

Mundaka

Mantra 2.2.11

Jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ is a peculiar light, the śruti points it out.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तम् अनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ २. २. ११ ॥

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāraḥ
nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ.
tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ
tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti. (2. 2. 11)*

sūryaḥ -- the sun; *na* -- not; *bhāti* -- lights up;
tatra ---- that (Brahman); *na* -- not;
candratāraḥ -- the moon and the stars; *imāḥ* -- these;
vidyutaḥ -- flashes of lightning; *na* -- not;
bhānti -- light up; *kutaḥ* -- how can;
ayam -- this; *agniḥ*-- fire; *sarvam* -- everything;
anubhāti -- shines after; *tam* -- that; *eva* -- only;
bhāntam -- when shining; *tasya* -- by that;
bhāsā -- light; *sarvam* -- all; *idam* -- this;
vibhāti -- shines

The sun does not light up that Brahman. The moon and the stars and the stars do not light it. These flashes of lightning do not light it. How can this fire light it? Everything shines after that self alone which is light of all lights. By its light all this shines.

Na tatra sūryo bhāti: the sun does not shine there. It is like the statement 'the stars do not shine when the sun is up.' The light of the stars is overwhelmed by the brilliant light of the sun. Similarly, the sun does not shine, does not illumine the light that is *jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*. What is there to say about the moon and the stars? All these various lights do not illumine there. How can a flame light up that *caitanya jyoti*? The answer is implied in the question -- it does not.

You do not require a light to see the sun or moon or any other light. But here, the śāstra tells that all these require a light to shine. The sun requires light, the moon requires light, the stars require light, and the fire requires light. Even the flashy lightning requires light. It means that light does not belong to the category of these physical lights. It is the light of consciousness in whose presence alone these lights come to light. It is unlike all these lights. *Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ*: when that is shining everything shines after it. That light is *jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ*.

The eyes see various forms only by picking up light. All opaque objects shine after light, so we can say that these inert objects *anubhāti*, shine after, and the light *bhāti*, shines. The physical lights like sun, moon and so on shine because of the light in one's eyes. Therefore, the sun, moon, stars, all of them, *anubhāti*. We will keep the Sanskrit verbs in the singular just for convenience. The eyes alone *bhāti*. It is so with reference to forms and colours. Then the pair of eyes *anubhāti*, the mind *bhāti*. If the mind does not light up the eyes, the eyes do not see. It happens many times that one does not notice what is right in front of one because the mind is elsewhere.

Similarly, all forms of sound *anubhāti*, the pair of ears *bhāti*. The pair of ears *anubhāti*, the mind *bhāti*. If the mind is not behind the ears, one does not listen, even though the sound may be within hearing distance. So too, the world of smell *anubhāti*, the sense of smell *bhāti*. The sense of smell *anubhāti*, the mind *bhāti*. If the mind is not there behind the nose, there is no sense of smell. Similarly, the world of touch *anubhāti*, the sense of touch *bhāti*. The sense of touch *anubhāti*, the mind *bhāti*. The world of taste *anubhāti*, and the sense of taste *bhāti*. The sense of taste *anubhāti*, the mind *bhāti*. When one eats, as long as one's mind is on the tongue, one tastes, otherwise one does not taste the food.

All the *vṛttis* in the mind, really speaking, *anubhāti*. When one goes to sleep, one does not experience any problem because the mind is not functioning there. If the mind is self-shining, it should be present in sleep. Then there would be no such thing as sleep at all.

Again, the mind undergoes a lot of changes, and one is aware of them. If the mind shines by itself, one will never really know what is happening in the mind. One will not even know what one sees, what one hears and so on. There should be a *pramātr*, knower, to know all this; only then what is happening in the mind would be known. That knower also *anubhāti*. In sleep he also goes away, and still something else *bhāti*. That alone *bhāti*. It does not rise, it does not set, and it shines always by itself. One does not require another light to light it up. The ātman lights up everything whom the senses and the mind do not objectify, cannot objectify. It transcends everything. It is the only *vastu*, unlike everything else in the world.

