

Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

(Mantra 2 ...continued..)

Gauḍapādācārya says,¹⁷ *ajāḥ kalpita-saṁvṛtīyā paramārthena nāpyajāḥ, brahma* is called *ajā* from the standpoint of the projected world, but really it is not even *ajā*. *Saṁvṛti* is a movement of thought forms. It is such a movement alone that makes a world; there is no other world. The world is *kalpita*, a projection. The manifestation of Brahman as *jagat* is an 'as though' manifestation; one cannot say that Brahman takes birth as the *jagat*. The *jagat* is not an attribute to Brahman.

By saying *ajā, śruti* negates all other forms of change like old age and death.¹⁸ All these negations are necessary because of the existence of various notions born of ignorance. Whatever you think *ātman* to be, *śruti* says, "Not this, not this."¹⁹ Knocking off all notions, it reveals the nature of *ātman* by implication.

Aprāṇaḥ : free from *prāṇa*. Being unborn, naturally it has no *prāṇa*. A body that is born has *prāṇa*; it energises the body. *Prāṇa* keeps moving all the time; it is *kriyā-śakti*, the power of doing. *Puruṣa*, however, is free from *prāṇa*; it is *aprāṇa*.²⁰ The statement 'Devadattaḥ aputraḥ, without a son,' can convey two meanings — His son expired or he never had a son.²¹ Similarly, there are two meanings for the word '*aprāṇaḥ*' — There was *prāṇa* once and now it is not, that is, the person is dead or there was no *prāṇa* in the first place. Here, '*aprāṇaḥ*' has the second meaning. *Puruṣa* has no birth; it is the *upādhi* along with *prāṇa* that is born.

Amanāḥ: free from mind.²² Being not born, it is free from mind, which is an effect. Mind is manifestation of *jñāna-icchā-śakti*, the power of knowing

¹⁷ माण्डूक्य कारिका 4.74

¹⁸ सर्व-भाव-विकाराणां जनिमूलत्वात् तत्प्रतिषेधेन सर्वे प्रतिषिद्धाः भवन्ति । चमुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

¹⁹ नेति नेति । च बृहदारण्यकोपनिषत् 4.4.22)

²⁰ अविद्यमानः क्रियाशक्तिभेदवान् चलनात्मकः वायुः यस्मिन्नसौ अप्राणः । च मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

²¹ यथा अनुत्पन्ने पुत्रे अपुत्रो देवदत्तः । च मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

²² अनेक-ज्ञानशक्तिभेदवत् सङ्कल्पाद्यात्मकं मनः अपि अविद्यमानं यस्मिन् सोऽयम् अमनाः । च मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ

as well as desiring. It has various expressions such as knowledge, emotions, doubts, memory, and ego. One *māyā-śakti* alone is expressing in the form of both *prāṇa* and mind. *Puruṣa* is free from any *upādhi* including *māyā*. For an ignorant person, *ātman* appears to have the attributes of *prāṇa* and mind due to the error of taking them as *ātman*, like space is erroneously taken to be subject to pollution. One should note that while *prāṇa* is *ātman*, *ātman* is not confined to just being *prāṇa*.

ātman appears as if having *prāṇa* and mind because it is *vivartta-upādāna-kāraṇa*, a non-changing material cause. The word '*vivartta*' means apparent. It is a change without involving a real change. The *ātman* remains the same and still seems to assume various forms. It is exactly like the clay assuming the form of a pot, a rope appearing in the form of a snake, the waker assuming the form of the dreamer.

The formless appears with form and the attributeless alone appears with attributes. In any hymn of 108 or 1008 names of the Lord, like the *viṣṇu-sahasranāma*, there are names referring to both the *nirguṇa* and the *saguṇa* aspect. All the glories and episodes from different incarnations, as well as the general expressions like the creator, the sustainer, the all-knowledge, form part of one set of names like *giridhāri*²³ and so on. The words describing the formless and attributeless such as *niravayava*, partless, and so on, form another set of names. Both of them contribute to the establishment of the non-dual nature of Brahman. Suppose one says that *nirguṇa* has become *saguṇa*, then there is no *nirguṇa* at all, and there will be no *mokṣa* possible. *Nirguṇa*, free from attributes, cannot become one with attributes. It is always free from attributes.

