

Vedanta Madhuryam

Salutations to all.

As days pass by we find that instead of moving more and more towards realization, we only add on to our problems that lead to sorrows alone. As time passes by, we progress towards death which is just a sign of another beginning (birth). Irrespective of one birth ending and another birth starting, what we experience is sorrow alone constantly.

Remembering this a sadhaka should always strive to progress quickly towards the goal of moksha so that all sorrows end and there is only rejoicing in bliss. The way to eternal bliss is jnaana and jnaana alone. Jnaana or knowledge of Brahman is only found in Vedanta as there are no other means of knowledge of Brahman, Brahman being beyond words and thoughts (and thereby not being objectified).

It is the purpose of this magazine to show the beauty of Vedanta so that we will be able to learn the system of Vedanta more and more. This would make us gain knowledge and conviction thus taking us quickly towards the goal of moksha. Many concepts that are dealt in this magazine, obviously, are not for normal sadhakas. But if normal sadhakas would spend considerable time going through the articles, they will find themselves glued to the system of Vedanta.

The system of Vedanta by itself doesn't have any eligibility at all. Though it is said that an eligible person is one with sadhana chathustayam, this is only for jnaana to be effective (to lead to eternal bliss). Due to the goal of Vedanta being one's own very nature of Brahman, each and every person in the world is eligible for Vedanta. In a way Vedanta is one's birth-right (multi-birth right).

May we all strive to know the beauty of Vedanta thereby making ourselves learn Vedanta more and more; thus finally taking us to the goal of eternal bliss here and now itself.

AUM NAMA SHIVAYA

Oct 16th

Aukramaanika

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Bheda Mithyaatva Siddhi

Bhedam

Difference is something that we constantly experience in the world. The world in itself is filled with differences of all sorts. As the Dvaita system says, there are differences between Brahman or Ishwara and the insentient entities of the world, between Brahman or Ishwara and jeeva or individual selves, between individual selves and between insentient entities.

Though difference is a matter of perception or our worldly experience still the scriptures are clear that differences aren't real. There are many reasons for this which we will see a little later. Because differences perceived leads a person into sorrow through attachment and aversion therefore difference has to be renounced (by seekers who desire to get rid of sorrow and rejoice in bliss). This is through remembrance of the underlying substratum or essence of everything as the ultimate reality of Brahman (the Consciousness which pulsates inside as I-exist, I-exist).

When there are two entities, then we have to define the relationship between both. Are they similar or dissimilar? If they are similar then we shouldn't perceive two entities. Therefore they have to be dissimilar. That which differentiates one entity from the other is called difference. This difference is what leads to duality or dual notion (duality or dual notion being considered as real) - if it can be established that difference is not at all there, then duality either ceases to exist or is considered as unreal (like the duality in dream).

The moment difference between two entities is established, advaita or non-duality becomes invalid. Therefore it is essential to prove that difference isn't really there (as we will see, it is very easy to prove that difference isn't really there).

Bhedam - cause of duality and sorrow

Difference leads to duality being real. This also in turn leads a person to either like or dislike an entity. Likes and dislikes when strengthened becomes strong attachments and aversions. These attachments and aversions leads a person to happiness or sorrow (when something bad happens to attached, then we become sad and when something bad happens to averted, we become happy; contrarily when something good happens to attached, we become happy and when something good happens to averted, we become sad - thus we fluctuate between happiness and sorrow). Finally, as the Lord says in Gita, these

attachments and aversions leads to destruction of a person. Destruction here means lack of happiness and ever experiencing sorrow.

And if we argue that once this birth ends then the new birth would be a happy one then we are wrong. Happiness and sorrow caused due to one's mental notions will continue to the next birth. Hence AMMA says that death isn't an end instead it is just like putting a full-stop at the end of a sentence which is only to start the next sentence. Similarly death just shows that the next birth will begin. Unless a person attains eternal bliss here and now, birth and death will go on and on without any end. Hence Sankara says that this ocean of Maya or transmigration is very tough to conquer as it goes on and on while causing nothing but sorrow and sorrow alone.

Bhedam - to be renounced

Since differences cause only sorrow therefore it has to be renounced. This is because each and every person in the world wants to get rid of sorrow and all activities are in order to get rid of sorrow alone.

It is important to remember that sorrow is caused by difference or bhedam. As only then we will be able to get rid of sorrow completely through renunciation or negation of bhedam. In order to get rid of sorrows from home, a person can run away to an ashram. But in the ashram there will be other or different types of sorrow. And if the person runs away from the ashram to a cave, still sorrow will be there from a different source. We cannot get rid of sorrow by changing places or environment. Hence AMMA says that what has to be changed is not the external environment but our mind. The mind has to know that bhedam is the cause of sorrow and thereby bhedam has to be renounced.

