

Vedanta Madhuryam

Salutations to all.

Once a person was walking through a forest in order to reach his destination which was beyond the forest. The forest was filled with wild animals and thieves. He heard the sounds of various animals while traversing the forest. All of a sudden, few thieves caught him. They tied his hands, stuffed his mouth and blindfolded him. Then stealing everything that he possessed, they went away leaving him amidst wild animals in the forest. He couldn't do anything but await the deadly fate that waited to pounce upon him. All of a sudden he found a compassionate passer-by find him. The passer-by removed the stuffing in his mouth, untied him and removed his blindfold. Then the passer-by showed him the right path to go out of the forest. As a result of the help from the passer-by, he was able to get out of the forest and safely reached his destination.

We all are going towards the destination of moksha characterized by complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss. In order to reach the destination of moksha we have to cross the forest of samsaara. This forest is filled with wild animals of kaama, krodha etc. (attachment, aversion etc.). There are also wild plants or trees of sense objects. The thieves of sense organs stuff our mouth attachment that we cannot shout. They tie our hands to the bondage of karma (which we are forced to perform at all times). Our eyes are blinded by passion and ignorance. Thus we are unable to anything at all. Struggling in this forest of samsaara amidst wild animals of sense objects that are ready to pounce upon us and destroy us, the compassionate Guru comes by (as a result of good actions of the past and Ishwara's grace). The compassionate guru makes us understand the futility of actions and enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Thereby we are able to overcome the passions and pull of the sense organs. While remaining safe from wild animals and thieves, we are able to come out of the forest through the guidance of the compassionate guru. Treading the safe path towards moksha, we are able to attain the goal of moksha.

Many times we are blessed that we have many gurus living amidst us. More than this, we are blessed as the knowledge of the scriptures are clearly available to us not just in the original Sanskrit language but in other local translations. Though equipped with everything that is needed in life, still we are ever suffering.

What is the cause of this suffering?

The main cause of suffering is that we are unable to tread the path of Vedanta towards moksha, that has been set since time immemorial. Instead of treading the spiritual path towards moksha, we often get into worldly pleasures. Thinking that they will lead to happiness, we run behind them only to be caught by sense objects which take away our time, energy and happiness. Sankara says as to how blissful a person who doesn't possess anything will be. Externally possessing a lot of things and internally possessing much more things, we are ever suffering alone.

Any moment we have the path towards moksha right in front of our eyes. We are in an era where Vedanta is known to even laymen. Though everybody know Vedanta, very few indeed are able to pursue the path (even those in ashrams fall for worldly pleasures). We often are foolish in that we fail to apprehend that if we seek moksha, then we will get eternal bliss and the external worldly pleasures also will be achieved. Not realizing this or not willing to give up external pleasures, we just run here and there seeking one or the other thing. Nobody has time for Vedanta or spirituality – instead there is time for anything and everything else in the world.

AMMA gives this beautiful short story to illustrate as how spirituality and the means of spirituality have no value for us today. Once two men saw each other after a long time. The first man asked about the second man's son. The second man said that his son is doing dhyana. The first man asked as to what is dhyana and whether it is good. To this, the second man replied that they say it is better than doing nothing.

Kali Yuga is the era when adharma will be at its peak and dharma will falling down and down. The moment we forget the non-dual reality of Brahman and the scriptures or Vedanta that preach about Brahman, that very moment adharma has risen in our mind. Adharma will only lead to sins and sorrows. Thus today we all are suffering in the adharma caused by forgetting of Ishwara. Dharma can be very easily established if we learn the system of Vedanta.

Many think that Vedanta and the spiritual path is very tough to tread. This is wrong – Vedanta is the simplest to implement in life. It doesn't change the external world or situations. We will still live in the world like we are living today and we were living yesterday. But internally we will be remembering at all times that one non-dual reality of

Brahman alone exists. This knowledge of the ultimate truth that Brahman alone exists instantly will remove sorrows and make us rejoice in bliss. If we are able to get bliss by just remembering Brahman for a moment, what would be the bliss when we are ever abiding in Brahman? This is the goal of moksha where we are ever rejoicing in bliss through constantly abiding in Brahman.

In order to attain the state of moksha, we have to learn, understand and implement Vedanta. This is only possible if we find beauty in Vedanta (beauty attracts everybody equally). Vedanta is beautiful in itself as it is about blissful Brahman – that Brahman which alone exists at all times. Though external activities will not change, yet the internal state will change. Thereby though living in the world like any ordinary person we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss internally.

May we all strive to enjoy the beauty of Vedanta so that through learning, understanding and implementation of Vedanta we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

AUM NAMA SHIVAYA

May 15th

Anukramaanika

Vedanta Madhuryam	1
Sristi Siddhi.....	5
Chathussutra Prakaashah	17
Upaadhi Dhyotanam	25
Vedanta Shabda Vicharanam.....	35
Sristi Nirupanam	41
Anukramaanika Nirdesham	44

Sristi Siddhi

Goal of life - moksha

Many people think that life is to be just wasted by running here and there. This is what is happening with majority of people today – they just run here and there in name of some or the other action. But really speaking they aren't doing anything at all. It might be argued that they gain a degree or doctorate etc. but for what use? What do such degrees lead to? Do they take us to any goal at all?

The reply comes from majority of people that they have a goal in life which obviously differs from one person to another. Some may have the goal of getting into IIT; others may want to become an IAS officer; yet others, to become a great scholar in nuclear physics. Thus we find that goals of each and every person are different. And this varying goal of people is further split into two by analysts of the same – one is the short-term goal which caters only to goals that is achieved in a short time and therefore is deleted or removed or terminated (once it is achieved) and second is the long-term goal which caters to the final goal of life of the person.

But will there just be one long-term goal for a person?

Definitely no, goals keep on changing and we keep on adding goals one after the other. When one goal is achieved, another is added and work is started towards achieving this. When this second goal is achieved, another third goal is added and work is started towards achieving this third goal. This goes on without any end. The best way to prove this is to approach very elderly people who are in their 80s or above 80s and ask them whether they have any goal or desire in life – it is impossible to find one elderly person who says "I am content and I have no goal to achieve in this life". The reply generally will be that I have more desires and goals to achieve but nothing suits the seeking of desires and goals – though I want to read, eyes aren't working; though I want to listen, ears aren't working; though I want to do something, body isn't working. Thus all in all, there are still goals but discontentment alone in the mind. Hence Sankara says in Bhaja Govindam that once a person grows old, thoughts linger in the mind – thoughts that could be about the past (beautiful times of the past) or desires for the future (which cannot be achieved in anyway).

So there will always be many goals in life?

This isn't exactly the case as at all times we only have one goal in life, whether it be called short-term or long-term. All other goals (seemingly appearing goals) are just due to forgetting of this one goal and superimposition on this one goal.

This one goal that alone exists for a person is the same for all people, irrespective of all distinctions of caste, creed etc. It doesn't matter who the person is but everybody has the same one goal alone. Since this one goal is that which will put an end to all goals (or all seeking) therefore it is called the ultimate goal. Ultimate goal thus is that which will put an end to all goals thereby leading to a state of contentment, satisfaction, peace and bliss.

Can't we get all of these in a air-conditioned room?

Definitely no. As Sai Baba says what is the use of sitting in an air-conditioned room without conditioning the agitations of the desirous mind? Majority of people are unable to condition their mind itself and therefore sitting in an air-conditioned room will not help. Today if we look at the external world, there has been progress from all perspectives whether it is be mere science or technology or culture or finance. But the only thing lacking is mental calmness or peace or satisfaction. People have air-conditioned their houses but they need sleeping pills in order to sleep. People travel in air-conditioned cars and sit in air-conditioned rooms in their office but there is no contentment at all, either in the car or in office. It can be argued that today world is competitive and therefore tensions are there causing lack of contentment; but then who causes these tensions? Is it the external world? If tensions are caused by the external world then they should vanish in the dream state (where the external world is not at all there) but we find tensions in the dream state as well. Moreover our boss who used to be very good with us and wouldn't cause any tension till today, starts creating tensions for us because of his own personal problems. Thus the same boss who didn't cause tension yesterday is causing tension today. Though we can blame the external world for our problems it is just escapism. The world remaining as such, we can definitely remain calm and blissful (without tensions) but our mind doesn't allow the same. Hence Vidyananda says in Panchadashi that the cause of all bondage is our mind or the mental perspective of the external world.

