

BRAHMA PRAKARAṆAM

In the foregoing Jagat Prakaraṇa the cause of the Jagat is analysed. Though the Jagat consisting of stars and planets, mountains and caves, rivers and oceans etc. has immense variety, it is only Brahman in its intrinsic nature. We can grasp this intrinsic nature only when we look beyond the superficial name forms. But this is not easy because Īśvara has carved out the Indriyas (sensory organs) only outwards and therefore man is only seeing outside – ‘पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयंभूः तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति’ (Ka.2.1.1). Moreover, the cause Brahman has very different features compared to the effect Jagat. As long as the nature of this distinction is not known, it is difficult to recognize Brahman even though it is right in front of us. Therefore, now we have to separate Brahman amidst the Jagat, from the Jagat in order to recognize It.

This separation is done in three steps. In the first step, It has to be separated from the Jīvas. Brahman so determined is with attributes. In the second step, It has to be separated from everything. This is Brahman which is Satyam (Existence), Jñānam (Knowledge/Consciousness) and Anantam (Infinity). In the last step, Brahman which is totally free from all the Upādhis and standing on Its own Svarūpa is determined. This is the ‘Not like this, Not like this’ Brahman (Neti Neti Brahman). As long as an unequivocal understanding of this Brahman is not got, we will not understand the meaning of the sentence “thou art that”, even if repeated hundreds of times (Sū.Bh. 3.2.21). Even an aspirant endowed with high Vairāgya (renunciation) and suitable for JñānaMārga will run the risk of slipping into the Karma Mārga like mind-control, etc. Therefore Bhagavān Bhāṣyakāra has made a very penetrating analysis with subtle nuances to convey this true Brahma Jñāna. The purpose of this Prakaraṇa is the brief summary of that very primary discussion.

CHAPTER 9

BRAHMAN, SEPARATE FROM THE JAGAT

9.1 Viśéṣaṇa – Lakṣaṇa

In order to recognize clearly anything mixed with others, it should be separated from all the other things of its category (genus) as also from all the things of other categories.

That property of an object which separates it from the other objects of the same category is called its Viśéṣaṇa, its attribute.

i) The property of blue lotus which separates it from all the lotuses is its blue colour. Therefore, the blue colour is its attribute.

ii) The hanging hide (dewlap) below the neck of the cow is its attribute which distinguishes the cow from all the four legged animals.

That property of an object that separates it from all the objects of all categories is called its Lakṣaṇa, its Feature.

i) The feature of giving room for all the ponderable objects is found only in Ākaśa and in nothing else. Therefore, it is the feature of the Ākaśa.

ii) The ultimate destination of all the rivers is only the ocean and nothing else. Therefore, that is the feature of the ocean.

9.2 The Existent Attributes

We now separate this Brahman first from the attributes and then from the features in order to recognize It. First attributes: An attribute is that property in a sample of a category which is not found in other samples of it. Consider the category of humans. We know that we the humans have Jñāna. That is why we are able to execute jobs. The creator Brahman has also Jñāna. Otherwise, It could not be the Nimitta of the Jagat. So, we and Brahman belong to the same category. Though this is a matter of pride for us, there is enormous difference between us and

Brahman. We may build houses, but It creates the whole universe. Therefore, our abilities are little whereas It is omnipotent. Actually even our scanty abilities have come only from That. Similarly, we may have the knowledge of few things. But That knows everything. That is omniscient – ऐष सर्वज्ञः ऐष सर्वेश्वरः (Mā. 6). We are only limited knowers. Really speaking, our ability even for our little knowledge has come only from That. The majority of our desires and ambitious resolutions will not be fulfilled at all. But Its desires and resolutions never remain unfulfilled. Therefore Brahman is Satyakāma and Satyasaṅkalpa – ऐष सत्यकामः सत्यसङ्कल्पः (Ch.8.1.5). Actually, even the occasional fulfillment of our desires and resolutions happens only by Its grace. We are too small compared to Īśvara. He is always endowed with Jñāna, Aiśvarya, Śakti, Bala, Vīrya and Tējas – ‘स च भगवान् ज्ञानैश्वर्यशक्तिबलवीर्यतेजोभिः सदा संपन्नः’ (G.Bh.Introduction). Here, Jñāna is His omniscience, Aiśvarya is His unimpeded volition, Śakti is His being the Upādāna of the variegated Jagat. Bala is His infinite capacity to maintain the universe. Vīrya is His unchangability. Tējas is His power of conquering anything which opposes His law. Though He is Nitya—eternal, Śuddha—pure, Buddha—ever free from Ajñāna, Mukta—ever free from bondage and ever free from birth and death, He appears to take birth when he assumes Descent through His Māyā for the welfare of the world. At that time he may appear like one among us. Nevertheless He is Īśvara only. Kṛṣṇa is one such Avatāra. Those who doubt His being Īśvara and Sarvajña are only fools — ‘या वासुदेवे अनीश्वरा असर्वज्ञा आशङ्का मूर्खाणाम्’ (G.Bh. 4.5).

Doubt: “As in the Vēda, the Māyā and the Jīvas are stated to be infinite also in the theory of the logicians. But we rejected Īśvara’s Omniscience of the latter on the ground that he could not keep account of the infinite entities of the Māyā and Jīvas (5.6). Then how is it possible to retain Īśvara’s omniscience in the Vēdānta?”

Answer: Īśvara’s omniscience is, of course, his capacity to know entirely and severally of everything. In the case of the logicians,

however, Īśvara is an inferred concept and the infinite Māyā and the infinite Jīvas are different from Him also. Therefore, He has to keep their account only by actual Arithmetic. This is impossible to be done in finite time. Therefore, we rejected the omniscience of their Īśvara on the basis of inference only. But our Īśvara is accepted on the basis of Vēda and the Māyā and the Jīvas are not different from Him either. We cannot also doubt that He might have limitations like us in understanding things because we are bound by our Dharma and Adharma and He is not. He can understand everything—even without the accessories like the mind. ‘His mysterious powers are varied, His activities happen spontaneously through the power of His intrinsic Jñāna – ‘पराऽस्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च’ (Śve. 6.8). Therefore, the omniscience of Īśvara revealed in the Vēda is irrefutable.

9.3 Non-existent attributes

This Īśvara is resplendent with His Sarvajñatva, Sarvaśaktitva, Satyakāmatva and Satyasankalpatva. There is no limit to such attributes. All the attributes mentioned above are existent qualities, that is they exist in Him, but not in us. There are some other attributes separating Him from us which have to be described as non-existent in the sense that they are in us, but not in Him. He is Apahatapāpmā—free from the sin of Dharma and Adharma. (We will know later on how Dharma is also a sin). He does not become aged, He is free from death, from grief, from hunger and from thirst – ‘अपहतपाप्मा विजरो विमृत्युर्विशोको विजिघत्सो अपिपासः’ (Ch.Bh. 8.1.5). But the Jīvas are not like Him in respect of these attributes. Even these attributes thus separate Him from us. But they are not existent qualities like omniscience etc. They are the absence of qualities. Such words are called **Śabda Vikalpa**, that is words representing only absence of things, but still conveying meanings ‘शब्द ज्ञानानुपाति वस्तुशून्यो विकल्पः’ (Yōga Sūtra 1.9).

Thus we have separated Brahman from the sentient beings by referring to the existent and non existent attributes. Now It is to be separated from everything else, that is we have to enumerate its features.

Véda describes three of them: 'सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं ब्रह्म'—Brahman is Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam' (Tai.2.1.1). These three words are technical. Therefore we delineate their meanings one by one.

