



Muṇḍakopaniṣad Mantrā 6



(Continued from last issue)

The example also answers a doubt: Does Brahman, the cause of jagat stand separate from it, like the spider that converts the threads into a web, is separate from the web? Brahman does not stand separate from the jagat like the spider from the web. Brahman is non-separate from the jagat, like the earth is not separate from the trees and plants that have come out of it.

One more objection can be raised here. Brahman is consciousness. From that Brahman how can an inert jagat manifest? The jagat, being inert, is entirely different from Brahman. From clay we do not produce a human being. Between the cause and the effect there is an identity, so that the qualities of the cause are found in the effect. Out of cotton fabric, we cannot produce silken cloth. So, Brahman cannot be the cause for vilakṣaṇa jagat, a world full of features that are opposite to Brahman. The third example answers this objection.

Yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśa lomāni : just as the hair on the head and the body comes out from a living person, keśa is the hair on your head. The hair that is all over the body is called loma. We can include nails also in this category. They are all inert. Keśa is inert in the sense that you can cut it without experiencing pain. That is why a haircut is possible. If a haircut hurts, nobody will have a haircut. It will become hair-surgery! The specialist will be called a hair-surgeon! Keśa is inert because there is no sensation there. What about the sensation that is there when somebody pulls your hair? That is because the scalp is sentient. The hair on your head is inert, but you are a conscious being. You cannot say, 'I am inert'. Something that is inert will not give an answer. A rock will not respond to my words. Just as the inert hair comes out from a conscious being, similarly the inert world comes out from Brahman. In fact, hair and nails grow, so they do have life.

There is no rule that an inert thing cannot come out of conscious entity. We see this in the example of inert tissue growing in the form of hair and nails in a conscious being. There is also no rule that the cause should inhere in the effect.

The earth is inert and the plants and trees that comes out are sentient. Therefore, there is nothing to contradict the fact that all that is here is one caitanyaṁ brahma. Really speaking, there is no division of sentient and insentient. Brahman is cetana and nothing is separate from it. Therefore, there is nothing that is inert. If you shift your vision, then all that is here is one caitanyaṁ brahma. Really speaking, there is no division of sentient and insentient. Brahman is cetana and nothing is separate from it. Therefore, there is nothing that is inert. If you shift your vision, then all that is here is one caitanyaṁ brahma. There is no object that you can think of, that is outside caitanya, consciousness. The whole object is pervaded and sustained by that caitanya alone. When the names and forms resolve, they do not go away anywhere, but just resolve into consciousness alone. Therefore, the creation is from the caitanya, the sustenance is by the caitanya and also the resolution is into the caitanya. All that is here is therefore one caitanya. This being the truth, the whole magic is, 'as though' coming, 'as though' being, and 'as though' going.

The more appropriate example for creation is our dream. In the jyotir brahmaṇa of the Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad¹, it is said, "Aaaall that is here is jyoti". Jyoti means light. That is a very beautiful word. It is the light because of which everything comes to light. For visual perception, light is inevitable. In light alone an object comes to light. Similarly, in the presence of the jyoti alone, everything comes to light—a sound comes to light, a form comes to light, a colour comes to light, and the entire jagat comes to light. That light is not a physical light. In fact it is the only light; everything else is lighted. It is the caitanya, consciousness.

In the dream, that jyoti is in the form of the dreamer as well as the dream world—dream-time, dream-space, dream-stars and so on. In the dream, everything that you see is non-separate from you, the dreamer. That dreamer is non-separate from the caitanya. In the dreamer there is no waker or sleeper. The waker, the dreamer and the sleeper mutually negate one another. The connecting factor between them is only caitanya. When I say, 'I dreamt', 'I have woken up', 'I slept', the connecting factor is 'I'. The 'I' is joined with all of them. Similarly, when I see it as the snake and say, "This is not a snake, this is a garland", the snake is gone and 'this' joins the garland. In fact 'this' does not join anything; 'this' remains always. 'This' did not shift, but remains invariable.

