

Pramana Introduction

Muṇḍaka Introduction by Pujyasri (2010-13)

Knowledge does not require a knower. This is an important understanding. Knowledge requires a means of knowledge, vastu and buddhi and alignment there of. Once aligned knowledge takes place.

If the knowledge is para vidyā, knowledge of the svarūpa of the knower, truth of the pramātā 'I am pūrṇam – jñānam', the knowledge takes place and I remain. Obviously no further action is required. Irrespective of the limitations assumed by the knower prior to this knowledge, I remain pūrṇam – jñānam. The knower then has to proceed to remove all prior ideas through mananam (analysing and eliminating all contra opinions about self) and through nididhyāsanam (meditation on the meditator 'pūrṇo'ham,' bringing up in the seat of mediation all the discussion leading to jñānam deliberately thus removing all the viparīta jñānam by abhyāsā) till I claim completely 'I am pūrṇam.'

Except this every other knowledge is aparavidyā, gathered through all known means of knowledge, pañca pramāṇa. Swamiji says, even this discussion arriving at the need for the sixth pramāṇa and also about epistemology is aparavidyā only.

For knowing the truth of the knower, svarūpa of the pramātā, another pramāṇa other than pañca pramāṇa is required. Since the very definition of this pramāṇa is what is not available by other means of knowledge this pramāṇa cannot be scientific, as science falls within the realm of pañca pramāṇa. If what is told in Veda is verified by science, then what is told in Veda is only anuvāda, not the viśaya, subject matter of the pramāṇa. We have to look for anadhigatavam, what is not available for other pramāṇas all the way for Veda, Vedanta to be a pramāṇa. What cannot be contradicted, abādhitam is Veda, as it is not available for other pramāṇas. 'Śabdebhyaḥ jātam, śābdam, pramāṇam, apūrvatā, phalavat arthabodhakatvam.'

Śābdatvāt parokṣaḥ jñānam, there is one argument, for various sādhanas and sādhyas, means and ends in karma kāṇḍa. At the end of Veda, a mumukṣu goes to teacher and asks, 'please teach me what is Brahman.' Jagat kāraṇam brahma aham asmi iti aparokṣa jñānam is the teaching. That is the svarūpa of Brahman and ātmā.

Karma and karmaphala are indirect knowledge, knowledge it is called because of pramāṇa. They are not within the five means of knowledge. It is indirect knowledge only if we have śraddhā in Veda as pramāṇa; otherwise they are belief systems, not verifiable, adṛṣṭa. Even the pañca pramāṇas are given and there is order in everything that is possible through the pañca pramāṇas, dṛṣṭa phala.

All-knowledge is Īśvara. Without the interference of the pañca pramāṇas, the knowledge that is received by ṛṣis is called apauruṣeya jñānam. Niśvasitena given to ṛṣis is called arsha vidyā.

Satyam param dhīmahi – Bhāgavatā's first words, no connection, we have to find the connection. The truth is not śabda vācyam, but prakāṣita, the listener is the meaning of all these words, see the advantage on the part of the teacher. 'Mauna vākya prakāṣita param brahma tattvam nidhānam,' where the words stop, is maunam. The meaning of the word is the student, prakāṣitam.

Śābdam jñānam parokṣam bhavati, since it is not born of pratyakṣa. This is the contention. This is answered by the analysis that this knowledge through śabda is parokṣaḥ only when the object of knowledge is away from you. We do not need a pramāṇa including Veda to know that I am, I exist, pl. note. Therefore only one thing in the jagat that does not need a pramāṇa to know is just 'I am, I exist'. Even our ignorance for us to know we need sākṣi pratyakṣa. So Veda, Vedanta pramāṇa also only leads us to better understanding through 'neti, neti' what our svarūpa is not, that is parokṣaḥ, and also by reasoning, śruti anumāna reasoning. Finally we arrive at aparokṣaḥ anubhūti svarūpam, svataḥ pramāṇa, explained by daśama dṛṣṭānta. Neither pratyakṣam, nor parokṣam, nitya aparokṣaḥ, self – revealing not born of pramāṇa, yat vāca anabhyuditam yena vāk abhyudyate tad brahma tvam viddhi. Na udeti na astam yeti, vṛddhim na yāti, kṣayam na yāti, svayam vibhāti. Nitya here is never parokṣāt any time, asmat pratyaya viśayatvāt, brahmatvam asti. Yato va imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yad prayanti abhisamvisanti iti tad brahma iti, jagat kāraṇam brahma aham asmi iti. So the attitude towards Vedanta pramāṇa is very important, based on the śāstra, should be total śraddhā. The pramāṇa must be handled deftly by an ācārya from the sampradāya, sampradāyavid. Therefore knowledge unfolded by Vedanta śāstra is always aparokṣam. Therefore the teaching should be such that it acknowledges this fact, then teacher's job is just make you own the knowledge.

