



Keys to opening the door to Ishvara Darshan

Oct 11-12, 2025 AVC Retreat SF Bay Area, with Sri Vijay Kapoor

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1. Overview

This document contains notes and partial transcripts from a two-day Vedanta retreat led by **Shri Vijay Kapoor** on the advanced topic of **Drik Drisya Viveka** (distinction between the Seer and the Seen). The core teaching emphasizes shifting focus from the external, changing world (**Idam**) to the unchanging, blissful Self within (**Aham**) to realize **Ishvara** (complete satisfaction/God). Through analogies like **electricity and appliances** and the **movie experience**, the teacher explains that the individual (**Jiva**) is actually the creator, screen, and light of their own reality, a concept proven daily by the **dream state**. Practical guidance is offered on **karma classification** and giving up the false notion that one is essential to others (**Vairagya**) to move toward complete freedom (**Asangata**).

The summary (is extracted by NotebookLM AI) regarding how spiritual seekers should address the various topics discussed here was drawn entirely from the provided source material, which consists of excerpts from the weekend retreat. *The AI generated material is presented from 4 points of view as per the Table of contents.*
Original [Retreat youtube talks](#) and summary talks are also available.

1.1 Key message is to Shift Focus from External to Internal Reality

- **Idam is Changing/Shift Focus:** The core instruction to **shift focus from "Idam" (this/external) to "Aham" (I/internal)** is a fundamental practice direction. Ishvara (complete satisfaction) cannot be found in the changing external world, so Ishvara must be hidden in "Aham". Seekers need to change the direction of their thinking from being totally involved in "Idam" (the external world) to the exploration of "Aham".
- **Internal Choice (Mumukshutva):** This shift requires a **genuine choice to prioritize Paramatma in the heart**. This genuine priority or desire is known as *Mumukshutva*. This internal choice is key, even while one externally fulfills commitments.



2. Jiva-Ishvara Connection and what is the purpose of Jiva

This extensive summary draws upon the teachings presented during the retreat on Drik Drisya Viveka, focusing on the core principles of Advaita Vedanta, the nature of illusion, and the practical steps required for self-realization.

2.1 The Nature of Spiritual Reality and the Jiva-Ishvara Connection

The core Vedantic teaching frames the relationship between the individual soul (*Jiva*) and the ultimate reality (*Ishvara*) using Swami Vivekananda's parable:

- **Cousins on the Same Tree:** The *Jiva* and *Ishvara* are described as two birds sitting on the same tree, signifying they are essentially cousins (*Sahuja*, *Sakhaya*).
- **The Power of Name (*Nama*):** When the *Jiva* complained to *Ishvara* about the perceived unfairness (*Ishvara* becoming all the powerful *Avataras*), *Ishvara* suggested dividing their property: *Ishvara* would keep the *Rupa* (form), and the *Jiva* would take the *Nama* (name).
- **Identifying Bliss:** Names like **Rama** (meaning "one who brings joy just by thinking") and **Krishna** (*Akarsharti*, meaning one who "attracts your own joy") are just as powerful as the forms. The true essence being attracted is the individual's own **Ananda Swarupa** (blissful nature).

2.2 Fundamental Spiritual Practice: Shifting Focus and Giving Up Attachment

The entire direction of spiritual practice must be inverted to achieve realization:

The Internal Search (Aham vs. Idam) The only two places in human experience are the external world (**Idam**, or "this") and the internal Self (**Aham**, or "I").

- **Ishvara is Unchanging:** *Ishvara*, representing complete satisfaction, cannot be found in the **Idam** (external world) because the external world is continuously changing. This changing nature violates the very definition of *Ishvara* as one who is constant and stable.
- **Ishvara is Hidden in Aham:** Therefore, seekers must **change the direction of their thinking** from being totally involved in the external world to the **exploration of "Aham"** (the internal Self), where *Ishvara* is hidden.

Addressing Attachments ("Me and Mine") The critical requirement holding the seeker back is the attachment to the notion of "me and mine".

- **Clinging vs. Response:** Attachments such as "My daughter, grandchildren, house" bind the seeker down. The instruction is not to abandon responsibilities but to stop clinging; one must **treat those relationships and possessions as Ishvara's children**.
- **Life as Illusion:** The seeker should view life as being like a dream, where the things that bother them do not actually exist.