Even as all objects of mud are pervaded by mud, similarly the entire world is pervaded by the creator of Ishwara (however we may want to call him). Since Ishwara is blissful (unlimited) therefore his creation also has to be blissful. But when such a creation passes

through our mind, it becomes sorrowful as a result of our own likes-dislikes. Instead of seeing the entire world as one Ishwara, we see it as different objects and beings. This leads to sorrow. This is similar to a person who sees a very beautiful rose but is sad at seeing it – because he remembers his own love who broke his heart; the rose is beautiful and therefore instantly will lead to bliss but since the person's mind taints the rose with his own ideas or perspectives, therefore he experiences sorrow from the rose. His mind thus is to be blamed for the same.

Thus until we condition our mind or get rid of likes and dislikes from our mind, we will not get the ultimate goal of life characterized by satisfaction, contentment, peace and eternal bliss. This ultimate goal of life is termed in Vedanta as moksha (because bondage is that which leads to sorrow – even as getting oneself tied by ropes leads to sorrow). We are already bonded by this world and therefore this bondage has to be removed and we should get liberated (attaining moksha).

How can we remove bondage of the world and how can we attain moksha?

Moksha is the state of eternal bliss of the Lord or Brahman. Really speaking our very nature is that of Lord or Brahman (of the nature of pure consciousness untainted by the entire world). That we have no association with the entire world (real association) including our own body is known through the deep sleep state. Deep sleep is the state where we are sleeping but there is no dream at all – thus there is neither the external world nor the internal world created by the mind. In this deep sleep, I do exist because I remember my experience after waking up. I also have bliss in this state because I recollect this bliss.

Since nothing else exists in the deep sleep state other than myself therefore I have to be of the nature of bliss. We cannot argue that other things are there in deep sleep state but I didn't experience it – if other things were there, I would definitely experience it in one or the other way (or one or the other time) but each and every time I sleep and each moment in sleep, I don't experience anything at all. This not-experiencing anything else is also known as "I didn't know anything" – this not knowing anything is called ignorance and this ignorance veil was there but since ignorance didn't get converted into the external or the internal world, therefore no other experience than oneself was there.

The state of deep sleep thus shows that I am of the nature of bliss so moksha is just realizing my state of bliss.

If my state is that of bliss, why don't I experience it now?

I don't experience it now because I associate myself with the world. As long as the world is accepted, there will be sorrows alone (as we experience in the waking and the dream state). But the moment the world is negated in our mind, that very moment we will be able to experience bliss of the Self (bliss of our own very nature).

Does this mean that we have to get rid of the world to experience bliss?

No, the world cannot be got rid of as it doesn't really exist. What is required is to understand the true nature of the world. Today scientists analyze the world thoroughly but they know little about the world alone. The more questions we pose to scientists about the world, we will find more assumptions coming out. And the diplomatic answer will be that we are still investigating only. This is contrary to our ancient systems based on the Upanishads, like the system of nyaaya and vaisheshika, which explain the world without posing assumptions.

But among the various darshanas it is only Vedanta that explains the world to perfection. Unless the world and its creation is explained correctly, there will be attachment and association to the world – this will in turn lead to sorrow alone (as we have seen already). We have to thus say that it is not the world that causes sorrow but the notion of the world being real that causes sorrow (this knowledge of the world being real is definitely wrong).

World – not real

How can we say that the world is not real?

Direct experience proves that the world is not real. Real is that which never ceases to exist (means it exists at all times). That which is subject to changes is also subject to birth and death. That which is subject to birth and death isn't real as it will cease to exist. The world that we currently experience has a beginning and an end (birth and death). It also constantly changes. Thus it is clear that the world isn't real.

It can be argued as to what is the problem with depending upon a world which isn't real but the answer is that such a world will only lead to sorrow (as it will eventually cease to exist). Therefore wise people will not take resort to such a world which isn't real.

Now if be argued that not real doesn't mean that the world is an illusion or the world doesn't exist, then the answer is that since the world is not real therefore it is an illusion. Unreal is that which never exists (like the son of a barren woman or castle in space). Since this world appears as existing now therefore it is neither real nor unreal. Such an entity is called as an illusion.

Taking worldly examples of illusions, we find that it isn't real and isn't unreal. The water seen in desert isn't real because it will vanish; but it isn't unreal as well as it is experienced. Illusions thus are those which appear as if real but aren't real. Their appearance is as a result of ignorance and therefore knowledge removes them. Once a person gains knowledge through going near the water, he will realize that water doesn't exist at all – thus the illusion is removed.

Removal of illusion is also empirical alone as ultimately it doesn't exist and it never existed also. It is wrong to say even that the water seen in desert has vanished as it never even existed to vanish – it just appeared as existing due to one's own ignorance and knowledge about its nature will make one realize that it never exists.

Today we depend on the world for anything and everything. Such too much dependency on the world is what leads to sorrow for us. Those who don't depend too much on the world (including their own body) will not face much sorrow and even if they face sorrow, they will be able to overcome it easily. The lesser and lesser dependencies towards the entire world, the more and more happy a person will be. This is something that we can directly experience by putting into practice. Dependencies are both external and internal – not depending on something externally while thinking about it in the mind is also dependency only and it will also lead to sorrow. Though it might be tough to not depend on the world initially, it will become easy through constant practice and knowledge of the world being sorrowful. Then we will be able to live in the world while performing actions while not getting affected by the world, even little. This is the state of moksha.

In order to achieve the state of moksha, we have to know a little bit more about the world (than just knowing it to be temporary and sorrowful).

World – two perspectives

Any illusion (that which is neither real nor unreal) has two perspectives for us to look at it. The first perspective is the empirical perspective wherein the illusion is perceived. The second is where the illusion doesn't exist at all and therefore is the ultimate perspective. With respect to the world, empirical perspective accepts the world, its creation, destruction etc. But from ultimate perspective, the world is totally unreal (not at all there). These two perspectives have to be remembered in order to understand as to how the world was created as well as to interpret the scriptures properly. If we forget these two perspectives, then we will find no explanation whatsoever for the creation of the world; also we will find contrary statements in the scriptures which can never be harmonized. The moment we lose faith in explanation of the world, which is directly experienced, and the scriptures that are the source for Brahman or Lord (and the goal of moksha), that very moment we move away from the goal of eternal bliss and will experience only sorrow.

Many contemporary systems of Vedanta and other systems fail to apprehend the two perspectives of the world and therefore they are not only unable to explain the world but they are unable to attain the goal of eternal bliss.

The dual perspective of the world is easily understood with the example of dream. While dreaming, the dream world appears very real and therefore we have to get rid of it (through waking up from it). But after waking up, it is foolish to say that I went into a dream world as there never was any dream world at all. Thus during dream, the dream world is empirically an illusion in the dreamer. But after waking up, the dream world is totally unreal. If we have to accept the dream world even after waking up, we have to just say that the dream world is an illusion in the dreamer (empirical perspective). Empirical perspective is just to explain illusions when we experience them but ultimate perspective is the real perspective. From the ultimate perspective, there never is any empirical perspective as well. Ultimately thus there is no dream world and there is no scope of any dream world being created as well.

Keeping the two perspectives in mind, let's analyze as to how this world is created. For the world to get created, there needs to be a cause. Without any cause, there cannot be an effect.

Can't the world be itself a cause?

Yes, the world can be cause but it is an effect as well. Effect is that which changes (that which is just a cause is never changing whereas effect constantly changes and therefore is just name-form in the cause – even as pot which is an effect is name-form in mud which is the cause – mud never changes into the pot but it is just name-form that makes it appear as if something new called pot is created). The cause of this world needs to be an uncaused cause; for if this cause is also caused by something else, then that cause also has to be either uncaused cause or there should be another cause which caused it; there will be infinite regression unless we accept an uncaused cause. Due to simplicity, we can accept the cause of the world itself as an uncaused cause.

Temporarily, let's assume that the world's cause is an uncaused cause. It is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and bliss. Since this cause has to be unlimited in nature (for only then can the seemingly unlimited world appear in it and be controlled by it) – due to being unlimited in nature, this cause is definitely uncaused (there is no other cause to it). Since the world appears as existing, therefore existence has to be the nature of the cause. That which is existence in nature will always exist and therefore is uncaused.

It cannot be argued that the cause of the world need not be existence; it can be temporary existence, like the world, and there can be another cause of this cause which is existence in nature; as then really speaking (or logically speaking) the world is caused from the cause which is existence in nature as the in-between cause is just an illusion (so we can strike it off).

Since the uncaused cause of the world is existence in nature, therefore a light has to be fall upon it constantly. This light is the light of Consciousness, the light of all lights (without which nothing can exist). For existence to be always there, it has to be consciousness in nature. That which is both existence and consciousness in nature is also unlimited in nature. That which is unlimited in nature is blissful also in nature. Thus the uncaused cause of the world is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

This uncaused cause is termed in Vedanta as Brahman and variously called as Ishwara, Paramatman, Bhagavan etc. From this uncaused cause, the world is created; the world exists also in this uncaused cause (as without it, the illusory effect of the world cannot

exist); the world merges unto this cause once it is destroyed. Thus really speaking, the world is nothing but just an appearance in this uncaused cause.

