**MUNDAKA UPANISHAD**

**By U. Ve. , MahAmahOpAdhyaya, Dr. Sriman Srirangam NallAn Chakravarthy Raghunathacharya Swami.**

**The essence**

Upanishads are parts of the Vedas which explain the Brahman. The Upanishads have originated to explain the nature and form of the JIva and ParamAtma, to discourse on the manner of releasing oneself from the ties of the world and obtaining eternal happiness by obtaining by attaining Brahman, after freeing oneself from the anxieties and cares for the uplifting of all the sentient beings. These Upanishads are the auspicious lamps, which throw light on our ancient philosophical knowledge (the Truths).

**UPANISHAD – Definition**

There is one definition- “*Upa- nishadya- grihyamaaNathvaath Upanishad*”. The meaning is that the Upanishad is that knowledge of the Brahman which is transmitted (taught) by the AchArya in a secret manner to a disciple who is seated close to him. Another definition is “*BrahmaNi Upanishannethyupanishad*” This is given the vAkyakAra – Brahmanandin. This is quoted in the S’ruthaprakaas'ika. According to this, Upanishad is that which directly explains the nature of Brahman. In the Mahabharata there is an expression “nishathsu – upanishathsu ca”. From the commentaries on Mahabharata, it may be seen that as said in purusha sUktham “*angaanyanyaani devathaah”*, that the mantras which pertain to the gods who are the limbs of the supreme lord are called “*nishath*” and those which address directly the ParamAtma are called Upanishad. Sri S’ankara at the beginning of his commentary on Mundakopanishad has explained with reference to the grammatical root of the word (*Upannishadiyatheethi Upanishath)* that the Upanishath is what rids one of the evils like birth and death, or that which enables a person to draw closer to Brahman, or that which destroys the causes for the evils like Karma caused by ignorance.

**MUNDAKA UPANISHAD –its Speciality**

Though there are many Upanishads, all of which may be termed as rays of philosophical knowledge, Sri S’ankara and Bhagavad RAmAnuja gave prominence only to ten Upanishads – the S’vethaas’vathara, the Subaala, Kausheethaki, and others. The Mundakopanishad however has greater claims for prominence than the above for the following reasons –

1. All those matters, without leaving anything, which need to be discoursed upon to the seeker-devotee have been very well summarised here.
2. A feature of this Upanishad is that matters pertaining to the S’Astras, which are beyond the comprehension of an ordinary person have been explained here with the common, but attractive examples, so that they are easily understood by him
3. Though the language is Vedic language, this Upanishad is couched in a manner which is intimate (close to), easily understood and in a sweet (attractive) language of Sanskrit, instead of the high level from beginning to the end, which is not understood by the common man.
4. The Mantras found here have been cited very often as authoritative by sage VyAsa in his Vedanta Sutras and in the commentaries thereon by the revered AchAryas.

For the above reasons, I am presenting below, in a summarised manner for the benefit of the readers, what has been stated in the six parts called Khandas of the MuNdaka Upanishad, which has a special prominence when compared to the other Upanishads. In the AtharvaNa Veda, there is a branch which has been discoursed upon by a great sage called MuNdaka. Towards the end of the Mantras enumerated therein, this Upanishad is found. That is the reason why this Upanishad is called MuNdaka Upanishad.

The First chapter or the First Khanda

In this Upanishad, Brahman has been addressed as “Akshara” and a discourse is being given on the science of Akshara Brahman with the aim of attaining the ParamAtma. Since Angirasa had such a wealth of knowledge, he was able to answer the question of S’aunaka and gave a discourse on Brahman. The essence of the discourse is as follows –

A knowledge seeker would have to know two sciences, here in after called Vidyas, the paravidya and aparavidya. VidyA stands for knowledge. When the four Vedas (Rig Veda and other Vedas), the knowledge of phonetics, the codes of rituals, grammar, etymology (the Vedic Lexicon), the prosody, astronomy, the ithihAsAs, the PurANas, Logic and Vedic exegesis, Dharma S'Astras and other such sciences are learnt from an AchArya, the knowledge of the Brahman which arises from such a study is “apara VidyA”. The knowledge of Brahman which is acquired through such knowledge which is imparted (that is learnt by hearing) is only indirect knowledge. Para VidyA is that knowledge gained by meditation which enables the experiencing the Lord as direct manifestation. The meditation which has, as its object, the form of the Lord, gradually matures into a stage of direct perception. The worship, which is instant, should gradually become more intense till the Lord Himself manifests before him. Such worship is called Para VidyA. That which is capable of being learnt from listening to Vedas and afterwards manifests personally at the stage of constant worship is Akshara Brahman. That Brahman is referred to as the material cause – upAdAna kAraNa for this entire physical Universe.

In His subtle state, the Akshara Brahman has the chit and achit merged in Him, in different forms as per His Will (desire). He is therefore referred to as the main cause for all the sentient and insentient entities. This Akshara Brahman permeates the entire universe and so the chit and achit become almost identical with Him. The essence of teaching of Angirasa therefore is that since the Universe has such an indissoluble connection with the Brahman, both before creation and after creation and since the universe has originated from Him and has been permeated by Him after creation, knowing about the Brahman, is knowing about the entire universe. This is what is conveyed when it is said- knowing One is knowing everything. This reply is given by Angirasa at Mantra 7 of Khanda 1, when he says “” *thenedam poorNam purusheNa sarvam”* and again at Mantras 9&10 of Khanda 3 when he says “*yenaisha bhoothaih thishThathe hyantharaathma”* and “*Purusha evedam viswam”*. In the seeds of trees, which are embryos of the tree itself, amazing qualities of the tree are available in subtle form and these are the causes for the different changes in the trees. When we see the seed, which is the primary cause, we realize also the nature of the qualities of the tree which is to grow, is it not? The meaning of the reply of Angirasa is that when we learn about the Brahman who has amazing powers and is the cause of the universe, it is the same as knowing this creation of His, into all of which He has permeated. In the ChAndOgya Upanishad also a similar reply has been given giving the example of lump of clay. When we look at a lump of clay, we know also about the pots, tiles, pans, and bricks etc., which are made out of mud/clay; is it not?

That is in the next posting.

***Mundakopanishat-3***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the introduction

***Continued from previous posting.***

This may be true. But how is the supernatural womb and how was the universe born out of it? Due to a combination of factors like the soil, the seed and the water, a seed may sprout and grow into a tree, but from the Brahman who has been described by the S’ruthis as immutable is it possible for the universe to be born or created? Equally, is it possible for it to merge in Him? Angirasa Commented on these matters also. The Akshara Brahman is not perceptible to the sense organs or to the motor organs. The Brahman is very subtle and unlike the human beings, is not limited by the body limbs or physical senses. He is eternally all-pervasive and very subtle. The elders say that the Brahman is the material cause for the entire universe. There is nothing more majestic, more pervasive or subtler than the Brahman. It is the sentient Form of the Supreme Lord. He has an amazing divinely auspicious Form and there is a place (SriVaikunTham) where He abides with great Majesty. He is omniscient; He does not have to put in any effort for the creation. Just by His will, He is capable of creating in a perfect manner this expansive universe. The manner in which this universe which has different forms was created and the manner in which it is dissolved (resumed) is explained in a very appropriate manner in the 8thmantra of the 1st Khanda. Let us study the examples given therein.

1. The spider brings out of its mouth some liquid matter (saliva) and weaves a web. After some time, the spider withdraws that web into itself. The spider needs no help of others for the weaving the web, nor does it require any external material. In the same manner, the Lord without any extraneous expectation or help, He by Himself, has become the Cause for everything.
2. Many creepers, bushes, plants, trees are born from the earth. Subsequently, they merge with the earth. For these trees, plants etc., which among themselves are different, the cause (the source) is the earth, which remains stable, suffering no change and is of the same form. In the same way, the immutable Brahman could be the cause for the Universe.
3. Even though the nails, the skin and hair are growing from the human body, it is not possible to say that for all of them, the body is the principal cause. All this happens only when the JIva is in the body. In absence of the JIva in the human body, the above are not created, is it not? It is seen thus that the sentient being is the cause for these insentient to come up and grow. In a similar way, it is possible that from the Akshara Brahman, the Universe, which is of different nature than Brahman, consisting of Chit and Achit, may be born.

These three examples explain the mystery of the universe. While explaining, the fact that the Brahman is the main cause (for the Universe) also is justified. These examples are majestic in the meaning, which is embedded in them. The readers may study in the main book a special discussion of these matters and a detailed philosophical analysis of the statement “*by knowing One, one can know everything.”*Expatiating on it from the angle of Vis’ishtAdvaita would be most enlightening.