Why is it said that bhedam is to be renounced instead of removing or destroying?

Bhedam, when we analyze it, is beyond logic. This means that it is just an illusion in the non-dual entity of Brahman even as various differences in gold ornaments are just illusions of names and forms in gold. That which is an illusion cannot be removed or destroyed. That whose existence itself cannot be proved is an illusion. All that can be achieved with respect to an illusion is renunciation of the illusion through knowledge that the illusion doesn't exist at all. Hence Vedanta says that even the world which is an illusion cannot be removed as there is no world at all to be removed; we can just know that the world doesn't exist. This knowledge will lead to renunciation of the world or the reality status of the world in the

mind. Similarly once we are able to prove that bhedam doesn't exist then it will lead to renunciation of bhedam in the mind (the knowledge that bhedam isn't real). Thereby though bhedam might still be perceived, the person will not be affected by the bhedam. In other words, bhedam will not lead to duality being real, attachments-aversions and lastly sorrows.

Anything that has to be proven should be proven through sruthi, yukti and anubhava. What we have to prove is that bhedam doesn't really exist or that bhedam is mithyaa.

Sruthi

The scriptures clearly tell in two ways that bhedam doesn't exist. First the scriptures say that there was nothing before creation which means that creation is just temporary. And since it is said that before creation Existence alone existed, without any differences of internal, similar or dissimilar, therefore bhedam is completely negated (before creation, during creation and after creation as well).

Scriptures also say that Brahman alone exists. Scriptures go to the extent of saying that Brahman is present right, Brahman is present left, Brahman is behind, Brahman is front, Brahman is on top and Brahman is on bottom - it cannot be more clearly stated that Brahman alone exists. The Lord also says in Gita that I am the beginning, middle and end of all beings.

If it is argued that through the statements that Brahman alone exists, differences aren't negated but it is only mentioned that everything is dependent on Brahman then that is also negated by scriptures through saying very clearly that difference doesn't exist at all. Thus the second way through which sruthi negates difference is through explicitly saying that difference doesn't exist.

Katha Upanishad thus says that know through the mind that there is no difference at all here. The Upanishad adds that whoever sees difference or duality as if existing will go from death to death (or experience only sorrow). The Lord says in Gita that there is nothing different from me.

Lastly Mandukya Karika says that if the world appears as existing then it will vanish as duality is a creation of Maya (or unreal) and non-duality alone is real.

Thus sruthi clearly says that difference or bhedam doesn't exist at all.

Yukti

In order to prove through logic that bhedam doesn't exist we have to first analyze the very nature of bhedam. If bhedam cannot really be explained, in any way, then it is clear that bhedam doesn't exist.

Bhedam or difference is between two entities. Let's say we have A and B; and difference is D between A and B.

Now where does D reside? Is it in A or is it outside A?

Inside A

D can be inside A either by being its nature or by being a guna or quality. D cannot be the very nature of A as then when we perceive A we should perceive D too. We only perceive D when we see A and B (and then comparison between both happens). Since D requires B also therefore D isn't the very nature of A.

D also cannot be a guna of A because this guna of A doesn't change (increasing or decreasing like height or weight). But if we assume that D is a guna which doesn't change then we will have to ask again as to whether this guna of D is inside itself (or nature) or outside. If inside then it becomes inside of A and thereby leads to cyclic fault (chakrikaa dosha or cyclic fault happens when X depends on Y, Y depends on Z and Z depends on X). First we have A and then D as difference, D is a guna and then this guna of D depends on A thus leading to cyclic of A to D to guna to A). If it is now said that guna is outside itself then it will go on and on (infinite regression) as then we will have to assume something other than the guna; then this second guna has to either depend on A which will lead to cyclic error or has to be outside which would lead to third guna; third will lead to fourth and fourth to fifth and so on thus leading to infinite regression or anavasthaa dosha.

The above analysis of inside A can be applied to inside B too. Thus it is clear that Difference cannot exist inside the entity (of either A or B).

Outside A

Since difference cannot be inside the entity of A, therefore it has to be outside A. This would mean that we have A, B and D as three separate entities. Now what is the relationship

between A-B and D (D by being the relationship between A-B)? Is this relationship D1 inside either A-B, D or outside? If Inside then the analysis we made above (Inside A) will come into picture and therefore it cannot be the case. If D1 is outside then now we have A-B-D and D1 as two entities. Now again, what is relationship between A-B-D and D1? Is it inside as A-B-D, D1 or outside? Thus the arguments continue with same result - thereby leading to infinite regression.