Names and forms in the world make it appear as if duality or differences are real. Similar to differences in the dream world, differences here as well are just illusions. Ignorance of the truth that this entire world is the uncaused cause (which is the real substratum of the illusory world) makes us see difference and as a result experience sorrows.

The world which is created from the uncaused cause is just an illusion of names and forms in the substratum of the uncaused cause of Brahman, like the dream world is just an illusion of names and forms in the substratum of the dreamer. While experiencing the waking world, we will have to take this perspective that it is just an illusion in the substratum of the uncaused cause.

But ultimately, can there be a world appearing in the uncaused cause?

Definitely no. There are many ways in which something can appear in the uncaused cause but all these ways will not be valid here as the uncaused cause of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss is one without a second (there is nothing apart from it). Thus whatever exists at all times is the uncaused cause alone. Nothing else exists for the world to even appear in the uncaused cause. Moreover due to the world being names and forms, its appearance is as a result of ignorance – knowledge instantly makes the world to appear or be seen as the uncaused cause of Brahman.

Thus ultimately the world is not at all created though empirically we can say that the world is created as an illusion from the uncaused cause-substratum of Brahman. Whenever we talk about sristi or creation, we should remember these two theories (one of the world not at all being created and the other of the world being just an illusion in Brahman). These two theories are called as ajaati vaada and vivarta vaada respectively.

Creation theories as per Vedanta

Though science among many other darshanas talk about creation of the world variously, Vedanta says beyond doubt that only two theories of creation are valid. One is the vivarta vaada which is valid empirically and the other is ajaati vaada which is valid ultimately.

Vivarta means appearance – even as snake appears in the rope, the dream world appears in the dreamer, similarly the entire world appears in the substratum of Brahman. Nothing new is created but the world of names and forms appears in Brahman. Due to ignorance of the truth that the world is Brahman alone, a person perceives difference in the world and gets carried away by them. Creating likes-dislikes, a person constantly gets into happiness-sorrow. This goes on for many births until knowledge of Vedanta dawns and the person realizes slowly that the temporary-sorrowful world is just an illusion in Brahman and Brahman alone exists or appears as the world of names-forms.

Though Vedanta initially talks about how creation comes out of Brahman (like a spider weaves web out of itself and through creation of mahat tattva, pancha bhootas etc. etc.), these are negated gradually and the sadhaka is told that the world is just an appearance of names and forms in Brahman. Even as various objects made of mud, gold and iron are just mud, gold and iron alone respectively (due to names and forms having no reality at all), similarly the entire world of names and forms is Brahman alone as names-forms have no reality whatsoever.

Ajaati vaada means that there is no world at all created. Thus Gaudapada acharya says that even the jeeva or individual is not at all created and there is no possibility of jeeva being created. This world if it appears as existing, it will definitely vanish for duality is just an illusion and non-duality alone is ultimately real.

Though ajaati vaada is very tough indeed to apprehend and remember in the mind, still it is the ultimate truth; therefore one or the other day a sadhaka will have to come to this truth that there is no world at all created and the non-dual reality of Brahman alone exists (even when the world appears as existing). Until when a sadhaka is ready to accept ajaati vaada, the world can be empirically accepted while remembering the vivarta vaada, remembering the world to be just an appearance or illusion in the non-dual reality of Brahman. Thus though the world is accepted as temporarily existing, it is seen as Brahman.

In both of these perspectives, a person sees everything as Brahman. This vision of oneness gets rid of all duality and likes-dislikes. Therefore such a person doesn't get into the dual notions of happiness-sorrow. Therefore such a person ever rejoices in bliss. This doesn't mean that he doesn't perform actions – he performs actions in the world like a worldly person but like an actor who while performing his role to perfection is never affected by the

actions, similarly he though performing actions in the world is never affected by the actions and therefore ever rejoices in bliss.

Such a ever-rejoicing blissful person is called a jeevan mukta or a liberated person. He is one with Brahman and is a Brahmajnaani. Any person who approaches this jeevan mukta will be able to experience the bliss of Brahman, provided there is openness of mind, similar to a person able to experience heat when going near fire, provided there is no protection of fire worn.

Conclusion

Creation has often confused ancient people as well as current day scientific people. But there is no confusion at all with respect to creation for a Vedantin or a sadhaka who is learning Vedanta. Vedanta, beyond doubt, says that the world never exists but empirically appears as an illusion in the substratum of Brahman.

The world that we currently experience is very similar to the dream world. The dream world appears very real when we are experiencing it but is known to be just an illusion once we wake up from the dream. Similarly this entire world that we are experiencing appears very real when we experience it but is just an illusion once we realize that it is Brahman alone (once we wake up from this dream of the waking world).

Even while experiencing the external world a person who is able to remember it to be nothing but Brahman alone will be able to ever rejoice in bliss as he doesn't get affected by the sorrows caused by the world.

To summarize, the world is an illusion empirically but ultimately it doesn't even exist – either way, the ultimate non-dual reality of Brahman alone exists.

Now who is this Brahman?

That which pulsates constantly inside each one of us as I-exist, I-exist is Brahman. It is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Forgetting our very nature of Brahman, we get into ignorance and therefore consider the external dual world to be real. Therefore we experience sorrow alone. The moment we gain knowledge from Vedanta that Brahman alone exists as my very nature of Consciousness, that very moment all sorrows end and we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss.

May we all strive to constantly remember the world to be either an illusion in Brahman or as not at all created but Brahman alone existing so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows caused by the unreal world and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Anumaanas used

कार्यं तु कारणमेव, नामरूपत्वात् नामरूपयोः मिथ्यात्वाच्च, घटादिवत् ।१ ।

kāryam tu kāraṇameva, nāmarūpatvāt nāmarūpayoḥ mithyātvācca, ghaṭādivat|1|

1. Effect is cause alone; due to being names-forms in nature and names-forms being illusions, like pot etc. (pot, wall etc. are illusions of names and forms in mud).

जगत्तु ब्रह्मैव, कार्यत्वात्, घटादिवत् ।२ ।

jagattu brahmaiva, kāryatvāt, ghaṭādivat|2|

2. The world is Brahman alone, due to being an effect, like pot etc. (all effects like pot, wall etc. of mud are mud alone; similarly this world of names and forms is Brahman alone).

सृष्टिस्तु मिथ्यैव, कार्यत्वात् नामरूपत्वाच्च, स्वप्नवत् ।३ ।

sṛṣṭistu mithyaiva, kāryatvāt nāmarūpatvācca, svapnavat|3|

3. Creation is an illusion alone, due to being an effect and name-form in nature, like dream (even as in dream everything is an effect of the dreamer and mere names-forms, similarly with this world as well).

दृष्टिस्तु द्विधा, व्यवहारास्पदत्वात्, स्वप्नवत् ।४ ।

dr̥ṣṭistu dvidhā, vyavahārāspadatvāt, svapnavat|4|

4. Vision or perspective of two-fold, due to being in the planet of the world (empirical), like dream (even as dream has perspective while experiencing it, appears as real, and after waking up, it is unreal).

जगत्परमार्थतस्तु ब्रह्मैव, एकमेवाद्वितीयत्वात्, ब्रह्मवत् ।५।

jagatparamārthatastu brahmaiva, ekamevādvitīyatvāt, brahmavat।5।

5. The world ultimately is Brahman alone, due to being one without a second, like Brahman.

Summarizing Sloka

सृष्टिर्नामात्मकं विद्धि ब्रह्मैव कारणं तस्य ।

दृष्टिभेदेन लोकस्य सत्यत्वं स्फुटतः सिद्धम् ॥

sṛṣṭirnāmātmakaṁ viddhi brahmaiva kāraṇaṁ tasya ।
dṛṣṭibhedena lokasya satyatvaṁ sphuṭataḥ siddham ॥

Know creation to be just names (and forms); Brahman alone is the cause for the world (creation); Due to the two perspective visions, the reality of the world is clearly established (empirically appears real but ultimately is unreal, like dream which when experienced appears real but after waking up is known to be unreal).

Chathussutra Prakaashah

Shareeraka Nyaaya Sangraha

Fourth Sutra

तत्तु समन्वयात् ।

tattu samanvayāt

And that Brahman due to being harmonized (in the entire scriptures, is the essence of the scriptures).

Previously we saw the purvapakshin arguing that Brahman cannot be proven through the Vedas by being the cause of Vedas (and Vedas only explain or prove effects). Now we will see the reply of the same by Prakashatman.

