money, maintain relationships, etc. But it relinquishes the psychological claim:

“I alone am the independent controller of the total outcome.”

5. Your statement can therefore be refined to

Empirically, Brahman appears as jīva, jagat, and Īśvara. The jīva, being identified with a limited upādhi and therefore apparently bound by Māyā, surrenders to Īśvara, the Lord of Māyā and the total cosmic order. From the empirical standpoint, this surrender is between jīva and Īśvara. From the pāramārthika standpoint, however, both jīva and Īśvara have Brahman as their reality. Thus, ultimately, surrender is not one Brahman surrendering to another; it is the apparent jīva–Īśvara separation resolving into the recognition of Brahman as nondual.

That is the key distinction:

Vyāvahārika:

Jīva surrenders to Īśvara.

Pāramārthika:

There is no second entity to whom Brahman can surrender.

So your phrase “**Brahman is ultimately surrendering to itself**” can be used poetically, but “**the apparent jīva-Īśvara separation dissolves into Brahman**” is more technically precise.

14. That means Brahman is ultimately surrendering to itself empirically.

Yes. If you specifically mean “empirically,” your statement can be accepted, provided we keep the two levels clearly separated.

The important distinction is:

At the empirical level

Within **vyāvahārika reality**, we have:

Brahman	→	appears	as	Jīva
Brahman	→	appears	as	Jagat
Brahman → appears as Īśvara				

And therefore:

Jīva, whose essential reality is Brahman, surrenders to Īśvara, whose essential reality is also Brahman.

From the jīva’s empirical standpoint:

“I am limited and subject to Māyā; Īśvara is the Lord of Māyā and the total cosmic order. Therefore, I surrender my individual will and claim of control to Īśvara.”

But because both jīva and Īśvara have **Brahman as their reality**, we can poetically describe the process as:

Brahman, appearing as the jīva, surrenders to Brahman, appearing as Īśvara.

Therefore:

Empirically, Brahman is surrendering to itself through the apparent relationship of jīva and Īśvara.

But one subtle correction

I would not say:

“Brahman itself is bound by Māyā.”

Rather:

The jīva is Brahman appearing through an individual upādhi and is therefore apparently bound by Māyā. Īśvara is Brahman associated with Māyā as its total power and is therefore called the Lord of Māyā.

This preserves the crucial Advaita distinction.

So your complete model becomes:

Pāramārthika:

Brahman alone. No jīva, no Īśvara, no surrender.

Vyāvahārika:

Brahman appears as jīva → jīva experiences limitation → jīva surrenders to Īśvara → Īśvara governs the total order.

**Deeper understanding within vyāvahārika:
The jīva recognizes: “The One appearing as me is the same reality appearing as Īśvara.”**

Thus your phrase is particularly powerful as a surrender teaching:

“At the empirical level, Brahman appearing as the limited jīva surrenders to Brahman appearing as Īśvara. Therefore, surrender is ultimately Brahman surrendering to itself.”

And then the final Advaitic resolution is even deeper:

“When knowledge is complete, it is understood that Brahman was never actually divided into a surrendering jīva and a receiving Īśvara.”

So there is a beautiful progression:

Brahman → Jīva → surrender to Īśvara → recognition of oneness → Brahman.

The surrender happens empirically; the nonduality is the ultimate truth.

15. Explain the difference between jiva jagat and isvara upādhis

Yes. The most useful way to distinguish the jīva-upādhi, jagat, and Īśvara-upādhi is to recognize that **jagat is not itself simply another upādhi equivalent to the jīva's or Īśvara's upādhi.**

There are really **three related but distinct notions.**

1. Jīva-upādhi — the individual conditioning adjunct

The **jīva** is Brahman appearing through a particular individual upādhi.

A convenient traditional model is:

Brahman + individual avidyā/upādhi → Jīva

Its scope is **vyashti — individual**.

