

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

Similarly, there must be space in between the different sparks of consciousness for any division to take place in consciousness. But there is consciousness in between two sparks of consciousness also. Space itself is *mithyā*, depending upon *satya*, *caitanya ātman*. The *mithyā* space cannot divide *satya*. From the *ātman*'s standpoint space does not even exist. Space exists only from the standpoint of our experience. Space is Brahman. So it does not divide Brahman. Time is Brahman. It does not divide Brahman. Any object in time and space is also Brahman. Objects do not divide Brahman. Therefore, *akṣaram brahma* remains the same. At the same time, wherever there is a subtle body, one will find consciousness naturally manifest there in the mind, and a conscious being comes into existence. There are many minds, so consciousness also appears to be many conscious beings. But each conscious being is *akṣaram brahma* only. The whole is always whole, like even the pot space is always total space.

The word 'sarūpāḥ' is very important here. *Sarūpa* means it is of same nature.⁸ There is no difference in the *svarūpa*, nature, between fire and spark. The *akṣaram brahma* is one, *jīvas* are many, like fire is one, and the sparks are many. Just as every spark is nothing but fire alone with an *upādhi*, so too the varieties of *jīvas* are nothing but *akṣaram brahma* with *upādhis*. The *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is nothing but the same *akṣaram brahma*.

The objection, 'what is known by the words of the *śāstra* is indirect knowledge,' is dismissed here. The *śāstra* is not presenting Brahman as something to be known like heaven. The *jīva*, the knower, is Brahman. The knowledge gained through the words of the *śāstra* is, therefore, direct.

Here, the spark example is appropriate. The fire is big or small depending upon the *upādhi*. If a spark were to think, "I am a small perishing spark," it requires to be enlightened that it is but the fire. Not that it has to be told, "You are small, you are only a spark." Such a revelation does not make it freer than it was before; in fact, the smallness is only confirmed. The only difference between the spark example and the *ātman* is that between the spark and fire there is space, whereas there is no space between the *jīva* and *ātman*. There is only one *ātman* that is limitless, whole consciousness. Therefore, there is no germane example possible, all examples being deficient in one way or another.

⁸ सरूपाः अग्नि-सलक्षणा एव । मुण्डक भाष्यम्

Every *jīva* has to know 'I am Brahman,' like the 'pot space' has to know, 'I am limitless space.' Until then, the sense of smallness and limitation will remain. The 'pot space' may get some satisfaction looking at the space in the needle's eye, but looking at the 'room space' it will feel small. The 'room space' also will have the problem of smallness looking at the 'hall space' though it may feel very happy looking at the 'pot space'. There is no smallness from the standpoint of space. Space alone is the reality with reference to the 'pot space'.

Tatra ca eva apiyanti: the sparks resolve only in the fire. They come from fire, remain as fire, and they go back to fire. The coming, remaining and going—all three do not belong to the fire. They belong to the *upādhi*. When the pot is broken, the 'pot space' resolves into space, having lived its life of 'pot space' according to its *karma*. If one accepts the coming, then one can also accept the going. From the standpoint of space there is no coming or going. From the standpoint of pot space it is 'as though' coming and 'as though' going, brought about by the creation and destruction of the pot.⁹ Similarly, from Brahman alone the *jīva* comes when the *upādhi* is born, the same Brahman sustains the *jīva*, and unto that Brahman the *jīva* goes back when the *upādhi* gets resolved. Therefore, all the *jīvas* are nothing but Brahman.

Really speaking, there is only one *vastu* which is *nirupādhika*, without the *upādhi*. Suppose you place a red flower in front of a crystal, it now appears red. The red colour is due to *upādhi*¹⁰ and is not intrinsic to the crystal. Without assuming the colour, the crystal appears as though it has the colour. The crystal does not even know the presence of the flower. From the standpoint of the crystal, there is no *upādhi*. From the standpoint of the appearance of colour in the crystal, we present an *upādhi* which is a flower here.

So too, whatever we attribute to Brahman is due to the *upādhis*. In reality the *jīvas* do not come out of Brahman. It is due to the appearance and disappearance of varieties of *upādhis* that we say, " *Jīvas* are born of Brahman and resolve into Brahman." It does not mean there are two different things—the *nirupādhika-brahma* and the *upādhi*. Brahman is free from *upādhi* and the *upādhi* itself is born of Brahman alone, and hence not separate from Brahman. So *upādhi* is *mithyā*. Brahman is called *jīva* due to *mithyā upādhi*. Without the *upādhi* the *jīva* is *satyaṁ brahma*. Even with the *upādhi* the *jīva* is *satyaṁ brahma*.

⁹ यथा आकाशस्य सुषिर-भेदोत्पत्ति-प्रलय-निमित्तत्वं झटद्युपाधि-कृतम् एव तद्वदक्षरस्य अपि नाम-रूप-कृत- देहोपाधि-निमित्तमेव जीवोत्पत्ति-प्रलय-निमित्तत्वम् । मुण्डक भाष्यम्

¹⁰ *Upādhi* is that which gives its attribute to another object, without really giving it.