There (in the arguments raised by purvapakshin) – remembrance of starting and ending, between repetition also being made, not being known through any other means, association with a special fruit, praising of the concepts (arthavaada) and whatever has been explained or mentioned, its being proven through logic – thus the six types of linga or ways are present for whose words and are being seen in one whose objects (or explanations), that words and it's objects validity is there both worldly as well as vaidika (from Vedas); we see this in the case of words of injunctions or vidhi (as we find in the scriptures); through this logic, it is established that the Vedas through having the six lingas have validity with respect to Brahman.

Tatparya or import

Let's say that two friends meet after a few days and they start talking. Though many topics will be discussed still we can say that one or two main or important topics will be discussed. If these main topics are figured out, then we can say that the entire discussion revolves around these topics alone. This or these main topics are called the import.

Import can be with respect to a work or a seminar or a paper or a talk. Everywhere we find import being very important in order to follow the speaker (or the writer of a work). Focusing on the import is the key to a successful work or seminar or talk. An orator who gets into a lot of topics while talking isn't a good or successful orator – therefore his words will not reach the targeted audience. Contrary to a bad orator, a good orator is one who is

ever focused on the import of his talk. He constantly talks with respect to the import – the entire speech will cry out clearly that this is the import of the speech.

There is no better way to understand this than from the speech of politicians. The politician constantly focuses on how his party is important and other parties are not important (and are wrong). Thus a congressman though might talk in a school or to press or in a temple, but the import of his talk will be extolling his party and defaming the opposition party (party that is opposition to his own party).

Though majority of the time speakers focus on the import of their topic, often we find foolish people whose mind runs in ten different directions. Thus such people talk about a lot of things and only briefly touch the import – listeners who listen to such talks will not be able to grasp anything at the end of the talk.

Though this isn't directly related to the spiritual path yet we can say that the import or goal is important in life. As is the goal of a person, so will his life be set. Depending on the focus on the goal, the person will attain it quickly. If focus is lacking then the person will never attain the goal in life. Though everybody has different worldly goals, the ultimate goal of life is eternal bliss (which is possible only through knowledge of Brahman as found in the scriptures). A true sadhaka who wants moksha or the ultimate goal of life attained soon itself will be ever focused on learning, reflecting and implementation of the scriptures.

Since here discussion is about a work, is there a way to find out the import of a work?

Definitely there is a way to find out the import of a work. It should be remembered that here we are talking about works that are based on the scriptures or those who interpret the scriptures – only such traditional works will have imports; all other works written by scientists or other authors may not have import in them (specifically). Though import might be there, it cannot be found out (except for the title or the introduction of the work).

Shad lingas for tatparya

Tatparya or import of a work can be found out through the shad lingas or six ways (or identification marks). Whatever these six marks point out, that is the subject-matter of the work. Thus if we apply it to the scriptures, we will be able to find out the import or subject-matter of the scriptures (the main purvapaksha argument is that the scriptures cannot point

out Brahman – therefore through the six marks, if we are able to point out that the scriptures point to Brahman, then the scriptures are the proof of Brahman).

The six marks are upakrama-upasamhaara, abhyaasa, apurvata, phalam, arthavaada and upapatti.

1. Upakrama-Upasamhaara – beginning and end

Any work has a beginning and an end. Whatever is the subject-matter of a work will be introduced in the beginning and concluded at the end. Thus through finding out what is being mentioned in the beginning and the end, we can find out the subject-matter of a work.

This pattern or way of writing work (where the subject-matter is discussed in the beginning and at the end) is followed even in today's paper-writing or letter-writing or speeches. Let's say we are writing a mail (whether official or personal) – we will begin the mail with whatever is the subject-matter of the mail and though there might be a lot of subjects discussed in the middle, we will end with the same subject-matter of the mail. This means that the subject-matter is that which is discussed in the beginning and the end – through this way, we can find out of the subject-matter or import of a letter.

The approach of looking at the beginning and the end in order to find out the subject-matter can be extended even to the scriptures.

2. Abhyaasa - repetition

If something is mentioned in the beginning and at the end, and then it is forgotten in the middle then it cannot be the subject-matter as the subject-matter has to be discussed constantly (so that focus is always there on the subject-matter). Therefore repetition in the middle is a mark to find out the import of a work. In the middle of a work as well, the import will be discussed again and again.

In a talk, though the subject-matter will be spoken about in the beginning and at the end, it will also be discussed in the middle – repetition of the subject-matter is only way to emphasize on the subject-matter.

3. Apurvata – not found or mentioned elsewhere

Let's say that I am writing a work; if the subject-matter of the work is found elsewhere then there is no point of me writing the work. If I am writing a work on the subject-matter which has already been explained elsewhere then there should be some extra-addition (or value-addition) or something different that is being dealt here (maybe the way of writing or targeting audience). Else there is futility of writing a work.

Though Upanishads have already been commented upon by Sankara, Vidyaranya in the very beginning of Anubhoothi prakaasha (which is a poetry-based commentary on the Upanishads) says that this is written for the understanding of children (sadhakas who aren't sharp to directly or through bhashyas understand the Upanishads).

We can say that this mark differentiates the work from all other similar or dissimilar works and therefore this is a distinguishing as well as specializing quality of the work (showing the subject-matter or import very clearly).

4. Phala – fruit

It is said that even ignorant or foolish people don't perform anything without seeking a fruit in return. Unless there is some fruit to an action, it will not be followed by anybody. Reading or learning of a work also thus requires a fruit that should be achieved as a result. The fruit also has to be the subject-matter because that is the focus-point of the work.

A person who learns a particular work will attain a particular fruit – this statement of the fruit has to be part of the work itself (or it has to be indirectly hinted at). Through the fruit of a work, we can definitely thus find out the subject-matter or import of a work.

For example, if we are reading the textbook of mathematics then it is know that the fruit will be knowledge of mathematics (certain concepts of mathematics). Even though the book maybe unnamed still if it is mentioned directly or indirectly that through learning of the book, one will gain knowledge of mathematics then we can conclude that mathematics is the subject-matter or import of the work.

5. Arthavaada or praising

It is certainly a controversial topic to say whether many of the statements of the scriptures are arthavaada or not but we can say that one of the way of pointing out the import of a work is through praising it in one or the other way.

Taking the example of the mathematics book, praising in between that one who gains knowledge of mathematics will become a master of the entire world or he will be able to know anything and everything in the world – easily points out to the subject-matter as mathematics.

Such praising words are required in all walks of life as it gives motivation. It is more important for initial sadhakas to hear praises about the spiritual path, the scriptures and Brahman as this alone will keep them ever focused on the path – for obstacles in the world are a lot and they are always waiting to pounce upon a sadhaka. When we sit in a scriptural class, then everything appears easy, simple and we will be able to focus on Brahman; but once we come out of the class and look at the world again (experience the world) then the world attracts and deludes us, thereby making us forget Brahman. Amidst all the sorrows and sufferings that we experience in the world, delusion pushes us towards the verge of collapse – then even listening to Vedanta will not help. Thus the scriptures constantly extol following of the spiritual path and even sadhakas – such motivational or inspirational words may not be eternally true but it still serves its purpose to make sadhakas follow the spiritual path.

Whatever is being praised in a particular work (once or multiple times) obviously has to be the subject-matter. Praising that which isn't the subject-matter is futile and it serves no purpose to anybody.

6. Upapatti – logic or examples

Merely explaining things through repetition or praising will not work for human beings who are endowed with intellect. The intellect though should be used for discrimination is often used to analyze things. Until analysis is complete, the mind will not accept concepts. Therefore it is essential for a work to explain things through logic and examples. Logic here means the various pramaanas or valid means of knowledge like perception, inference etc. Examples always serve to make people understand concepts – whether they be smart or intelligent people or foolish people.

Without this particular mark, though the work may be very good still it will not fully serve its purpose. Thus all works will use logic and examples in varying quantities (depending on the subject-matter). Through finding out as to what is being proven through logic and hinted at directly or indirectly through examples, a person can find out the subject-matter or import of a work.

Six lingas

All the six lingas or marks have to be applied in order to find out the subject-matter or import of a work. Traditionally even if one linga is missing, the subject-matter will not be pointed out clearly. Therefore knowledge of the subject-matter will ensue for all sadhakas. If knowledge only reaches few sadhakas then that is a fault in the work – it has work for anybody in the world, for it to be faultless.

Prakashatman says here that using the logic that six lingas point out to the subject-matter of a work, we can prove that Brahman is being pointed out by the scriptures. For this we have to just analyze the scriptures using the six lingas to find out its subject-matter or import.