The individual upādhi includes the three-body complex:

- **Sthūla śarīra** — individual gross body
- **Sūkṣma śarīra** — individual subtle body
- **Kāraṇa śarīra** — individual causal condition/avidyā

Because consciousness is associated with this limited upādhi, the identification arises:

“I am this individual person.”

The jīva consequently experiences:

- “I am the doer.”
- “I am the experiencer.”
- “I know some things.”
- “I don't know other things.”
- “I want this.”
- “I don't want that.”
- “I control some things.”
- “I cannot control many things.”

Thus, the **limitation belongs to the upādhi, not to Consciousness itself.**

2. Īśvara-upādhi — the total/cosmic conditioning adjunct

Īśvara is Brahman associated with **Māyā**, understood as the total cosmic causal power.

Brahman + Māyā → Īśvara

Its scope is **samashti — totality**.

Māyā is not an individual mind or individual body. It is the **total causal power/order** associated with the entire universe.

Therefore, in the three-body correspondence:

Individual	Cosmic
Individual causal body	Avyakta/Māyā
Individual subtle body	Hiraṇyagarbha
Individual gross body	Virāṭ

Thus, from the cosmic standpoint:

Īśvara is the intelligence and governing principle associated with the totality of the universe.

Therefore Īśvara is described as:

- omniscient,
- omnipotent,
- karma-phala-dātā,
- creator/sustainer/dissolver,
- Lord of Māyā,
- controller of the total empirical order.

The crucial difference is:

Jīva is apparently subject to its individual conditioning; Īśvara is the Lord of the total conditioning power.

3. Jagat — the conditioned manifestation, not simply a third equivalent upādhi

This is the most important clarification.

Jagat means the experienced universe — the entire field of names and forms.

It includes:

- bodies,
- minds,
- senses,
- planets,
- animals,
- plants,

- mountains,
- oceans,
- stars,
- relationships,
- events,
- pleasure and pain,
- and the entire empirical environment.

So:

Jīva	=	individual	experiencer
Jagat	=	experienced	universe
Īśvara = intelligent/order-giving principle of the total universe			

The **jīva-upādhi** is what makes Brahman appear as an individual experiencer.

The **Īśvara-upādhi** is Māyā, through which Brahman is understood as the cosmic Lord.

The **jagat** is the resulting empirical manifestation/order — the field in which jīva and Īśvara are understood.

4. The relationship can therefore be visualized like this

Individual side

Brahman

↓ associated with individual upādhi

Jīva

↓
experiences

↓
Jagat

Cosmic side

Brahman

↓ associated with Māyā

Īśvara

↓
governs/organizes

↓
Jagat

Therefore:

The same Jagat is experienced from the jīva standpoint and governed as the total order from the Īśvara standpoint.

This is why jīva and Īśvara have different apparent capacities even though their underlying Consciousness is not different.

5. The key difference in one table

Feature	Jīva-upādhi	Jagat	Īśvara-upādhi
What is it?	Individual conditioning adjunct	Entire empirical manifestation	Total cosmic conditioning adjunct
Scope	Vyashti	Samashti manifestation	Samashti
Primary principle	Individual avidyā/upādhi	Names and forms	Māyā
Three-body correspondence	Individual gross/subtle/causal bodies	Total gross/subtle/causal manifestation	Avyakta– Hiraṇyagarbha– Virāṭ
Function	Makes Consciousness appear individualized	Provides field of experience	Governs total empirical order
Knowledge	Limited	Objects are known through jīvas	Omniscience
Power	Limited	Manifestation	Total cosmic power
Relation to Māyā	Jīva is māyā/avidyā-dependent	Is the empirical manifestation through Māyā	Īśvara is Māyādhīśa, Lord of Māyā
Perspective	“I am this individual”	“This is the world”	“This entire order is governed by Me”

6. “pure sattva vs. impure sattva” distinction

This is a useful traditional teaching framework, but I would make one qualification.