The conscious being is cognitive, will, choice come later; open your eyes, you see; for what you do after seeing, will comes in. Sometimes people respond spontaneously or impulsively depending on the person. So the cognition reveals something basic about a human being. The cognition can also depend on the defect on the eyes or poor light or if the mind is not with the eyes. Pramāṇa is highly truthful, as true as the object is, vastu tantram. Pramāṇa operates without interference from pramātā. Prior judgement by the pramātā, prejudice interferes with pramāṇa tantra. Intuition is not pramāṇa. Knowledge in keeping with what you know already is called pratyabhijñā.

Pramāṇa does not brook option. The whole being, pramātā, object, indriya, buddhi are aligned, without interference from pramātā is called total surrender to pramāṇa. I am a mortal, limited, duḥkhi is not pramāṇa prāpta, it is avicāra doṣa. Śabda, words of śruti are pramāṇa. So the words have to reach me, the meaning has to be understood, understanding here is the very nature of pramātā, svarūpa of ātmā. It is not the pramātā, the knower is sitting there and looking at the meaning of the words because he is the meaning of those words. The pramāṇa says you are Brahman, satyam, jñānam, ānandam. The self-evident being, ātmā becomes the very meaning of the words satyam, jñānam, ānandam, Brahman.

This has to be understood. Therefore 'gurumeva abhigacchet, śrotriyam brahmaniṣṭham.' So the entire śāstra vicāra is to understand that I am the meaning of the words 'satyam, jñānam, ānandam, Brahman.' So total surrender to the sampradāya, the guru, the pramāṇa is necessary. Guru upadiṣṭa śāstra is pramāṇa. One who has received the knowledge through the sampradāya is called śrotriya.

Vedanta pramāṇa has phalavatvam, whereas when you open your eyes, you may see many things which are not phalavat. Veda pramāṇa being deliberate pramāṇa has always phalavatvam. Vedanta pramāṇa does not require science to validate. The lakṣaṇa, meaning implied by the words, excludes every other meaning of the words. 'Vedānto nāma upaniṣad pramāṇam.' 'ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati,' – the pleased self ātmā is the most sought after, everything else is sought or kept away only to remain the pleased self. The pleased self ātmā has to be discovered, seen for sure, the pramāṇa whose object is 'ātma- the pleased self' is to be listened to, doubts removed and all viparīta bhāvana to be removed.

Jagat kāraṇam brahma tvamasi

Madhvacarya says atattvamasi - 'tat satyam sa ātmātattvamasi' is read as 'tat satyam sa ātmā atattvamasi.' Why should śāstra tell that, which we already have as a notion. We do not need an independent pramāṇa (Veda pramāṇa) for that.

Then tattvamasi is read tasya tvam asi, one belongs to Brahman; there is nothing other than Brahman, you are part of it, the wave belongs to the ocean and is not the ocean. This also does not need an independent pramāṇa because that we as individuals belong to the larger set of bones, blood..etc; elementals belong to the elements; this is already available through other pramāṇas.

Advaitam – the truth of Brahman is the truth of ātmā, satyam jñānam anātam brahma, (tasmāt etasmāt ātmanah) the meaning there of can be seen aparokṣena and then jagat has to be necessarily mithyā because kāryam kāraṇāt abhinnaḥ. Kāraṇam being acintyam, arūpam, abhinna nimitta upādhanam, kāraṇam is satyam, kāryam is nāma, rūpa mithyā, word and meaning, all-knowledge, the order of orders, (yatovā imāni bhūtani....) available for transaction, both events and activities are nothing but nāmni nāmāni. This is the vision. This being pramāṇa need not be validated by another pramāṇa but should be abādhitam, not to be contradicted by other pramāṇas and no internal contradiction. That is pramāṇa lakṣaṇam, svataḥ pramāṇam, object being self, self has to validate, like even the eyes have to validate eyesight, especially what the pramāṇa conveys is self-evident you. This is very important.

The pramāṇa is in the form of words, mantras. Each mantra is meaningful only when the vision of all mantras is there. All mantras can be studied one by one only. So there is anyonya āśraya, that is why 'gurumevābhigacchet.' This guru would have got from his guru, paramparayā tracing back to 'sadāśiva samārambhām śaṅkarācārya madhyamām asmat ācārya paryantām vande guru paramparām.' The source of every discipline of knowledge is Īśvara. In every piece of knowledge we only scrap-off some ignorance, the knowledge is already there. All-knowledge-consciousness is Īśvara. Improperly handled pramāṇa can do harm, therefore śrotriya is required.