Though any scriptural text can be taken up for this analysis, generally the sixth chapter of Chandogya Upanishad is taken up for its clarity of statements and concepts. The sixth chapter titled Svetaketu brahmana is an instruction from the Guru-father of Uddhalaka to the Shishya-son of Svetaketu. As Prof. Balakrishnan Nair points out, this chapter beautifully explains Brahman to sadhakas even like a laboratory experiment (many experiments are carried out here thus making it the most scientific of all texts).

The chapter starts with mention of the truth of Brahman of the nature of Sat or Existence alone existing before creation, one without a second. The Upanishad also says that this is the truth knowing which everything becomes known (like through knowledge of mud, all objects made of mud will be known). The chapter ends with proclamation of the fact that one who knows Brahman verily becomes Brahman (and that we all are Brahman alone).

In the middle as well, the Atman or Brahman is pointed out repeatedly. The Mahavakya of TAT TVAM ASI or That Thou Art is repeated nine times. This mahavakya says that the ultimate reality of Brahman is the Consciousness which constantly pulsates inside oneself.

This knowledge of Brahman isn't found elsewhere as Svetaketu went to the gurukula and gained some knowledge, but not about Brahman. Since he wasn't able to know about Brahman and was egoistic that he gained knowledge, therefore Uddhalaka endeavors to teach his son Brahnavidyaa.

The fruit of this brahnavidyaa is unique in that knowing this everything will become known. Everybody is constantly struggling to gain knowledge of everything – everybody wants to know everything (knowing is as good as possessing as then means can be used to possess). But all the various means of the world don't lead us to the state where we know everything. Therefore brahnavidyaa is the only means to know everything – put an end to all knowledge (and make a person ever rejoice in bliss). We can thus say that the fruit of brahnavidyaa is eternal bliss. And Brahnavidyaa is gained through this text or scripture – how can we say this? Because at the end of the instructions, Svetaketu says that he knows Brahman now.

Brahnavidyaa is extolled in many ways in this scripture – one of the way is that by knowing Brahman, everything will be known. This though is a very common statement in Vedanta is arthavaada alone; as really we will not know everything. A brahmajnaani will not know how to code in C or C++. But the meaning of such sentence is that a person who gains brahnavidyaa will know everything in its essential nature. Since Brahman is the essence of the entire world therefore knowing Brahman is as good as knowledge of the entire world. If it is argued that knowledge of C or C++ is still not gained, then what is the purpose of such knowledge? When brahnavidyaa leads to fulfillment of the ultimate goal of life as eternal bliss, then why should one gain knowledge of C or C++? Even if C or C++ is essential, then such a brahmajnaani will very easily be able to learn it.

Brahman is being proven in this chapter through logic and examples that put our laboratory experiments to shame (as this explains things through natural experiments).

Vedas – proof for Brahman

Thus we can say that through the six lingas, Brahman is being point out by this chapter. This chapter is just an example, any scriptural text can be shown to point out the non-dual reality of Brahman as the subject-matter or import. Thus we can conclude, beyond doubt that Vedas are proof for Brahman.

Though each and every scriptural text points out to Brahman clearly, still it is ignorance and pre-conceived notions that make a person not perceive the statements that clearly point out Brahman. Any sadhaka with an open mind will be able to find out each and every scriptural text directly or indirectly point out Brahman. Scriptures have been tested time and again by various masters – therefore they are faultless.

Though many statements of the scriptures might seem to be contrary in nature, they are not contrary in nature. They just talk from different perspectives. It requires subtle mind to interpret each and every sloka of the scriptures. Therefore a Guru is essential for majority of sadhakas in order to understand the scriptures properly and progress in the spiritual path towards the goal of moksha. It isn't very easy to find out a Guru and to surrender unto such a Guru, therefore the compassionate Veda Vyaasa wrote the brahma sutras to harmonize all scriptural statements that appear contrary in nature and to prove that all of them point to the subject-matter of Brahman alone.

We will see a summary of this sutra along with examples of scriptural statements to show that all of them point to the non-dual reality of Brahman alone.

May we all strive to gain knowledge of Brahman through the scriptures so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrows and through realization of Brahman ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Upaadhi Dhyotanam

Recap

We saw previously in the third sloka as to how Ishwara is essentially or by nature without any qualities yet appears as with qualities from empirical viewpoint or perspective. Empirical perspective helps sadhakas to initially imagine Ishwara and through contemplation on Ishwara get rid of likes-dislikes; thereby setting the stage eventually for knowledge to dawn (and realization of the quality-less non-dual reality of Brahman).

Before getting into the analysis of Upaadhi, the author next states the entire essence of Vedanta – after prostration of Ishwara in the third sloka, the author thus states the ultimate truth (essence of Vedanta).

एकमेवाद्वितीयं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दरूपकम् ।

अन्तः स्फुरन्तमात्मैव ज्ञात्वाप्नुयात्सुखं सदा ॥४ ॥

ekamevādvitīyaṁ brahma saccidānandarūpakam |
antaḥ sphurantamātmaiva jñātvāpnuyātsukhaṁ sadā ||4||

4. One without a second Brahman is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss; it is the Self or Consciousness that pulsates inside always; knowing this, a person attains happiness always (remains blissful at all times).

Ultimate truth

In order to analyze or understand about the ultimate truth of Brahman we have to go beyond the currently perceived and experienced world. The world of duality constantly poses a veil over the ultimate reality of Brahman by being the effect of Brahman.

Cause gets converted into effect by creation of names and forms. This is like mud getting converted or appearing as pot (and other objects made of mud). There is no real creation possible out of any cause but creation is effect appearing in the cause. As long as cause isn't perceived and effect alone is perceived, there will not be true knowledge of the effect (and of the cause as well). Even as knowledge of pot doesn't lead to knowledge of all objects made of mud, similarly knowledge of the world doesn't lead to knowledge of Brahman (as the cause of the world). It is when we gain knowledge of cause as the

substratum of the effect that we get to know the cause and therefore effect also is completely known.

The cause of the world is termed in the scriptures as Brahman. Logic also proves that there needs to a cause which is eternal, for the ever changing world. Any change is impossible unless there is changeless substratum in which the changes appear. When changeless substratum cannot be found out, then a person assumes something to be changeless and therefore superimposes the changes on this assumed-changeless entity. Thus we say that we are moving from one place to another or driving a car from one place to another – this is not really possible as the earth itself is moving, so there is no basis for our change. But we assume earth to be stationary (earth or ground) and therefore say that we are moving. All changes are similarly perceived due to and in a changeless entity.

Why can't Brahman be a changing entity but assumed to be changeless?

Because then we have to assume another changeless entity for the changing entity of Brahman – this would go on until we stop with a changeless entity. Then why not stop at Brahman itself which is changeless? Logic also proves that Brahman, due to its nature, is changeless. If it is said that logic cannot be proven, then we can say that there is a changing entity as the cause of the world and then extend that changing entity to another entity – this can go on until we find a changeless entity. This changeless entity is termed in the scriptures as Brahman. Since other in-between changing entities are changing in nature therefore they can be ignored and the world can be said to be created out of Brahman itself.

Brahman – Existence, Consciousness and Bliss in nature

What is the nature of Brahman?

Brahman is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Brahman is existence in nature as it always exists – if it doesn't always exist, then it will not be changeless in nature; that which temporarily exists (for a period of time) undergoes the six modifications which include birth, changes and death. Since Brahman is changeless therefore Brahman is eternal. That which is eternal is existence in nature (as it always exists). That which always exists needs a light to illuminate it at all times – the light that illumines everything, even the Sun, moon etc. is the light of Consciousness. Brahman always exists and therefore is of the nature of Consciousness also. That which always exists is infinite or without any limitations (limitations cause to cessation of existence or existing just for a short period of time). Such an entity which is unlimited and infinite is blissful in nature; as we see also that

those which are limited and finite are sorrowful (though they might lead to temporary happiness, such happiness is seed of sorrow and will lead to sorrow and sorrow alone).

Brahman thus is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. This Brahman is the cause-substratum of the entire world (that in which the illusion of world of names and forms appears as existing for a period of time though having no real existence whatsoever).

Why isn't there anything apart from Brahman?

The scriptures say that before creation Brahman alone existed, one without a second. Creation is just names and forms appearing as if real. Since names and forms have no reality whatsoever, therefore during creation as well Brahman alone exists, one without a second. Thus at all times, Brahman, one without a second, alone exists.

Brahman – one without a second

There are three types of differences possible in the world. First is internal difference or svagata bheda. Second is difference between similar entities or sajaateeya bheda. Third is difference between dissimilar entities or vijaateeya bheda.

Example of internal difference is the various parts of a tree like fruit, leave, branch etc. Another example is the body which consists of hands, legs, face etc. An entity with parts alone has internal differences (parts is internal difference).

Example of difference between similar entities is a tree different from another tree. Another example is a body different from another body. These entities are part of the same category or jaati – though they possess very same qualities yet they are two different entities and have some difference between them.

