

Mundaka

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Mantra 2.2.9

Again one wants to know what happens after the knowledge. The śruti says,

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥ २ ॥ २ ॥ ९ ॥

bhidyate hṛdayagranthiḥ chidyante sarvasaṁśayāḥ ।
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣṭe parāvare. (2. 2. 9)

tasmin -- when that (Brahman); *parāvare* -- which is in the form of cause and effect; *dṛṣṭe* -- is recognised; *hṛdaya-granthiḥ* -- the knot (ignorance) of the heart; *bhidyate* -- is resolved; *sarvasaṁśayāḥ* -- all doubts; *chidyante* -- are removed; *ca* -- and; *asya* -- of his; *karmāṇi* -- all karmas; *kṣīyante* -- get exhausted

When that Brahman, which is in the form of cause and effect is recognised, the knot of ignorance of heart resolves, all doubts go away and all his karmas get exhausted.

The result of self-knowledge is now pointed out. Brahman is called *parāvāra*. *Para* means that which exists before, while *avara* is that which comes later. What exists before is the cause, and what comes later is the effect. Brahman being *parāvāra*, is both the cause and the effect.¹⁰² The effect that is the jagat, including one's body-mind-sense complex, is *mithyā*. Being *mithyā* it depends upon *satya* which is Brahman and is, therefore, non-separate from Brahman. So both the cause and effect are Brahman. *Para* can also be understood as *Īśvara* and *avara* as the *jīva*. Both *jīva* and *Īśvara* are Brahman; the difference between them being *mithyā*. Thus, the identity is revealed by the word, '*parāvāra*'.

Tasmin parāvare dṛṣṭe (sati): when that Brahman, which is both *para* and *avara*, is seen. The word 'seen' is used in the *śāstra* in the place of 'known' because there is finality in sight, that is, there is no doubt whatsoever. Even in a homicide case, the testimony of the eyewitness is conclusive, not what one has heard. The *śāstra* also uses the word, '*dṛṣṭi*' involving sight in the sentence, '*ātmanā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ, ātman* should be seen.'¹⁰³ What is said here is that *ātman* should be known. *Ātman* is self-evident, but it has to be recognised as Brahman, as both *para* and *avara*. That recognition should be conclusive; it should not leave anything to be desired. When Brahman is recognised as oneself, the results are pointed out here.

¹⁰² परं च कारणात्मना अवरं च कार्यात्मना इति परावरेज(मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

¹⁰³ Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 2.4.5

Bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ: the knot of ignorance is resolved. Your ignorance goes away. In fact, the going away of ignorance is called seeing. This knowledge takes place differently from all other forms of knowledge. In other forms of knowledge, *ātman* has got to be there as the knower in order to recognise the object of thought. With reference to self-knowledge, on the other hand, the knower does not remain as a separate entity in the wake of the recognition that the knower is Brahman. *Ātman* is not going to be seen as an object. The knowledge removes the ignorance and ignorance-born notions, 'I am a *saṁsārin*' and 'I am the doer who has to accomplish this end which is different from me.' In that removal, there is the recognition that all that is here, at all times, is one Brahman. Nothing else goes away or comes in.

The desire to be somebody is not there anymore. When the sense of doership goes away, the reality given to the accessories of action such as the object, instrument and so on, goes away. Previously the accessories of action were taken as real, now all of them are *bādhita*, sublated, by knowledge. Since the doer is not there, the karma is not there. The *karma-phala* also does not accrue to this person.

Avidyā, kāma and karma - these three constitute the granthi, knot. A knot always ties up things. The *ātman* is bound to this body first by *avidyā*, the original cause, then by the *kāma*, desire, and finally by karma, action. *Avidyā* here stands for *ahaṅkāra*. The *ahaṅkāra* and the *karma* tie this person to this body, and take him or her to another body, again to another body, and this continues as long as *avidyā* is there. When the *avidyā* goes away, then the *saṁsāra* characterised by birth and death also goes away.

Suppose one has the ignorance of a pot. When pot ignorance goes away, the pot does not go away, nor does anything else. Here, however, when ignorance of *ātman* goes away, *saṁsāra* goes away. It is because *saṁsāra* is a product of ignorance. We are not attempting to eliminate the problem of *saṁsāra* or the cause of the problem. The attempt here is to understand what is the *ātman*, 'I' the *vastu*.

The ignorance of the self will naturally make one a doer, identifying with the body-mind-sense complex. One will then be a given individual distinct from everything else. 'Everything else' includes *Īśvara*-- the deities, the elements, the forces, the people, the bugs and so on. It is infinite. With the two small hands and frail legs that one has, one is not going to succeed in dealing with this world. It is one against 'the all'. One is a born loser and has no chance whatsoever to win. This is the situation for a *saṁsārin*. It takes a long time to understand what exactly will resolve this knot of ignorance. One gets the hang of it when the *puruiṣārtha-niścaya* takes place. *Avidyā-granthi*, otherwise called *hṛdaya-granthi*, then falls apart.

Chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ: all the doubts in a person disappear when Brahman is recognised. Doubts are two-fold. One pertains to the *pramāṇa*, the means of knowledge and the other pertains to the *prameya*, the subject matter of the means of knowledge.

1) *Pramāṇa-gata-sarīśaya*, doubts with reference to *pramāṇa*. Some of these doubts can be analysed here. You may have a doubt whether you require a separate *pramāṇa* for gaining the knowledge of the *ātman*. Is not your experience enough? Anything that leads you to knowledge is called *pramāṇa*. Experience, however, is not conclusive in giving knowledge, as it is not a *pramāṇa*. Whenever you say that experience gives knowledge you mean that you have learnt from the experiences. Mere experience is not a *pramāṇa*. Memory also is not a *pramāṇa*. Perception and inference lead you to immediate and indirect knowledge respectively. But neither of them is capable of removing the ignorance of the *ātman* because they cannot objectify the *ātman*. So, you require *śabda*, the words of scripture as a means of knowledge.

Again, there may be another doubt whether *śāstra* will give rise to knowledge or not. How do you know that the eyes see? It is only by using the eyes and seeing. You have to open the eyes and see whether the eyes see or not. By using the ears, you know whether the ears hear or not. Similarly, to know whether the *śabda pramāṇa* works or not, you have to employ it and know whether it works or not. You have to allow the *pramāṇa* to operate itself because it is external, which is why *śraddhā* is required. *Śabda* is a spoken word; it is not written word. The spoken word being what it is, has to be operated by another person. Words well-handled always work. There is no reason why they should not work. We can even remove the doubts with reference to a *pramāṇa*, like whether it works or not, without using the *pramāṇa*. We have sufficient arguments for that. Once we use the *pramāṇa*, it removes the ignorance pertaining to the subject matter of the *pramāṇa*.

to be continued...

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