Khanda- 2

The second and third Khandas begin with the sentence “*tadetat sathyam”.* In this Upanishad, Brahman is principally discoursed on. This Brahman has no birth, no growth and no decay. It has no change and is always in the same form. It is called *Satyam* (the one without any change). All those who wish to attain such a Brahman, need to perform the *Yajnas –* the sacrifices and other rituals, which are prescribed in the Mantras. Many of the *gRihasthhas* – the householders are having the three eternal fires in which the sacrificial offerings are being offered. They should perform with those sacrificial fires the rituals especially the *Yajnas*, not for the sake of temporary ephemeral and transient fruits to be obtained in this nether world but for the sake of attaining the Eternally Existent Brahman. This is the safe path (means) to attain the permanent abode of the Brahman. Please perform with sincerity, as is prescribed in the S'Astras, the Dars'a, PUrNamAsa Agrayana and Vais'vadevams etc., with *Agnideva,* in the form of sacrificial fires, glowing with the seven flames. Honour the guests. If through the Homa you do not satisfy the three fires in your house with oblations, these fires, dissatisfied with your inattention, would punish your family for seven generations, making it devoid of happiness. If you perform the Yajnas, seeking the joys of attaining upper regions like heaven, up to that of the four-faced god, the offerings given by you join the rays of Sun and take you to the realms; but you will find that even those worlds are non-permanent. Hence seeking those transient joys is ignorance. After the merits earned by them are spent and exhausted, rebirth is certain for them. They cannot escape it. If following such ignorant persons, others also do seek through their *Yajnas* temporary pleasures, (fruits of sacrifice) it would be like a person taking the help of a blind person and will not be able to see the thing he desires. Hence only when a person is not seeking any fruit (reward) and with such intent is performing these Yajnas purely out of the love for the Lord, the seeker will obtain knowledge of Brahman, due entirely by the grace of the Lord. As has been said in Gita “dadaami *buddhiyogam tam”* will be rid of his sins and obtain knowledge of the Brahman. The seeker would be able to travel beyond the *sUrya MaNdalam,* the region of the Sun, and reach the SriVaikunTham, the residence of the Supreme Lord. Hence, he, who has no desire to attain the impermanent pleasures of heaven etc., should seek a good AchArya to acquire the knowledge of Brahman, who is the means for obtaining the eternal liberation. The good AchArya, who is endowed with the knowledge of the Vedanta and devotion to the Brahman should test the fitness of the disciple and then impart the knowledge of the Akshara Brahman. The qualities of an AchArya and S'ishyA are discussed in length in the text.

*To be continued.*

Mundakopanishat – 4

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the introduction

Khanda-3

In this Khanda is described again, in a detailed manner, what was stated in Khanda-1, namely the process of creation by the Supreme Lord. Thousands of sparks, which have the effulgence of fire, are emerging from the burning fire. In the same manner, the various JIvas which are coalesced (absorbed) in the Brahman, before creation, are released from the Brahman at the commencement of creation. There are many things to be learnt from the comparison with the release of sparks of fire. Just as the sparks are joined with the fire and are part of the fire, the JIvas are part of Brahman. Just as the sparks of fire have effulgence just like the fire; the JIvas have knowledge, as is the case with Brahman. Like the sparks are merged in fire, before they are released, the JIvas, before creation are merged in (are part of) Brahman. The fire, the source of the sparks has intimate connection with the wooden logs or the heated Iron ball. Likewise, Brahman, the cause of the universe, has an intimate connection with the sentient – the Chit and insentient – the Achit. Both of them in the subtle form are merged in the Brahman. But there is one essential difference between the fire and Brahman. The sparks and the fire are not of permanent nature, whereas the JIvas and Brahman are eternal. Hence there is no destruction of the JIvas and they get merged in the Brahman. This is the majestic message conveyed in the 1st Mantra of this Khanda.

The Brahman, which is immensely glorious than the sentient and insentient, creates the five elements, mind, the vital breaths, the senses and the physical senses, and with their help, created several *BrahmANDas* and each of them has fourteen worlds within them. He then pervades all of them. The Lord’s cosmic has then been described. As has been described in the Vishnu sahasranAma SthOthra, *bhooh paadau yasya naabhih* etc., the Brahman has the *Dyuloka* as His head, has Sun and moon as His eyes. The directions are His ears. The Vedas are His speech. The wind is life. The entire universe is the Heart and the earth is His feet. Since Brahman has created the universe which has several forms, has permeated it and is inseparably joined with it, those who are knowledgeable (about the Reality), say that all this is Brahman. When we know about the Brahman, who has created and permeated this entire universe, it is same as knowing all about everything, the universe. This is the reply given by sage Angirasa to the question posed by S'aunaka, viz., what is the meaning of “by knowing One thing, one can know everything”. That knowing One thing is knowledge of Brahman. One who is able to worship such a Brahman located in the inner parts of the heart and is able to attain Him (is able to see Him or directly visualise Him), will be devoid of the threefold afflictions, anxieties and attain liberation from the routine of births and deaths.

Khanda-4

This part, primarily explains the method of meditating upon the Brahman. The Akshara Brahman, in a subtle form is the In dweller in the cavity of the hearts of all living beings. In their awakened state, as well as when they are asleep, this Brahman, who has entered the beings is very close to (is intimate) and is the support of all beings. There are some who are not able to recognize or realize Him, by the power of their Yoga. The manner in which such a Brahman, who is to be sought to realise all human ends, is to be attained is explained with the help of two interesting examples.

1. An archer holds the bow, sets a sharp arrow in position, aims at the target carefully, pulls the string to the ear, releases the arrow and hits the target. The target that was hit by the released arrow is broken up and comes under the control of the archer. One has to apply this analogy to the present scene. The PraNavam (Aum) is the bow for the seeker after liberation. His Atma which has been rendered pure by his Yoga is the sharpened arrow. This arrow has to be placed in the bow viz., the PraNavamantra (Aum), very carefully aimed at the target, i.e., the Brahman and released. The meaning is that one has to surrender the Atma to the Brahman, who is the target to be attained, reciting the PraNavam The Lord, pleased by the total surrender of the Atma, would then become subordinate to (comes under the control of) the devotee.
2. The sacred fire, which is required for a Yajna, the sacrifice, is ignited by rubbing “Khadira (**Botanical-Acacia catechu Wild (Fam., Leguminosae) Tamil-Karungali, Telugu-ChaNDra**” and Sami (**Tamil- parambai/jamboo, Telugu- Jammi**) wooden logs against each other. In Sanskrit these wooden logs are called araNi. When one churns one log into hollow made in the other rigorously, due to the friction, heat is generated and fire erupts. This fire is considered to be sacred and is used for the Yajna. In the same manner, one has to churn his Atma, one of the araNi against the PraNavam, the second araNi. Here churn means meditate. As the meditation continues progressing stage by stage into a serious DhyAna etc, the effulgent Brahman, who is in the Aum and the Atma will emerge and manifest. The meaning is that this meditation, which is practised in the form of churning, should be continued till the Brahman manifests.

The Conclusion which emerges from these two examples is that while chanting the PraNavam, the seeker should through his meditation surrender his Atma to the Supreme Lord. The manifestation of Brahman by such meditation is the paravidya referred to in the 1st Khanda. The meditation which is done in a loving manner, with devotion and adherence to principles is what is called Bhakthi Yoga.

The Supreme Lord, who has been so worshipped, is like the dam which enables us to cross the ocean of SamsAra and reach the other shore, namely the liberation. The Shore on the other side is SriVaikunTham which has been variously proclaimed in the Vedas as Paramapadam, Parama-vyoma and as Divya Brahmapura. That divine residence where the Supreme Lord in an exceptionally divine auspicious Form is shining (glowing) is full of effulgence. It is place of eternal bliss due to experiencing the Brahman. One need not have doubts as to how one is to meditate on the Lord, who is in a far-away place, in some divine abode. Though in His glorious, divinely auspicious Form, He is in that world only in a subtle form, as the In dweller, He is present (has pervaded Himself) in the cavity of the heart of every being. Just as the rim of a wheel is dependent on the nave, every being along with the body, senses and their functions is dependent on the In dweller. Hence, such an In dweller needs to be worshipped by the chanting of the PraNavam. By such a meditation, the impurities which we entertain in the form of anger, greed, jealousy etc., the various sins which are glued to us from times immemorial get totally destroyed and cleaned. The cavity of the heart is like a lotus bud. It will be hanging upside down, about nine inches (distance between the stretched out thumb and little finger) above the navel. A subtle place, inside the cavity, is the residing place of this In dweller.