Example of difference between dissimilar entities is a tree different from a rock, a body different from a tree etc. In these cases, the difference is as a result of difference between the categories of the entities. The entities are part of different categories of objects and therefore difference is present.

These three types of differences are found in the world for all objects. Whether it is a tree or a body or a rock or any other object of the world, there is these three types of differences. It is these differences that make it appear as if these entities are real (duality is real and

non-dual or Brahman is unreal). The thought that differences are real makes us get into likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes get strengthened to attachments and aversions. Attachments and aversions leads to happiness and sorrow. Since happiness achieved is short-lived and from objects of the world, therefore it is seed of sorrow alone.

If Brahman has these three types of differences then Brahman will be sorrowful in nature. We already proved that Brahman is blissful in nature but then Brahman also shouldn't accept these three types of differences. If Brahman accepts these three types of differences, then Brahman would be both blissful and sorrowful. This is only possible if Brahman is an illusion (that which appears as both blissful and sorrowful). In order to remove the argument that Brahman is an illusion, we have to prove that Brahman is without any differences.

Now let's try to apply the three types of differences to Brahman. Brahman is changeless and eternal. That which has parts is subject to changes and therefore is non-eternal. Brahman thus is without parts. Even if we wanted to prove parts of Brahman, we will not succeed in the same. Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss is without parts. Though these three terms appear different from one another, they go hand in hand with each other. One without the other is not possible. Thus Brahman is without parts and therefore without internal differences.

There also cannot be anything like Brahman (similar entity). Existence or Consciousness cannot have another entity of the same time. Assuming that there are two Consciousness, both will illumine each other. Since Consciousness is that which illumines everything else, itself remaining self-luminous therefore there cannot be two Consciousness. Thus Consciousness is without any similar entity (sajaatheeya bheda is removed in Brahman).

Can there be anything different from Brahman?

Definitely no as everything else is created by Brahman (which alone exists). Brahman is unlimited and therefore there cannot be anything apart from Brahman. If there be any entity apart from Brahman then we will have to say as to what is relation between Brahman and this entity. This relation whatever it be will be limiting Brahman. If we say that the entity is not real, then relation itself will not be real and Brahman alone will exist. Thus we can conclude that there is no other entity than Brahman. Therefore difference between

dissimilar entities is not there with respect to Brahman (as nothing apart from Brahman really exists).

Thus Brahman is without any differences or is non-dual in nature. This is indicated in the scriptures through the three words of ekam, eva and adviteeyam. Ekam or one means without any internal differences. Eva means one alone or nothing similar to it exists. Adviteeyam means there is no second than Brahman (or no dissimilar entity is there apart from Brahman).

Brahman thus is without any difference and is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

Now what is the use of knowing about such a Brahman? Unless we really benefit from such a Brahman, there is no point knowing or learning about Brahman. And even if we know Brahman as different from ourselves, we will only experience temporary happiness and not eternal bliss. Since temporary happiness is seed of sorrow therefore knowing such a Brahman is futile.

Brahman - Pulsating Consciousness-Self

This isn't the case; the author says through the statement that the Consciousness which pulsates inside us and is termed as Atman is Brahman alone.

Advaita Makaranda says thus:

Aham asmi sadaa bhaami kadaachinnahamapriyah

Brahmaivaahamatah siddham sacchidaanandalakshanam

I always exist, am ever shining and am never hated; therefore it is proven that I am Brahman of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

Brahman, as we have seen previously, is of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. I (not the ego I which is constantly changing but changeless I) always exist – we never feel the cessation of existence of I. Even when we dream or are in deep sleep, I never ceases to exist. Even death is based on this I alone as without I death itself would be possible. Therefore I always exist – for I to always exist, it has to be of the nature of Existence.

Existence at all times is not possible without the light of Consciousness. Ramana Maharshi thus says that in order to illumine existence, there is nothing other than Consciousness. Therefore Existence is of the nature of Consciousness – both go hand in hand. And the light of I which pulsates inside us at all times is Consciousness alone.

This I is never hated. Though sometimes we may dislike ourselves and even think about committing suicide, it is due to liking to oneself that suicide is committed. We like ourselves and don't want to cause harm or sorrow to ourselves. But situations are such that we will experience only sorrow therefore we end our life through committing suicide. From this, it is clear that suicide is not as a result of hating oneself but liking oneself. Since I am never hated therefore it is clear that I am always loved. Such love towards something is only possible if it is blissful in nature. Thus I am of the nature of bliss.

Therefore I am of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. Now we have two entities of the same nature of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss – one is Brahman and the other is the Self (devoid of all distinctions or limitations of body-mind-intellect etc.). There cannot be two entities of the same nature. It only means that both the entities are the same – or I am Brahman alone.

Assuming that there are two Consciousness C1 and C2 – C1 will illumine C2 and C2 will in turn illumine C1; this is not feasible as Consciousness illumines itself and everything else while itself remaining ever un-illuminated by anything (not objectified by anything). Therefore our assumption that there are two or many Consciousness is wrong and only one Consciousness is there.

Even if we analyze from the perspective of bliss, we will find that there is only one bliss entity as multiple bliss entity would mean that there would be relation between both which would lead to limitation of one by the other; this itself would mean that bliss isn't bliss (as bliss is that which is unlimited – that which is limited is sorrowful in nature or will lead to temporary happiness alone).

Thus I am Brahman of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. This "I" is different from the ego I which identifies and associates itself with the body-mind-intellect-objects-people of the world.

Unlike the dvaita system which says that there are many jeevas or individual Selves, Advaita says that there is only Self. This Self of the nature of Consciousness is Brahman. As we have seen, this Brahman or Self cannot be many (and it cannot have duality in it or with respect to it).

Now, what does a person get as a result of knowledge of this Brahman?

Self-knowledge is the knowledge of one's own Self as Brahman. A person who doesn't know his own name or details about himself is called a mad person in the world. Since majority of people in the world are those who think themselves to be the limited Ego I therefore they are all mad people.

What is the experience of mad people?

Since mad people are always deluded therefore their experience is sorrow and sorrow alone. Irrespective of what they are doing or where they are, they will experience only sorrow. Since everybody is knowingly or unknowingly seeking eternal bliss (and complete cessation of sorrow) therefore effort should be put in order to remove sorrow and ever rejoice in bliss. Until effort is put towards this and one attains eternal bliss, there will be sorrow alone.

Knower of Brahman – attains bliss

Once a person knows Brahman, then the person attains eternal bliss (that bliss which is untainted by sorrow and never again will such a person ever get into sorrow again).

Brahman is the substratum of the entire world and the Consciousness that pulsates inside us as I-exist, I-exist at all times. Such a non-dual blissful entity alone can lead to eternal bliss when a person knows it (gains knowledge of it).

It cannot be argued that since Brahman is something which is known it is an object and therefore non-eternal; as knowledge of Brahman is knowledge of one's own very nature of Consciousness. It cannot be argued that one's own nature is always known and therefore no knowledge is possible; as currently there is ignorance of one's own nature and therefore knowledge is essential in order to get rid of ignorance.

There is no new knowledge gained from Vedanta; just knowledge of one's nature is gained which will remove ignorance that seemingly veils the Self. Self due to being of the nature of Consciousness or light can never be veiled – but the veil of ignorance isn't real; it is just an

illusion. As long as this illusion of ignorance is there, one has to tread the path of Vedanta and through gaining knowledge has to attain the goal of moksha. Since ultimately no ignorance exists therefore there is no fault of either forgetting the Self or veiling the Self – the Self alone ultimately exists but is seemingly forgotten and this forgetting has to be removed through knowledge of the Self. Even as a person who is dreaming has to be woken up to realize that there is no dream at all, similarly a waking person has to be woken up from the sleep of ignorance.

Even as a dream-lion immediately scares us and we wake up from dream, similarly the scriptures and guru (who themselves are illusions as ultimately Brahman alone exists) wake us up from the sleep of ignorance, thereby making us realize our very nature of Brahman.

Bliss – nature alone

Happiness that is newly achieved or attained will also be lost and therefore will be non-eternal. Bliss for it to be bliss or eternal has to always exist. Therefore bliss is our inner nature alone. It is veiled (seemingly veiled) even as clouds seemingly veil the Sun. Due to this veil of ignorance a person feels as if there is no bliss at all and one is suffering. On top of ignorance, all wrong notions are added up like “I am the body, I am a man, I have friends etc.” All these wrong notions add on to sorrow. Since these wrong notions increase the veil of ignorance, therefore the stronger these are the tougher it will be to remove it and come out of it.

