

Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.1.7

बृहच्च तद्विव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं
सूक्ष्माच्च तत्सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति ।
दूरात् सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च
पश्यत्स्वहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥ ३.१.७ ॥

*bṛhacca taddivvyamacintyarūpaṁ
sūkṣmācca tatsūkṣmataraṁ vibhāti .
dūrāt sudūre tadihāntike ca
paśyatsvhaiḥva nihitaṁ guhāyām. (3.1.7)*

tat -- that; *bṛhat* -- is limitless; *divyam* -- pure consciousness;
ca -- and; *acintyarūpam* -- not available for thinking;
tat -- that; *sūṣmāt* -- than the subtle; *ca* -- and;
vibhāti -- reveals itself in many forms; *tat* -- that;
dūrāt -- than the remote; *sudūre* -- is very far;
iha -- here; *antike ca* -- and near;
śyatsu -- in the conscious beings; *iha* -- here; *eva* -- only;
āptakāmāḥ -- those who have fulfilled their desires;
nihitam -- placed; *guhāyām* --in the *buddhi*

That Brahman is limitless, pure consciousness and is not available for a thought. It is subtler than the subtlest and reveals itself in many forms. It is very far from what is remote, and is very near here, right now in the body. In all conscious beings, it is present here in the *buddhi*.

Tad bṛhat ca: it is limitless. The word 'tat' means the *ātman* under discussion. Since it is limitless, there is no path involved here. Nor is it located in the *buddhi*. The *buddhi* is only a means to understand Brahman. So, the *śruti* knocks off the very concept of location by saying *bṛhat*. Any object which has a location in space, is limited because it is only in one place. Brahman is not in space, but space is Brahman. Brahman is, Brahman is everything. It is the meaning of *bṛhat*. There is nothing bigger than Brahman, and being limitless, it is one. there cannot be limitlessness plus oneself.

Divyam: not worldly, self-effulgent. Pure consciousness is the nature of *ātman*. It is the *svarūpa*, the nature, of the knower. Śaṅkara explains it alternatively as that which is not an object for the senses.¹⁶⁵ Whatever one experiences belongs to this world; *ātman*, not being an object of experience, is *divya*.

Acintya-rūpam : not an object of thought. Anything that possesses *jāti* species, *guṇa*, quality, *kriyā*, action, or *sanbandha*, relationship, can be objectified by a thought. There are not many Brahman, so it does not fall under any species. Brahman does not have any quality or action or any relationship because Brahman is *nirguṇa*, free of any attributes; *niṣkriyā*, free of any action and *asaṅga*, unassociated. It means Brahman is not available as an object of a given thought, like a pot. Every object is an object of consciousness. Brahman is the nature of the subject, consciousness. The thinker, the thought and the object of thought- all three are Brahman. It is the *svarūpa* of oneself.

Tat sūkṣmāt sūkṣmataram: it is subtler than the subtlest. One can at least think of something very subtle. But this is subtler than that. It is subtler than even a particle. A particle has no size; but it exists in consciousness. That consciousness is the truth of the particle as well as the one who is conscious of the particle. Brahman is subtler than the subtlest because it has no form, and it is the cause of everything including the subtle space.

Tat vibhāti: it shines in various forms. Being the cause of everything, it is space, it is time, it is the sun, it is the moon, it is the earth, it is the body, it is the mind and so on.¹⁶⁷ It reveals itself in various forms. There is no question of asking where to see and when to see Brahman.

Dūrāt sudūre: This Brahman is farther than the farthest. *Dūrāt* means 'than a very remote place.' It is beyond that. It is beyond *brahma-loka* also. *Brahma-loka* is a long way to go. For the one who is trying to reach Brahman, it is *dūrāt sudūre*, meaning, one can never reach it, if it implies distance, time can be one of the intervening factors. Perhaps one can reach it after a long time. But it is something beyond the remote, which one cannot reach at all. The one who searches for that limitless Brahman is Brahman. That is the point, it is not really away. When one is searching, it is far away.

If one gives up the search without knowledge, then also it is far away---there is only despair! Brahman is consciousness that sustains the despair. "I cannot get this Brahman. O! It is far away!" if one sits under a tree waiting for Brahman to surface, it is definitely *dūrāt sudūre*, farther than the farthest. It is too difficult to comprehend for the one who is not ready, who is not blessed with a teacher who knows the methodology of teaching. That is why it is *dūrāt sudūre*. The idea conveyed here is that one should not look for Brahman as a thing to be reached. There is no distance between oneself and Brahman.