***To be continued.***

***Mundaka-4***

**Khanda-5**

In the beginning itself, it was stated that a speciality of this Upanishad is that it explains profound principles with interesting examples. Readers would already have noticed this in the preceding Khandas. In the 5th Khanda also the differences in the form and attributes between the sentient, the insentient and the Omnipotent, omniscient Is’vara are explained in simple and easy style, with examples as may be seen from the following. There are two birds on a tree. These two birds which normally move together would normally have the same attributes. But of the above two, one bird eats the fruits from the tree and is in a sad state. The other bird does not partake of the fruits and is therefore in a shining form. Here the philosophy is explained in a wonderfully simple way. The tree stands for the body. The two birds refer to the JIva, who has entered a body as a result of his karma, while the other is Is’vara, who is the in-dweller and the witness. As a matter of the course, these two have a close contact and have qualities of eternal knowledge and bliss. But the JIva is experiencing the joys and sorrows caused as a result of “karma”. Is’vara is beyond “karma” and though as an in-dweller, He is inside the being, the sorrows do not attach themselves to Him. Je is of eternal effulgence. From this we know that the attributes of the insentient nature which is like the tree, the JIva, which suffers the effects of the karma and the Is’vara who enters the being to be the controller and the eternal witness, are different from him is within him, that He is Omnipotent and realizes His grandeur, worships Him, then the being will be released from cares (anxieties) and liberated. Liberation consists in the liberated soul – the Atma attaining utmost similarity (*parama sAmyam)* with the Lord. Truth, penance, knowledge of the Reality and continence are the causes for devotion to the Lord. The Brahman, who cannot be realized from words or by the physical senses like the eyes, can be realised only by a mind which is devoid of the RAjasik and ThAmasik qualities and becomes totally SAththvik quality. The mind will be able to develop such SAththvik qualities only by the Grace of Lord. For the Lord to be so gracious, a person has to perform his oblations, karma, jnAna and Bhakthi yOgas. Though the JIva is atomic in size, due to the grace of the Lord, can obtain liberation and attain grandeur of Omniscience.

***Khanda-6.*** (In this section, there is a brief mention of the archirAdi and dhoomAdi mArga in the original. However, some more details are added by DAsan to explain about these two mArgas)

One who acquires the knowledge about the indestructible Brahman, the refuge for the entire universe, will not suffer the sorrows of rebirth. A person, who develops love for the Lord, love without any limits, all his desires for the extraneous objects, will cease to exist. Such desires of the JIvas propel him to carry out good and evil deeds. These in turn become the cause for the Karmaphala. This ensures that the JIva takes rebirth to experience the Karmaphala and thus the cycle continues without a break until his Karmaphala becomes nil. This can happen only when these desires are no more generated. This can happen only when he gets fully engaged in an unlimited love for the Lord. Because of such unlimited love towards Him, his thoughts and actions are only about Him and for Him filled with devotion. With this sort of his thoughts and deeds being only about Him and for Him continuing without any break, He becomes pleased with him and becomes gracious. The JIva perceives Him in front of him continuously without any break as if it is Reality. This is the result of meditation with love. If such love and devotion are absent in the JIva, the seeker, how much seriously he learns Vedas and recites them, how many Yajnas he may perform, whatever so called meditation he may be practicing, him realising Him will not be possible. A JIva who can control his sensory organs, has acquired the knowledge of the reality by continuous listening from the scholars and Asthikas, and is devoted towards Him as explained above, will on his leaving this body i.e., after the death, will travel to become an ardent servant of Him on the ArchirAdi high road to Paramapadam. He will be endowed with his original attributes same as attributes of the Lord except the creation capability. As explained in Gita, there are two routes which a JIva travels after death viz., the ArchirAdi the path of extreme Brightness and DhoomAdi- the smoky road. Those who perform the deeds to enjoy the fruits of this world and other higher worlds like the heaven etc., take the smoky route the DhoomAdi mArga, to enjoy their fruits of the virtues in heaven etc. As soon as the virtue’s fruits are exhausted he is back in the circuit of births and deaths. The devoted seekers of the Lord, as mentioned earlier take the road of brightness, the ArchirAdi, which leads to the Paramapadam, and they have no rebirth thereafter. For such people, they leave this body when the Karmaphala, the resultant of their deeds is fully experienced in this life and the net Karmaphala becomes nil. If at all any Karmaphala is still left over as sanchita karma, deposited Karmaphala, which becomes ineffective by His grace. Similarly, the Karmaphala which is the result of the acts the JIva does during this life (after becoming total surrendered devotee of the Lord through the practice of the Brahma VidyA) by accident and not be design, also become ineffective due to His grace. Soon after JIva leaves this body, his subtle body moves on the ArchirAdi high way till the borders of this universe. The JIva is escorted by immortal personality called Athivaahikas and after he takes a bath in the River Varaha he attains a body like all the residents of Paramapadam. River waters has a separate identity till it enters the confluence with the sea and once the waters merge with the ocean, the separate identity is lost and it becomes a part of the sea and cannot be separately identified. Similarly the liberated JIva would be giving up all his earlier forms as Devas, humans etc and attains the parama sAmyam – the supreme likeness to the Supreme Godhead.

This knowledge pertaining to the Akshara Brahman is part of the AtharvaNa Veda. It is stipulated that the disciples who study this Veda should have a headgear of long cloth and should carry their sacrificial fire while learning this. However there is no such stipulation for those who follow the other Vedic Branches. Since this Akshara VidyA is one of the 32 Brahma Vidyas, the person who is serious in learning the Akshara Brahma VidyA can approach a suitable AchArya and learn it from him. May we offer our salutations to the Guru Parampara – the succession of AchAryas who taught this Brahma VidyA- the science of Akshara Brahman.

In our next posting we shall start with the Mantras and the detailed exposition of them by Sriman Raghunathacharya Swami.

Dasoham,

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

***Mundakopanishat-5***

S'aanthi Mantra

Before this Upanishad is studied or learnt the custom is invocation is done by the following Mantras before embarking on to the main Upanishad.

Mantra-1

***Bhadram karNebhih s’ruNuyAma devAh***

***Bhadram pas’yemAkshabhir yajathrAh|***

***Sthirairangai sthushtuvAgm sasthanUbhih***

***Vyasema devahitham yadAyuh||***

The substance of the Mantra – O Gods! May we always listen the auspicious Vedas. May we always perform the Yajnas and watch always auspicious things. May we always be possessed of strong bodies with firm and strong limbs. May we always recite the hymns praising you, and have longevity so as to render auspicious things to you.

Mantra-2

***Svasthi na indro vriddhas’ravAh***

***Svasthi nah pUshA vis’vavedAh|***

***Svasthi nasthArkshyO arishtanemih***

***Svasthi no brihaspathirdadhAthu||***

The substance of the mantra – May Indra, who is well renowned confer on us good fortune! May the all-knowing Sun confer on us good fortune. May Garuda, who nullifies calamities of all kinds, confer on us good fortune. May Brihaspati confer on us good fortune!

***Aum s’Anthih s’Anthih s’Anthih.***

May the threefold worries – aadhyathmika, aadhibhauthika and aadhidaivika abate and we live in peace.

SrimathE RAmAnujaya namah

**Mundakopanishad**

**(based on the RAmAnuja dars’anam)**

Muraripu padayuga nakhara- jyOthis’chandrAthapAnubhavathripthA|

HRishyathu chiththachakOree – visRijya samsArasamudithAyAsAn||

sathpramANa bahuyukthivis’eshaih – lakshmaNArya paridRishTas'araNyA|

AndhravAgbhiradhunA vis’adAbhih mundakopanishadam vivRiNeemah

**The origin of the Upanishad**

The Mundakopanishad is part of the AtharvaNa Veda. It consists of six parts called Khandas. The Upanishad consists of three divisions, each of which is divided into two parts or Khandas. The RAmAnuja’s tradition takes into account of six Khandas without resorting to the divisions and Khandas. But Sri S’ankara had considered the divisions and the Khandas. In Sri S’ankara’s commentary, there are 65 mantras. In the RAmAnuja’s tradition, in S’ruthaprakaas’ika and in the discussions thereon we find some additional mantras in the adris’yathva section and also some differences in the readings. Upanishadbhashyakarar Sri RangaRAmAnuja Muni in his BhAvaprakAsika had commented on 65 mantras but in his commentary in the first Khanda he had included one mantra – *yasmAthparam na aparamasthi...,* only as extra. It is not clear as to the reason for not making commentary on these extras in the UpanishadbhAshya, but making commentary in BhAvaprakAs'ika on the extra stanzas. Thus in the commentary of RangaRAmAnuja there are 66 mantras as against S’ankara’s commentary showing 65 mantras. This is to be discussed at the appropriate places as the commentary proceeds.