But once ignorance is removed through knowledge that there is no ignorance at all and only bliss exists, then a person will be able to rejoice in bliss. The quicker a person tries to get rid of the ignorance, the quicker the person will be able to rejoice in bliss.

It is seeking bliss that each and every person in the world is performing all activities and desiring a lot of things; but bliss cannot be attained from the external world. The one and only way to attain eternal bliss is through realization of one’s own very nature of Brahman. Realization of Brahman as one’s own nature of Consciousness – that which is non-dual in nature – alone can get rid of sorrows and make us rejoice in bliss. Any other way Brahman is thought about in the mind will only lead to temporary happiness (which is seed of sorrow).

People from ancient time itself have tried out different ways to attain eternal bliss but they all have been unsuccessful because only through finding bliss inside ourselves will we be able to attain eternal bliss. Even today science is trying to find out means of bliss from the external world, which has been and will be unsuccessful alone. Thus though science and technology have improved vastly yet it has only lead to more sorrows in life. Instead of committing suicide by jumping into a well, today people are doing the same by taking sleeping pills and sleeping in an air-conditioned room. Though there are ways to reach the Moon, Mars etc. yet there is no way to reach into one's own mind. Not understanding the infinite capabilities of the mind (and that it is none other than Brahman alone), people are getting affected over and over again with respect to thoughts into the mind.

Swamiji Tejomayananda gives this beautiful story to illustrate as to how the mind isn't in our control (but others control) and as a result we are experiencing only sorrow. Once a old man was traveling in a bus sitting in a seat. He then saw a woman get into the bus and standing nearby; politely he got up from his seat and offered the woman his seat. The woman sat down on the seat and started reading the newspaper in her hand. The old man kept looking at the woman but there was no response at all. Slowly the old man coughed in order to get the attention of the woman but this also was of no use. Then the old man asked the woman "Did you say something?" The woman replied "No" The old man asked again and with the same response. The old man then asked the woman whether she said thanks; to this as well, the woman replied in the negative. Irritated fully, the old man got angry on the woman.

The old man expected a thanks from the girl. This expectation was affecting his mind a lot. Instead of feeling happy to have given the woman a seat, he expected a thanks in response. Most of the social service in the world is like this only – where something or the other is expected in return. The mind is not at all under control but at the finger tip of others. Others just need to say something bad about us and immediately we will get offended. Without control of the mind, we cannot attain eternal bliss – we will only be suffering again and again.

All the advancements in the external world will not help in controlling the mind. Only sadhanas like dhyana will help us control the mind. Total control of the mind is only possible through knowledge that one Brahman alone exists here. This knowledge will make us get rid of all duality in our mind. Though externally we may perceive the dual world, still

internally we will remember everything to be Brahman alone. Thus while performing actions to the core in the external world, we will be remaining calm and steady like a mountain in the mind. This is the state of jnaani – only jnaana can take us to this state. Until this state of internally ever rejoicing in bliss is achieved, we will be suffering alone.

Suffering in sorrow and pain isn't just in this birth but it continues from one birth to another. Though in between we will try to experience happiness from the world, it is so short-lived that it is seed of sorrow (or sorrow alone). Only those wise people who realize that there is no bliss in the world and only in Brahman will be able to seek Brahman. Through constant seeking of bliss, a sadhaka will be able to realize that there is nothing here but Brahman alone.

This realization isn't a mere intellectual concept but it is ever rejoicing in bliss at all times irrespective of external situation. As Sankara says such a jnaani might be enjoying or doing yoga, might be attached to people or detached, still since his mind is ever abiding in Brahman (remembering that Brahman alone exists) therefore he will ever rejoice in bliss.

It is through knowledge of the non-dual reality of Brahman of the nature of Consciousness that pulsates inside us at all times that we will be able to attain the state of moksha characterized by complete cessation of sorrow and ever rejoicing in bliss. Though it might appear very tough to gain and implement knowledge, it is very easy indeed through practice and the strong desire for moksha. When a person has a strong desire for moksha, automatically the entire path will be set and there will be steady progress towards moksha. It doesn't matter when we attain moksha as moksha is our very nature – the moment we remember that our very nature is that of non-dual reality of Brahman, that very moment we will rejoice in bliss. In due course of time, we will be able to ever rejoice in bliss in constant contemplation of the truth that Brahman alone exists here.

May we all strive to remember our very nature of non-dual blissful Brahman so that we will be able to get rid of all sorrow and will be able to ever rejoice in bliss here and now itself.

Vedanta Shabda Vicharanam

Karma

The word Karma is derived from the Sanskrit root Kr, which means to do. The word karma means action or work. In this article we will analyze about what Karma is, what is the effect of karma, what are the types of karma and what is the role of Karma towards the path of Moksha.

Scriptures point out that the human goals can be categorized as Dharma (righteousness), Artha (possession), Kama (pleasure) and Moksha (liberation). Human work towards their chosen goal thinking that they would gain happiness upon attaining their chosen goal. Scriptures point out that the goal of Moksha can be attained only through the Knowledge of Brahman and not by any other means.

Taitireeya Upanishad says

Brahma vid aapnoti param

Knower of Brahman attains the supreme

Purusha sooktam says

Tam eva vidvaan amrta iha bhavati| na anyah panthaa vidhyate ayanaaya

He who Knows (the Truth) will become immortal. There is no other way for moksha.

But in order to attain any of the 3, we have to perform corresponding karma or action. In order to attain the goal of accumulating wealth, we have to do the appropriate Karma to earn money. Similar is the case for the goals of Dharma and Kama. Thus, appropriate Karma is done by all human being towards their chosen goal in order to satisfy their desire of getting happiness upon attaining the goal.

Thus, we can see that when there is a desire to attain a certain goal, we perform action through which the chosen goal can be achieved. Every action we do will produce a result based on the action and the way it is done. The result may be the goal we had in our mind before performing the action, and when we attain the goal we wanted we get some happiness. But the problem with Dharma, Artha and Kama goals are that they are impermanent. The attained result will not stay for too long. After achieving one thing, the goal would change to something else and the desire to attain that goal will prompt to perform action towards that. Since the happiness that we get from the worldly goals of

Dharma or Artha or Kama don't last long, more and more desires comes up which make us do more and more action and thus the life goes.

The desires we get in our mind are based on the kind of thoughts we are habituated to which are termed vasanas. The vasanas are generated by our past desires and experiences and hence based on the strength of the vasana we will be prompted to perform the action to satisfy the desire. The result that comes out of this action could either be favorable or unfavorable. If the favorable result is obtained, we gain some happiness and that experience of happiness creates desire to get similar experiences or higher which strengthens the vasana. If the result is unfavorable, the desire to attain the favorable result strengthens prompting us to do more action in order to attain the desired result. Thus we can see that whenever we have a desire in our mind, we will be prompted to do more and more actions.

Effects of Karma:

The results that are associated with the action we perform may not always come to us immediately. Some results would come immediately, some may take few days or months or years or even births. There is result associated with every action we perform and there is no getting away from experiencing it be it a good result or the bad result. The good result means happiness and bad result means sorrow. If we experience a happiness that is indication of good result and if we experience any pain or sorrow that is the indication of bad result. There is a worldly rules or dharma for the actions to be performed in a specific way and if the actions are not done in that appropriate way, then that will be a bad action resulting in bad result.

As mentioned above there is no getting away from experiencing the results of action. And so, we can infer that the every birth we take in this world is because of the past karma, every experience and action we perform are also because of the past karma. Thus, we perform action as a result of the past karma and on account of exhausting those karma by experiencing those results, we end up doing more action and thus the cycle continues. This action → result → action continues on and on and that is the same case for every living being in this world. The whole world exists or holding up only because of Karma.

Q: Is there an end to this cycle of Karma?

A: Yes, the end of this cycle is when we attain the 4th goal of Moksha. Scriptures point out that we are essentially Brahman which is of the nature of Anandam. But this fact about our real nature is forgotten it make us think we don't have happiness and we need to obtain it. When we realize our own nature of Brahman we would realize that we are not the doer, we are the ever Peaceful and Blissful Self. When we dissociate ourselves from the doer, we go beyond the realm of Karma and thus there will be no karma cycle binding us.

Q: A person who realizes his real nature of Self is Realized Master. So, a Realized Master is beyond the cycle of Karma, but we still see Realized Masters performing actions. How are actions done after going beyond the cycle of Karma?

A: Realized Masters know that they are the Self and the actions are not being done by them but the ego. Realized Masters dissociate themselves from the doer and hence are not affected by the action or the results of the action. Moreover, the actions that we see Realized Masters performing are not desire prompted actions. They are done only for the welfare of the people and not for once own benefit.

Types of Karma:

Scriptures speak about 4 types of Karma that are done from worldly perspective.