Elsewhere, the *vastu* is revealed in a single verse, called *eka ślokī*. It is an excellent example of the directness and immediacy of the teaching. It is in the form of a conversation between a teacher and his student.

Teacher: What is the light because of which you see objects?

Student: During the day, it is the sun. At night it is the moon, stars, lightning and fire.

Teacher: With what light do you see all these lights?

Student: With the light of my eyes.

Teacher: With which light do you see when the eyes are closed?

Student: The light of the mind.

Teacher: When the mind is asleep, what is the light that shines?

Student: It is the light of consciousness, Revered Sir, and I am indeed that!

What is *anubhāti* is non-separate from Brahman which is *satyam* and whose effulgence therefore is recognised as independent and self-revealing.¹¹⁷

Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam: when that ātman is shining, the sun, moon and stars shine after. One may contend here that what is 'anubhāti' is not necessarily mithyā. For instance, *Rāmogacchati*, Rāma goes; *Lakṣmaṇaḥ anugacchati*, Lakṣmaṇa goes after. But Lakṣmaṇa is not mithyā. He is independent and chooses to follow Rāma. Whatever reality Rāma enjoys, Lakṣmaṇa also has the same reality. So, whatever 'anugacchati', is not mithyā. In the same way, whatever 'anubhāti' is also not mithyā. It is not true because what is 'gacchati' and 'anugacchati' belong to the same order of reality, whereas what is 'bhāti' and 'anubhāti' do not. Therefore, the śruti says, *tasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ vibhāti*, by its light all these luminaries shine. Without that light nothing is going to come to light. This alone is the independent reality and everything else is mithyā.

To understand this, we need to go one step further here. The existence of anything is dependent upon this consciousness alone. Here, the sat, existence, is pointed out. '*Tasya bhāsā eva*' means *tasya sattayā eva*, by its existence alone, everything comes to exist in different forms. It lends existence to everything, and also reveals, gives light. Here again Īśvara is taken into account. When we say all these are indeed Brahman, then 'all these' have to be explained further. So *māyā* and omniscient Īśvara walk in. He alone is in the form of the sun, moon, stars, and all that is here.

The imagery presented in this mantra can be understood at the level, at the *adhyātma* level, at the level of the individual *upādhi*. The sun, being the presiding deity for the eyes, stands for eyesight. The moon, being the presiding deity for the mind, stands for the mind, and fire, being the presiding deity for *vāk*, stands for speech. Speech, mind and the senses like the eyes do not illumine Brahman. Brahman is unfolded as 'that which is not the object of speech, but because of which speech is possible; that which cannot be comprehended by the mind, but because of which the mind is able to think; and that which is not available for the eyes to see, but because of which the eyes see.'¹¹⁸

This mantra is often chanted when the *ārati* is shown to the deity in a temple. When the priest chants, '*kuto yam agniḥ*' he states, "O Lord! I do not think that this short-lived lighted camphor I am holding in my hand can reveal you in front. I am lighting up my buddhi, knowing that it is in my *buddhi* that you are available to me. May I recognize you there as none other than myself, with your grace and my guru's teaching.

117 यत् एवं तदेव ब्रह्म भाति च विभाति च कार्य-गतेन विविधेन भासाऽतस्तस्य ब्रह्मणो भा-रूपत्वं स्वतोऽवगम्यते । न हि स्वतोऽविद्यमानं भासनम् अनयस्य कर्तुं शक्नोति ।

घटादीनाम् अन्यावभासकत्वादर्शनात् भारूपाणां च आदित्यादीनां तद्दर्शनात् । य मुण्डक भाष्यम् फ
118 यद्वाचानभ्युदितं येन वागभ्युद्यते । (केनोपनिषत् 1.4) । यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् (केनोपनिषत् 1.5) ,
यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति (केनोपनिषत् 1.6)

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