Since the Upanishad establishes in a concise form the five essential topics which a seeker has to know, the pUrvAchAryAs had observed that **this Upanishad establishes these five topics much more comprehensively than the other Upanishads**.

These five topics are named - the *Arthapanchaka – as* a group. They are illustrated in the following verse of HAreetha samhitha–

***prApyasya BrahmaNo rUpam, prApthuscha pratyagAthmanah***

***prApthyupAyam phalam prApthesthaththA prApthivirodhischa|***

***vadanthi sakalA vedAh sethihAsapurANakAh***

***munayascha mahAthmAnah vedavedAnthinah||***

Meaning –

***prApyasya***  of the sought after

***BrahmaNo rUpam,***  Brahman’s characteristics

***prApthuh*** of the seeker – (the JIva)

***pratyagAthmanah cha*** the JIva

***prApthyupAyam*** the means of attaining the sought after Brahman

***prAptheh phalam*** the benefit of the attaining the sought after fruit

***thathhA*** Like wise,

***prApthivirodhis'cha|*** the obstructions while following the means to achieve the

sought after

***sakalA vedAh*** all the Vedas,

***ithihAsapurANakAh***  the persons who are thorough with Ramayana,

Mahabharata, Vishnu PurANa etc

***vedavedAnthinah*** the persons who have studied Vedas and Upanishads etc

***mahAthmAnah*** the persons of impeccable personality as per Vedic

Traditions)

***Munayascha*** the persons who have Him as the single subject of their

thoughts.

***Vadanthi*** say that the above five are the topics a person must know.

The substance is that the five topics which one must know are 1 – the real nature of the Brahman, who is the cause for the entire universe and who is sought to be attained by the JIva; 2- the nature of JIva, who is seeking to attain the Brahman; 3 – the nature of means to attain the Brahman; 4, the fruit, the eternal Bliss, which the JIva attains in the presence of Brahman; and 5- finally the obstacles one faces in his process of following the means stated above, to attain the sought after.

These above five topics are elaborated in this Mundakopanishad, in various mantras.

***In this Upanishad, the Supreme God-head is called as Akshara, and the nature of worship needed to attain Him is explained.*** To indicate that this Akshara VidyA is a very precious one and that this is the Brahmavidya followed by the seekers, having a good behaviour, the essence is being told in a story to make it interesting to learn and practice.

In our next posting we shall start with the Mantras of the Upanishad and the beautiful commentary of Sriman MahAmahOpAdhyaya Dr. Raghunathacharya

**Mundakopanishad-6**

***Khanda -1,***

Dear AsthikAs, we begin the Mundakopanishad with the 1st mantra in this posting.

**Preamble for the 1st Mantra**

In this Upanishad, the Supreme God-head is identified with the word “Akshara”. The form of meditation to attain that Supreme God-Head is specified. This method of meditation is called “akshara VidyA”. To impress that this science of meditation is the best to achieve the Supreme Godhead for the seekers; and to make it known that this science is obtained from a good lineage, a story is being narrated in the beginning of the Upanishad.

**Mantra -1**

***brahmA devAnAm prathhamah sambabhUva***

***vis’vasya karthA bhuvanasya gOpthA***

***sa brahmavidyAm sarvavidyAprathishThAm***

***adharvAya jyeshThaputhrAya prAha***

**Word meanings**

***vis’vasya bhuvanasya =*** for the entire universe

***karthA gOpthA (cha) =***the creator and the saviour

***brahmA =***the four faced

***devAnAm prathhamah =***the first among Gods

***sambabhUva =*** arose (from the lotus navel of nArAyaNa)

***sah =***that Brahma

***prAha =*** taught

***brahmavidyAm =***the Akshara VidyA,

***sarvavidyAprathishThAm =*** that which is the main source of all Vidyas

***jyeshThaputhrAya =*** to his first son

***adharvAya =*** sage Atharva

The explanation of the Mantra -1

As the s’ruthi authoritatively tells us “*yo brahmANam vidadhAthi pUrvam, yo vai vedAmscha prahiNOthi thasmai” –* in every BrahmANDa the four faced-Brahma is created first by the Supreme God-head. This Brahma in turn is the creator of gods, humans and other objects in this Great shell BrahmANDa. Being the conferrer of the boons sought by them, he is their saviour. By the grace of the Lord, he obtained all the Vedas. The PramANa vAkyas confirming this like “*yannAbhijAthAth aravindakos’Ath; brahmA AvirAseeth; yathah esha lOkah”* etc., are the references in this instance.

Such Brahma, the creator of that world and a scholar of the Vedas, taught his first son sage Atharva, the Akshara VidyA. This akshara VidyA is the base of all other Brahma Vidyas.

It is clarified by S’ankara that this Atharva is the first son of Brahma (the four-faced) in one of the kalpas (one of the cycles of creation).

How does this Brahma VidyA become the main source for all the Vidyas? Since Brahman the supreme God-head, is the cause for everything, if we learn about Him (the source for all the things) it means that we learn everything about all His creations in the worlds of the Universe; since there is nothing other than His creations. This is what was told by the S’ruthis.  *yathA Somya ekena mrithpiNdena sarvam mriNmayam vijnAtham bhavathi –* Oh! Somya, by knowing about a lump of mud, one can know about the various articles made from the mud like a pot, pan etc., rather about everything made out of mud. With the same analogy, by knowing about the Lord of the universe, who is the cause of the whole creation; there is none other than His creation; and which creation ultimately merges with Him; one can know about everything in the universe. In this akshara Brahma VidyA, which is about Him only, all knowledge ought to be acquired is a part of this. According to S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya, it is quite appropriate to state that this science- Akshara Brahma VidyA is the main source of all the sciences of meditations because of the above reason.

**Mantra -2**

**adharvaNe yAm pravadEtha brahmA**

**adharvA thAm purovAchAngirE brahmavidyAm**

**sa bhAradvAjAya sathyavAhAya prAha**

**bhAradvAjongirasE parAvarAm**

***Word meaning-***

**purA :** In the ancient times

**brahmA :** the four-faced

**adharvaNe :** to sage adharva

**yAm pravadEtha :** the Brahma VidyA, which was taught;

**parAvarAm :** that was propagated by the succession of AchAryas

or that was stated in the Para and apara Vidyas

**thAm brahmavidyAm :** such BrahmaVidyA

**angirE uvAcha :**was taught to his disciple sage Angir.

**Sah :** that sage Angir,

**prAha :** taught to

**sathyavAhAya :** sage SathyavAha,

**bhAradvAjAya :** belonging to the lineage of sage BharadvAja.

**bhAradvAjah :** That sage SathyavAha of family of sage BharadvAja,

**angirasE prAha :** taught the same BrahmaVidyA to Angiras, the son of sage

Angir.

***Substance of the Mantra***–In the ancient times, the four-faced Brahma taught this akshara BrahmaVidyA to sage adharva, Alternately, it could be said that the chathurmukha Brahma taught the Para Vidyas and apara Vidyas – the Brahma Vidyas and the six subsidiaries of Vedas, viz., the grammar, etymology, astronomy and astrology etc., to sage adharva. In turn he taught the akshara Brahmavidya to his disciple sage anger. This Angir subsequently taught sage SathyavAha, belonging to the lineage of sage BharadvAja. He in succession taught this Brahmavidya to his disciple Angiras*.*

***Explanation:***

The word “parAvara” according to the etymology – the science of evolution a word – “parasmAth avarENa prAptheyam vidyA parAvara” which means – that science which was propagated by succession, which means that one person taught to another person and this another person taught to the next person. Alternatively, that which is established through the other Brahma Vidyas which are termed “Para Vidyas” and the apara Vidyas – the six subsidiary sciences to the Vedas – S'iksha, vyAkaraNa, Chhandas etc., and then conveyed both directly and indirectly through succession.

To continue

Dasoham

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

**Mundakopanishat-7**

Dear AsthikAs, we continue with the 3rd mantra in this posting.