Thus it is very clear that difference cannot be outside A or B.

So we have to conclude that difference doesn't exist either in A or B or is a separate entity. If it is argued that difference temporarily appears as existing but doesn't really exist, then this view supports advaita or non-duality as it will lead to non-duality - which means difference doesn't exist at all. Thus what we serve to prove will be proven by the opponent.

It cannot be argued also that sruthi supports difference as it has been shown that sruthi supports abhedam (and since yukti also doesn't support bhedom therefore bhedom isn't real).

If it is argued that even though sruthi and yukti doesn't support difference, it is supported by experience, then the below analysis will prove that experience also doesn't really support difference.

Anubhava

Though we directly experience difference, it need not to be real. Real is that which never gets sublated - this means that it is never invalidated (with respect to time or space or causation). Even though we see water in desert, it isn't real because it vanishes after a period of time (and thereby doesn't exist at all times).

For difference to be real, it should exist at all times. We generally experience three states in a day - the waking state, the dreaming state and the dreamless deep sleep state. For difference to be real, it has to be present in all the three states. In the waking state we experience differences naturally or automatically. In the dream state as well we experience differences but these differences aren't same as the ones in waking state as the waking state world vanishes in the dream state and dream state world vanishes in the waking state. Therefore the world of duality in these two states doesn't really exist and therefore

difference doesn't really exist in either of these states. But since difference exists in one or the other form in these two states therefore it cannot be concluded that difference doesn't really exist. But when we analyze the deep sleep state we find that difference completely vanishes. There is absolutely nothing but one's own blissful Self in the deep sleep state. If it is argued that ignorance is there in the deep sleep state, it is also wrong as the experience that I am ignorant is made after waking up - in the deep sleep state, ignorance along with its effects of the world (ego etc. as well) is in the one entity of Brahman. Thus since difference doesn't exist in the deep sleep state therefore we can conclude that difference isn't real.

Mere experience doesn't prove something to be real. Experience which isn't invalidated proves something to be real. Since difference vanishes in the deep sleep state therefore it is proven through experience that difference doesn't exist.

Conclusion

When a seeker perceives duality, the mind has to assert duality to be not real and that Brahman alone exists as the duality perceived. In order to be able to do this, difference between objects has to be remembered as not there - or that objects are indifferent from one another. This indifference is present essentially and not externally. Thus externally duality is perceived but because difference is considered as not real therefore duality isn't considered as real; thereby the seeker isn't affected by duality perceived.

It has been proven here that difference isn't real but just is an illusion that is temporarily perceived. If this is remembered then though duality might be perceived, it will not be considered as real; thereby duality perceived will not lead to sorrow (as sorrow is caused due to difference). Thus through perceiving everything as Brahman a sadhaka will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May we all strive to remember difference to be not real so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself in constant contemplation of Brahman as pervading the entire world.

नास्तिभेदं कदाचित् हि श्रुतियुक्त्यादिहीनत्वात् ।

अभेदवस्तुस्वात्मानं भजेहमात्मसिद्धयर्थं ॥

nāstibhedaṅkadācit hi śrutiyuktyādihīnatvāt |
abhedavastusvātmānam bhajehamātmāsiddhyartham ||

Difference is not there at all times, definitely as devoid of sruthi, yukti and anubhava (cannot be proved through either); the indifferent entity (in which difference is an illusion) of one's own Self I worship in order to realize the Self (worshipping of one's own Self is to realize one's own Self as this worship will get rid of differences and is worship of the truth).

Chathussutra Prakaashah

Shareeraka Nyaaya Sangraha

First Sutra

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा

athāto brahmajijñāsā

Now, therefore let us desire to know Brahman.

We saw in the previous magazine Prakashatman saying that knowledge of scriptures is the only means to realization and thereby anubandha traya was mentioned.

Let's now continue, next Prakashatman raises the purvapaksha viewpoint that because there is no anubandha traya therefore brahmavichaara or enquiry into Brahman cannot happen (or desire to know Brahman cannot be started).

Literal Translation of the work

There (with respect to anubandha traya) doership, enjoyership and the power for the same in the Self, due to bondage being real and getting rid of bondage due to realization of Brahman being impossible, therefore phalaanubandha or the fruit is not there (with respect to enquiry into Brahman); and due to the four qualifications of discrimination between real and unreal etc. being impossible at all times, and even if they are possible still the fruits of chathurmaasya etc. being eternal and realization of Brahman not logical therefore adhikaari or eligible person who is distinct from karma adhikaari is not there; and Vedanta not having any injunctions and the subject which is unattained is not there; therefore the shaastra of enquiry into Brahman cannot be started.

