

Mundaka

Second Muṇḍaka

Mantra 2.2.1 continuation from previous issue.....

Śaṅkara gives here the analogy of spokes on the hub of a chariot's wheel⁵⁹ to point out how everything has its being in *Brahman*. Without the hub the spokes have no being. Similarly, everything is placed in this *Brahman* alone. The hub and the spokes enjoy the same order of reality. The example, therefore, has a limited scope and is meant only to show that the hub supports all the spokes. Similarly, the wheel of *saṁsāra* also has a number of spokes, factors that make it continue. These factors have their being in the hub of Brahman. It is not a hub of activity; it is a hub of placement. Because of this hub alone the spokes are in place and the wheel of *saṁsāra* moves. So it is *mahat-padam*. The mantra now lists all the things that are placed in Brahman.

Yat ejaṭ : that which moves. Here it means anything insentient that moves, like air, water and so on. Anything that is alive is covered by the words *nimiṣat* and *prāṇat*. It is the *upaniṣad*'s style of covering things. *Yat nimiṣat* : anything that closes and opens the eyes. It means that which has eyelids. All the animals and human beings are included. *Yat prāṇat* : that which breathes, meaning anything that has *prāṇa* like trees. Even insects are included in this.

All these are various *upādhis*. One does not understand the implications of the term *upādhi*. We often hear people saying, "Swamiji, I know I am limitless, but I have a problem with my *upādhi*. It is not good." It is just shifting the language to express one's problem. Unless one identifies with the *upādhi*, one cannot make the statement, 'I have a problem with my *upādhi*.' With that identification the *upādhi* is no longer an *upādhi*, but has become oneself. The first step in recognising the *vastu* is to know that one is not the *upādhi*. The next step is to

The first step in recognising the vastu is to know that one is not the upādhi. The next step is to see that one is not enclosed in the upādhi. The final step is to know oneself as the one in whom all the upādhi are placed

see that one is not enclosed in the *upādhi*. An *āstika*, a believer in the *Vedas*, does not think he or she is the body, but thinks that he or she survives the body. For such a person, the body becomes a trap; one has to get out of it. Not knowing how to do so, the person seeks a good trap in the form of better body. It is like a Prince, found guilty of a crime, being slain with a golden sword. The final step is to know oneself as the one in whom all the *upādhi* are placed.

Sad-asat: which has forms and which is formless. *Sat* here means anything tangible, anything that has a form and *asat* means that which exists but is not tangible, and has no form. In the *sāstra* whenever the words 'sat' and 'asat' are used, we need to see the context in which they are used before interpreting them. Here, the teacher is talking about the manifest world. So the context is not *satya* and *mithyā*.

Taittirīyopaniṣad uses the terms *sat* and *tyat* for *sat* and *asat*, respectively. *Sat* refers to the elements having form such as fire, water and earth, and *tyat* refers to the elements having no form like space and air. The *jagat* is nothing but these five elements put together. So '*sadasat*' is the Vedic way of expressing the *jagat*.⁶⁰ *Brahman* is in the form of the five elements. Elements have their existence because of *Brahman*.

This *Brahman* is *vareṇyam*:⁶¹ worshipful. *Brahman* is to be sought, worshipped and understood by everyone. *Varaṇa* is in terms of choosing the best. *Brahman* is the *nitya-vastu*, and hence, if you want to put an end to your seeking, you should make it the subject matter of your pursuit. All your prayers and actions should converge to accomplish the knowledge of this *nitya-vastu* alone, knowing which everything is as well known. Any other knowledge does not make a real difference in your life. But when this knowledge is there, all other knowledge becomes sacred. This knowledge is, therefore, the most worshipful for a *vivekin*.

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The glories of all the deities are the glories of this *vastu* alone. They are placed in this *vastu* only, even though they are all worshipful. So everything, which moves, breathes, opens and closes eyes, which has form and no forms, is placed in *Brahman* and hence *Brahman* is *vareṇya*. It is said⁶² that 'salutation offered to any deity goes only to *Īśvara*.' The route is your *iṣṭā-devata*. Therefore, you can worship any form.

In the *gāyatrī-mantra*,⁶³ the word '*vareṇyam*' occurs. *Om* is the most worshipful and sought after *vastu*. All three worlds, *bhūr-bhuvas-svāḥ*, are nothing but *Om*. *Tasya devasya bhargah dhīmahi*, may we meditate upon that all-knowledge *Īśvara* who is free from ignorance, like the sun that is free of any black spot.

Yaḥ vareṇyam bhargaḥ naḥ dhiyaḥ pracodayāt, may that omniscient Lord, who is the most worshipful, who obtains in the heart, guide our intellect in the right direction, brighten our intellect.

One can take the potential mood of the verb *pracodayāt* as present tense form '*pracodayati*' and explain that he is the one who illumines the *buddhi*, who causes all activities. Then the whole mantra becomes a *mahā-vākya*.

Tat vijñānāt param praṇānam: it is above the knowledge of the people. Any knowledge is gained by the senses and mind through perception and inference, and whatever knowledge is gained by a person through these means is *aparā-vidyā*. The knowledge of *Brahman*, on the other hand, *parā-vidyā* which is not available for perception and inference. *Brahman* does not require the mind and senses to reveal itself because it is self-evident and reveals everything else. *Prajā* means not only human beings, but all beings.

Variṣṭham: the most exalted. There are any things which are exalted, but *Brahman* is the most exalted. Why? Because it is free from all limitations, all defects.⁶⁴ *Brahman* is always free, shining and pure.⁶⁵ it is the only thing that is perfect. If at all there is a concept of perfection, it is not in *saṁsāra*, but only in the *ātman* which is free of attributes. If something has an attribute it is imperfect. People who are committed to perfectionism are always in trouble. Suppose a person wants to write perfectly; he will never start writing. If one wants to do a job perfectly, one will never begin the job. It is a psychological problem. There is no such thing as perfection in *saṁsāra*. Knowing *Brahman*, on the other hand, there is no limitation for the person. Thereafter, one is no longer subject to *saṁsāra*. That is the nature of *āvih*, *brahmātman*, in which everything has its being.

So the teacher tells his disciples, '*etat jānatha (yūyam)*: may you all know this as the *svarūpa* of yourselves. ' It happens to be oneself, knowing which everything is as well known. So the original question on the part of *Śaunaka* remains answered.

59 रथनाभाविवाराः (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

60 सदसतोर्मूर्त्तामूर्त्तयोः स्थूलसूक्ष्मयोः । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

61 वृजः एण् (उणादिः ३ ॥ १८) ।

62 आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् । सर्वदेवनमस्कारः श्रीकेशवं प्रतिगच्छति ।
(सन्ध्यावन्दनमन्त्रः)

63 ओं भूर्भुवस्स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ।

64 सर्वपदार्थेषु वरेषु तद्व्येकं ब्रह्म अतिशयेन वरं सर्वदोष-रहितत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

65 नित्यमुक्त-नित्यबुद्ध-नित्यशुद्ध स्वभावः ।

to be continued.....