Kena upaniṣad Introduction:

Veda has a commitment to reveal jīveśvara aikyam. The method employed by the śāstra is to prove effect is not separate from cause and the cause is not separate from me. This is the only method that can give a person sarvātma bhāva, which is the truth, aham idam sarvam; this is purely a vision, it is not a process. The other pañca pramāṇas are good for getting by for the confused person. They do not say there is duality. The pramāṇas reveal what they have to reveal, that's all. None of them tells dvaitam is satyam. You conclude blue sky, eyes do not say that. They only give sensory data and allow you to make inference. These pramāṇas do not have any clue to reveal the svarūpa of the pramātā. The final tātparyam is oneness is the reality. The oneness is revealed by the upaniṣads, Vedānta. Tasmin eva samanvayāt, sūtra. Even karma kāṇḍa addresses a person to say where he is, by pointing out that there is adṛṣṭam, you have choice to do or not to do, by common sense you know what is right or wrong, referred to as conscience, common sense based values, etc. The person takes himself to be a wanting person. This is the setup.

There is every possibility for going against common sense dharma. 'Gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ.' So the Veda addresses the person where he is in the setup. It guides you to sukṛt, avoiding pāpa and gathering puṇya; it tells you it is not worth going against dharma, that gives you space, creates a possibility for viveka. It tells possible dṛṣṭa phalam by doing adṛṣṭa karma, anadhigatam karma, adṛṣṭa phalam by doing known, dṛṣṭa karma. By revealing this, śāstra releases the person from the hold of rāga dveṣa, makes one a responsible person. It helps one grow. We have to deliberately follow dharma, so that I will grow and one day I will spontaneously follow dharma. In our own self-esteem I have to pass as a person. So dharma becomes mukhya puruṣārtha. Karma kāṇḍa gives us that, makes us sukṛt. Even mantras in karma kāṇḍa also reveal jagat is Īśvara, so non-duality walks in. Any normal thinking person can find out the whole Veda is pointing to non-dual vision.

Nature of Brahmajñānam as explained at the end of Kenopanīśad

Swamiji explains the Yakṣa as avatāra, bhagavat māyā, vastu has not undergone change. He says the whole sṛṣṭi is like this, born of, mayayā; an avatāra is an appearance, without having the compulsion of karma, having kartṛtvam; if a person has kartṛtvam, earned puṇya pāpa, one is born, this is called janma, vṛddhi, not an avatāra. The appearance of an effulgent being like Yakṣa, we call avatāra, appearance for a job, aṁśa, the appearance has upādānam, result of some kind of prayers, vāyu, agni, Indra have earned some kind of puṇya, the blessing is the appearance of Uma (ūḥ is Śiva, Uma is śakti of Śiva) here Uma is jñāna śakti. Sā Uma śrutiḥ uvāca. ,Yakṣa you saw is Brahman.'

Vidāñcakāra – gained knowledge. From upadeśa alone even Indra understood, not by himself, na svātantryena. Vāyu, agni devatā are more blessed because they went near Yakṣa and held talks with him. Indra is most blessed because he got the teaching.

Anyān devān हेनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्श came to know that later. The upaniṣad presents that the whole thing happens like lightning – the Yakṣa coming, and going - upamā upadeśaḥ(verse 4.4) Brahman being what it is there is no upamā, nirūpamasya brahmaṇaḥ, upamā ādeśaḥ(3 mātra) – analogical teaching. Vidyut is prasiddham like vidyut. It is known but you can't see. Dṛṣṭānta is dṛṣṭa sadṛśam. (Amṛtam is śrutānta.) Because of this, tiro bhūtam brahma devebhyaḥ, sakṛt (one time) darśayitvā. Tejaḥ iti adhyāhāryam, vidyotitavat (आ ३ इव). Another example is just like blinking, wink of the eye. The Yakṣa came and disappeared for Indra. All the devas experienced Yakṣa, but they did not get to know(that much alone is the example, it went off in a flash) vastu, upadeśa alone gave them jñānam. The understanding also is a vṛtti happens and goes away, the vṛtti also goes away in a flash and only pratyaya remains. This vṛtti that is obtained by the upadeśa 'tadbrahma tvamasī' is akhaṇḍākāra vṛtti, the vṛtti which does not recognise knower-known-knowledge difference. So in keeping with the appearance of knowledge is the Yakṣa appearing and leaving in the upaniṣad example. Ajñāna nivṛtti is the flash. That is like lightning, that is the upadeśa.

Etat brahma manaḥ gacchati iva. When you contemplate upon Brahman, Brahman 'ṭaukate iva, visayī karoti iva,' not available for objectification. Śabda is very important, satyam brahma. You are the meaning of satyam. If all other relative meanings are negated by enquiry, then for the informed person, the śabda satyam is good enough to be the meaning. Therefore manaḥ śabda gacchati iva, śabda anuviddha savikalpa samādhi, an absorption with the word, you become the very meaning of the word. Sanakādi ṛṣis were taught by dakṣiṇāmūrtiḥ maunena. You begin with the word vācya, gacchati iva, arrive at the lakṣya.

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