Self-enquiry

As Sankara points out, all problems are due to not understanding the Self or that which is denoted as "I". Proper enquiry into this I is therefore essential to get rid of all problems. This I is the ultimate reality of Brahman (which is the substratum of all beings). Since to get rid of all problems is the ultimate desire or goal of all beings, therefore enquiry into Brahman or Self-enquiry is essential.

If it is proved that self-enquiry cannot be started then the system of Advaita becomes invalid. And proving this is through proving that anubandha traya which are essential in order to start any work or system isn't there. The purvapakshin or opponent thus tries to prove that anubandha traya doesn't exist and therefore the system of Advaita cannot be started. Prakashatman thereby explains the purvapaksha statement here (and the answer we will find in the next magazine).

As we have seen previously, anubandha traya consists of phala or fruit (the fruit one achieves through this work or system), adhikaari or eligible person and vishaya or subject matter.

Phalaanubandha abhaava - non-existence of fruit of self-enquiry

Prakashatman beautifully mentions three reasons why phala is not there with respect to enquiry into Brahman.

1. Enjoyer, doership in Self

Enjoyer and doership is naturally there in the Self. This is known through one's direct experience of I am doing this action, I am enjoying this fruit etc. Since doership and enjoyership is already there in the Self therefore it cannot be removed. Even if these are removed, the removal will not be eternal (as it is newly started).

And enquiry into Self is also invalid as the Self is already known as the doer and enjoyer of actions. Since there is nothing other than this to know about the Self, therefore the fruit of realization of Brahman or Self is not there.

2. Bondages being real

Bondages are experienced by people constantly. That which is enjoyed has to be real as it never ceases to exist. Bondages because of being real cannot be removed; that which is real cannot be removed. Only that which appears as real can be removed through the knowledge that it isn't real. Since bondages are real therefore the fruit of self-enquiry as removal of bondage isn't there (even if there, such a removal isn't permanent).

3. Bondage removal impossible

Bondage being real cannot be removed. And removal, as Vedanta says, through knowledge and realization of Brahman isn't possible as we never experience it. Not just that we don't

experience it but it is also illogical that bondages can be removed just by mere knowledge of Brahman.

As a result of the three reasons, phala or fruit isn't there. And since fruit isn't there therefore self-enquiry cannot be started.

Adhikaaryanubandha abhaava - non-existence of adhikaari of self-enquiry

If it is argued that even if phala isn't there, at least adhikaari is there; then the purvapakshin says that even adhikaari is not there with respect to self-enquiry. Prakashatman gives three reasons as to why adhikaari isn't there.

1. Sadhana chathustayam impossible

A adhikaari for self-enquiry is one endowed with sadhana chathustayam or the four-fold qualification. These are viveka or discrimination between real and unreal, vairagya or dispassion towards the world & passion towards Brahman, shamaadi shatka sampatti or the six-fold qualities of the mind like calmness, control of sense organs etc. and mumukshutva or burning desire for liberation.

As we can see, these qualifications are very tough to attain and hence the purvapakshin says that it is impossible to gain these. And since these are impossible therefore adhikaari is not there.

2. Fruits of activities like chaturmaasyam being real

There are many activities like chaturmaasyam which have real fruit (unlike self-enquiry which doesn't have a fruit as proved in the previous section). Since real fruits are possible therefore a wise person shouldn't go behind self-enquiry which doesn't have a fruit at all.

3. Realization of Brahman not logical

As simple as it appears, realization of Brahman isn't logical in that it is impossible for majority of people. The shaastras talk about realization after one attains many lokas and finally reaches brahmaloka. When there are real fruits available through simple activities, it is illogical to go after realization of Brahman which is very tough (and almost impossible).

Or we can also say that Brahman is the ultimate reality behind the world. Since I am the doer-enjoyer therefore it is not just illogical to realize Brahman but impossible as well. Nobody ever experience themselves as the substratum of the world. If it is argued that we

experience Brahman in the deep sleep state, the answer is that we don't experience Brahman as the substratum of the world as there is no world at all in the deep sleep state.

As a result of the above three reasons, there is no adhikaari for self-enquiry and therefore the system of Advaita is invalid.

Vishayaanubandha abhaava - non-existence of subject-matter of self-enquiry

Prakashatman gives two reasons to show that subject-matter or vishaya doesn't exist with respect to self-enquiry.

1. Vedanta not having injunctions

Anything is attained in the world with injunctions or in general activities. Wherever activities aren't there, nothing can be attained. Since Vedanta talks about jnaana or knowledge and there is total lack of activity in Vedanta therefore Vedanta doesn't have any subject-matter at all. We can talk about attaining something but we cannot talk about something which is already attained. By being devoid of injunctions, Vedanta or self-enquiry cannot be started.