1. Nithya Karma: The Karma that are supposed to be done regularly. The actions like worshipping the Lord etc are to be done every day without any break.
2. Naimittika Karma: The Karma that have to be done on special occasions.
3. Nishiddha Karma: The Karma that should be avoided at all cost. Actions like smoking, drinking etc.
4. Prayshchitta Karma: The Karma done to mitigate the past actions

We can also broadly classify karma into 2 from the perspective of Moksha. We say it from the perspective of Moksha because when we understand these types, we can understand what will take us towards the permanent goal of Moksha and what will not. The two types are

1. Sakaama Karma – Karma done with desire
2. Nishkaama Karma – Karma done with no desire

When we perform the Karma with desire in our mind, desire to attain a specific goal, that karma or action is called Sakaama karma or action prompted by desire. As we have seen

above elaborately, action prompted by the desire will bind us more and more into action and thus make us come into the world again and again.

Swami Vidhyaranya in Panchadasi says that

kurvathe karma bhogaaya karma karthum cha bhunjate

Actions are done for the sake of enjoyment and they enjoy in order to do more actions.

We work in order to eat food every day and we eat food so that we can work more to earn money. This cycle would continue on and on for many births. And thus Sakaama Karma would never produce an ever lasting peace. Any happiness we may attain through Sakaama Karma would be lost at some point.

On the other hand, Nishkaama Karma will purify the mind and would reduce the desires in our mind and would eventually bring forth peace in our mind.

In Isvasya Upanishad,

Kurvan eva iha karmaani jijeevishet satam shamaah

Evam tvayi na anyate asti na karma lipyate nare

A person should desire to live 100 years doing action (with the thought of offering the actions to the Lord). Only by this way it is ensured that action and fruit will not cling to the person.

Ramana Maharishi in Upadesha saram

Isvaraarpitam na icchaya kritam

Chitta shodakam mukti saadakam

Actions done as an offering to Isvara with no desire for the result, will result in purification of mind and there by serves as the means to Moksha.

When we are able to offer our actions to the Lord keeping in mind that everything is pervaded by the Lord, then whatever be the outcome of the action, we will take it as the Prasad from the Lord. This will reduce the binding desires, that would make us do more and more action and it will also make us gain more focus on the Lord.

There are 3 terms mentioned in the scriptures for the Karma Phalas or results of action

1. Sanchita karma: The balance of Karma phalas that are done in the past births and that are not fructified yet.
2. Prarabdha Karma: The portion of Karma from the Sanchita that have started to fructify in the current birth is the Prarabdha karma
3. Agaami Karma: The results of action that are performed in the current birth which are not enjoyed are the Agami karma which will fructify in the future birth.

Role of Karma in the path towards Moksha:

Now there could be a question, that if Karma causes more and more bondage and make us take birth again and again, is there anything that Karma could offer towards moksha. Karma has an important role in the life of a person seeking Moksha. A person seeking Moksha would have by now understood that he is in bondage and he wants liberation. Therefore a seeker of Moksha will have to perform the action appropriately so that the Karma instead of being an obstacle would give a helping hand towards Moksha.

Moksha is termed as the Ultimate Goal because the result upon attaining the goal of Moksha is permanent. The benefit of moksha is complete cessation of Sorrow and complete Anandam (which can be understood as Contentment or Peace). We experience sorrow because we are focused on things in the world which are not permanent and hence the happiness that seem to come from objects in the world don't stay for long time. And these attainment of worldly happiness through various objects or people etc are the result of actions we do prompted by the desire. Thus, Karma performed for worldly goals has sorrow intrinsic to it. But when there is desire for Moksha and the actions performed appropriately will serve a bridge for permanent result of Anandam with no sorrow at all.

Q: Earlier it was mentioned that Moksha can only be attained through Knowledge. What then is the role of Karma?

A: As mentioned earlier, Moksha can be attained only through knowledge about the Ultimate Reality of Brahman as our own nature. There is no other way. But we should be eligible enough to gain this knowledge and the eligibility can be attained only through purification of the mind. When we are in the world doing action towards worldly goals, our mind is focused only on the world and hence makes the impure with likes and dislikes. Performing the actions as an offering to the Lord without desire for fruit is the way to attain purification of the mind. A pure mind will be able to comprehend the truth mentioned in the

scriptures and such a mind will be able to grasp the subtle truth of Brahman as own nature. But just performing Nishkaama Karma will not give moksha. Only way to attain Moksha is to dissociate oneself completely from ego and owning up the Self. In both Sakaama Karma and Nishkaama Karma there is ego sense, and Ramakrishna Paramahansa calls this as Gold Chain. This is also chain and hence we have to utilize the mental purity towards gaining the Ultimate Knowledge through the study of scriptures under the guidance of a Guru. If we don't utilize the mental purity for knowledge, there will be chances of falling down.

Adi Sankara mentions the same in Vivekachoodamani
"Chittasya suddhaye karma na tu vasthu upalabdhaye
Vasthu siddhir vicharena na kinchit karma kotibhih"

Purification of mind alone is achieved through action and not realization. Because realization can happen only through enquiry and not through crores of actions.

Thus, the end of analysis of Karma.

Sristi Nirupanam

ॐ सृष्टि निरूपणम्

om sṛṣṭi nirūpaṇam

लोककारणं ब्रह्मनामकम् ।

सत्त्वरूपकं तन्नमाम्यहम् ॥१॥

lokakāraṇaṁ brahmanāmakam |
sattvarūpakaṁ tannamāmyaham ||1||

1. That which is the cause of the world, named as Brahman and of the form of Existence, I prostrate.

कारणं विना कार्यसंस्थितिः ।

नास्तिसर्वदा आश्रितं सदा ॥२॥

kāraṇaṁ vinā kāryasaṁsthiṭiḥ |
nāstisarvadā āśritaṁ sadā ||2||

2. Without cause, existence of effect is never possible; as effect is always dependent upon the cause.

सृष्टिनामकं नामरूपकम् ।

मृत्यथाघटं स्वप्नवत्तथा ॥३॥

sṛṣṭināmakam nāmarūpakam |
mrtyathāghaṭaṁ svapnavattathā ||3||

3. That which is named as creation and names-forms, is like mud and pot, dream etc. (even as pot is name and form of mud, dream is name and form of dreamer, similarly is this world name and form of Brahman).

दृश्यते तु यो लोकवस्तुनः ।

सत्यवत्विभात्येव स्वप्नवत् ॥४॥

dr̥syate tu yo lokavastunaḥ |
satyavatvibhātyeva svapnavat ||4||

4. One who sees this world, it will appear to him like a reality (like really existing) but it is like dream only (appearing to be real but not real).

दृष्टिभेदभावेन तद्विधा ।

नैव वस्तुतो निश्चयं सदा ॥५॥

dr̥ṣṭibhedabhāvena tatdvidhā |
naiva vastuto niścayaṁ sadā ||5||

5. The world is of two types due to difference in perspective or vision; such differentiation itself is not there ultimately at all times, but only empirically.

व्यावहारिका लौकिकी सदा ।

तस्य पालनं दुःखदायकम् ॥६॥

vyāvahārikā laukikī sadā
tasya pālanaṁ duḥkhadāyakam ||6||

6. The vision of empirical is always that of the world (worldly) and its maintenance will lead to sorrow.

ब्रह्मभावनं लोकव्यापकम् ।

तस्यनाशकं मोक्षसाधकम् ॥७॥

brahmabhāvanaṁ lokavyāpakam |
tasyanāśakaṁ mokṣasādhakam ||7||

7. Notion of Brahman as that which pervades the entire world will destroy sorrow and

empirical vision; and will help in liberation or moksha.

तात्त्विकी तु ब्रह्मैव संस्थितिः ।

नास्ति द्वैत भावस्तु मायया ॥८॥

tātvikī tu brahmaiva saṁsthiṭiḥ |
nāsti dvaita bhāvastu māyayā ||8||

8. Ultimate perspective is the state where Brahman alone exists; there is no duality notion as it is only due to maya (illusion).

ब्रह्मणा स्थितिः यस्य सर्वदा ।

नन्दनन्दनो नन्दनन्दनः ॥९॥

brahmaṇā sthiṭiḥ yasya sarvadā |
nandanandano nandanandanāḥ ||9||

9. Abidance as Brahman at all times is there for whom, he is a blissful person; he is a blissful person.

Anukramaanika Nirdesham

1. Editorial – a general message.
2. Sristi Siddhi – an analysis of sristi or creation.
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. Upaadhi Dhyotanam – a multi-part series with slokas explaining madhvacharya's upaadhi khandanam and answering of the same.
5. Vedanta Shabda Vicharanam – thorough analysis of one word of Vedanta.
6. Sristi Nirupanam - explanation of creation (of the world). 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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