**Mantra – 3**

**s’aunako havai mahAs’Alongirasam**

**vidhiva dupasannah paprachcha**

**kasminnu bhagavO! vijnAthE**

**sarvamidam vijnAtham bhavatheethi||**

***Word meaning***

**mahAs’Alah s’aunakah :** sage S’aunaka, who was a great householder

**angirasam vidhivath upasannah**

**:** being a qualified disciple according to the scriptures,

approached sage Angirasas a disciple,

**paprachchahavai :** said to have asked as follows-

**bhagavah! :** O, respected sir!

**idam sarvam :** this entire universe, a combination of sentient and

insentient,

**kasminnu vijnAthE :** by knowing which object

**vijnAtham bhavathi :** will become known?

**Ithi :**( so asked)

Explanation-

From the first two mantras, it is clear that this Akshara Brahmavidya is not a creation of a single person, but it has been obtained through successive AchAryas. This proves its excellence. The Upanishads which speak about the different Brahmavidyas commence with a story. One may entertain a doubt as to the purpose the story serves. The Vedas say “*pAriplavam Achaksheetha”; “AkhyAnAni s’amsanthi” – when* the AsvamEdha sacrifice is being performed, the king, the beneficiary of the sacrifice, his family members and his retinue should be offered proper seating and every day a story is to be narrated to them. Narration of such stories are specified as a part of the performing the sacrifice. This exercise is called *pAriplava*. Such narration of the stories serves no other purpose than engaging the king and his retinue. It has no significance in the conducting the AsvamEdha sacrifice. In the same manner, these story narrations have no significant value addition to the Brahma Vidyas but for narrative purposes only. This is the manner in which the purvapakshin, the person holding a prima facie view, and in general, one who raises objections; concludes his understanding of the *pAriplavam.* It is to be noted significantly at this juncture, that this sort of interpretation providing non-significance to the *pAriplavam* is countered and clarified by the siddhAntin in the *pAriplavAdhikaraNa* of the Vedanta sutras that the sole purpose of such exercises of story narration is to emphasize and establish the importance and excellence of the Brahma Vidyas.

Coming to the present meaning of the 3rd mantra, it is stated in the mantra that S’aunaka, desirous of knowing – the thaththvas, the constituent elements of the universe, approaches sage Angiras with diligence, duly prepared with the samidhas- the wooden twigs from the specified trees, to be offered in the sacrificial ritual fires. Prior to approaching the AchArya, he acquired the required qualities a disciple should possess for getting accepted by the learned AchArya. The essence of his question to the AchArya is as follows – O learned sage! Kindly tell me about such an object, by knowing about it, one can know about the entire universe – a combination of the sentient and insentient. S’aunaka had often heard from elders that there exists an object, by knowing that object thoroughly, the whole universe becomes known. Is it not impossible for such an object to exist? Is it possible to know about a tree by knowing about the mound on which it grows? Can one know about the cotton plant to know everything about a cloth? As an explanatory answer to these questions, he had heard the *illustration of mrithpiNda, the lump of clay* from the same elders. A lump of clay is transformed into several pots, pans, bricks etc. If a person, who had seen the lump of clay in the morning before the transformation took place, sees these pots, pans etc after the transformation, he understands that these pots, pans etc are made from the same lump of clay which was seen by him earlier. Similarly if a person sees a big steel ball which is brought for transformation into objects before the transformation, and subsequently he sees the various items such as knives, spears etc. at the same place, he can easily conclude himself that these items are transformed from the steel ball seen by him earlier. Applying same analogy, if one knows that object, which is the raw material for the universe to be created, before embarking on knowing about the universe, and that is enough to know the entire universe. S’aunaka, who concluded that such an object which is the cause for the entire knowledge about the created universe exists, desired to know in detail about that object. This is the underlying meaning of the above question raised in this 3rd Mantra.

From this meaning is of the s’ruthi vAkya “eka *vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam”,* it is clearly established that *upAdAna kAraNa –the* raw material or basic cause for the creation of entire visual universe. An object which undergoes transformation into a different stage is called *upAdAna kAraNa*. The transformed objects kAryas are called as *upAdeya*s. From the cited example of the lump of clay and the pots, pans etc., it is clear that the Brahman and the universe have a relationship which is called *upAdanOpAdEyabhAva* – the relationship between the cause and effect. Likewise, since all the objects which are seen belong to the category kArya – the effect, there is no other object, which is *nimiththa kAraNa* for this transformation and hence it should be noted that the lone Brahman, who is the material cause – the *upAdAna kAraNa,* is the instrumental cause – the *nimiththa kAraNa* also. From this the statement by the thArkikas –a class of persons who base their arguments and postulations based on logic – “the Brahman is only an instrumental cause and the atomic particles only are the material cause; and the same object can never be the material cause and also the instrumental cause” is contrary to the *Veda vAkya.* The specific word *eka*  in the s'ruthi vAkya – “eka vijnAnena ...” as well as the word *advitheeya* in the s’ruthi vAkya –“ *sadeva somyedamagra Aseeth – ekamevAdvitheeyam*” of ChAndOgya Upanishad make it clear that there is no other object which is the instrumental cause; and the Brahman alone is capable of being the both the causes for the creation of the entire universe.

What is a material cause? Is it not the one which undergoes transformation into another state? (Note the transformation of a lump of clay into pots, pans etc.). How can Brahman who is the repository of knowledge and consciousness transform into the inactive universe, a combination of the sentient and insentient, devoid of knowledge and consciousness? – This is the objection raised for Brahman to become the material cause for the universe. But as can be seen from the previous paragraph, this objection is not at all tenable. The S’ruthi vAkya “eka vijNAna...” indicates that the Brahman is Omnipotent and is having all the requisite wonderful powers and eminence to be capable of being the material cause as well as the instrumental cause. From the example of the lump of clay and the pots, pans etc., it is clear that one should not have the delusion that all visible objects are alike as in the case of seeing one cow and having an impression that all cows will be alike. One should not derive that illusory meaning from “*eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam”.* This has to be explained with the relation of the upAdAna and upAdeya only.

In our next posting we shall see how this s’ruthi is confirming the VisishTAdvaithA system only.

Dasoham

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-8**

Dear AsthikAs, we continue with the detailed analysis of Sriman Raghunathacharya in this posting.

**The *eka vijNAna* s’ruthi is most appropriate only for the Vis'ishTAdvaithA- the qualified monism.**

***Objection:***

The object which experiences transformation/ metamorphosis is what is called the material cause. Is it not? When it has undergone the change, we call it the effect – the kArya- upAdeya or the product. Thus, the material cause and the product are one and the same. How can Isvara, whose characteristics are widely at variance from the universe, which is a mixture of the sentient, the infinitely small in size and of insignificant power and insentient, devoid of any consciousness, be the material cause for it? In your Vis'ishTAdvaithA, you talk of a wide variation between the trio of sentient, insentient and the Godhead. Thus*, there is no possibility of the Godhead- the Isvara, to be the material cause for the universe,* which is a mixture of sentient and insentient and totally different from it. Hence, the s’ruthi saying that with the knowledge of the Brahman, the entire universe will be known is not at all in accordance with your Vis’ishTAdvaithA.

Answer:

This objection is from those, not aware of the concurrence of the Upanishads. The sentient and the insentient are always inseparable from God-head, in all the three states of creation, sustenance and dissolution. Hence, the Brahman the God-head is always qualified by the sentient and insentient. Bhagavan himself has said in GitA (VII.4-6) – “I am present in a subtle form in the insentient matter like earth etc., and also in the sentient. I create this visible universe through them.”

The verses quoted are given below:

***bhUmirAponalo vAyuh kham mano buddihrevacha|***

***ahamkAra itheeyam me bhinna prakRithi rashTathhA|| VII-4***





***apareyam ithasthvanyAm prakRithi viddhi me param|***

***jeevabhUthAm mahAbAho! Yayedam dhAryathe jagath|| VII-5***





***ethadyoneeni bhUthAni sarvAneethyupadhAraya|***

***aham sarvasya jagathah prabhavah praLayasthathhA|| VII-6***





In these two shlokas, the universe in the form of the sentient and insentient called as *apara and Para* has been described. In the third shloka, by the word *etadyoninee-* it has been told that those two- chit and achit – the sentient and insentient are the material cause for the entire visual universe. He, being qualified by these two, is, by His will, carrying the creation and dissolution of this universe. This is the substance of these shlokas. This has been clearly explained both in S’ankara bhashya and RAmAnuja bhashya. S’ankara writes as follows- thathhA prakrithidvayadvAreNa aham sarvajnah isvarah jagathah kAraNamithyarthhah-

“

RAmAnuja wrote-

thathhA prakrithidvayayonithvena krithsnasya jagathah thayordvayorapi madyonithvena, ahameva prabhavah, ahameva s’esheethyupadhAraya - in his BhAshyam

Further, Manu describing the creation of the universe says “Bhagavan has created this universe from the primordial cosmic matter – the moola prakRithi.” Further it was told that this primordial cosmic matter is lying dormant in subtle form, merged in Him and is called as thamas. The shlokas – sobhidyAya s’areerAth svAth sisRikshurvividhAh prajAh

etc. are recommended for reference in this instance.