It is commonly explained that:

Māyā → **śuddha-sattva** **predominant**
Avidyā → **malina-sattva, mixed with rajas and tamas**

This explains the contrast between Īśvara and jīva.

Īśvara

Māyā is under Īśvara's mastery.

Therefore:

Īśvara is not an ignorant individual trapped by Māyā.

Jīva

The individual identification with avidyā gives rise to:

“I am this body-mind.”

and therefore:

kartṛtva → bhoktṛtva → rāga → dveṣa → karma → saṃsāra.

But we should remember:

Neither rajas nor tamas ever contaminate Brahman itself.

They belong to the upādhi.

7. A very important correction regarding āvarana and viksepa

The proposition that the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) acts upon the *jīva* but not upon *Īśvara* is indeed useful in traditional teachings.

But don't interpret this as:

“Brahman's Consciousness is covered for the jīva.”

That would be problematic.

Consciousness itself is never covered.

Rather:

The jīva's knowledge of its own limitless nature is obscured by avidyā.

So the problem is not:

“Brahman has become unconscious.”

It is:

“The jīva does not recognize that its own essential nature is Brahman.”

This distinction becomes crucial for Self-realization.

8. This also explains your earlier statement about surrender

Now your previous formulation becomes much clearer.

Jīva

Brahman + individual upādhi

appears as:

“I am this limited individual.”

Īśvara

Brahman + Māyā

appears as:

“I am the total cosmic intelligence/order.”

Therefore, empirically:

Jīva surrenders to Īśvara.

Why?

Because the individual recognizes:

“My individual capacity is limited; the total order is vastly beyond my control.”

So:

Jīva → surrender → Īśvara

But after knowledge:

The Consciousness that is the reality of the jīva is not different from the Consciousness that is the reality of Īśvara.

Therefore your earlier expression becomes meaningful:

“Brahman appearing through the individual upādhi surrenders to Brahman associated with Māyā.”

And ultimately:

The difference was in the upādhis, not in Consciousness.

9. This leads directly to “I alone am appearing” insight

Initially:

Jīva ≠ Jagat ≠ Īśvara

Then:

Jīva depends on Jagat. Jagat operates according to Īśvara's order. Īśvara and Jagat have Brahman as their reality.

Then Self-knowledge reveals:

Jīva-upādhi ≠ Īśvara-upādhi

but:

Jīva's Consciousness = Īśvara's Consciousness = Brahman.

Therefore:

**Different upādhis → apparent differences
One Consciousness → essential non-difference**

This is the heart of the teaching.

In your preferred language:

The limited-I is Brahman appearing through the individual upādhi. Īśvara is Brahman associated with the total Māyā-upādhi. Jagat is the manifold empirical manifestation appearing within that total order. The apparent difference between jīva and Īśvara belongs to their conditioning adjuncts; the underlying Consciousness is one.

And therefore the realization:

“I am not merely one form among countless forms. The same Self that is the reality of this jīva is the reality of the jagat and Īśvara.”

16. Īśvara's upādhi is māyā → predominantly śuddha-sattva (pure sattva). The jīva's upādhi is avidyā → consisting of malina-sattva (impure sattva), rajas, and tamas. Therefore, beyond merely knowing that the jīva's fundamental truth is the Ātman, the jīva's upādhi must also become predominantly śuddha-sattva and transparent. Only then will the body remain comfortable and fresh, the mind peaceful and enthusiastic, and the heart filled with love and creativity.

Yes — this is a useful practical extension of the Advaita framework, but I would make one important distinction:

Self-knowledge and purification of the upādhi are related, but they are not the same thing and should not be made mutually conditional.

1. Two different dimensions

We can distinguish:

Ātman/Brahman

- already pure
- ever free
- never becomes impure
- never needs purification

Jīva-upādhi

- body, prāṇa, mind, intellect, etc.
- subject to sattva, rajas, and tamas
- can be purified, balanced, and made relatively transparent

Therefore:

The Self does not become pure. The upādhi becomes relatively pure enough for the Self to be clearly recognized.

