

Mundaka

Mantra 2.2.9 continued from previous issue

The next doubt is about the *tātparya*, the vision, of the *śāstra*. What does the *śāstra pramāṇa*, say? Does it say is part of Brahman or separate from Brahman, or that *ātman* is Brahman? Does it say the world is real or unreal? All these questions are answered by the *śāstra*. The *śāstra*, with a commitment, conveys, "Brahman is one without a second."¹⁰⁴ "There is no second thing at all here."¹⁰⁵ "All that is here indeed is Brahman."¹⁰⁶ and so on. All of them talk about the oneness between the *jīva* and *Īśvara*, and about the *jagat* being non-separate from *Īśvara*. These sentences do not give any meaning other than the non-dual nature of Brahman.

After reading the same Vedanta, one can say, " *Ātman* is either part of Brahman or different from Brahman, and the world is *satya*." He will argue, "The all-pervasive *Īśvara* is up in *vaikuṇṭha*. He is like the sun in the sky, whose rays of grace are all-pervasive, or like a king in his palace whose will and mandate are operating in his entire kingdom. Lord's mandate is operating in the entire world. You are within that mandate. With his grace alone you can get some small goodies." When this view is presented, you may think that it is also right. You have to decide which is right and which is not. To ascertain this, you have to do *śravaṇa*, listen to the *śāstra*. In listening, you analyze the *śāstra* based on what is said before, what is said later, what is said in between, what is unique in its statements, what is praised and so on, and ascertain the *tātparya* of the *śāstra*.

As long as you are a separate individual different from *Īśvara*, *mokṣa* is not possible. Even if you go to *vaikuṇṭha*, you will still be an insignificant person. An insignificant person will remain insignificant wherever he or she goes, and there will not be any significant change by a change of place. When you see this very clearly, you understand the nature of bondage and freedom. When it is understood, the vision of the *śāstra* becomes clear. In understanding the *śāstra* you also use grammar and reasoning. Anything that the *śāstra* says cannot be against reasoning. So anything against reason must be either dismissed, or the fallacy in the reasoning discovered. Śaṅkara says that even a hundred *śrutis* cannot establish that fire is cold to touch. If the *śruti* contradicts what the other means of knowledge reveal, then the *śruti* is wrong. But the *śruti* does not contradict the other means of knowledge. No means of knowledge is capable of contradicting another means of knowledge.

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Here, *śraddhā* becomes very important. When you do not understand what the *śruti* says or find it seemingly wrong, you begin to look into the *śruti* again because of *śraddhā*. Now, the language, the imagery, and so on are understood properly; you have no doubt whatsoever, and you are able to see the validity of what the *pramāṇa* says.

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Prameya-gata-saṁśaya, doubt with reference to whether what the śāstra says is true or not. Śāstra says, "I am that Brahman which is ever pure, ever enlightened and ever liberated." I do not have doubt in what the śruti wants to reveal. Śruti is consistent. But I do not think I am Brahman. I am created and I am limited. When I say, "I am limited, I do not feel that I am Brahman," the discussion ends because feeling cannot be handled by argument. I cannot feel that I am Brahman; in fact every feeling is Brahman.

I do not understand what the śāstra says, and therefore, I entertain such a doubt. Or a great person states that the self is non-existent, or it is momentary consciousness, or it is a divine spark and so on. Since the person who says this is acclaimed by a lot of people as enlightened, I want to believe such a leader to be right. I think that I am accommodative and broad-minded by doing so.

Let us understand what this 'broad-mindedness' is about. One plus one is two. Someone says it is three. If I want to accommodate that also, it is not broad-mindedness. Broad-mindedness is to give such a person a place to live on this planet along with his or her confusions. Perhaps, I can reach out and try to correct the person's thinking, if he or she wants to get corrected. But if the person is satisfied with the conclusion, then I should let him or her have the freedom to breathe and live. That broad-mindedness is called compassion or accommodation. I can allow such people to be what they are because they also serve a purpose by making others feel very intelligent! Broad-mindedness is not accepting an obvious error as fact. I cannot accommodate an error. To accept something that is incorrect, against all evidence, is wrong. It reveals some kind of problem. The buddhi is not meant for that; it is partial to what it understands to be right. I cannot make the buddhi bend to accommodate what is wrong, in its own view. I can make it see that what it considers wrong is also right, if it is right. It is ready to reshuffle its ideas. It is the nature of the buddhi. But everything cannot be right.

You may argue, "It is only a difference in language. I use the word *śūnya*. You use the word *nirguṇa*. It is all the same." If it is the same, then it is Vedanta, and you should not object to calling it Vedanta. If anything else is untrue, then you have to say it is untrue. Again, you cannot simply dismiss it as untrue. You have to examine it first, following a criteria, before dismissing it as untrue. If what is said is the same thing, then it is not accommodation because there is no issue at all even to discuss.

The *mahā-vākya* equation becomes clear to such a person. That equation can neither be improved upon nor dismissed. There is no other means of knowledge available to negate it as untrue. It is an equation; we are not talking about an event that is going to take place because of some cause. The *ātman* is self-evident Brahman, and that is what is revealed. There is nothing to oppose that knowledge and hence it stays.

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A question may be asked here, 'Suppose, a new philosopher comes and tells in his own language that ātman is not Brahman. Then what shall one do?' One has to question that new argument. If it is presented as a scientific argument, it is very easy to dismiss. We are not dealing with science at all here. We are dealing with the ātman which looks into science.

'You are the whole' cannot be improved upon. You cannot be negated. The whole cannot be improved upon. You have to keep on looking into this vision until all the doubts go away.

One Panditji asked me, "Swamiji, if somebody comes and improved Śaṅkara's teaching, what will happen?" I said, " Śaṅkara does not have a philosophy of his own." The *upaniṣad* tells me, "I am Brahman." Śaṅkara only makes me see the statement clearly. The statement cannot be improved upon. The methods of communication can perhaps be improved upon, but definitely the vision, 'You are the whole' cannot be improved upon. You cannot be negated. The whole cannot be improved upon. You have to keep on looking into this vision until all the doubts go away.

Ignorance can clear and still leave some vagueness behind, some doubts behind. That is why we keep on looking into them until the doubts go away. It is spiritual romanticism to think that just by sitting under a tree one can get enlightened. Here, it is a quiet and profound way of looking into oneself through the śāstra and removing all the doubts. As the doubts get cleared, the vision of the śāstra becomes clearer.

All the doubts with respect to the subject matter of the *pramāṇa* can thus be cleared only by *manana*, a relook, in which you use logic. *Manana* is in keeping with the śāstra. Only *śravaṇa* is related to the śāstra. Only when doubts are gone, can you say that Brahman is seen.

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Kṣīyante ca asya karmāṇi: for this person, who has come to recognise Brahman, all the *karmas*¹⁰⁷ get exhausted at one stroke. There are three types of *karmas* talked about in the śāstra.

104 एकमेवाद्वितीयं ब्रह्म । (छन्दोग्योपनिषत् ६ ॥२ ॥१)

105 नेह नानास्ति किञ्चिन् । (कठोतनिषत् २ ॥१ ॥११)

106 सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म । (छन्दोग्योपनिषत् ३ ॥१४ ॥१)

107 यानि विज्ञानोत्पत्तेः प्राक्तनानि जन्मान्तरे चाप्रवृत्त-फलानि ज्ञानोत्पत्ति-सहभावीनि च ।(मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

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