2. Subject is unattained

Vedanta talks about attaining the state of moksha. This means that moksha isn't currently attained. That which is not attained can never be attained; even if it is attained, the attainment will not be permanent (as that which is attained will also be lost eventually). Therefore the subject of Vedanta which is unattained moksha is not at all there (as good as not at all there).

Due to the above two reasons, there is no subject-matter with respect to self-enquiry and therefore self-enquiry itself is invalid.

Self-enquiry - invalid

By proving that anubandha traya of fruit, eligible person and subject isn't there, the purvapaksin concludes that the system of Vedanta isn't cannot be started. It cannot be started as there is no system of Vedanta itself (a system exists only if the anubandha traya exists).

Since self-enquiry itself is invalid therefore the entire Brahma Sutra itself is futile. The purvapaksin thus decimates the system of Vedanta by proving that Vedanta cannot even claim to be a system due to being devoid of anubandha traya.

Answering of purvapakshin's statements

This magazine we have seen the purvapaksha statements. Just because the purvapakshin makes statements or the statements seem logical doesn't mean that they are true or right. There is answer for all objections made by purvapakshins in Vedanta. We will see in the next magazine, the answer for all these objections through the words of Prakashatman.

We cannot say that analyzing of purvapaksha statements isn't required. Doubts are the very nature of the mind. At one point or the other, there can be doubts and objections in one's own mind. Therefore an analysis of doubts that are there in the mind and that can come in the mind in the future is essential to ensure that there never will be any doubts regarding the ultimate reality of Brahman. And answering of doubts will ensure that the sadhaka gains conviction with respect to Brahman thereby moving quicker towards realization.

May the master of Prakashatman guide us to understanding the various doubts and objections in the mind so that we will be able to get rid of them and thereby through realization will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Avidyaa Prakaashah

We saw in the previous magazine illogicality of avidyaa with respect to its support (asraya). The purvapakshin says that avidyaa cannot be supported by Brahman because Brahman is self-luminous in nature and will lead to duality (as avidyaa becomes another entity). Avidyaa also cannot be supported by jeeva who himself isn't real and dependent on avidyaa itself for his very existence. Thus, the purvapakshin concluded that avidyaa is illogical and so is the system of Advaita Vedanta which bases itself on avidyaa.

The siddhantin replied saying that the support for avidyaa is Brahman alone as there isn't any real entity apart from Brahman. And since avidyaa isn't real therefore duality isn't affected at all. Avidyaa since it is just a matter of experience for an ignorant person and really not real therefore it doesn't cause any harm to self-luminous nature of Brahman (and also doesn't lead to duality or another real entity like Brahman).

Now we come to the next illogicality with respect to avidyaa.

2. tirodhAnAnupapattiH- Illogicality with respect to concealment of Brahman by avidyaa

ॐ अविद्या प्रकाशः

om avidyā prakāśah

ज्ञाननाशकस्यात्मरोधनं ।

नास्तिसच्चिदानन्दरूपतः ॥५॥

jñānanāśakasyātmarodhanam ।

nāstisaccidānandarūpatāḥ ॥5॥

5. Ignorance's concealment or hiding of the Self is not there because Self is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

भावनमिथ्या युक्तिवर्जितं ।

दीप्तिरूपकस्यैवनास्तितत् ॥६॥

bhāvanammithyā yuktivarjitam ।

dīptirupakasyaivanāstitat ॥6॥

6. If it is said that the concealment (veiling) is an illusion, then it is not possible because the Self is of the nature of light.

ज्ञानवर्जितस्यैवतत्सदा ।

स्वानुभूतिरूपेणसिद्धिदम् ॥७ ॥

jñānavarjitasyaivatatsadā
svānubhūtirūpeṇasiddhidam||7||

7. Ignorance is only for one who is devoid of knowledge. And it is proven through one's own experience.

व्यावहारिकं तत्सतोर्भिदा ।

पारमार्थिकः स्वात्मबोधकः ॥८ ॥

vyāvahārikam tatsatorbhidā
pāramārthikaḥ svātmabodhakaḥ||8||

8. Ignorance is empirical and different from Brahman (therefore it can veil Brahman and this veiling isn't real but empirical); and ultimate truth of Brahman is illuminator of one's Self - knowledge of Brahman unveils the empirical ignorance (and this is logical alone that knowledge of Brahman removes empirical or unreal ignorance which only empirically or illusorily veils Brahman).