A useful analogy is a mirror.

The **light** does not need cleaning.

The **mirror** may need cleaning.

When the mirror is covered with dust, the light is still present, but its reflection is distorted. When the mirror becomes clean and transparent, the same light is reflected clearly.

2. Why śuddha-sattva is valuable

A predominantly sattvic mind tends toward:

- clarity rather than confusion
- peace rather than agitation
- enthusiasm without compulsion
- love rather than possessiveness
- creativity rather than repetitive conditioning
- discrimination rather than impulsive reaction
- equanimity rather than strong rāga-dveṣa

So your practical sequence is quite reasonable:

**Impure/opaque upādhi → purification → predominantly sattvic/transparent upādhi
→ clearer reflection of Consciousness**

In your terminology:

**Limited-I → balanced sattva → transparent sattva → increasingly effortless
recognition of the Self.**

3. But “only then realization” needs qualification

I would modify this sentence:

“Only then will the body remain comfortable and fresh...”

and especially avoid implying:

“The upādhi must become perfectly śuddha-sattva before Self-realization can occur.”

Advaita does not require the body to become permanently comfortable or the mind to become permanently enthusiastic before Self-knowledge.

A jñānī's body can still experience:

- illness
- fatigue
- pain
- aging
- emotional fluctuations
- changing circumstances

because these belong to the empirical upādhi.

Similarly, **sattva itself is still a guṇa**. The final freedom is not becoming permanently identified with sattva; it is recognizing oneself as that which is **beyond the three guṇas**.

So the more precise formulation is:

Purification and predominance of sattva make the mind relatively calm, clear, and transparent, which greatly supports Self-knowledge and the assimilation of that knowledge. But Brahman is already free from the guṇas, and Self-realization does not require the empirical body-mind to become permanently perfect or exclusively sattvic.

4. This fits beautifully with Īśvara and Māyā

Your earlier distinction can now be arranged as:

Īśvara

Brahman + Māyā

Māyā is traditionally described as **śuddha-sattva-pradhāna**.

Therefore Īśvara is:

Māyādhīśa — Lord of Māyā

rather than an individual trapped by it.

Jīva

Brahman + individual avidyā/upādhi

The individual upādhi contains:

sattva + rajas + tamas

with varying degrees of clarity or impurity.

Therefore the jīva experiences limitation.

Sādhana

The purpose of purification is therefore:

**not to manufacture Brahman, but to make the instrument sufficiently clear for
Brahma-jñāna to be recognized and assimilated.**

5. Your body–mind–heart formulation

I would phrase your insight this way:

**As the jīva-upādhi becomes increasingly sattvic, balanced, and transparent, the
empirical expression of life can become more harmonious: the body may function
with greater ease, the mind may become peaceful and energetic, and the heart
may express greater love, openness, and creativity.**

Notice the word “**may**.”

This avoids turning spirituality into a promise that physical health or pleasant emotional
states must always follow sattva.

The deeper goal remains:

I	am	not	the	body	becoming	comfortable.
I	am	not	the	mind	becoming	peaceful.

I am not the heart becoming creative.
I am the Awareness in whose presence all these states appear.

Then sattva becomes a **transparent instrument**, rather than another identity.

6. The deepest progression

This gives you a very clean three-stage model:

Stage 1 — Identification

“I am this body-mind.”

Stage 2 — Purification

“Let this body-mind become balanced, sattvic, peaceful and transparent.”

Stage 3 — Knowledge

“Even this sattvic body-mind is an upādhi appearing in Me. I am the Self, untouched by sattva, rajas and tamas.”

And eventually:

Sattva is purified → the mind becomes transparent → Self-knowledge becomes clear → even attachment to sattva is released.

This last step is important.