In addition, the s’ruthi while telling about the merger of all the objects in the state of dissolution, says that the primordial cosmic matter – thamas gets integrated inseparably in Him at the time of dissolution. The SubAla Upanishad says- prithhivyapsu praleeyathe- Apasthejasi leeyanthe – aksharam thamasi leeyathe – thamah pare deve ekee bhavathi -

. similarly the VishNu PurANa has mentioned in the shloka– “prakRithiryA mayAkhyAthA vyakthAvyaktha svarUpiNee| purushaschApyubhAvethau leeyethe paramAthmani”





that primordial cosmic matter, which is both manifest and unmanifest, and the JIva, named as purusha, merge (integrate) into Him.

Even after bringing out in the gross form, the sentient and the insentient, which were lying inside Him in subtle form after dissolution, Brahman pervades every object everywhere in the universe as mentioned in the s’ruthi- VAkyas – thathsRishTvA thadevAnuprAvis’ath, antharbahis’cha thathsarvam vyApya -  etc. Thus the way He willed the creation of the universe is noteworthy, Brahman willed- “thadaikshatha bahusyAm prajAyeya” -“may I, from the single form, become manifold. I shall evolute as the universe” (ChAndOgya. 6-2-3). This will – His Sankalpa, indicates the transformation of the Brahman having the sentient and insentient as his attributes, into the gross form of the sentient and insentient of the universe. the s’ruthi vAkya “thadAthmAnagm svayamakurutha”also says that Brahman has got himself transformed into and created the universe. If we go through all the above, it is clear that before the evolution of the universe, Brahman with the sentient and insentient in subtle form, merged with Him is the material cause- the upAdAna kAraNa. Further, that the same Brahman had got transformed as universe- the upAdeya kArya, consisting of the Brahman with sentient and insentient in gross form. Thus there is only a qualified union for Brahman and the sentient and insentient. The sentient and insentient do not exist separately. Hence, by knowing the Brahman qualified by the merged sentient and insentient, obtaining the knowledge of the gross universe qualifying the Brahman is quite possible. This is in essence the meaning of the s’ruthi vAkya “eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam.

The illustrative example of the lump of clay and pot also corroborates the above. Before the pot is generated, the lump of clay is having some qualities of the shape, touch, clumpishness etc. Afterwards it became a pot. Since the clumpishness - pindathvam ( as well as the nature of being pot- ghaTathvam (, are inseparable with clay, it is not possible to separate those attributes and the object. Similarly, the sentient and the insentient have had always an inseparable union with the Brahman and hence, these became inseparable attributes that cannot be shown separately. Thus both the illustration and the subject of knowledge of Brahman, enables one to get the knowledge of everything in the universe. But there is one significant difference between the illustration and the matter for which the illustration was shown. The Brahman which has a special characteristic alone has become the material cause and the product. However, the touch, shape, clumpishness etc. are only characteristics whereas the sentient and insentient in case of Brahman are inseparable entities. When it is said “I am a celestial, I am human” etc., the Atma identified by the word “I” is qualified by the celestial or human bodies. Since Upanishads, SmRithis, ithihAsAs, PurANas etc. are acclaiming loudly that similar is the case of Brahman – who, also is qualified by the inseparable bodies (apRithaksiddha chidachithpadArdharoopas’areera vis’ishTah-

in the forms of sentient and insentient, it is not possible to cast aside this qualified oneness of Brahman. Another noteworthy point. The clay in the illustration is insentient and requires the potter for its transformation into pots and pans. However, Brahman, here is endowed with knowledge and being the lone entity, is transforming Himself by His will alone and is not anticipating an instrumental cause () is the meaning conveyed by the s’ruthi.

Thus, both the kAraNa – the cause and kArya – the effect, are the qualified Brahman only. But, the ordinary persons, unaware of this qualified oneness with the Brahman, are under an illusion that this universe consisting of sentient and insentient is distinctly different from Brahman. The objection cited above has arisen out of such an illusory thinking. So, sage Angirasa replied to S'aunaka by proving the qualified oneness or monism of the universe with Brahman, by the line 

We shall continue with another objection raised on the subject of qualified monism and the answering justification in our next posting.

Dasoham

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-9**

Dear AsthikAs, we continue with another objection and its answer in the statement that the s’ruthi vAkya *Eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam* suits only the VisishTAdvaithA.

Another objection:-

The answer given for the 1st objection is not satisfactory simply by speaking about the qualified oneness. That is because, according to VisishTAdvaithA, the sentient and insentient are the two attributes to the qualified Brahman. The form and characteristics of all the three are different from each other and there is no meeting point amongst them at all. The transformation is only for the merged sentient and insentient, which, before the evolution, are in subtle form, devoid of form and name. After all these are the attributes only to Him. They are transformed into gross form of celestial, human bodies etc. or into the earth, water etc. The transformation is not for the Brahman, the main body. Which matter can be called as material cause? A matter that becomes direct repository for the transformation only can be called as material cause. Such material only can become the upAdAna. So the subtle sentient and insentient, which are direct repositories for the transformed gross forms can become the material cause for them. But not the Brahman, who is indirectly the repository of the gross forms of sentient and insentient, by way of the parking place for them in the subtle form. At the most, Brahman can be only the nimiththa kAraNa – the instrumental cause, since His intention for this transformation into the gross forms. Thus by closely examining and concluding, it is clear that He is not the material cause. So from the knowledge of Him, it is not possible for knowing the entire universe. Hence, this *eka* vijnAna s’ruthi does not get along with the VisishTAdvaithA postulations.

Answer:-

It is true that the relationship of being the material cause and effect is not there between entirely different entities. However, for the gross changes found in attributes comprising the special unity or the qualified oneness (*vis’ishTaikyam*) caused by inseparable existence, a qualified substance can be the material cause. We can realise this from the illustration cited in the 8th mantra of this Upanishad itself- “.....*yathhorNanAbhih sRijathe grihNathe cha – yathA sa thah purushAth kes’a lomAni*”. The spider forms the material cause for the threads coming out of it and man becomes the material cause for the hair etc. growing in his body. The web woven by the spider as also the hair and nails grown by a human being are in common parlance stated as having grown from the body of the spider or the body of the human being, though it is from the insentient matter they have grown. The spider and the man, because of the inseparable union are regarded as the material cause. In the same manner, Brahman who is in inseparable union with sentient and insentient is the cause for the transformation which has resulted in the evolution or creation of the universe. This is told by the s'ruthi vAkya itself. In that mantra -8, which reads *“yathA pRithhivyAh oshadhayassambhavanthi…”*  the earth, being the substratum for the growth of herbs etc., is shown as an illustration for this argument. So, an entity which forms the direct substratum for change/transformation, or that qualified entity which cannot exist independently in instances where changes take place in attributes, can be called as material cause according to the scripture itself.

***The characteristics of upAdAna kAraNa – the material cause.***

An upAdAna kAraNa is defined as follows – “*bhAvisthhUlAvasthhAvathah pUrvabhAvi sUkshmAvasthhAyogi yath kAraNam thadupAdAnam”*  - meaning that an entity is called upAdAna kAraNa if it exists in a subtle form before getting transformed into a gross form. This is the characteristic requirement for an entity to be material cause. While getting transformed into the gross form of a pot, the previous state of the clay is in the form of lump- subtle form. In this case, we are calling the lump of clay – the subtle form before the transformation into the gross form of a pot- the kArya – as the upAdAna kAraNa or the material cause. How does this characteristic apply to Brahman? According to the s’ruthi VAkyas, which are accepted as pramANas – the authentic statements, “*aithadAthmyamidam sarvam”, “thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam”* etc., the Brahman, which permeates the entire sentient and insentient and as inner core controlling them, has these insentient and sentient as its body. Hence it is inseparable from them and is the qualified Entity. So all the changes/ transformations or metamorphosis the insentient and sentient go through are considered to be for the Brahman- the qualified entity. Though the childhood and adolescence etc. are for the body, it is always considered to be of the inner self- the Atma. Similar is the case with the various changes the sentient and the insentient undergo are considered to be of Brahman only. Even the Vedic usage *“ashTavarsham brAhmaNam upanayeetha”* shows the qualifying status of being eight year old body to the inner soul – the Atma only. In the same manner it should be understood that Brahman is repository for the gross forms of the sentient and insentient through their bodies; and hence the qualified Brahman – the repository of the gross forms of sentient and insentient subsequent to the transformation, is the kArya – the effect of change. The characteristic of material cause applies perfectly to the same Brahman, qualified by the sentient and insentient in the subtle state, before their transformation into gross.