9.4 Brahman is Satya

i) At this stage it is necessary to recollect the contents of 6.4. The effect is not observed before creation, it appears after creation and disappears after dissolution. There may also be another effect manifesting in its place. This means that the effect changes from time to time. It is only a name and a form by which we can recognize the cause. Unlike the effect, the cause is always as it is before the appearance of the effect, during its appearance and also after its disappearance. This situation is described by the statement that the effect is Asatya and the cause is Satya. These definitions have to be remembered: 'यद्रूपेण यन्निश्चितं तद्रूपं न व्यभिचरति तत् सत्यम्' – that which is known once in a certain way and remains always as such is Satya' and 'यद्रूपेण निश्चितं यत् तद्रूपं व्यभिचरत् अनृतम् इत्युच्यते' – that which is known once in a certain way but changes later is Asatya' (Tai 2.1.1). In this sense the world is Asatya and Brahman is Satya. The world is Asatya because it changes and Brahman is Satya because It doesn't. Remember that though the effect changes it does not lose its identity with its cause which remains unchanging. That the effect is unmanifest before creation and after dissolution, but manifests in between is its changing nature. Even in practice we use the word Asatya with this meaning: one who keeps changing statements about something is a liar (Asatyavān) and one who does not change is an honest/truthful fellow (Satyavān). In this way the Satya feature of Brahman separates It from the whole class of effects. This means that Brahman is not an effect. Therefore It has only to be the cause.

'Why shouldn't It too be an effect?' Suppose it is. Then there must certainly be a cause for that and that cause cannot be vacuous, because nothing can come out of vacuum. In this way we trace Brahman to Its cause and another cause to this cause *infinitum*. Therefore, the

ultimate cause of everything is accepted as Brahman. 'या मूलप्रकृतिः अभ्युपगम्यते तदेव च नो ब्रह्म' (Sū. Bh. 2.3.9).

ii) Doubt: The definition of Satya is based on the concept of the past, the present and the future. Therefore the definition of Brahman is based on time which is itself changing. What is present now, becomes the past later; what is future now, becomes the present later. It follows from the definition of Asatya that the basis of Brahman is itself Asatya. Therefore, when all the Asatya are rejected the very basis of the definition of Brahman is shattered. Then either Brahman is left undefined or It becomes vacuous.

Clarification: Not like that: The past, the present and the future are the three qualified times, that is, they are only pointers to the unqualified time. Later, earlier, simultaneous, slow, quick are only the pointers of time — 'अपरस्मिन्नपरं युगपत् चिरं क्षिप्रं इति काललिङ्गानि' (Vaiṣeṣika Sūtra 2.2.6). Because they change all the three qualified times are, of course, Asatya. But the unqualified time to which these three are adjectives is not Asatya; it is not changing. Therefore this definition is free from faults.

Objection: This explanation would now result in the fault of over reach (over extensive—Ativyāpti) that is, we are left with two Satyas: Brahman and the unqualified time. Therefore Brahman is not clearly separated.

Answer: The objection is not exhaustive! Because, along with the unqualified time, Jaḍatva, that is inertia, also remains. Inertia is also Satya because it is always inertia. That is why the Śruti points to other features of Brahman for its unique separation (see further).

Question: How do the unqualified time and the inertia exist during dissolution?

Answer: They remain unmanifest like everything else. The event of creation brings them into manifestation in the form of the qualified time and inert objects.

We can draw the same conclusion in another way also: After rejecting the three times, the past, the present and the future, as Asatya it is not true that nothing remains. The seer who is witnessing the changing times certainly remains and is also unchanging. Obviously he is not Asatya. Therefore, just like a person who collects all dirt in an old cloth, ties it up, throws it out and remains clean, the one who collects all the changing things in the changing unqualified time rejects it, remains as he is. This is the Ātman. He is Brahman Himself. Therefore Brahman is separated and is also shown to be non vacuous.

9.5 The Illusory world

i) Apart from the changing effect described above, there is another effect which is different from the cause. (see 6.5.ii). This is like the mirror image of a gold ornament. This is Mithyā, that is, illusory. The reason is the following: The effect is not different from the cause. But, generally, the layman recognizes the Jagat only independently and not as Brahman. This is a wrong understanding of the Jagat. The world that is understood wrongly in this way is termed as illusory. Actually the Jagat before us is Asatya, that is changing, but the Jagat in this misunderstanding is illusory. The changing Jagat originates from the mind of Brahmā and then gets its present gross form from Himself. But the illusory Jagat—from the beginning till one gets the right knowledge—is only a mental illusion of the Jīva, that is, it does not correspond to the Jagat seen.

ii) In this context the Śāstra gives the example of the rope-snake to explain the uninformed layman's understanding that the world is illusory. Some people have drawn a wrong interpretation of this example that: 'Just as the snake is non-existent in the example, the Jagat is also non-existent'. Actually the purport of the example is not to comment on the rope or the snake, but on the understanding of the rope as follows: What the layman thinks as a snake is really an illusion. What he is actually seeing is a rope, confusing it for a serpent. Similarly, what the uninformed understands of the names and forms, independent of

Brahman, are not actually so. They are in fact Brahman appearing as names and forms. (This discussion is elaborated later in 10.3).

iii) Further we show that, that which is Mithyā can never be Anirvacanīya. It is as follows: Anirvacanīyatva occurs only when both the cause and the effect or Śakti and Śakta are simultaneously perceived either by direct perception or through the Śāstra. On the other hand Mithyā is related to the wrong perception of an object. The difference between the two can be understood clearly from the cause-effect non-difference relation. In the latter half of this relation, that is, cause is different from effect, the effect is the one told by the Tārikikās (Logicians) which is related to the cause through samavāya (inherence) relation. Before the creation and after the dissolution it is non-existent and appears only in the intervening period (sustenance). Therefore it is really non-existent (see 6.5.vi). So an effect that appears to be independent of the cause is an illusion. There is no room at all for Anirvacanīyatva in this because, it is clearly told that the cause is different from it. But the effect in the former half is not like that. Its relation with the cause is one of identity — (कार्यकारण सम्बन्धः) ब्रह्मवादिनः कथम् इति चेत्? न | तस्य तादात्म्यलक्षणसम्बन्धोपपत्तेः (Su.Bh.2.2.38). अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत | अव्यक्त निधनान्येव (G.2.28). Therefore, it is Asatya but objectively existing. One who knows its Svarūpa, knows it only as the cause. Though it appears in a special form, it is known to be the cause in the light of the Vēda. This is Anirvacanīyatva (8.10.iii). If the distinctive meaning of the words Satya, Asatya, Mithyā, Anirvacanīya are clearly understood, one does not need any clutches of clever arguments for a right understanding of the Bhāṣyas of Śankara.

9.6 Three Satyas

It has been demonstrated above that Brahman is described variously only relative to the adjuncts. But in its Svarūpa this is not so. This is the only Satya (reality) and the Jagat is Asatya. The Vēda itself makes it very clear through the clay pot example — ‘वाचारंभणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्’ (Ch.Bh. 6.1.4). But in practice, people commonly

refer to anything they see as Satya. Even if they should pause a little and try to recall the definition of ‘Satya’ they can understand that the Jagat in front of them is Asatya. But generally they do not remember it and describe the Jagat as only Satya. Even those who have studied the Śāstra are not exceptions to this. Therefore the Śāstra discusses Satya and Asatya further giving margin to the layman’s use of this word. It too calls anything that comes in the purview of the Indriyas as Satya, but subdividing Satya into three classes:

- 1) Pāramāthika–transcendental;
- 2) Vyāvahārika–transactional/empirical;
- 3) Prātibhāsika–virtual/Apparent.

The transcendental Satya is always the same according to the original definition of the word; It doesn’t change at all. It does not come under the purview of the Indriyas. The transactional Satya, though changing from time to time is nevertheless tangible. Virtual Satya only appears in a special situation, but it is not transactional.

9.7 Lens example

To explain these three Satyas further, the example of a convex lens may be considered. This focuses the real image of an object on the screen. These images look different depending on the relative positions of the screen and the object or whether the screen is tilted or straight. These images can be photographed, that is, they are available for transaction. There is yet another virtual image which is seen only by an observer in specific positions. It cannot be photographed.

In this example the object represents the transcendental Satya because it is the same for everyone always. The real image stands for transactional Satya. It is the same for every one at any given time and is available for transaction though it is changing. The virtual image stands for virtual Satya, not available for transaction.