2.3 The Necessity of Choice (*Mumukshutva*) and Action (*Karma*)

Attaining the Self (*Atma*) is not merely a matter of trying harder or extensive study. **The Genuine Choice (*Mumukshutva*)**

- The *Atma* cannot be reached through teaching, intellect (*medhaya*), or extensive learning (*bahuna shrutena*) alone.
- Realization requires a **genuine internal choice** to prioritize *Paramatma* in the heart. This internal priority is called **Mumukshutva**.
- The second line of the key Upanishadic verse indicates that truth becomes a reality for a person who chooses (*vr̥ṇute*) *Paramatma*. This choice is internal and must be sincere; otherwise, the Self will not "open up" (*vr̥ṇ*).

Managing Duties (*Karma*)

Seekers must honestly assess their commitments to maintain a balance while internally prioritizing spiritual growth. Actions are classified into four types:

1. **Nitya Karma:** Daily duties (must continue).
2. **Naimittika Karma:** Occasional obligations (e.g., visiting a sick friend; must continue).
3. **Kamya Karma:** Unnecessary activities (e.g., excessive sports watching). These superficial activities should be **gradually eliminated first** before neglecting necessary duties.
4. **Nishiddha Karma:** Prohibited actions (e.g., cheating, lying; must be avoided).

2.4 Understanding Illusion (*Brahma*) and Spiritual Progression

Spiritual advancement is described in three stages:

1. **Samsari:** The first stage where the person feels limited and is affected by the world.
2. **Vairagya:** The second stage, achieved by **recognizing the illusion**. This means stopping the pretense that the seeker is essential or useful to others, as family or societal dependency is often a **self-created illusion** or *Brahma* (false notion). To be free is to stop pretending you are useful to someone.
3. **Asangata:** The final stage, meaning unaffected. The person becomes like a **mirror** reflecting the world's activities but is never actually changed or touched by them.

Types of False Notion (*Brahma*). *Brahma* (false notions) can be corrected in two distinct ways:

1. **Rope/Snake Type:** This illusion (like mistaking a rope for a snake) completely **disappears** once corrected.
2. **Blue Sky Type:** This illusion (like the sky appearing blue) **remains visible** even when understood as false. The appearance of the world (*Vishvam*) upon the Self is like the blueness of the sky—the world is perceived, but the enlightened person (*Gyani*) knows it does not truly affect the unaffected substrate.



2.5 Advanced Concepts: Distinguishing the Self from Ahankara

The most difficult discrimination (*Viveka*) is distinguishing the real, unchanging Self from *Ahankara*.

The Real Self (*Sat-Swarupa*)

- The Real Self is the unchanging reality (*Sat-Swarupa*).
- It is the **only entity that is self-existing (*Swayamsiddha*)**.
- The Self does not need to be proven because "you already are".
- The Self is simultaneously the **screen** and the **light** of existence.

Ahankara (The I-Thought)

- **Ahankara** is the "**I-thought**". It is the identity that says "this is me" and asserts, "**I am in charge of my life**".
- It is a **partial, changing identity** (waking I, dream I, sick I, etc.).
- *Ahankara* is a **reflection** or distorted version (*Abhasa* or *Chichaya*) based on the real I, which is still to be explored. When problems arise, the seeker should remind themselves: "This is only a **partial I**, not the real I".

Guidance for Problems When facing problems, seekers should close their eyes and recall the Vedantic truth that the disturbance comes from the partial self. Ishvara, who is more anxious for the seeker's happiness than the seeker themselves, provides clear "hints" or "ropes" (like the recognition of the partial self) to help them get out of life's "mess".

2.6 Proof of Reality: The Dream State and Movie Analogy

Vedanta provides proof for its teachings, specifically through the daily phenomenon of the dream state.