Slokas

The first two slokas explain the illogicality with respect to asraya of avidyaa. The first two slokas (4th and 5th) thus are purvapaksha statements whereas the last two (7th and 8th) slokas answer the objections and the siddhantha or advaitic view-point.

Avidyaa - veils Brahman

Though Brahman alone exists as the substratum of the entire world of names-forms and is the indwelling Self of all beings, still people experience sorrow. This sorrow is due to lack of knowledge of one's own nature of Brahman.

This lack of knowledge is termed as avidyaa. Avidyaa veils one's very nature of blissful Brahman and hence bondage ensues, along with sorrow and birth-death. Once a person

realizes through knowledge that I am Brahman, avidyaa gets destroyed and thereby only bliss remains behind. The veiling of Brahman by avidyaa is essential in order to explain the state of sorrow a person experiences in the dual world (else a person should just be blissful at all times by being of the nature of bliss).

Purvapaksha - Brahman is of the nature of self luminosity

Advaita Vedanta says that Brahman is of the nature of self-luminosity or svayam prakasha. Thus Brahman always shine as the light of Consciousness - that light which is the light of all lights; that light which illumines even various sources of light in the world like Sun, Moon, Fire and Stars. Thus Brahman is like Sun.

It is essential to accept Brahman to be self-luminous in nature as Brahman eternally exists (without any change). As Ramana Maharshi says, existence can only be illumined by Consciousness (satvabhāsikā citkvavetarā). In order for Brahman to ever-exist, Brahman has to be of the nature of Consciousness; in other words, Brahman is self-luminous because Brahman ever exists.

It is important to remember here that self-luminous Brahman is the light of all lights and nothing, absolutely nothing, will obstruct Brahman.

Purvapaksha - avidyaa cannot veil self-luminous Brahman

Brahman as we saw is self-luminous in nature and is the light of all lights. Such a Brahman therefore cannot be veiled by avidyaa. Such a veiling is illogical and thereby impossible as well.

If it is said that avidyaa doesn't veil Brahman then the entire system of Advaita Vedanta falls apart as bondage cannot be explained and thereby effort for liberation cannot be started as well.

Now if it is said that avidyaa doesn't really veil Brahman, then again the system of Advaita Vedanta will fall apart as there is neither bondage nor liberation (when Brahman alone exists).

Thus, avidyaa is illogical in that it cannot veil self-luminous Brahman.

Siddhantin - avidyaa only for ignorant

Just because avidyaa isn't logical doesn't mean that avidyaa doesn't exist. Avidyaa isn't logical like Brahman as it isn't real. Avidyaa is valid only with respect to an ignorant person. Avidyaa is the experience of an ignorant person and since it is the direct experience of an ignorant person, therefore it is self-proven (with respect to an ignorant person). This is similar to darkness. When we try to prove logicity of darkness, we will fail. This doesn't mean that darkness isn't logical but just that darkness isn't real. Absence of light is darkness. And darkness is a matter of experience for a person experiencing it - it is self-proven and doesn't need any proof for its existence. When light is brought then darkness automatically vanishes as it doesn't really exist. Similarly avidyaa doesn't really exist but is self-proven for an ignorant person.

If it is argued as to whether a jnaani experiences avidyaa or not, the answer is that avidyaa is sublated for a jnaani even like a person who perceives water in desert even after knowing that there is no water at all.

Siddhantin - two levels of reality

There are many contrary statements in the scriptures which can be understood only when we remember that there are two levels of reality (and statements of the scriptures target either of these levels).

Vyaavahaarika or empirical level - this is the world that is experienced. The world, its reality and its activities are all accepted from this level. This is similar to a movie or dream being accepted as real within that movie or dream. Avidyaa, bondage and liberation are all accepted in this level.

Paaramaarthika or ultimate level - ultimately Brahman alone exists. It is this reality level that a person has to always remember as this alone exists. The empirical level is just an illusion in Brahman but it is accepted in its plane even as dream is accepted in dream (but unreal from the waking state perspective).

The I that pulsates inside us is Brahman alone of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Forgetting of this nature means one has avidyaa and therefore all efforts should be made to get rid of avidyaa through knowledge; then one will realize that Brahman alone ever existed (and there never was any avidyaa at all). Avidyaa is thus valid from the

empirical level but unreal from the ultimate level. A worldly person identifies himself with the empirical level while not remembering his very nature of Brahman. This is what is called as veiling of Brahman. This is possible from empirical view point - as bondage and sorrow clearly prove that avidyaa or ignorance does exist. But once this person becomes a sadhaka and starts learning the shastras, he gains knowledge. Knowledge is that Brahman alone exists at all times. Thereby ignorance vanishes and the person realizes that he is ever at the ultimate level.