9.8 Transcendental Satya

In the Śāstra, the Pāramāthika Satya is the same for everyone, everywhere, always. It is the same Satya mentioned in the statement “Brahman is Satya”. This is not available for direct sense perception because only a changing thing can be perceived. This can be verified in common experience also. We can perceive the change in the pitch of a singer only when the drone does not change its pitch. Staying for a long time in a place experiencing the same smell, one ceases to recognize it in due course; Similarly, the transcendental Satya is not available for sense perception. Though not available, it does exist in those things which are available for sense perception. Śankara says ‘if only the transcendental Satya Brahman were not in them they would never be available for transaction — ‘न हि निरात्मकं किञ्चित् भूतं व्यवहाराय अवकल्पते’ (G.Bh. 9.4). As this is the cause of all the Asatyas, It exists. This is Brahman.

9.9 Transactional Satya

We observe the five Bhūtas of the changing world through our five senses. Any one with no faults in sense organs will get the same knowledge about them. The stone is seen as stone by everybody. This commonness in understanding of things is the basis of all the transactions with the world. Such a world changing from time to time and available for transactions is called the transactional Satya. It is Satya Brahman which is its Upādāna that is responsible for acquiring the name **transactional Satya**.

9.10 Virtual Satya

There are phenomena other than the empirical reality, for example, the mirage. When the ground has become hot due to the hot sun, from a distance it appears like water, but it is not water. The particular place where it shows up is not wet. Such an appearance observed under special conditions of space and time is called virtual Satya. A thing to be remembered here is that the mirage formed is only

according to the natural laws. Therefore, it is not illusory, but apparent Satya. It is not wrong knowledge to understand mirage as an appearance like water. It is indeed a correct knowledge of a virtual Satya! But if it is really thought to be water, then it is a wrong knowledge of the mirage. The water in this referent is an illusion. In addition to this, there is scope for the ambiguity of Anirvacanīyatva when the mirage is spoken of as “Is it the ground? Or is it different from the ground?” But there is no such ambiguity of understanding in the illusory water. Though the water is non-existent, the reason for designating the mirage as virtual **Satya** is the following: Even here, Satya Brahman is the basis for the appearance. Anyone who has no fault in the eyes, sees the mirage which is formed according to the natural laws. One has to see the hot ground only from a specific distance; in this way it is only Brahman that is the base for its appearance also; therefore the mirage is not an illusion; it is hence called virtual Satya. In this way the one Satya Brahman which is the transcendental Satya is the basis for both the transactional Satya and the virtual Satya. But it is obvious that the transactional Satya is more Satya compared to virtual Satya and transactional Satya is less Satya compared to transcendental Satya. The Vēda summarizes the situation as follows: ‘सत्यं चानृतं च सत्यमभवत् | यदिदं किं च | तत्सत्यमित्याचक्षते’ — the (transcendental) Satya itself became the (transactional) Satya and the Anṛta that is (virtual) Satya. Whatever here is only That Itself. That is called (transcendental) Satya’ (Tai. 2.6.7). Another Śruti describes this in the following way: ‘नामरूपे सत्यं ताभ्यामयं प्राणश्छन्नः’ — name forms themselves are Satya, the Prāṇa is concealed by them’ (Br.Bh.1.6.3). ‘तस्योपनिषत् सत्यस्य सत्यमिति प्राणा वै सत्यं तेषामेष सत्यम्’ — His Upaniṣad is the Satya of Satya, Prāṇas are themselves Satya, but He is the Satya for them’ (Br.Bh. 2.1.20). ‘सत्यं च भूतपञ्चकम् | सत्यस्य सत्यं च पर आत्मा’ — Satya means the five elements, the Satya of the Satya means Brahman’ (Br.Bh.3.6.1).

9.11 Brahman is Jñāna

i) Next we will discuss the second feature to distinguish Brahman from the transactional world. We have seen that its first feature namely, Satya led to the conclusion that Brahman is only the cause and not the effect. A question would now arise, whether in that case, it could also be inert like the world. This is because the cause of the inert pot is inert clay, the cause of the inert ornament is inert gold. But the cause of the inert world, Brahman, cannot be inert. Were it so, it could not be its Nimitta (efficient cause). So we ask: What is that feature which separates Brahman from inertia? The Śruti answers this question by telling the second feature of Brahman as Jñāna. Caution is necessary while understanding this word because, in common language it represents mental cognitions of various things that one understands. This Jñāna changes as the object changes. In deep sleep there are no mental object—cognitions of any type. Therefore this Jñāna is Asatya. Since Brahman is Satya, its Jñāna cannot be Asatya. In other words this Jñāna is not the mental cognition. Brahman's Jñāna will have to be Satya also. It is described as **Pure Awareness** also called **jñapti**.

ii) This subtle difference between the mental cognition and this Jñāna can be understood in the following way: The mental cognition caused by a pot is called pot's Jñāna and that caused by a cot is cot's Jñāna. These are qualified Jñānas. This qualified Jñāna changes according to the objects. But in this qualified Jñāna what is changing is only the adjectives pots, cots, etc. However, the unqualified/substantive Jñāna remains the same. Therefore, Jñāna means that noun for which the pots, the cots are adjectives. Remember that this noun, Jñāna, should be ever-existing in an unchanging way, while accommodating the adjectives which get tagged on or detached from it. In fact, in the absence of any qualifiers, it is only the unqualified Jñāna which is present. (This will be explained in greater detail in chapter 13). That is why after waking one says "I was not aware of anything in deep sleep,"

This unchanging unqualified substantive Jñāna is certainly not Jaḍa (G.Bh.2.16).

9.12 Is Brahman Sarvajña or Not?

Question: If all qualified Jñānas are prohibited in Brahman, how can It be Omniscient?

Answer: Not so; Brahman is certainly omniscient. Its unchanging Jñāna is indeed its capacity to grasp everything. Therefore, when we say it is pure Jñāna it goes without saying that it is also omniscient — ‘यस्य हि सर्वविषयावभासनक्षमं ज्ञानं नित्यमस्ति सः असर्वज्ञः इति विप्रतिषिद्धम्’ (Sū. Bh. 1.1.5)

“But there is nothing to grasp before the creation.”

It is not correct to say that omniscience holds good only when there is the act of grasping. Omniscience is really the ability to grasp everything. Therefore, even when there is nothing to grasp it is omniscient. For example, even during the night we say ‘the sun shines’ or even when there is nothing to reflect we say ‘the mirror reflects’. For that matter, the Jīva who is known to be Kiñcijña, that is able to grasp only a few things, does not cease to be Kiñcijña in deep sleep when he is not grasping anything. Moreover, it is not correct to say that there was nothing for Brahman to grasp before the creation. Certainly there were the unmanifest name forms. In fact, it was only after seeing them that It created the Jagat.

“Then why is qualified Jñāna prohibited in Brahman?”