The Movie Experience. Life itself is likened to a movie experience, wherein the Self plays multiple roles:

1. **The Screen (The Substratum):** The Self is the fixed, solid, and colorless screen upon which everything is projected. The Self is the *Vastu* (entity) in which everything is born into, stays in, and dissolves into (*Janmadi Asya Yata*).
2. **The Light (Consciousness):** The Self is the steady, powerful, and unchanging light that illuminates the experience (*Swayam Prakasha*).
3. **The Script/Film (The Narrative):** The individual Self generates the film or script. This script includes every detail of one's life (parents, siblings, events, the sun, moon, and galaxies). The content of the script is drawn from memories and experiences, potentially including previous lives.

The Dream as Daily Proof. The **Dream State** provides daily, irrefutable proof that the individual is capable of creating and dissolving entire realities.

- Every night, the individual creates entire worlds, characters, and experiences (producer, screen, light, and participant simultaneously).



- Ishvara's design dedicates one-third of the individual's life to this demonstration, providing a strong hint (*Linga*) of the Self's creative power.

3. How should spiritual seekers address attachments to "me and mine"?

Spiritual seekers should address attachments to the notion of "me and mine" by fundamentally reorienting their perspective, prioritizing internal spiritual growth, and restructuring their daily commitments while recognizing the illusory nature of their limited identity.

Here is a comprehensive overview of how spiritual seekers should address these attachments, according to the sources:

3.1 Shift Focus from External to Internal Reality

The most fundamental practice required is to **shift focus from "Idam" (this/external) to "Aham" (I/internal)**.

- **Idam is Changing:** The external world ("Idam") constantly changes. Because Ishvara (who represents complete satisfaction) cannot be found in the changing world, Ishvara must be hidden in "Aham".
- **Change Direction:** Seekers must change the direction of their thinking from being totally involved in "Idam" (the external world) to the exploration of "Aham" (the self).
- **Internal Choice (Mumukshutva):** This shift requires a **genuine internal choice** to prioritize *Paramatma* (spiritual reality) in the heart. This genuine priority or desire is known as *Mumukshutva*. This choice is internal, even as one externally fulfills existing social and family commitments.

3.2 Give Up Clinging and Recognize Illusion

Attachments like "My daughter, grandchildren, house" are what ultimately hold the seeker back. Clinging to the idea of "this is my son" and worrying about it prevents spiritual progress.

- **Reframe Relationships:** The critical requirement is to **give up "me and mine" attachments**. Seekers should continue to maintain family and social responsibilities but internally prioritize spiritual growth. Instead of clinging, they should **treat those relationships and possessions as Ishvara's children** (or belonging to Ishvara).
- **Life as a Dream:** The seeker should view **life as being like a dream**. What bothers the seeker doesn't actually exist. The limited identity associated with "me and mine" is only a **partial I, not the real I**.



- **Abandon False Usefulness:** A crucial step, described as the stage of *Vairagya* (recognizing illusion), is to **stop pretending the seeker is essential or useful to others**. The feeling of dependency on the family or society is often a **self-created illusion** or *Brahma* (false notion).

3.3 Manage Actions and Priorities (Karma)

Seekers must honestly assess their priorities to balance spiritual practice with worldly responsibilities. This involves differentiating between necessary duties and unnecessary actions:

Karma Classification	Action Recommended	Description and Context
Nitya	Continue	Daily duties (e.g., family work).
Naimittika	Continue	Occasional obligations, such as visiting a sick friend or attending a family birthday party.
Kamya	Gradually eliminate	Unnecessary activities, like excessive sports watching. These should be given up first before neglecting necessary duties.
Nishiddha	Avoid	Prohibited actions (e.g., cheating, not speaking the truth).

The instruction is to fulfill necessary commitments honestly, ensuring that superficial activities (*Kamya karma*) are given up first.

3.4 Distinguish the Self from "I-Thought" (Ahankara)

The attachment to "me" is rooted in *Ahankara* (the "I-thought"), which is a partial, changing identity that shifts across different roles and states (waking I, dream I).

- **Identify the Real Self:** The most difficult discrimination (*Viveka*) is distinguishing the **real Self (which remains constant)** from this changing *Ahankara*.
- **The Nature of Ahankara:** *Ahankara* is the fundamental identification that states, "This is me," and leads to declarations like, "I am in charge of my life". It is a reflection (*Chidabhasa*) based on the real I, but the real I has yet to be fully explored.
- **Recalling Vedantic Truth:** When facing problems, seekers should close their eyes and recall the Vedantic truth that the source of their upset is **only a partial I, not the real I**. Ishvara wants the seeker to be happy more than the seeker does, and hints (like the recognition of the partial self) are provided to help them get out of life's "mess".