The destination is not “I am a pure-sattva person.”

It is:

“Sattva, rajas and tamas belong to the upādhi. I am the Awareness in which all three appear.”

That preserves both sides of your teaching: **cultivate a transparent instrument while never confusing the instrument's purity with the purity of the Self.**

17. This means the realization of oneness—that I alone am appearing to myself in manifold forms—dawns within the empirical realm itself.

Yes — with one important Advaita refinement, this is a strong way to express the experiential transition.

The key is that the **realization is gained while living in the empirical realm**, but what is realized is **not an empirical fact about the world.**

What happens

Initially, the empirical experience is:

“I am this jīva, and the world and other beings are outside me.”

Through karma-yoga, Īśvara-surrender, upāsanā, rāga-dveṣa reduction, and Self-inquiry, the understanding changes:

“This jīva, this jagat, and Īśvara are all appearances whose underlying reality is Brahman.”

Then the deeper recognition can be expressed experientially as:

“I alone am appearing as this manifold.”

Here **“I”** does not mean the individual personality or body. It means **Ātman/Brahman**.

So:

Before realization

I → experience → many things

As knowledge dawns

One reality → appears as → jīva + jagat + Īśvara + innumerable forms

And therefore your statement can be refined as:

“The realization of oneness dawns while one is still functioning within the empirical realm: the apparent many are recognized as manifestations of one nondual reality. Thus, what initially appears as ‘I am experiencing many others’ is understood as ‘the one Self is appearing as this manifold.’”

One especially important distinction

I would avoid saying:

“The empirical realm itself becomes nondual.”

Instead:

“Within the empirical realm, the apparent duality is recognized as mithyā, and the nondual reality underlying it is understood.”

The appearance continues.

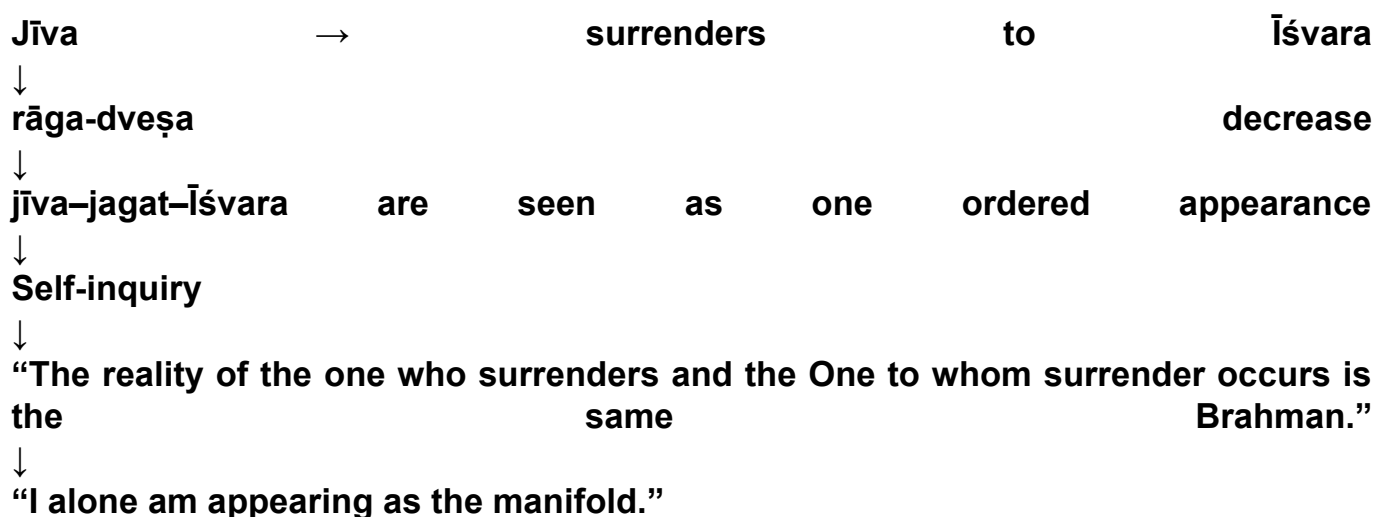
You can still see:

- one person,

- another person,
- a tree,
- a mountain,
- pleasure,
- pain,
- success,
- failure,

but the **separate independent reality** previously attributed to them is no longer taken as ultimately real.