It is because there is no action of grasping in Brahman, that is, there is no Tripuṭi—the tripartite knowledge—in Brahman such as ‘I am the knower, the Jagat is to be known, now I have known it.’ To have such a division it demands the existence of something different from Brahman. But there is no such thing. Keeping this in view, the qualified Jñāna of the type of the Jīvas are denied in Brahman. But Omniscience

is Its inherent nature. The Śruti describes it as follows: न तस्य कार्यं करणं च विद्यते | न तत्समश्चाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते | पराऽस्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते । स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च – He doesn't have a body or organs. No one is equal to Him or greater. His prowess is known to be multifaceted and he is capable of action by the strength of his natural Jñāna (Śve.6.8); 'सः सर्वज्ञस्वाभाव्यात् आत्मा एक एव सन् ईक्षत' — It is because Sarvajñatva is His intrinsic nature that the Ātman saw though He was alone' (Ai.Bh.1.1.1). From the transcendental view where all the Upādhis are negated, there is no transaction of omniscience in Ātman's Svarūpa — 'न परमार्थतो अपास्त सर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि सर्वज्ञत्वादि व्यवहारः उपपद्यते' (Sū.Bh. 2.1.14). But to say 'He who always has Jñāna capable of grasping everything is non-omniscient' is self contradictory — 'यस्य हि सर्वविषयावभासनक्षमं ज्ञानं नित्यमस्ति सः असर्वज्ञः इति विप्रतिषिद्धम्' (Sū.Bh.1.1.5). 'Every *transaction* from self luminosity to mokṣa occur only through Upādhis like the mind etc, and so *transaction* is the matter of Avidyā... But even the best logician (Tārīkika) can never deny the intrinsic nature of self luminosity of the Ātman — स्वयज्ज्योतिष्ठादि व्यवहारः आमोक्षान्तः सर्वो अविद्याविषय एव मन आधुपाधि जनितः.....स्वयज्ज्योतिष्ठ (तु) सुदर्पितेनाऽपि तार्किकेण न वारयितुं शक्यते' (Pra.4.5). All *action*, like seeing and hearing involves duality which is not the Svarūpa of Brahman. But that does not mean that Brahman does not have even sight. 'Being a seer he does not see. The sight of the seer is never left because it never becomes non-existent — 'पश्यन्वै तन्न पश्यति | न हि द्रष्टुः दृष्टेर्विपरिलोपो विद्यते अविनाशित्वात्' (Br.Bh.4.3.23). 'Where dwaita appears to exist one sees another, one hears to another. For whom everything has become the Ātman, Who sees anything with what! Who hears anything with what! — 'यत्र हि द्वैतमिव भवति तदितर इतरं पश्यति.....इतर इतरं शृणोति.....| यत्र त्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत्..... तत्केन कं शृणुयात्' (Br.Bh.4.5.15). What appears to be contradictory in this nature of Brahman can easily be clarified by the following example: Since even in the pot which is non-different from the clay, the transaction of becoming manifest and unmanifest is there.

It is Asatya. When it is rejected there is only the clay which is Satya and all the pot transactions are totally absent. Nevertheless certainly it cannot be said that the clay will not have the ability to appear as pot. Similarly in the case of Brahman, the Bhāṣyakāra describes this as follows: 'Though (It is) totally attributeless It is known to be the cause of the Jagat and therefore Brahman does exist — सर्वविशेषरहितोऽपि जगतो मूलम् इत्यवगतत्वात् अस्त्येव (ब्रह्म) ' (Ka.Bh. 2.3.12).

The one corollary that follows from the statement that Brahman is Jñānam, is that It is not inert. Another corollary is that It is only One. This is because Jñānam cannot be more than one. It is meaningless to say that one Jñāna knows another Jñāna. It is the nature of Jñāna to know everything, else it will become only Jñeya to It, that is knowable.

9.13 Brahman is Ananta

Its Satyatva, unchangeability, thus separated Brahman from the category of effects; Its Jñāna, awareness, separated It from inertness. However, there is one more entity which is neither an effect nor inert. (Sū.Bh.2.2.8; 2.3.17) Therefore, Brahman is still to be separated from this category. This is the category of the Jīvas. When we have described the (positive and negative) attributes of Brahman, this is surely accomplished (9.3,4) There it was done with respect to the transactional aspect of Īśvara and the Jīva. But now it has to be done taking into account their features. What feature of Brahman separates It from the Jīvas? For this purpose the Śruti ordains that Brahman is Ananta—limitless. The process of separation is as follows: The objects of the world are being comprehended by the Jīva. Therefore, he is the Jñātā—knower. The objects are Jñeya—the knowables. The mental impressions of the object is his knowledge—Jñāna-qualified Jñāna. Here, the knower is different from the knowable and also from the knowledge. All these three mutually different entities constitute a Tripuṭi. None of them infringes the other two. This is the Antatva in the Jīva—his limitation. Brahman has no such limitation. The proof is as follows: Brahman

pervades in the knowable because it is its Upādāna; pervades the qualified Jñāna through Its unqualified Jñāna; pervades the Jīva also. (This last statement will be proved later), that is none of these three aspects in the Tripuṭi is left unpervaded by Brahman. In other words none of them is different from Brahman. Therefore Brahman does not have the limitation of the Jīva. This is Its limitlessness!

Limitation could also result from space, time and the object: an object has limitation in space. It has limitation in time also because it is an effect, that is, it does not exist before creation and after dissolution. One object is different from another. The door is not the window; the window is not the door. But Brahman does not have any of these three limitations also: it is not limited in space because it is the Upādāna of the Ākaśa which is limitless in space; It has no limitation in time because it is the ever existing cause and not an effect; it has no limitation object-wise because it pervades every object being their common Upādāna. Therefore, the third feature of limitlessness (Anantya) shows that

Nothing is different from Brahman;

But, Brahman is different from everything. (9.13)

Question: “In that case limitlessness alone separates Brahman from everything. What is the necessity of telling the other two features?”

Answer: No; limitlessness does not separate Brahman from the Ākaśa and the unqualified time, (9.4.ii) because both of them are also limitless. But Ākaśa is not Satya because it is an effect and the unqualified time is not Jñāna but only Jñeya. So, all the three features are necessary for separating Brahman. They are mutually independent. Not only that. To the question ‘why object-wise limitation is not there in Brahman’ then, Its Satyatva feature is to be pointed out as the answer. Therefore all the three features are necessary for its complete separation from everything.

9.14 The Experience of the Jñānīs

It is this limitlessness of Brahman that great souls like Prahlāda have realized; he saw Viṣṇu even in a pillar. Saint Tyāgarāja tells that he understood the limitlessness of Brahman only after knowing that nothing is different from It. Guru Arjun dev in the Granth Sahib advises us to see Brahman everywhere; to hear It everywhere. He wants us to understand that it is only Brahman that pervades everything. He says “There is nothing like ‘I’ or ‘You’. Become one with everything like dust in mud. Only Brahman pervades everyone’s body. See only That everywhere. Hear only That in everything”.

Maha Parivrajaka

CHAPTER 10

THE ATTRIBUTELESS BRAHMAN

In the previous chapter the attributes and the features of Brahman were enumerated to recognize It as distinct from everything else. Recognizing through the attributes Sarvasaktitva etc, is the first step in spiritual progress, which is easy because it is easy to distinguish it from us. It is also easy to think about and cherish the qualified Brahman. Therefore majority of the Āstikas adopt this Brahman and indulge in Its worship. Recognizing it through features Satya etc, is the second step which is a little more difficult, because It is to be separated from everything. Nevertheless, it is the more intimate knowledge of Brahman. Those who take the second step give up the activities of Pūja, and so on and resort to Dhyāna. This is more difficult than doing Pūja, etc. Therefore, the Śāstra instructs the aspirants to worship the qualified Brahman namely, Īśvara for a long enough time and then take to the second step. ‘आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते’ — the one desirous of taking to Dhyāna but not capable of it is Ārurukṣu. He should indulge in Karma for his spiritual progress. In due course he becomes arūḍha and later he needs only Śama, that is control over the Indriyas and the mind, to do dhyana only’ (G.6.3). But the difficulty for the Arūḍha is that he does not grasp Brahman even through the features. The reason is: Though one understands It as different from effects, different from inertia, different from Tripuṭi and different from Jīva, he does not understand directly what It is. Therefore one has to know directly what It is. But even the Vēda is unable to tell directly what Brahman is. It is not accessible to words, nor to the mind — ‘यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते | अप्राप्य मनसा सह’ (Tai.2.4.1). Therefore, it is the adventure of the Vēda to speak about That which is beyond speech and our adventure to understand through the mind that which is not accessible to it. Therefore, when the Śruti says that Brahman is Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam, we should not try to understand It through these

words, as we understand a cow through its description as white, with big horns etc. We should understand It in the spirit of the Sthūlārundhatī Nyāya: the very tiny star Arundhati is spotted through the help of a bigger star in its neighbourhood. Similarly, we should go beyond the words of Satya, Jñāna and Ananta to recognize It. That is, we should not go by Vācyārtha of these words that is, their primary meaning. On the other hand we should take their Lakṣyārtha, that is, their intended meaning. This can be elucidated in the following way. If one takes the literal meaning of Satya and wants to search for the unchanging Brahman with one's Indriyas and the mind, one will never be successful, because an unchanging thing can never be grasped by the Indriyas and the mind (9.8). Indriyas and the mind cannot totally grasp even a limitless thing like the Ākaśa. It cannot be recognized even by the feature of Jñāna. If it were possible, then It would become only a Jñeya. Therefore, the Vācyārtha does not help us in grasping It. So we should take the intended meaning.

