

Mundaka

Mantra 2.2.9 continued from previous issue

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

Sañcita-karmas: These are karmas standing in the account of the *jīva* which are yet to fructify. For these karmas to fructify, the *jīva* has to assume different types of bodies. In a given birth only a set of karmas can be exhausted. There are different sets of karmas that assemble themselves differently to give rise to varieties of experiences. Those experiences can be gathered only when there are appropriate embodiments. Endless births are necessary for the *Sañcita-karmas* to exhaust themselves. They will come to fruition later.

Prārabdha-karmas: These are karmas that are already *ārabdha*, started. They have already begun to fructify in the form of the experiences in this birth.

Āgāmi-karmas: Karmas gathered in this birth both before and after self-knowledge are known as *āgāmi-karmas*. These karmas will fructify later. You perform various actions even after knowledge, but because you no longer have the notion of doership, you do not reap the results of those actions. Yet, those actions produce *puṇya* and *pāpas*. These *puṇyas* and *pāpas*, earned by the wise person's actions, go to others - *puṇya* to those people who serve the wise person and *pāpa* to those who abuse him or her. The karmas done by the wise person in this life before knowledge will have the same status as *Sañcita-karmas*.

Since ātman is Brahman and Brahman's nature is *akartṛ*, non-doer, I was *akartṛ* all the time. I gathered karmas in the past due to taking myself to be a *kartṛ*, out of ignorance.

With reference to these three types of karmas, Śaṅkara says, " *Sañcita-karmas* get destroyed when knowledge takes place because the *kartṛtva*, doership, goes away. Since ātman is Brahman and Brahman's nature is *akartṛ*, non-doer, I was *akartṛ* all the time. I gathered karmas in the past due to taking myself to be a *kartṛ*, out of ignorance. The *Sañcita-karmas* now just evaporate since they are notional, arising from ignorance that is no more. It is like a dreamer's action for which the waker is not accountable.

Āgāmi-karmas do not accrue to the *jñānin* because he has no notion of doership. The results of karmas done so far in this life get destroyed due to absence of a claimant. Even though the *jñānin* performs actions, he is not affected by *puṇya* and *pāpas*. Only *drṣṭa-phala*, seen result, will be there for the karmas that he does. Thus, for a *jñānin* there are no new or old karmas.

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Only the *prārabdha-karmas* that cause this body and sustain it, remain.¹⁰⁸ Thank God for this! Otherwise, no one will want to acquire the knowledge of Brahman. This physical body, which came into being with the fructification of *prārabdha-karma*, is the creation of *Īśvara*. It came into being according to the order that is *Īśvara*, and in keeping with that order the physical body has to run through the whole span of *prārabdha-karma*. One has to go through the allotted experiences of pleasure and pain, and thereby, exhaust the *prārabdha-karmas*.

The enlightened *ahaṅkāra* continues to exist, performing an empirical function. Even one's psychological past is there, with its own empiricity. Past memories are there, even for a *jñānin*. It is *sahaja*, innate. It is not born of one's imagination, so it will not disappear with knowledge.

The enlightened *ahaṅkāra* continues to exist, performing an empirical function. Even one's psychological past is there, with its own empiricity. Past memories are there, even for a *jñānin*. It is *sahaja*, innate. It is not born of one's imagination, so it will not disappear with knowledge. The body continues to be there, like the bandage on the tenth man's head. When a group of ten students of a guru were on an outing, the leader of the group counted them after crossing a river to make sure that no one is lost. He counted nine and found that the tenth man was missing. He was furious with himself because he undertook this trip disobeying his guru. He could not excuse himself, so he hit his head on the nearest tree. His forehead was bleeding and bandage was put around it. All the students were grieving. When a passer-by found out the cause of their grief, he told them that the tenth man was not lost. He showed that the one who counted was the tenth man. The leader got enlightened-- 'I am the tenth man.' But the bandage continues to be there even after discovery. It is called *prārabdha-karma*.

There are several examples to help us understand the continuance of *prārabdha-karmas*. It is like the wheel of the potter that continues to move as long as the momentum lasts even after the pot is shaped, or like the released arrow that continues to travel until it completes its trajectory. Another example is that one has to digest what one has eaten, though one could have avoided eating before and one can avoid further eating.

This body is the creation of *Īśvara* and it should be allowed to run its course. If it is created by the *jīva* it will go away with knowledge, just like a rope-snake that will disappear in the wake of the knowledge that it is a rope. The snake is called *arthādhyāsa*, error of object.¹⁰⁹ The body which is *Īśvara*'s creation is *jñānādhyāsa*, error of knowledge.¹¹⁰ Even after knowing that the sun does not move, the sun will be seen rising and setting. One may give reasons for this perception, but the perception will remain. Similarly, the physical body will continue as long as the *prārabdha-karmas* last.

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When we say that the body is *Īśvara's* creation, it is not given by him according to his whims and fancies, but is in keeping with the law of karma.

One cannot say that a given body is not good. If one say so, one is saying that *Īśvara* is not good. It is our judgment. If one submits to *prārabdha*, one submits to *Īśvara*. Even though one has will, that will itself is surrendered to the *prārabdha*, and it works according to the *prārabdha*.

One cannot say that a given body is not good. If one say so, one is saying that *Īśvara* is not good. It is our judgment. If one submits to *prārabdha*, one submits to *Īśvara*. Even though one has will, that will itself is surrendered to the *prārabdha*, and it works according to the *prārabdha*. The *prārabdha* fulfils itself either by creating a desire in the wise person to do something, or creating a desire in others who are connected to him or her.¹¹¹ It may also produce a result which was not the desire of anyone, like a disease that just happens. Knowledge destroys *prārabdha* in one way, and that is by making the person see that he or she is not subject to *prārabdha*. Only due to *upādhi* do we say that the person continues to be in the body. The enlightened person is free enough to have a limited body, limited mind, limited set of senses and so on. He is like an actor who is free to assume any role including the one involving begging.

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In the wake of knowledge, nothing else goes except the ignorance-born notions, 'I am the doer, I am the enjoyer.' If the *prārabdha* also goes away, there will not be a teacher or student or a teaching tradition or *mokṣa*!

108 न तु एतज्जन्मारम्भकाणि प्रवृत्त-फलत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

109 One object is mistaken for another object, like a rope mistaken for a snake, this is *arthādhyāsa*. If one sees the rope, the snake will disappear.

110 Suppose something that one sees is perceptually right, but factually wrong, and one makes the error of taking it to be true, it is called *jñānādhyāsa*. It is like taking the perception of the sun rising in the eastern sky as factual. By correcting the error here, the perception does not go away.

111 इच्छाऽनिच्छा परेच्छा च प्रारब्धं त्रिविधं स्मृतम् । (पञ्चदशी 7.152)

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