Then what about the world?

The world doesn't really matter now as it isn't real. Even as water seen in desert doesn't matter if a person knows that there is no water, similarly after knowing that Brahman alone exists a person isn't affected by the world at all (knowing that world doesn't exist). Ignorance or avidyaa then doesn't exist because a person identifies himself with Brahman (ultimate level). Avidyaa and its effect of the world might exist but still the person is identified with Brahman and therefore ignorance or its effect of the world doesn't affect at all.

Isn't avidyaa experience of the ignorant? So if avidyaa or its effect of world exists, then wouldn't that mean for a jnaani too avidyaa exists and that would make the jnaani an ajnaani?

Avidyaa is self-proven as it is the experience of an ignorant person. Avidyaa is not remembering the entire world to be essentially Brahman. A jnaani is like a gold-smith who sees all gold ornaments as gold alone whereas an ajnaani is like a normal person who sees all gold ornaments are different from one-another. Both see the names-forms of gold as various gold ornaments. Similarly a jnaani sees the world as Brahman (and therefore from the jnaani's perspective, there is no ignorance or veiling of Brahman and the world which is effect of ignorance also is seen as Brahman; therefore there is neither ignorance nor its effect for a jnaani who sees everything as Brahman alone).

Avidyaa - different from Brahman; Brahman or paaramaarthika - illuminator of Self

Avidyaa by being empirical in nature is different from Brahman or Sat (existence). And this avidyaa causes bondage and sorrow. Brahman or the ultimate truth is the illuminator of the Self. When a person gains knowledge that Brahman alone exists, this ultimate knowledge (or Brahman itself) is remover of the ignorance. Since ignorance is different from Brahman and doesn't really exist, therefore it is removed through knowledge of Brahman.

We can consider this knowledge of Brahman itself to be empirical in nature in which case empirical knowledge removes empirical ignorance and only Brahman remains behind. We can also consider this knowledge of Brahman to be ultimate in nature (in that it is realization of Brahman itself) in which this ultimate knowledge makes a person remember that empirical is not real (even as dream is removed when a person wakes up).

Examples of concealment

Light is concealed by darkness. This concealment isn't real as there is no real entity of darkness (absence of light makes darkness as if a real entity). When light comes in, darkness vanishes. This doesn't mean that darkness cannot conceal light - it does conceal light for a person who is experiencing darkness.

Ramanujacharya's statement that it is absurd to accept that darkness can hide light is wrong in itself. Because darkness does hide light (as is the experience) and when light comes, darkness instantly vanishes. Even as this hiding of light by darkness isn't real as darkness cannot be proven except directly experienced, similarly concealment of Brahman by ignorance isn't real as ignorance cannot be proven yet directly experienced. It is obviously absurd even for a child to accept the argument of Ramanujacharya (that it is absurd to say that darkness can hide light) let alone answer it (which we have done here in order for the benefit of all sadhakas).

Sometimes when it is cloudy or about to rain, we find that the ever-shining Sun is veiled by large clouds. This continues for a period of time and then when the cloud vanishes then Sun re-appears again. Really speaking, Sun is never veiled nor re-appears. But if clouds are experienced, then Sun is veiled and thereby the unveiling also has to happen. Similarly ignorance doesn't really veil Brahman but if it appears as veiling (empirically) then unveiling has to happen with knowledge of Brahman (as found in the shastras).

घनच्छन्न दृस्तिर्घनच्छन्नमर्कं
 यथा मन्यते निष्प्रभं चातिमूढः ।
 तथा बद्धवद्भाति यो मूढदृस्तेः
 स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥

Hastamalaka says "through the vision of clouds, the Sun is considered as light-less by ignorant; similarly that which appears as bonded from the vision of an ignorant person, that Self of the nature of being ever-present I am".

There is absolutely no illogicality with respect to accepting Brahman to be concealed by ignorance (for an ignorant person who experiences ignorance) and removed by knowledge of Brahman even as light veiled by darkness is revealed by light and Sun veiled by clouds is revealed by knowledge of Sun.

Anumaana used by purvapakshin and siddhantin

Purvapakshin

अविद्यायाः तिरोधानानुपपत्तिः सत्यं, ब्रह्मणः स्वप्रकाशरूपत्वात्, सूर्यवत् ।

Avidyaa's illogicality of veiling is real, due to Brahman being of the nature of self-luminosity (and avidyaa veiling Brahman), like Sun (which is light in nature and hence can never be veiled).