In our next posting we shall see how our veteran commentator Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya ably justifies this characteristic of Brahman being the material cause. He had justified it very elaborately by anticipating all possible objections to Brahman being the material cause and giving sufficiently strong repudiations of the objections and establishing firmly that the qualified Brahman is the material cause and none other than Him.

Dasoham

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-10**

Dear AsthikAs, we continue with the justification by Sri Sudarsana Bhattar – Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya for the Brahman to be the material cause. In the *prakRithyadhikaraNa* of Sribhashyam Sri S’ruthaprakAsíkAchArya had amply justified that Brahman is the material cause for the entire universe and had given a number of illustrations. The summary of that justification is given below.

Brahman has become the locus or the AS'rayam for all the states of gross transformation occurred in the sentient and insentient – the attributes of Brahman. He has become the place for these transformations through his attributes – the sentient and insentient. If that is the case, a doubt may arise regarding the crookedness of the walking stick, a person is having with him. The doubt is whether the crookedness should belong to him. But in the illustration there is a difference. The sentient and the insentient are inseparable from the Brahman and are becoming useful for the evolution of the universe and these are part of the characteristic attributes of Brahman. Hence any metamorphosis of transformations is applicable to the qualified Brahman through these attribute sentient and insentient entities. But the walking stick is not so. It is not a part of the characteristic of the man. Further it has an independent existence apart from the man, whereas the sentient and insentient cannot exist independent of the Brahman as they are part of Him as inseparable attributes to Him. Hence the crookedness etc of the walking stick is not part of the nature and characteristics of the man holding the stick.

An inseparable attribute existing as long as the object to which it is an attribute, exists, and useful for the metamorphosis alone can be called as nature of the object. In other words, a unique form, useful in the process of metamorphosis/ transformation, and is inseparable attribute of the object should be called as nature or characteristic of that object. What is the characteristic of a pot? Is it clay alone? A form of clay that is useful for holding something like water etc. only can be called as the characteristic of a pot. The heat which causes blisters on a human body by touch alone is the characteristic of the fire. The sharpness and wedge shape useful for splitting or cutting the wood are the characteristics of an axe. In the same way, the characteristic nature of Brahman is that which having the subtle sentient, insentient and the time as its inseparable attributes, useful in the process of transformation and evolution of the universe. Hence, there is no objection for the Brahman to be the locus for the gross forms of the sentient and insentient. These gross forms are the result of the changes/ transformation/metamorphosis in the sentient and the insentient – the characteristic attributes of Brahman. Thus since the Brahman is always a qualified entity only, the illustrations given by the S’ruthis and SmRithis to say that He is the material cause, are quite apt. The authentications for the above argument are the following –

*“thadyathhA rathhasyAreshu nemirarpithA, nAbhAvarA arpithAh evamevaithA bhUthamathrAh prajnAmAthrA svarpithAh, prajnAmAthrAh prANe arpithAh*”. The meaning of this verse is given below- The rim of a wheel depends on the spokes of the wheel and the spokes are connected to and depend on the hub for the wheel’s activities. Thus the wheel means the hub qualified by the spokes and the rim. But, remember that the hub alone is not the wheel. So, the spokes and the rim are a part of the wheel. When the rim or the spokes are broken it is said that the wheel has broken down. Similarly, the transformation which had taken place in the chit – the sentient and the achit – the insentient, is considered to be in the qualified Brahman only and hence, the Brahman qualified by the gross forms of the chit and achit – the sentient and insentient is known to be the kArya – the effect.

Now Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya gives another illustration to prove that Brahman is the material cause for the entire universe. This is from Vishnu PurANa, praising Bhagavan having the universe as his form.

***“yathA hi kadaLee nAnyA thvakpathrAnnAthha! dris’yathe|***

***evam vis’vasya nAnyasthvam thvamchApees’vara! dRis’yase||”***

The meaning of this verse is “O Lord! The banana in the form of stem is not different than the leaves and the sheaths. The stem associated with the sheath and the leaves, all of them together only is Banana tree. Similarly You are not different from the universe, which is made up of the sentient and insentient. Your characteristic nature is the form qualified by the sentient and insentient. However, the stem of a banana tree is a still has a separate entity, which is the shelter for the sheath and leaves. Likewise, You, being the seat of the unlimited knowledge and eternal bliss, are also a special extra-ordinary entity, different than the sentient and insentient, though they are inseparable parts of you, taking shelter in you. Such an extra-ordinary form of you is visible to the yogis.”

Now, in the two illustrations of the wheel and the banana tree, it can be observed that the qualified or discriminated entity – the hub, as well as the stem of banana tree; and the qualifying entities – the rim& spokes and the sheath& leaves respectively, are all insentient. Hence there is no controlling capability for the qualified entities on the qualifying entities. But in case of Brahman, it is not so. Brahman has the control over the qualifying sentient and insentient, which are taking shelter in Brahman. They are controlled by Him. Because of this inseparable relationship of the controller – controlled or ruler-ruled condition only, the body-soul relationship condition has been determined. We observe that the states of childhood, youth etc. which are for the body, are being connected to the soul in the s’ruthi VAkyas like *ashTavarsham brAhmaNa mupanayeetha* etc. With the same analogy, though the transformations like becoming stout or lean etc. are for the sentient and insentient matter only, their getting connected to the Brahman, the inner soul of these, becomes important. Thus for the kAryAvasthas – the states of stoutness or leanness etc., the qualified Brahman is becoming the place of parking through the sentient and insentient which are inherent qualifiers of Brahman. Hence, the definition ***bhAvi sthhUlAvasthhAvathah pUrvakAlika sUkshmAvasthhA-yogithvam upAdAnathvam*** applies in this circumstance.

We shall see in our next posting as how this argument attracted a small objection which has been effectively answered by S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya

Dasoham,

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

**Mundakopanishad-11**

Dear AsthikAs, we continue with the justification by Sri Sudarsana Bhattar – Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya for the Brahman to be the material cause and the further objection raised on this statement and the justification-

The objection-

Whichever entity becomes directly the repository for the future gross forms of the subtle materials without any intermediary can be called as UpAdAna – the material cause in *mukhya vyavahara* – the primary usage. Brahman becomes the repository ***through the sentient and insentient*** for all the direct changes or transformations in them and not directly. Such being the case, how can you call Brahman as material cause in the primary usage? It can become at the most in *gauNa vyavahara –* a secondary usage only.

The reply-

This is a small matter. The question itself is very insignificant. There is no compulsion that a material cause has to be the repository only for the direct transformations from subtle stage into the gross stages. The causatives like the *karthA* – the doer, *karma* – the done and *KriyA* – the doing are becoming the generators of the *kArya* – the gross stages, only along with the necessary other objects. Without the associated other catalytic agents, it is not possible for the doer and done items to get transformed into gross entities. Hence the scriptures are stating clearly and emphatically, that even with the association of other catalytic agencies, such transactions are termed as *mukhya vyavahara –* the primary only. There are plenty of illustrations supporting this statement. A few of them are given below

1. “The potter is making a pot”. In this illustration, the pot is the kArya – the transformed object. The potter becomes the doer along with the various other objects like his hands, the potter’s wheel, and the wooden staff to spin the wheel etc. If there is no association with these objects, it is not possible for the pot to be produced at all. The grammar says the ***subject*** in this illustration to be ***the potter only.***
2. “The servant is carrying the water.” In fact what the servant carries is the pot. The water is being carried through the pot only. Thus even though the pot is associated the water getting carried by, the ***water alone*** is becoming the primary ***object.***
3. “He is cooking the food using the dried fire wood”. Here, the firewood is the instrument for change only. But firewood is becoming the instrument for the transformation only through its flames. So if there is no association with the flames the firewood cannot become instrument of change.
4. “The creation is happening because of the sun.” Here in this illustration, the sun through his rays and through the clouds is becoming the cause for the creation. The sun is not directly becoming the cause, not directly but indirectly only. The sun is becoming the material cause of the fifth dative case.
5. “The animal is brought for the sacrifice.” Here the animal is not directly used for the sacrifice. Here the *vapa* – a special fatty part of the goat, is used as the sacrificial offering in the Homa.
6. “This entire earth is ruled by the Ikshwaaku clan.” Here the rulers belonging to the Ikshwaaku clan are not directly ruling the earth but through their obedient regal and viceroys only. Thus their ruler ship is through their viceroys and regal only. In spite of such being the connection, it has been accepted grammatically on the basis of the relative dative of the sixth case.
7. “He is lying on the taped cot.” In this usage, the cot is not becoming direct object for the action of lying down. There in between is the bed sheet and bed as well. Even then it is considered as the primary support by the seventh dative case.