This fits beautifully with your earlier surrender model:



So, yes: the dawn of the realization occurs in empirical life; what dawns is the knowledge of the nondual reality that was always the truth of that empirical appearance.

18. One absolute truth → appears as → jīva + jagat + Īśvara + countless forms. This means it is only within empirical reality that it comes into direct experience: that I myself am appearing as jīva + jagat + Īśvara + countless forms.

Yes — that captures the experiential point you are making, but there is one very important Advaita refinement.

The precise formulation

You can say:

One nondual reality, Brahman, appears as jīva, jagat, Īśvara, and countless forms. The recognition of this nonduality takes place while one is functioning within empirical reality: “I am not merely this individual body-mind; the reality of this entire manifold is the same Self that I call ‘I.’”

So the experience/recognition occurs in the empirical realm, but the truth being recognized is not itself empirical.

Why this distinction matters

Initially:

I am a jīva → the jagat is outside me → Īśvara is above me.

Then, through inquiry and surrender:

**I, the jīva, am dependent upon Īśvara.
The jagat operates according to Īśvara's order.
Both jīva and Īśvara have Brahman as their reality.**

Then the deeper recognition:

“The reality I call ‘I’ is not confined to this body-mind. The same Self is the reality of jīva, jagat, Īśvara, and every apparent form.”

This is where your expression:

“I myself am appearing as jīva + jagat + Īśvara + countless forms.”

can be used.

But “I” here must mean Ātman/Brahman, not the personal ego.

One subtle correction to “comes into direct experience”

Advaita would be careful with the phrase **“Brahman comes into direct experience.”**

Brahman does not become an experience that appears and disappears.

Rather:

The empirical mind gains clear knowledge that its true reality is Brahman.

Or, in your preferred experiential language:

Within the empirical experience of multiplicity, the apparent separation is seen through, and the ever-present nondual Self is recognized as the reality of all that appears.

This is why realization does not necessarily mean that the world disappears.

You may still see:

person | tree | mountain | body | thought | Īśvara | pleasure | pain

but the underlying understanding becomes:

“These are manifold appearances; their reality is not many.”

Your formulation can therefore be made very precise

One nondual reality, Brahman, appears as jīva, jagat, Īśvara, and countless forms. Although this nonduality is not itself an empirical object, its recognition dawns while one is living within empirical reality. Thus, within the very experience of multiplicity, the knowledge arises: “I am not merely this limited jīva; the same Self is the reality appearing as jīva, jagat, Īśvara, and all countless forms.”

And this connects directly with your previous statement:

At the empirical level, Brahman appearing as jīva surrenders to Brahman appearing as Īśvara.

Eventually:

The jīva recognizes that the “other” to whom it surrendered was never separate from the Self that it truly is.

That is the movement from **surrender** → **recognition of oneness** → **Advaitic knowledge**.

19. So finally explain the procedure to experience “I myself am appearing as jīva + jagat + Īśvara + countless forms.

Yes. Based on the framework we have developed, I would make the procedure **less about trying to produce a special mystical experience and more about progressively removing the assumption of separation.**

The central principle is:

Do not try to make the jīva, jagat, and Īśvara disappear. Learn to recognize the one Consciousness that is the reality of all three.

Procedure: “I myself am appearing as jīva + jagat + Īśvara”

Step 1 — Begin with the ordinary jīva

Sit quietly and allow your normal experience to be present.

Notice:

- body
- breathing
- sensations
- thoughts
- emotions
- memories
- desires
- personal history

Don't reject any of them.