Siddhantapakshin

अविद्यायाः तिरोधानोपपत्तिः सत्यमेव, स्वानुभूतिरूपत्वात्तस्य व्यावहारिकत्वाच्च, सुर्यमेघावरणवत् ।

Avidya's logicality of veiling is real only, due to it being of the nature of self-experienced and being empirical in nature, like clouds veil Sun.

Satya Nirupanam

ॐ सत्यनिरूपणं

om satyanirūpaṇam

एकमेवसद्द्वैतवर्जितः ।

ब्रह्मसृष्टिपूर्वं सदेव च ॥१॥

ekamevasaddvaitavarjitaḥ|

brahmasṛṣṭipūrvam sadeva ca||1||

1. Existence is one alone which is devoid of duality, named as Brahman; and before creation as well it existed as Sat or Existence alone.

सृष्टिनामकं नामरूपतः ।

ब्रह्मणश्च तन्नास्तिसर्वदा ॥२॥

sṛṣṭināmakam nāmarūpataḥ|

brahmaṇascha tannāstisarvadā||2||

2. That which is called as creation is of the nature of names-forms and from Brahman; But it is not there at all times (by being unreal in nature).

सत्त्वरूपतः सर्वदास्थितेः ।

ब्रह्मणः स्वरूपं सदेव तु ॥३॥

satvarūpataḥ sarvadāsthiteḥ|

brahmaṇaḥ svarūpaṁ sadeva tu||3||

3. Of the form of Existence due to always existing, Brahman's nature is existence always.

चित्विनासतो नास्तिसत्यता ।

भानहीनतो भासकस्तुचित् ॥४ ॥

citvināsato nāstisatyatā |
bhānahīnato bhāsakastucit ||4||

4. Without the light of Consciousness, there is no existence (for Sat also) because Sat is without any shining and the shiner/illuminator is Consciousness.

पूर्णनन्तरूपं सुखं सदा ।

सच्चित्तिश्च नन्दः स्वरूपतः ॥५ ॥

pūrṇanantarūpaṁ sukhaṁ sadā |
saccitiśca nandaḥ svarūpataḥ ||5||

5. Due to being of the nature of perfect and infinite, (Sat) is happiness alone; and therefore Sat-Chit is of the nature of bliss.

(Thus truth is Sat, Chit, Ananda or Existence, Consciousness and Bliss in nature).

प्रीतिवर्धनात् द्वेशवर्जितः ।

मामकः स्वरूपं सुखं सदा ॥६ ॥

prītivardhanāt dveśavarjitaḥ |
māmakaḥ svarūpaṁ sukhaṁ sadā ||6||

6. Due to increasing affection and devoid of aversion, my nature is bliss always.

ज्योतिरूपकः मामकश्चित्तिः ।

चेतनान्वितः सर्वप्रत्ययः ॥७ ॥

jyotirūpakaḥ māmakaścitiḥ |
cetanānvitaḥ sarvapratyayaḥ ||7||

7. My Consciousness is of nature of light and all thoughts/experiences follow this Consciousness (thus my nature is Consciousness which is the light for everything).

नास्तिभावना वै कदाचन ।

क्षीयते ततोऽहं सदेव च ॥८॥

nāstibhāvanā vai kadācana
kṣīyate tato'haṁ sadeva ca ॥8॥

8. The notion of existence definitely doesn't vanish at anytime; therefore I am also of the nature of Existence.

सत्वरूपकोऽहं तु बोधकः ।

नन्दनन्दनो नन्दनन्दनः ॥९॥

satvarūpako'haṁ tu bodhakaḥ
nandanandano nandanandanaḥ ॥9॥

9. By being of the nature of existence, I am also the illuminator; and I am always blissful, blissful.

(Thus I am also of the nature of Sat, Chit and Ananda - thus I am Brahman of the nature of Sat, Chit and Ananda - and I am the ultimate truth, the substratum of the illusory world).

Anukramaanika Nirdesham

1. Editorial – a general message
2. Bheda Mithyaatva Siddhi - an analysis of bheda or the concept of a difference and proving bheda to be an illusion.
3. Chathussutra Prakaashah - a multi-part series on illumination of the first four sutras of Brahma Sutra through learning of the work of Shaareeraka nyaaya sangraha of Prakashatman.
4. Avidyaa Prakaashah - a multi-part series with written slokas explaining the illogicality of avidyaa as per Sri Bhashya and the answering of the same.
5. Satya Nirupanam - explanation of truth through a set of simple slokas (last time we saw explanation of sristi or creation). This section is dedicated to original work written but not explained in depth in order to help sadhakas in reflection of the concepts themselves.

1. Comments
2. Suggestions
3. Corrections (word, sloka, content etc.)
4. Would like to see specific content
5. Would like to contribute (through research from websites, don't need to write up the content yourself)

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