“Features are told only to recognize the object. If recognition through them is not possible at all why are they told?”

No. Features can also be told to withdraw the attention from the unintended thing. Therefore the words Satya, Jñāna and Ananta are intended to withdraw our attention from Asatya (changing), Jaḍa (inert), Sānta (limited) things.

“If the existence of the object is already determined, its recognition may be possible even by this. But Brahman's existence is not yet determined.”

This is not correct. Its existence has been determined. It has already been told that It is the cause of the Jagat, that It is to be searched in the cave of the intellect and that the reward of recognizing It is the fulfillment of all the desires at once. Therefore, It should be existent. It is also possible to grasp It through the intended meaning of features. For example if the intellect is withdrawn from all the changing inert and limited things, it can certainly be grasped because by rejecting them

through Vairāgya, the intellect becomes faultless, clear and subtle. Ātman is faultless and extremely clear and extremely subtle. It is possible to grasp it with an intellect with similar qualities — ‘अत्यन्त निर्मलत्व अतिस्वच्छत्व अतिसूक्ष्मत्व उपपत्तेरात्मनः | बुद्धेश्च आत्मसमनैर्मल्यादुपपत्तेः आत्मचैतन्याकार आभासत्वोपपत्तिः’ (G.Bh.18.50). The Śruti also tells that ‘मनसैवानुद्द्रष्टव्यम् — with faultless, clear and subtle mind it has to be grasped (Br.Bh.4.4.19). ‘(Faulty, unclear and gross) mind cannot grasp it — ‘अप्राप्य मनसा सह’ (Tai.2.4.1). The impurity in the mind is due to its association with things which are Asatya, Jaḍa and Sānta. They are all Abrahman, that is, non-Brahman. Therefore, if the mind is reverted from all non-Brahman objects it will be possible for it to grasp Brahman. The Śruti makes various efforts to help us recognize Brahman in this way.

10.1 The Brahman without qualities.

i) The Śruti which describes Brahman as qualified also describes it as attributeless in the extreme: It is not gross, not atomic, not short, not long, not red, not sticky, not shadow, not dark, not Vāyu, not Ākaśa, not adhesive, not taste, not smell, not with eyes, not with ears, not speech, not mind, not dazzling, not vital air, not face, not measurable without inside, without outside. It does not eat anything, nothing eats it — ‘अस्थूलम् अनणु अह्रस्वम् अदीर्घम् अलोहितम् अस्नेहम् अच्छायम् अतमः अवायु अनाकाशम् असङ्गम् अरसम् अगन्धम् अचक्षुष्कम् अश्रोत्रम् अवाक् अमनः अतेजस्कम् अप्राणम् अमुखम् अमात्रम् अनन्तरम् अबाह्यं न तदश्नाति किञ्चन न तदश्नाति कश्चन’ (Br. 3.8.8). ‘It is soundless, touchless, formless, not (decreasing) depleting, tasteless, eternal, odourless — ‘अशब्दम् अस्पर्शम् अरूपम् अव्ययं तथाऽरसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत्’ (Ka.1.3.15). ‘It is without backside, without frontside, without inside, without outside — ‘अपूर्वम् अनपरम् अनन्तरम् अबाह्यम्’ (Br. 2.5.19). ‘It is bodyless, woundless, nerveless, clean, sinless — ‘अकार्यम् अत्रणम् अस्नाविरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम्’ (īśa.8); ‘Invisible, ungraspable, originless, colourless, eyeless, earless, handless, legless — ‘अद्रश्यम् अग्राह्यम् अगोत्रम् अवर्णम् अचक्षुश्श्रोत्रं तदपाणिपादम्’, (Mu. 1.1.5). Therefore, Its

description is ‘not this’, ‘not this’ — ‘अतः आदेशः नेति नेति’ (Br. 2.3.6). He is the ‘not like this’, ‘not like this’ Ātman — ‘स एष नेतिनेत्यात्मा’ (Br. 3.9.26, 4.2.4, 4.4.22, 4.5.15, etc).

ii) If the Śruti describes one and the same Brahman with attributes and without attributes, which one is to be taken? Whichever is taken, why is it to be taken? The answers to these questions depend on who has to take it. The beginner aspirant has to take only to the Brahman with qualities and indulge in Karma. This will purify his intellect and make him eligible for Dhyāna. Only after this stage the Brahman without qualities is to be contemplated upon. “Forget about our taking to It. How exactly is Brahman in Itself? Is it with attributes or without?” Some people answer this question by telling that It is both. This is wrong because the same Brahman cannot have such opposite descriptions. Therefore, only one of them is to be accepted and the other reconciled with this one.

One’s reconciliation may be as follows: “Brahman is only with attributes, but the attributeless description is only to convey the subtlety of the attributes. For example, the Śruti says ‘असदेवेदमग्र आसीत्’ — all this was only Asat’ (Ch. 6.2.1). This literally means that all this was really non-existent before the creation. But this is not correct because a non-existent thing cannot come into existence. Therefore ‘Asat’ is interpreted as subtle. Similarly all the attributes are only subtle, that is not gross. In this sense, attributeless description must be deemed as an exaggeration.” This sort of reconciliation may perhaps hold good for statements like “tasteless, odourless.” But it does not hold good for pairs of statements like ‘not gross, not atomic’ or ‘not short, not long’, etc. If these pairs of words are interpreted to mean that Brahman is ‘gross in a subtle way, atomic in a subtle way’, it would again be describing it in opposite ways only in a subtle way! Therefore, for the same reason that we give up opposite features at the gross level we have to give up opposite features at the subtle level also. Not only that, Suppose ‘bodyless’ is interpreted as ‘with a subtle body’, then ‘woundless’ will have to be interpreted as ‘with subtle wounds’ and ‘sinless’ as ‘with subtle sins’. This is clearly not

acceptable. More than this, it would directly contradict the statement ‘It is not like this, not like this’. “Suppose only the auspicious features are accepted and the inauspicious features are rejected?” Even that is not possible because, the wound may be inauspicious for the one who has it. But it is certainly auspicious for the worm in it. Both the afflicted person and the worm are parts of the same Brahman. In relation to whom should the feature be described as auspicious or inauspicious? Furthermore, the Śruti says that those with inauspicious features are also Brahman. For example, ‘Brahman is full of lust, full of anger, full of Adharma — ‘ब्रह्म काममयः क्रोधमयः अधर्ममयः’ (Br.4.4.5); ‘Fishermen are Brahman, slaves are Brahman, gamblers are Brahman — ‘ब्रह्मदाशा ब्रह्मदासा ब्रह्मैवेमे कितवाः’ (Atharva Śruti quoted in Sū.Bh.2.3.43). Therefore, it is impossible to reconcile the mutually opposite statements in this way.

On the other hand **we can faultlessly reconcile them in the following way: Brahman is intrinsically attributeless, but appears with attributes in the presence of the Upādhis.** ‘It has no forms, because the Śāstra describes it mainly in that way — ‘अरूपवदेव हि तत्प्रधानत्वात्’ (Sū.3.2.14). The attributeless Brahman is the Parabrahman, Brahman with attributes is Aparabrahman.

“Does it mean there are two Brahman — Parā and Aparā?”

Yes, two. Brahman described denying the changing name — forms is Parabrahman; Brahman described in relation to them — the Upādhis — is Aparā Brahman.