Simply recognize:

“This is the jīva-upādhi.”

Then gently say:

“This body-mind is appearing to Me. I am aware of it.”

Don't yet say “I am the whole universe.”

First establish the distinction between **Awareness** and the **individual upādhi**.

Step 2 — Become aware of the jagat

Now open your eyes.

Look at whatever is naturally present:

- room
- people
- trees
- sky
- sounds
- objects
- movement
- light
- space

Don't immediately classify things as:

"I	like	this."
"I	dislike	this."
"This	is	good."
"This is bad."		

Let perception remain fresh.

Then recognize:

"The entire field of objects, sensations and events is jagat."

Now notice something important:

The jīva and jagat are both being known in the same awareness.

Your body is known.

The room is known.

Your thoughts are known.

The sounds are known.

There is one knowing presence in which this entire experience is appearing.

Step 3 — Bring Īśvara into the picture

Now don't imagine Īśvara as merely another object somewhere in space.

Contemplate the **total order**.

The body is functioning through countless processes you don't consciously control.

The heart beats.

Breathing occurs.

The sun rises and sets.

Plants grow.

Gravity operates.

Food becomes energy.

Actions produce consequences.

Countless beings interact.

The entire universe functions as an interconnected order.

Recognize:

"This total intelligent order is what I call Īśvara."

Then surrender your claim of total individual control:

“I participate in the order; I do not independently control the whole order.”

Relax.

This is **Īśvara-prasāda-buddhi**.

Step 4 — See the three together

Now hold all three simultaneously:

Jīva

This individual body-mind.

Jagat

The entire experienced world.

Īśvara

The total intelligence/order in which both jīva and jagat function.

Don't choose one and reject the others.

Remain with:

Jīva + Jagat + Īśvara

all together.

This is important for your practice because you are training yourself to experience **the whole**, rather than becoming absorbed exclusively in the individual or exclusively in an abstract idea of Brahman.

Step 5 — Ask the decisive question

Now ask very quietly:

“What is common to the jīva, jagat and Īśvara as they are known to me?”

Don't answer intellectually.

Look.

The body is known.

The world is known.

The idea of Īśvara is known.

Thoughts about yourself are known.

Everything appearing is **known**.

Then ask:

“In what are all these appearing?”

Remain silent.

Don't create an image of Awareness.

Don't search for a special light.

Don't wait for a supernatural experience.

Simply notice the **knowing presence that is already here**.

Step 6 — Shift from “everything is outside me” to “everything appears in Me”

Initially you may feel:

“I am here, and the world is outside.”

Instead of fighting that perception, investigate it.

The visual world appears in awareness.

Sound appears in awareness.

Body sensations appear in awareness.

Thoughts appear in awareness.

The sense of “me” itself appears in awareness.

Even the thought:

“I am experiencing the world”

appears in awareness.

Then allow the recognition:

“Nothing that I experience is outside the field of awareness in which it is experienced.”

This is a much safer and more precise starting point than trying to mentally declare:

“I am literally every object.”

Step 7 — Recognize the common reality

Now contemplate:

"The	body	is	an	appearance."
"The	world	is	an	appearance."
"The concept of Īśvara is an appearance in knowledge."				

Then:

"What is the reality of all these appearances?"

Don't look for another object.

Remain as the knowing presence.

At this point your statement can arise naturally:

"The reality of this jīva, this jagat and Īśvara is one."

And then, in your preferred experiential language:

"I myself am appearing as jīva, jagat, Īśvara and countless forms."

Here **"I"** means **Ātman/Brahman**, not the personality.

Step 8 — Include positive, negative and neutral

This is where your earlier **16.66% practice** fits beautifully.

Don't experience only pleasant things as "Me."