¹ योऽयं विज्ञानमयः प्राणेषु हृदि अन्तर्ज्योतिः पुरुषः ॥ स हि स्वप्नो भूत्वा इमं लोकम् अतिक्रामति । ब्रह्दारण्यकोपनिषत् ४।३।७

Similarly, when the dream is gone what is retained is 'I', the jyoti, which joins the waker. 'I' is always the same, invariable caitanya called sāksin. The waker, dreamer and sleeper are one invariable caitanya. The waking and dream worlds also are the same invariable caitanya. The entire dream jagat is the manifestation of caitanya. In dream, you see a mountain and a mountaineer. We say that mountaineer is sentient and the mountain is insentient. But both are one caitanya alone in dream. So 'sentient, insentient' are purely two points of view. If you look at it as jyoti, there is nothing sentient or insentient in this world. All that is there is only caigtanyam brahma that appears in the form of various things in this jagat. So, we have the three examples, meant for easy understanding² of the fact that there is one Brahman alone which is the cause of everything. This Braman is both maker and matgerial, and there is no cetana-acetana division.

Tathākṣarāt sambhavati iha viśvam : Similarly, the world comes into being from akṣara. Iha means here, where we are, so that verse is talking about creation. Viśva means anything that is understood through bvarious cognitions. When you see a flower, there is cognition of flower. That is called pratyaya. There are different types of pratyayas reporting to you an attribute, or a species or an action of a given object, or the connection of an object with something else. This is all the jagat consists of. This jagat, which is understood by various cognitions, is called Viśva. It comes from akṣara, like the dream world comes from you. For creation of the dream world you are endowed with the necessary powers. Similarly, for the creation of entire jagat, Brahman as Īśvara is endowed with all the powers necessary. When we analyse the jagat, we find that it is mithyā. There is no such thing as jagat, really speaking. To create a mithyā jagat, Īśvara requires a power, and that power is mithyā māyā. The word mithyā must be understood properly. It is purely a word revealing your understanding of the reality of an object. The jagat is to be understood as mithyā. 'Truth' also is a word revealing your undeerstanding of reality. Mithyā māyā and its effect, the mithyā jagat, are sustained by satyam brahma. Brahman is the only reality that gives satya, existence, to everything.

Brahman is the provideer of existence to everything, including ignorance. When you say that a flower 'is', that 'is-ness' always is. That never goes. That is why you cannot destroy it. If you destroy the flower, the flower is gone, but the petal 'is'. If that is also destroyed, the destroyed petal 'is'. Suppose everything disappears and you do not see any form. Then the absence of form 'is'. The

² अनेकभट्टन्तोपादानं तु सुखार्थभप्रबोधनार्थम्। मुण्डक श्राष्यम्।

'is-ness' is never negated. That 'is-ness' is Brahman. That is the reality of everything. Therefore, knowing that Brahman as oneself without any attribute, everything is as well known. So, śaunaka's question is answered in this way.

When the Śruti says everything is Brahman, it is not pantheism. In pantheism the cause has undergone change to become the world. It is not so here. Brahman is vivartta upādāna and also nimitta kāraṇa, therefore there is no pantheism here. If at all there is change, it is attributed to māyā, which has no reality apart from Brahman. So, māyā being there in between Brahman and everything else, it does not become pantheism. When satya and mithyā are not understood, it all ends up in confusion.

The words, 'cause' and 'effect' are only from a point of view. You say that this is the effect and that is the cause. In fact, the effect itself is the cause, being non-separate from the cause. Then again, which is cause and which is effect? When the pot is broken, it becomes clay. That means clay came from pot! The concept of cause and effect is purely a point of view. Our understanding that the cause came first and the effect came later is only a point of view. From the standpoint of Brahman, there is nothing that comes later, because Brahman itself is the effect. If at all the concept of 'cause' and 'effect' is talked about, it is from the standpoint of the unmanifest and manifest conditions.

The unmanifest becomes manifest—that is called creation. Creation itself is not a proper word for us, because the word 'creation' is relevant only when something did not exist before, and later came into being. But it is not like that. That which is in an unmanifest, undifferentiated form, comes to be differentiated. One is in a subtle form, the other is a gross form. In a differentiated form it is called creation. In an undifferentiated form it is called dissolution. This creation is cyclic. The creation becomes unmanifest because it was manifest before. Unless it was manifest before, it cannot become unmanifest. We cannot talk about any sequence here.

To be continued...