“Is it not opposed to the Advaita Śruti, which tells that Brahman is only one?”

Not like that. There is only Parabrahman. But for the sake of the people who do not know it, the Aparabrahman is described so that It can be worshipped by them. ‘Parabrahman is to be realized; But Aparabrahman is to be attained — ‘परं चेत् ज्ञातव्यम् अपरं चेत् प्राप्तव्यम्’ (Ka.1.2.16). Therefore it does not contradict the Śruti statements on non duality. (Sū.Bh. 4.3.14).

iii) In this way Brahman is not anything that we can imagine — Nēti Nētyātman. “It is not like this, not like this” Ātman. Whatever we could say about Brahman as ‘like this’, it is only with respect to some Upādhi. Vijñāna or Ānanda or Vijñānaghana or even Brahma or Ātma — are all words which describe Brahman only with respect to an Upādhi — ‘अध्यारोपित नामरूपकर्मद्वारेण ब्रह्म निर्दिश्यते ‘विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म’ ‘विज्ञानघन एव’ ‘ब्रह्म’ ‘आत्मा’ इत्येवमादि शब्दैः’ (Br.Bh.2.3.6). The impossibility of its specific description should not cause the doubt whether It could be vacuous. How can It be vacuum when whatever we see has come only out of It? It does exist. But its subtlety transcends description.

iv) Notwithstanding all this analysis, it may be difficult to understand this featurelessness of Brahman. Therefore, in order to convey this idea the Śruti adopts another means. It describes Brahman in mutually opposite ways in the same sentence: ‘It does not stir, It is one, It has more speed than the mind, being stationary It will overtake any runner — अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयोतद्भावतः अन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत् (Īśa.4). ‘It stirs, It does not stir. It is far away, It is nearby — तदेजति तनैजति तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके (Īśa.5). ‘It is farther from the thing far away. It is very near hear itself — ‘दूरात्सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च’ (Mu.3.1.7). ‘Without legs He runs fast, without hands He catches, without ears He hears, without eyes He sees — ‘अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः’ (Śve.3.19). ‘Brahman is full of lustre, lacks lustre, desirous, desireless, angry, angerless, full of Dharma, full of Adharma — ‘ब्रह्म तेजोमयो अतेजोमयः काममयो अकाममयः क्रोधमयो अक्रोधमयः धर्ममयो अधर्ममयः’ (Br.4.4.5).

10.2 The Reason for Brahman’s Featurelessness

i) From this peculiar description, one will have to conclude that it is featureless. If the same crystal is once described as red and then not as red, once described as blue and then not as blue, one will conclude that the crystal is transparent in itself, but appears in different colours due to different Upādhis. Similarly about Brahman. Without Upādhis It does not shake, It is here, It is there. But with an Upādhi, It can move

with a great speed. While being here, It can go beyond the running speech and the mind. Though without shaking, It appears to be shaking through the Manas as Upādhi. For one who does not grasp It, It is far away; for one who grasps It, It is here itself. In the background of an angry mind It appears to be angry, in the background of an angerless mind It appears to be angerless. Whether it is an angry person or an angerless person — both are Brahman only. But Brahman in Itself is neither angry nor angerless. It is the 'not this, not this' Ātman (Br.Bh.3.9.26).

ii) In this way Brahman is totally attributeless in Itself. Nevertheless the Jagat of infinite variety has emanated only from It. If all the qualities of the world have emanated from It, It has to be free from all qualities in Itself. Is not the sunlight from which all the colours emanate, itself colourless? Is not the clay from which all the shapes emanate shapeless in itself? Similarly in the case of Brahman; since all the qualities come out of It, It is Itself free from all qualities. However, one may think like this: when all the qualities are coming out of It though without qualities in Itself, It may be the producer of qualities in association with Māyā. This may be true at the transactional level but it is not true at the transcendental level. The reason is the following: For example, we say that THAT Brahman who creates THIS Jagat is omniscient and omnipotent. But the descriptions "THIS Jagat, THAT Brahman" is possible only from the transactional view, but not from the transcendental view. It is because the Jagat is also Brahman from the transcendental view. Brahman cannot therefore be distinguished as 'THAT' and 'THIS'. It means the following: In the initial stages of teaching, the Śāstra describes the Jagat as the Upādhi of Brahman, but later shows it is Brahman itself. An Upādhi for Brahman has to be actually different from It. But nothing is different from Brahman. Therefore equipped with this knowledge, we realize that there cannot be anything like an Upādhi to Brahman. Therefore Brahman and Brahman alone remains. So it is totally attributeless. Even the shape of the effect is not different from its cause — 'कार्याकारोऽपि कारणस्य आत्मभूत एव अनात्मभूतस्य अनारभ्यत्वात्' (Sū.Bh. 2.1.18). Therefore, not even the shapes

of the world can become Upādhis to Brahman. When this is so, what to say about Māyā which is Brahman's own Śakti? Even that is Brahman. Therefore, there is Brahman alone in the transcendental view and there is no scope for attributes at all. Bhagavān Bhāṣyakāra explains this directly clearly and unambiguously as follows:

Question: If the Upādhis of name-forms are existing, would it not contradict the Advaita Śrutis like 'one without a second', 'there is not the least multiplicity here', etc.

Answer: This is not so. This has already been answered through the clay-pot example. After analysing the clay from the transcendental view, one realizes that the pot is not different from it and therefore the clay alone exists. Similarly, with the help of Śruti, when the name-forms are realized from the transcendental view that they are not different from Brahman, it will be realized that there is only one Brahman and absolutely no multiplicity. The Advaita realization follows with the adoption of this transcendental view. But when name-forms are viewed as separate due to one's natural Avidyā, it becomes the transactional view. Then there are Upādhis to Brahman and the multiplicity is seen — 'नामरूपोपाध्यस्तित्वे 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्' (Ch.6.2.1) 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन' (Br.4.4.19) इति श्रुतयो विरुध्येन् इति चेत्? न | परिहृतत्वात् मृदादि दृष्टान्तैश्च | यदा तु परमार्थ द्रष्ट्या परमात्मतत्वाच्छ्रुत्यनुसारिभिः अन्यत्वेन निरूप्यमाणे नामरूपे मृदादि विकारवद् वस्त्वन्तरे तत्त्वतो न स्तः सलिलफेनघटादि विकारवदेव तदा तदपेक्ष्य 'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्' 'नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ' इत्यादि परमार्थदर्शन गोचरत्वं प्रतिपद्यते | यदा तु स्वाभाविक्या अविध्यया ब्रह्मस्वरूपं रज्जु शुक्तिका गगन स्वरूपवदेव स्वेन रूपेण वर्तमानं केनचित् असृष्ट्वाभावमपि सत् नामरूपकृत कार्यकरणोपाधिभ्यो विवेकेन नावधार्यते नामरूपोपाधि दृष्टिरेव च भवति स्वाभाविकी तदा सर्वोऽयं वस्त्वन्तरास्तित्वव्यवहारः' (Br.Bh. 3.5.1).

