



## Muṇḍakopaniṣad Mantrā 6



*(Continued from last issue)*

Mr. Spider, intelligent enough to create the web, is the efficient cause and also the material cause. The spider has an upādhi, an eight-legged body, which accounts for the material cause for the creation of the web. Therefore, from its own standpoint the spider is intelligent cause, and from the standpoint of upādhi it becomes the material cause<sup>1</sup>. So, one cannot say there is no example. There can be a logical objection only when there is no example. When the logical objection is negated, what the śruti says becomes very clear, both the efficient and material cause can remain in one locus like in spider or like in a dreamer.

When we use the word 'material cause' it can be either a changing cause or an unchanging cause. It can undergo a certain modification in order to become a new product, like milk undergoing a certain change to become yogurt. Even clay undergoes a change to become a pot. The change is effected by a secondary cause, viz. fire. When the clay is fired, its elasticity, which is one of its natural attributes, is gone. Now it has become brittle. It is not just clay in the form of pot, but the clay has undergone a change in the process of firing. Even the gold is not the same mined metal that becomes an ornament. It is gold that is an alloy, wherein the gold is predominant. It is not possible for the goldsmith to make ornaments from pure gold. Combined with another metal alone it is available for shaping as different ornaments. You accept gold along with the copper as the substance that is material cause. Then we can say that gold has undergone a change of form only in becoming an ornament. That is the way to look at the gold example. The gold example is better than the clay. The clay example will still be a good example if there is no heating process involved. All these examples have their own limitations because there is no illustration for non-dual Brahman. Here in the creation of the jagat, the material cause is vivartta, non-changing, and not pariṇāmin, that which undergoes a change.

Brahman as intelligent cause has got to be a conscious being, equipped with all knowledge and power to create the world. The initial pratijñā, proposition, knowing which everything is known, is possible only when Brahman is also the material cause, which has not undergone any change. Therefore, it has to be understood as vivarta upādāna kāraṇa, not pariṇāmi upādāna kāraṇa. But

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<sup>1</sup> *sva-pradhānena nimittam bhavati svopādhi-pradhānena upādānam ca bhavati |*

we can call it pariṇāmi upādāna kāraṇa from the standpoint of māyā, which makes Brahman the cause of everything. Brahman along with the upādhi called māyā is Īśvara.

Māyā is not considered an attribute of Brahman, but only an upādhi. An upādhi also can be viewed as a kind of attribute but not an intrinsic attribute. From the standpoint of māyā upādhi, Brahman becomes the upādāna-kāraṇa for the jagat consisting of various names and forms. Māyā has three qualities – satva, rajas, tamas. These three qualities account for the varieties of names and forms in the jagat. Māyā is a non-plus addition to Brahman; an addition without addition and everything is like that. The whole śāstra talks about 'iva, as though' creation. We can therefore say, Brahman is the material cause even without mentioning the word māyā, because māyā is not an addition to Brahman. What 'is' is Brahman alone. From one point of view you see the world of names and forms. If you shift your standpoint, all that is here is Brahman. This shift is very important.

How you look at something is very important. If you look at the picture hanging on the wall here, the eyes contact the surface which has only some patches of colour, blue and white, and you do not see anything else. If you focus your eyes on your own reflection, inside the picture at a particular distance, you see the 'Statue of Liberty' standing there. So, your focus has changed. These are two different ways of looking at the same thing. One way of looking at it gives you only some meaningless patches. By another way of looking at it, you find some meaning in it.

A man is walking in a forest with his friend. He sees a huge wild elephant standing there near a tree with a lifted trunk. He is frightened and wants to run for his life. His friend tells him not to be afraid of the elepaht and he goes near and touches the elepahant. It is made of wood. If the focus is on the form you see an elephant there. It is very beautiful to note how a shift in standpoint changes the vision completely. You see a real jagat from your own vision based on ignorance, and you see it different from the vision of the śāstra. In the vision of the śāstra there is only Brahman. Both visions are there. Otherwise you cannot account for the jagat.

The vision that Brahman is both the intelligent and material cause is something unique to our śāstra. We do not find this concept of God anywhere else. God is always other than the jagat for all the others who have a concept of God. Sitting in one place, he created this world and from there he is constantly watching it. This is totally illogical. First, he should have a place to sit. He cannot be the whole jagat and still be in the jagat. Again, he cannot be inside the jagat and create the jagat. There is no place that is outside the jagat since the jagat includes space; every place is inside

the jagat. Therefore, the statement that 'God sitting in heaven created the world' has to be understood properly. We can give the benefit of doubt and try to give a meaningful sense for the sentence. It is meaningless in the way it is presented. Where there is no immediacy of total freedom, there is no spirituality. Any other spirituality is only confined to spirits, nothing more. If there is no solution to the human problem here, all you require, is a dogma because basically you are sinner. You require a saviour; it becomes a 'saviour' theology. There is a God and there is a saviour in between you and God. God has to save you because you have been condemned for good.

In the Buddhist tradition there is no 'saviour' theology. They have immediacy of liberation from saṃsāra, bondage. But they talk about this jagat very negatively. We are not talking negatively or positively about the jagat. We talk only about our confusion and show that it has no basis. Our confusion that 'I am bound' causes a sense of limitation and sorrow. That sense of limitation makes us continuously struggle and seek approval and so on. That is what we call saṃsāra. We do not say that the jagat is the cause for sorrow.

All that is here is one Īśvara. With reference to the jagat, Brahman is Īśvara. Sankara uses the word 'Īśvara' very commonly in the sense of Brahman as satyam jñānam anantam and Brahman as the cause of this jagat. There is no real difference between Īśvara and Brahman.

Brahman which is the cause of the jagat does not require any outside help and does not undergo any change in the process of creating. To point this out, the example of the spider is given here. Like the web that comes out from the spider, this entire world comes out from akṣara. Akṣara means that which does not undergo any change. That akṣara is Brahman.

Yathā pṛthivyām oṣadhayaḥ sambhavanti: just as the plants are born on the earth. This example answers another objection viz. how can the jagat come out of Brahman if the jagat is Brahman? Even though the jagat is Brahman, it can still come out of Brahman. It is exactly like the trees and plants, which are non-separate from the earth, have come from the earth. The trees and plants are derived from nothing but the minerals. They are non-separate from the earth. Similarly, even though the jagat is non-separate from Brahman, still it has come out of Brahman.

*To be continued....*