śubhraḥ : It is pure. It is free from *rāga-dveṣa* or any kind of mental problems. *ātman* is free from the concept of pure and impure. Even a good quality may have some blemish. Being unborn, it is pure.

Parataḥ akṣarāt paraḥ : that which is beyond *māyā*. The word '*akṣara*' is used in two different senses - one in the sense of the *vastu*, the other in the sense of *māyā*, the unmanifest cause. In '*akṣarāt parataḥ*' the word '*akṣara*' means *māyā* only. *Māyā* is called *akṣara* because when everything is dissolved, *māyā* continues to remain in its causal form, and it is called *parā* because everything goes back into it. *Māyā* depends on Brahman, and so Brahman is *para*, superior to *māyā*. *Māyā* is not an intrinsic attribute of Brahman, nor is it a parallel reality to Brahman. *Māyā*

²³ One who holds the Govardhana Mountain.

is the *kalpita-upādhi* of Brahman and it is *mithyā*. So *parataḥ paraḥ* means that which is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the truth of the very *māyā*.

We are constrained to look at one reality in a two-fold way. One is the *puruṣa*, the *caitanya* which is Brahman and which is not bound by time. The other is only from the standpoint of time. Ontologically, the first order of reality is called *satya* and the second order is *mithyā*, empirically true. The *śāstra* uses the word '*satya*' in the sense of both orders. The word '*satya*' refers to Brahman, the cause of everything that does not undergo any change and also to *māyā*, the cause of everything that undergoes modification. *Māyā* is non-separate from Brahman and has, therefore, the ontological designation of *mithyā*. Anything born of *māyā* also is *mithyā* and is empirically real.

These two orders of reality have been clearly revealed in the sentence, '*sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ brahma*, all that is here is indeed Brahman',²⁴ through a particular usage of words. The words '*idam*' and '*sarvam*' are in *sāmānādhikaraṇya*,²⁵ in apposition, revealing the same object. It is similar to the sentence, 'Devadatta is a grammarian,' where the words 'Devadatta' and 'grammarian' are in *sāmānādhikaraṇya* revealing one and the same person. However, here Devadatta's knowledge of grammar is as real as Devadatta and both enjoy the same degree of reality.

Suppose a person mistakes a rope for a snake. He is told that it is not a snake but a rope. The sentence 'This snake is rope' is not like the sentence, 'Devadatta is a grammarian.' The words 'snake' and 'rope' have *sāmānādhikaraṇya*, but the snake is not an attribute of the rope; it resolves into the rope. There is no adjective-substantive connection between the snake and the rope. Neither the snake is an attribute of the rope, nor the rope is an attribute of the snake. In this type of *sāmānādhikaraṇya*, one word negates itself and reveals the other. We call this *bādhāyām sāmānādhikaraṇyam*. When there is an error in perception or cognition, the words used in *sāmānādhikaraṇya* to correct the error, work by negation, in the wake of the knowledge of rope, the snake disappears.

²⁴ छान्दोग्योपनिषत् 3.14.1

²⁵ *Samāna- vibhaktikānaṁ bhinna-pravṛtti-nimittānāṁ ekasmin adhikaraṇe tātparyam yatra tatra sāmānādhikaraṇyam* ~ words of same case ending having different meanings, pointing out to one thing are said to have *sāmānādhikaraṇya*. It is unlike the words of a sentence that has got *samsarga*, syntactical connection. When someone says, 'Hey Govinda bring the cow with the help of a stick in hand,' the words are not in *sāmānādhikaraṇya*. Each word having different case ending points out to different things here.