This transactional view and the transcendental view are exactly those connected with the latter half and the former half of Jagats in the Jagat-Brahman non-difference relation. Those Jīvas who follow the illusory name-forms of the latter half Jagat in the relation are ruled by Īśvara, that is, Brahman, who acquires the attributes of rulership, omniscience, omnipotence etc. But in the case of those liberated souls

who adopt the transcendental view and live in the name-forms of the former half Jagat in the relation, these transactions of rulership omniscience, omnipotence, etc. do not apply. This is because, the name forms are non different from themselves — 'तदेवम् अविध्यात्मकोपाधि— परिच्छेदापेक्षमेव ईश्वरस्य ईश्वरत्वं सर्वज्ञत्वं सर्वशक्तित्वं च | न परमार्थतो विद्यया अपास्तसर्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनि ईशित्रीशितव्यसर्वज्ञत्वादि व्यवहारः उपपद्यते | तथा चोक्तं 'यत्र नान्यत्पश्यति नान्यच्छृणोति नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा', 'यत्रत्वस्य सर्वमात्मैवाभूत् तत्केन कं पश्येत्' इत्यादिना' (Sū.Bh. 2.1.14). This means that one conceives attributes only because of the wrong impression that the name forms are Upādhis to Brahman, when actually they are also Brahman only. The moment this misconception is erased one will realize that Brahman Itself is totally attributeless. 'In nature it is without Prāṇa, without Manas and pure — 'अप्राणोह्यमनाः शुभ्रः' (Mu.2.1.2). But even after so much explanation, if one with the transactional view asks "From where did the Prāṇa come?" the Śruti says, "The Prāṇa, the Manas and all the Indriyās have come from 'That'" — 'एतस्माज्जायते प्राणः मनस्सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च' (Mu.2.1.3). 'True. We cannot grasp It through the words or the mind or the eyes or any other Indriya because It is totally attributeless. However, It does exist because It is known to be the cause of the Jagat — सत्यम् | नैव वाचा न मनसा न चक्षुषा नान्यैरपि इन्द्रियैः प्राप्तुं शक्यते | तथापि सर्वविशेषरहितोऽपि जगतो मूलम् इत्यवगतत्वात् अस्येव (ब्रह्म)' (Ka.2.3.12). This should never be forgotten.

10.3 Is the Jagat Existent or Non-existent?

i) Question: "Starting from the Jagat and moving towards Brahman it was demonstrated with the help of the cause-effect non-difference relation that everything is Brahman only. Therefore, there is Brahman alone and It is attributeless. It is repeatedly told that Brahman is without parts. 'स एष नेतिनेत्यात्मा' — He is the 'not this, not this' Ātman (Br.3.9.26). 'दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः' — 'This divine Puruṣa is formless' (Mu.2.1.2). But the Jagat is with parts. How can the Jagat with parts come out of Brahman without parts? (see also 7.11).

Answer: This may be understood through an example. Though really looking at a rope, one sometimes sees a serpent instead. In such a case what is seen is only the imagined parts of the rope as serpent that is, the imagined parts of the rope have given rise to the shape of the serpent. Similarly the imagined parts in the partless Brahman could give rise to the shape of the Jagat — ‘निरवयवस्य सतः कथं विकारसंस्थानम् उपपद्यते? नैषदोषः | रज्ज्वाद्यवयवेभ्यः सर्पादिसंस्थानवत् बुद्धिपरिकल्पितेभ्यः सदवयवेभ्यो विकारसंस्थानोपपत्तेः’ (Ch.Bh. 6.2.2).

ii) Question: “Brahman which has been shown to be attributeless should also be transactionless. But the Śruti says: ‘सोऽकामयत बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति’ — Brahman desired to be born as many’ (Tai. 2.6.4). “How can the transactionless Brahman appear as the world with many forms?”

Answer: ‘It is just like the clay taking the forms of the pot, or just as the rope produced as the imagined snake — ‘बहु स्यां प्रजायेय यथा मृद्धटाद्याकारेण यथा वा रज्ज्वादि सर्पाद्याकारेण बुद्धिपरिकल्पितेन’ (Ch.Bh.6.2.3).

iii) Question: ‘In that case, is the Jagat also nonexistent just like the imagined snake — ‘असदेव तर्हि सर्वं यद्गृह्यते रज्जुरिव सर्पाद्याकारेण?’ (Ch.Bh.6.2.3).

Answer: No. It is only the existent Brahman appearing as many in special forms in a different way. Nothing here is non-existent at any time. The logicians imagine a thing different from its cause and speak of it as non-existent before its appearance and after its disappearance. However we say that there is no name or form which is different from the cause at any time. Though the clay is called pot as if it is different from the clay, we know that it is after all clay only. Similarly, when the rope is examined properly, we conclude that though it appeared like a snake, it is not a snake. With this realization we only get rid of the idea of a snake. Similarly after examining Brahman we get rid of the idea of Jagat and we also stop referring to it as Jagat — ‘न | सत एव द्वैतभेदेन अन्यथागृह्यमाणत्वात् नासत्त्वं कस्यचित् क्वचित् इति ब्रूमः | यथा सतोऽन्यत् वस्त्वन्तरं परिकल्प्य पुनस्तस्यैव प्रगुत्पत्तेः प्रध्वंसाच्चोद्ध्वम् असत्त्वं ब्रुवते तार्किकाः । न

तथाऽस्माभिः कदाचित् क्वचिदपि सतोऽन्यत् अभिधानम् अभिधेयम् वा वस्तु परिकल्प्यते । सदेव तु सर्वम् अभिधानम् अभिधीयते च यदन्यबुद्ध्या । यथा रज्जुर्व सर्पबुद्ध्या सर्प इत्यभिधीयते । यथा वा पिण्डघटादि मृदोऽन्यबुद्ध्या पिण्डघटादिशब्देनाभिधीयते लोके । रज्जुविवेकदर्शिनां तु सर्पाभिधानबुद्धि निवर्तते यथा च मृद्विवेकेनदर्शिनां घटादिशब्दबुद्धी | तद्वत् सद्विवेकदर्शिनाम् अयविकारशब्दबुद्धि निवर्तते’ (Ch.Bh.6.2.3). In other words, after realizing Brahman in accordance with the Śruti, one’s understanding that It is transactionless will not be shaken, though for sense perception It is seen in the form of the Jagat.

v) Question: How can it be said that there is no transaction of creation etc in Brahman when it is clearly stated that Brahman desired to be born as many?

Answer: It is not so. Brahman is not born in the form of the Jagat and become many like a father becoming many through the birth of his children. In the example the children are different from the father. But the name-forms of the Jagat are not like that. They existed in it even previously in an unmanifest state, became manifest without losing their Brahman-ness. They were never different from Brahman anywhere at any time. This type of manifestation of the one as many cannot be deemed as transaction in Brahman (Tai.2.6.4). Any transaction should necessarily result in a change in the transactor. When one removes his money from his left pocket and puts it in his right pocket, nobody calls it a money transaction obviously.

10.4 Doubt Regarding two imaginations

Question: In the above discussions in (10.3.i) and (10.3.ii), two types of imagination have been alluded: i) of parts in the partless Brahman, and ii) of the name-forms of the Jagat. Are these two the same or different?

Answer: They are different. The situation in the first one is the following: The Śruti says that the Jagat with parts has indeed come only from the partless Brahman. This is difficult to be understood for people with limited intelligence like us. The Bhāṣyakāra’s desire is to help us to

understand it. In other words, without dropping the idea of the creation of the Jagat, he wants to reconcile it with the partlessness of Brahman. So he says: just as the imagined parts of a rope give rise to a serpent, the imagined parts of Brahman could give rise to the Jagat. Therefore, this imagination is only done by us. But the situation with regard to the second imagination is different. The purpose here is to convey the message of the Śruti that though the Jagat has emanated from Brahman, the latter is still transactionless. Even here, without dropping the idea of creation, it is to be reconciled with the transactionlessness of Brahman. For that purpose the Bhāṣyakāra has given the examples of the clay-pot (Upadana) and the rope-snake (Nimitta) (7.12.iii). The clay-pot example conveys the understanding that the Jagat is the effect of Brahman and the rope-serpent example is given to understand that Brahman is transactionless as someone else is actually the Nimitta. Remember that it has been told in the foregoing subsection that the Jagat is not non-existent like the snake in the rope-snake example. Therefore, the phrase ‘parts of the imaginary snake’ can never mean that the Jagat is **our** mental fabrication like seeing a non-existent snake in a rope. Moreover, we should notice that **the statement ‘I will be born as many like the rope born as parts of the imaginary snake’ is a statement of Brahman and not of Jīva.** Therefore, it means that it is the mental thought of the name-forms in Hiranyagarbha—that is, Aparabrahma. In fact, the latter Mantras in that Upaniṣad confirm this. In order to carve out the name-forms He remembered in His mind the Jīvas who lived in the previous cycle of Sṛṣṭi — ईक्षां कृतवती.....स्वबुद्धिस्थं पूर्वसृष्टि अनुभूत प्राणधारणम् आत्मानमेव स्मरन्तिनामरूपे व्याकरवाणि’ (Ch.Bh.6.3.2). It is just like one conceiving words in his mind and then producing them in sound-forms to convey his meaning. So also, Aparabrahma created name-forms that already were existing in his mind. That is why later, in the same Upaniṣad all the name-forms have been referred to as Brahma’s mental constructs. All the things that we see in our waking state are only Brahma’s mental constructs because they are only the transformed light, water and food produced by the glance of Brahman — ‘जाग्रद्विषया मानसप्रत्ययाभिनिर्वृता एव | सदीक्षाभिनिर्वृता