4. What are the "keys to opening the door to Ishvara darshan"

The sources outline several profound internal, intellectual, and practical "keys" necessary for a spiritual seeker to "open the door to Ishvara Darshan" (the direct experience of Ishvara, or Self-realization).

These keys center on redefining reality, shifting the core of one's identity, and embracing a sincere internal commitment.

4.1 Redefining and Relocating Ishvara

The first crucial step is recognizing the true nature and location of Ishvara:

- **Ishvara is Complete Satisfaction:** Ishvara is essentially defined as the **sense of complete satisfaction**. This complete satisfaction is what human life is ultimately searching for.
- **The Internal Search (Aham):** Since the external world (**Idam**) is continuously changing and therefore unstable, Ishvara cannot be found there. The search must be redirected to the **internal Self (Aham)**, where Ishvara is hidden.
- **Recognizing the Diamond:** The seeker must learn to recognize the "diamond" that Ishvara is. The self is the "only entity that is self-existing (**Swayamsiddha**)". Many people make the mistake of searching for this satisfaction in the wrong places.

4.2 The Absolute Internal Choice (*Mumukshutva*)

Spiritual progress is not a matter of simply trying harder or accumulating knowledge; it requires a deep, sincere internal decision:

- **Choice Over Intellect:** The *Atma* cannot be reached merely through extensive teaching, intellectual study (*medhaya*), or abundant learning (*bahuna shrutena*).
- **Prioritizing the Self:** Realization occurs only for the person who **chooses (*vṛṇute*) Paramatma to reside in their own heart**. This genuine desire and internal priority is known as **Mumukshutva**.
- **The Self Must Open:** The Self (*Atma*) will not "open up" (*vṛṇ*) to the seeker unless this internal choice is made.

4.3 Shifting Identity and Giving Up Clinging

The greatest barrier to Ishvara Darshan is the attachment to the limited, changing identity:

- **Abandoning "Me and Mine":** The seeker must **give up the notion of "me and mine" attachments** (such as clinging to family, grandchildren, or possessions) because these are what ultimately hold the seeker back and are binding. Instead, one should treat those relationships as **Ishvara's children**.
- **Honest Priority Assessment:** While maintaining necessary duties (**Nitya** and **Naimittika Karma**), the seeker must **eliminate unnecessary activities (*Kamya*)**



Karma), such as excessive sports watching. This involves balancing spiritual practice with worldly responsibilities through **honest priority assessment**.

- **Abandoning False Usefulness (Vairagya):** The spiritual stage of **Vairagya** (recognizing the illusion) requires the seeker to **stop pretending they are essential or useful to others**. The feeling of dependency on family or society is often a **self-created illusion (Brahma)**. To be truly free is to recognize that nobody needs you.

4.4 Discrimination (Viveka) and Accepting Guidance

Advanced discrimination is required to separate reality from reflection, and the seeker must actively use the "hints" provided by Ishvara:

- **Distinguishing Ahankara:** The **most difficult discrimination (Viveka)** is distinguishing the **Real Self** (which remains constant) from **Ahankara** (the "I-thought"). *Ahankara* is the partial, changing identity that asserts, "I am in charge of my life".
- **Recalling Vedantic Truth:** When facing problems, the seeker should **close their eyes and recall the Vedantic truth**, remembering that the source of the upset is only a **"partial I," not the real I**.
- **Accepting the Hint (Linga):** Ishvara provides **"hints" or "ropes"** for the seeker to get out of life's "mess" because Ishvara wants the seeker to be happy more than the seeker does. The **dream state** is presented as a crucial daily proof (*Linga*) of the Self's capacity to create and dissolve entire realities.

By implementing these internal choices and practices, the seeker moves through stages of spiritual development, from feeling limited (**Samsari**) to recognizing the illusion (**Vairagya**), and eventually becoming **Asangata** (unaffected, like a mirror reflecting the world without being changed by it).

Vijayji will continue to expand these topics in subsequent class talks on Arsha Vidya Center youtube channels.