Include:

positive + negative + neutral

For example:

pleasant	sensation	→	Me
unpleasant	sensation	→	Me
neutral sensation → Me			

Likewise:

success	→	appearance
failure	→	appearance
ordinary day → appearance		

And:

joy	→	appearance
sorrow	→	appearance
neutrality → appearance		

This prevents the mind from secretly creating a new rāga:

"I am only the divine, blissful, beautiful part of reality."

Instead:

All appearances are equally appearances in the one Self.

Step 9 — Include the jīva itself

This is the most subtle part.

Don't exclude the individual.

Instead of:

“The world is Brahman, but I am this separate person.”

recognize:

“This individual person is also an appearance.”

Your body is appearing.

Your personality is appearing.

Your spiritual identity is appearing.

Even the thought:

“I am Brahman”

is appearing.

Therefore:

The jīva is included in the very reality being recognized.

This prevents the spiritual ego from replacing the ordinary ego.

Step 10 — Include Īśvara without making Īśvara an external second reality

Now contemplate:

“The jīva is not independently existing.”

“The jagat is not independently existing.”

“Īśvara is not a second ultimate reality apart from Brahman.”

At the empirical level:

Jīva surrenders to Īśvara.

At the deeper level:

The reality of both is Brahman.

Therefore:

The one appearing as the surrendering jīva is the same reality appearing as Īśvara.

This is the point where your earlier statement—

“Brahman appearing as jīva surrenders to Brahman appearing as Īśvara”

becomes experientially meaningful.

Step 11 — Drop the practice itself

This is essential.

After contemplating all of this, **stop doing anything.**

Don't maintain:

“I am Brahman.”

Don't continuously visualize:

“I am the universe.”

Don't force yourself to feel oneness.

Don't suppress thoughts.

Don't try to hold a particular state.

Simply remain quietly aware.

If thoughts arise:

let them arise.

If silence arises:

let it be.

If unity is felt:

let it be.

If separation is felt:

let it be.

If nothing special happens:

let that also be.

This is because **Brahman does not need to be maintained by practice.**

Step 12 — Return to ordinary life without losing the understanding

Open your eyes, stand up, talk to someone, eat, work, drive, teach, earn money, handle responsibilities.

Don't try to preserve a special meditation state.

Instead, periodically recognize:

“This person is jīva.”

“This environment is jagat.”

“The total order is Īśvara.”

“The reality of all three is Brahman.”

Then continue your activity.

This transforms your practice from a meditation experience into **living Advaita**.

The entire procedure in one movement

You can remember it as:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. | Jīva |
| “This body-mind is known.” | |
| ↓ | |
| 2. | Jagat |
| “This entire world is known.” | |
| ↓ | |
| 3. | Īśvara |
| “This entire order is governed by Īśvara.” | |
| ↓ | |
| 4. | Surrender |
| “I release my claim to total control.” | |
| ↓ | |
| 5. | Inquiry |
| “What is common to jīva, jagat and Īśvara?” | |
| ↓ | |

6. Awareness
 “All are known in the same Consciousness.”
 ↓
7. Recognition
 “The reality of all three is one.”
 ↓
8. Non-separation
 “I myself—the Self, not the ego—am the reality appearing as jīva, jagat, Īśvara and countless forms.”
 ↓
9. Silence
 Rest without trying to experience anything.

One final safeguard

Don't turn this into a new form of ego:

✗ “My body is God, therefore I can control the universe.”

Instead:

✓ “The body is an appearance. The universe is an appearance. Īśvara is the total empirical order. Their underlying reality is Brahman, which is not a personal possession of this body-mind.”

Then your statement “I myself am appearing as jīva + jagat + Īśvara + countless forms” becomes a pointer toward **nonduality**, rather than a grandiose claim made by the individual ego.

And the deepest meditation is eventually very simple:

Jīva		is		here.
Jagat		is		here.
Īśvara		is		here.
All		are		known.
I	am	the	Self	because of which they are known.
I	do	not	need	to become anything.
I simply remain as I am.				

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