तेजोऽब्रमयत्वात् जागरित विषयाणाम्’ (Ch.Bh.8.5.4). This distinction between the two imaginations would be clear if we discern that only the rope-serpent example is given for the imagination of parts in Brahman, whereas, both the clay-pot and the rope-serpant examples are used for the latter situation of name-forms. The rope-serpent example is necessary and sufficient to explain the imagined parts in partless Brahman, because these parts are really absent just like the serpent. But in the case of the creation of name-forms both examples are necessary. In the clay-pot example the clay, the pot and their non-difference through the causal relation are directly perceived. There is no need for any imagination here. Therefore, in order to convey that the Jagat is an effect of Brahman, only the clay-pot example is cited without the phrase ‘mental imagination’. However, there is a possibility that the aspirant may wrongly understand Brahman as getting transformed into the Jagat just as clay into pot. Therefore, he will not arrive at the transactionless Brahman from this example alone. In fact, even in this example it is only the clay lump which undergoes transformation into the clay pot, while the clay has remained as clay which does not undergo any transformation. In this sense it is already transactionless. It is just like the Jñānam of Brahman already discussed in 9.11.ii. Though there is transaction in the qualified Jñāna such as the pot-Jñāna and cot-Jñāna, the noun ‘Jñāna’ which is pervāding in all of them is transactionless that is, unchanging. Similarly, though the clay lump changes to the clay pot, the clay pervades in both of them equally and hence it is transactionless that is, unchanging. That is why it is the unchanging cause-Vivartopadana-of all clay articles. Had it also undergone change, the Śruti would not have stated ‘मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्’-the clay is unchanging’ (Ch.Bh.6.1.4). It is also like there being no change in the meaning though the words expressing it change. One who understands this can certainly grasp the transactionless Brahman even from the clay-pot example alone. But most people find it difficult to do so. To assist them in understanding the truth, the rope-snake example has been given. Anyone can easily understand that the snake is only a mental thought and the rope is totally different from it. Therefore, this example

facilitates us to understand that the Jagat creation transactions (which go in the mind of) Aparabrahman, that is Hiraṇyagarbha (8.7), are not to be found in the Parabrahman. That is why the Bhāṣyakāra gives the second example and says I will be born as many just like the rope is born as the imagined snake. The upshot for all these complicated discussions of Bhagavān Bhāṣyakāra is this: Through the cause-effect nondifference relation one understands intellectually that the Jagat is Brahman; that for this reason, there is Brahman alone and that therefore It is unqualified and transactionless. Further, one may also have an intellectual grasp of the statement that one is also Brahman. Nevertheless this oneness does not come to one's experience because it has become a habit for us to treat the world as separate from us. We can never reconcile to the statement that "the Jagat has emanated from Brahman; nevertheless It is transactionless." We go on getting the same doubts again and again. In order to free us from this bad habit, Bhagavān Śāṅkara takes us once from the Jagat to Brahman and then from Brahman to the Jagat repeatedly and goes on clearing the doubts appearing again and again, in different ways, till we become unshakably firm in our understanding. Any amount of gratitude to him can never be adequate.

10.5 Adhyārōpa-Apavāda

In the beginning stages of study the aspirants will be knowing that Brahman is only the Nimitta of the Jagat and that the Jagat is different from Brahman. Therefore, they know only that Brahman with attributes which is recognized in relation to this Jagat. So, it is necessary to start the (spiritual) teaching only with this qualified Brahman that is, Brahman on which Nimitta-causeness is superimposed—Adhyaropita. In the next stage, Brahman will have to be introduced through the three features of Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam. In the last stage, they will come to know that the Jagat is not different from Brahman and the aspirant will realize that Brahman is one, only one, without a second. Therefore, It automatically becomes the 'not like this, not like this' Brahman. With this final understanding the Brahman with attributes is obviously dropped which was accepted in the beginning. This method

of the Śāstra is called Adhyārōpa-Apavāda. It is only at the end of the study that the aspirant comes to know Brahman as totally transactionless though apparently creation, sustenance and destruction of Jagat are handled by It. This will not be known in the beginning when he is ignorant of Brahman being the Upādāna of the Jagat. He wrongly imagines that the Jagat is independent and Brahman its creator. Starting from this premise the Śāstra also treats the Jagat as adjunct to Brahman and superimposes all transactions of creation, sustenance, destruction on Brahman. This superimposition is called Adhyārōpa. Further, the Śāstra analyses the Jagat on the basis of the Jagat-Brahman non-difference relation and educates the aspirant that it cannot be treated as an Upādhi to Brahman because it is not different from it at any time, whether the past, the present or future. Equipped with this correct understanding, looking beyond the name forms the aspirant will concentrate only on the unchanging Brahman. By this step, all the transactions, attributes, and features which were superimposed on it due to Avidyā, will drop off. Then, in spite of one witnessing the changing world with the Indriyas, one will not lose sight of the intrinsic Brahman without attributes. In this way, dropping of the superimposition made in the beginning is Apavāda (Br.Bh.2.1.20; 4.4.25 and G.Bh.13.13). In short, Adhyārōpa is the temporary superimposition of the things not existing in Brahman and then Apavāda is rejecting them later.

At this stage it may be necessary to clarify once again what is that which is dropped by Apavāda. Before understanding the intrinsic nature of Brahman, the aspirant was looking at the Jagat from the transactional view only. Never once did he see it from the transcendental view. After studying the Śāstra he develops the transcendental view about the Jagat and then the wrong impressions he had about Brahman previously get dropped. The misconception that the transactions are carried out by It is gone. Though he continues to perceive with the physical eye the transactions of the world, his firm understanding that none of it exists in Brahman Itself is never shaken. This is just like one who knows science continuing to see with his eyes the earth as flat but knowing firmly that it is round.

SUMMARY OF BRAHMAPRAKARAṆAM

The cause of the Jagat namely, Brahman, is very different in features from the Jagat. Therefore it is very difficult to describe it and also to understand it. Everyone knows it as a rule that an unknown thing is to be conveyed through the known. Therefore, the Śāstra takes the aspirant to Brahman starting only from the Jagat which is familiar to him. The first introduction of It is obviously the qualified Brahman with Jagat as Its Upādhi. The attributes to It are told only with respect to Jagat and Jīva appearing in the latter half of the Jagat-Brahman and the Jīva-Brahman non-difference relation. Afterwards the next level of understanding of Brahman is through its features—Satyam, Jñānam and Anantam. Notice again that these are mentioned with respect to the Jagat and Jīva appearing in the former half of the non-difference relations. In the next stage one will understand that every perceivable thing of the transactional and the virtual world are only Brahman in their intrinsic nature. It would then follow as corollary that Brahman alone exists from the transcendental view. Then he would realize that all these superimpositions like attributes and even features that had been attributed to/spoken about Brahman drop off and only the transcendental Brahman remains. 'Introduction to Brahman, through words like Vijñānam, Ānandam Brahman, Vijñānaghana or Brahma or Ātma are also only with respect to the name-forms and transactions. This has already been told in (10.1.iii). We should not understand this sentence to mean that Brahman is neither Vijñānaghana nor Brahma nor Ātma, etc. It only means that it cannot be conveyed through any words except with reference to something else. It is totally attributeless, not accessible for speech and not available to the mind.