Distance can be taken in terms of time. If something happens at a particular time, then it is an event. Brahman is not an event, it is not going to happen in time. Only ageing will happen in time. The cognition 'I am old' is because of Brahman. Both the young and the old are Brahman. So if one looks for Brahman in time, it is not going to happen; so it is *dūrāt sudūre*.

If one employs an inappropriate means of knowledge, or looks upon the study of Vedanta as some kind of intellectual exercise, leading to indirect knowledge, Brahman is far. It is not going to work. It only sets one up for a trip. Vedanta must be looked upon as a means of knowledge so that one can relax and listen. One cannot afford to get tensed up while being exposed to a means of knowledge. Brahman, that is the *ātman*, is the subject matter here and it is ever experienced. There is no question of indirect lacking, it is only in terms of lack of clarity. If Vedanta is looked upon as giving indirect knowledge, one will be eternally waiting for some experience to take place. Brahman sustains that very expectation. So it will not take place. Brahman becomes far, *dūrāt sudūre*. Even if one looks at Vedanta as means of knowledge, lack of preparedness, like absence of *śraddhā* and so on, may keep Brahman away, and therefore, Brahman becomes *dūrāt sudūre*.

Since it is *dūrāt sudūre*, one may think that Brahman is far away; so the says, *tad iha antike ca*: that Brahman is here, right now as the very self. The word '*iha*' refers to time as well as space. In this body right now one can gain Brahman since it is the self of the very knower.¹⁶⁸ One is not required to move an inch physically. Nor is a thought movement necessary. Every thought is Brahman. To understand a pot one requires a thought modification to objectify the pot. Even that thought modification is not required to understand Brahman. The *Kenopanīṣad* says, "It is known in and through every thought as the consciousness in the thought and the consciousness revealing the thought and the consciousness revealing the thought itself!"¹⁶⁹ It is available right now, here in the *buddhi*. So it is *antike*, the nearest. The use of both near and far together reveals that it is neither far nor near. It is oneself.

It is not the seeker blossoms into Brahman. Then, the Brahman-fragrance comes out spreading divinity around! There is no scope for poetry here. One has to cut out all those frills. One cannot fain Brahman poetically. Once one knows Brahman, then everything is poetry. Until then, one has to be very objective and deliberate.

One requires a mind that is not poetic, a mind that is not trying to find new adjectives. One is always interested in finding new adjectives. If one merely says, "It is a blue sky," it is not enough. One has to say, "The spotless, vast, blue sky." In literature one may have to make it more descriptive and flowery, if that is the style. But here, one is dealing with the teaching of the realities. One has to drop all the adjectives.

In a subject matter like mathematics or physics there is no place for adjectives. What adjectives will one use for the particle or the electron? There, at least one can say 'a moving electron' and so on, because particles and electrons have attributes and location. But here it is not possible. One has to seriously look into the need for removing the orientation towards adjectives. Only then will the mind relax to see the *vastu* that is free from adjectives. Some people use adjectives for Brahman like 'the supreme Brahman,' 'the divine Brahman' and so on. But Brahman is always free from all attributes. What one needs are bare words, minimum words, and that too, words implying Brahman. When words themselves have to depend upon their implied meaning to reveal Brahman, adding more adjectives is fangerous.

Paśyatsvīhaiva nihitaṁ guhāyām: brahma is available right now, here, in the *buddhi* of people who have I have *viveka*. It is recognised *buddhi* with the help of the words of the *śāstra*. *Guhāyām* means *buddhi*.

165 दिव्यं स्वयम्प्रभम् अनिन्द्रिय-गोचरम् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

166 सूक्ष्मादाकाशादेरपि तत्सूक्ष्मतरं निरतिशयं हि सौक्ष्म्यमस्य । सर्वकारणत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

167 विभाति विविधम् आदित्य-चन्द्राद्याकारेण भाति दीप्यते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

168 इह देहे अन्तिके समीपे च विदुषामात्मत्वात् । सर्वान्तरत्वाच्च । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

169 प्रतिबोधविदितं मतम् । (केनोपनिषत् 2.4)

To be continued.....