Thus for all the actions to take place, the causes are acting through intermediaries only. Similarly the Brahman also is becoming the material cause for transformation through the sentient and insentient which are inseparable parts of Him. Stating so, is considered to be confirming to primary causative only and not of a secondary in nature. When a man is carrying the water with the pot, it cannot be denied that the man is the base for the water being carried. Though there is an intermediary in the form of a pot, it is the person, who carries the weight of water; he spends his energy in carrying. When carrying the pot only there is no spending the energy of carrying the water. So the man is the support for the water being carried. Likewise, the Brahman is the repository for all the gross sates of the sentient and insentient through His inseparable parts, the sentient and insentient. Hence statement that Brahman is the primary material cause for the transformation into the gross states is acceptable and the objection raised is not sustained.

In this case, there is a very significant point, worth noting. It is grossly wrong to consider an entity to be the main material cause only because it becomes the direct base. When an intermediary, does not have the capacity to sustain the change, the object which becomes the base for sustaining the change through the intermediary becomes the main repository as per established conventions. In such a case, we consider that the incapable direct repository to be unimportant or as secondary only. Though the bed sheet spread on the bed becomes the direct recipient of a person lying on the bed, it cannot hold him directly. A bed sheet spread on a big hole in the earth, cannot hold the person if he steps on to it directly above the hole. So for the person lying down on the bed sheet the main support or refuge is the cot below the bed and bed sheet. In such a case, it is a fact that the cot becomes the prime refuge or repository for the person and not the bed sheet or bedroll. When it is said – “he is walking on grass”, it is the established practice to call the hard earth on which the grass had grown, as the prime support or refuge for the walker and not the grass with which the walker has direct relationship. In the same way, ***the subtle sentient and insentient do not have the capabilities to hold the wider gross forms of the sentient and insentient***. *So it is the Omnipotent Brahman only who can hold the gross forms of the sentient and insentient.* Is this not the most appropriate conclusive statement?

Thus it is established that the Brahman, the prime repository for all the subtle and gross forms of sentient and insentient, is the material cause. Thus it is quite obvious that it is possible to know everything about the gross forms of the sentient and insentient, which are derived from the subtle sentient and insentient parts of Brahman only, if one has the knowledge about such Omnipotent, Omniscient Brahman. Thus the statement – “eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam” has been proved to be a valid and true statement.

In the next posting we shall see how in this case the qualified monism is justified

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

**Mundakopanishad-12**

Dear AsthikAs, in this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad, the treatise by S’ruthaprakAsíkAchArya as – as to how the Brahman only, qualified by the sentient and insentient, can justify the meaning of the words *eka vijnAnena* in the *s’ruthi vAkya*.

Summary: One should consider the qualified Brahman in the s’ruthi vAkya ***“Eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam”*** for the word ***“eka”***. He should not consider only the *swarUpa –*the nature, of the Brahman. It is very clear that in such an instant, it not possible to have the knowledge of the attributes – the *vis’eshaNas* from the knowledge of the subject Brahman – the *vis’eshya*. With the knowledge of the qualified entity, qualified by its attributes, it is possible to know completely, the constituents of the entity viz., the attributes as well as the qualified entity – the *vis’eshaNa* and *vis’eshya* respectively. However, when you consider the ‘lump of clay and the pot’ illustration, it shows the *svarUpaikyam* – the unity in nature and characteristics of the causal material – the *upAdAna*, and the effect – the *kArya*. But the same *svarUpaikyam* cannot be told for the combination of the universe comprising the sentient and insentient; and the Brahman. It goes against all the Veda VAkyas. Considering the sensibilities and insensibilities; controlling and controlled or ruling and being ruled nature; ignorance and omniscience etc., of the sentient and insentient respectively there is a vast difference between the nature of the Brahman – the *Isvara* and the sentient and insentient – the *chit and achit* according to all the Vedas and scriptures, there cannot be any *svarUpaikyam – the* identity or unity of the nature between them. The inner controlling characteristic – *antharyAmithvam* of Brahman is evident from the s’ruthi VAkyas like *“thadanupravis’ya”, “sathcha thyachchAbhavath”, “aithadAthmyamidam sarvam”* etc. From that characteristic of the Brahman, *vis’ishTaikyam –*the qualified oneness (by nature) is confirmed by the Vedas. Even during the dissolution of the universe, the qualified oneness only is authentic for the Brahman, who becomes one with the subtle form of the dumb or insensible cosmic matter. The meaning of the word *ekibhAva* in the s’ruthi vAkya *thamah pare deve ekeebhavathi* is noteworthy. According to *abhootha thadbhAve chvih –* a specific rule of Sanskrit grammar, (*anekam ekamiva sampadyamAnam* – many entities (put together)looking as though all of them became a single entity), the subtle cosmic matter joins the Brahman to appear as if it has become one with the Brahman. In other words, the preposition or suffix–*chvi* makes it clear that the word *ekeebhAva* gets the meaning of “appearing as though it is a single entity, when all the entities are held together by a unique inseparable bond.” Thus, it has been established that from the knowledge of the Brahman, who is having an authenticated qualified oneness for all the time, it is possible to get to know about the universe, which has an inseparable relationship with Him and is an attribute of Him.

An objection:

According to the SrivaishNava siddhAntha, all the entities viz., the world of SriVaikunTham; the buildings, towers etc. there; the resident *nithya sUris* etc., are all eternal. Isn’t it so? For all these entities, definitely the Brahman is not the material cause. Hence, by the knowledge of Brahman – the material cause, it may be possible to know about the physical universe – a product of the cosmic matter, but how can one know about the eternal entities like the *SriVaikunTham* etc.? If that is not known, how can the statement *eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam* be true?

The answer:

My dear sir, please take note of the words *idam sarvam* in the mantra presently being discussed – *“kasminnu bhagavo vijnAthe idam sarvam vijnAtham bhavathi?”* These words are clearly pointing out the visible universe – *idam sarvam –* this everything, only. It does not speak about the eternal universe – the SriVaikunTham, which has been confirmed as eternal by the scriptural statements like *“thripAdasyAmRitham divi”* etc. Hence, it is immaterial whether those eternal entities are known, or not. The substance of the statement *sarvam idam vijnAtham –* all this is known, is – that after having knowledge about that material cause, it is possible to have the knowledge about the entire universe that has been derived from that material cause.

Another objection:

The S’ruthis are emphatically denying presence of any other entity, in the beginning, other than the One, by the statement – *“sadeva Somya idamagra Aseeth, ekameva, advitheeyam – O Somya, in the beginning there was sath alone, one only and there was no second entity”*. It says that there is no second entity at all. In such circumstances, stating that the SriVaikunTham, its residents, mansions there etc. are eternally present, is definitely contradictory to the oneness professed above. Is it not?

***To be continued***

In our next posting, we shall see how this objection was answered and some more objections and their answers.

Dasoham,

AdiyEn Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-13**

Dear AsthikAs, in this posting we shall see how the objection raised in the last posting has been answered and continue with the treatise of Sriman U.Ve. Raghunathacharya swami on Mundakopanishad.

Answer: “***idam agre adviteeyam, ekameva sath eva aaseeth”*** – “***agre*** = in the beginning, before the creation has started, ***idam*** = this visual world, with many varieties of the names and forms, ***sadeva Aseeth*** = was there as ***sath*** only, an entity with Brahman at its core, was there. ***advitheeyam – ekameva*** = that sath was only in subtle form, as the material cause, devoid of name and shapes, and there was no other instrumental cause.”This is the meaning of the above s’ruthi vAkya. Thus, this word *eka* is only proving the existence of an entity (as the material cause) without any divisions of names and shapes. We see all those varieties of forms and names in today’s universe. It does not prove the statement – there exists only Brahman and nothing else exists. From the structure of the sentences like ***bahusyAm prajAyeya*** and ***tharhi avyAkrithamAseeth – thannAmarUpAbhyAm vyAkriyatha*** etc., attaining the nomenclature like name and form. Further is the word *eka* not showing the universe was in the subtle form devoid of the division with name, form etc.? Leaving aside such a meaning which is in line with the other lines in that part of the texts, saying that “Brahman only is real, the rest is all illusory” is only stubborn refusal to accept the logical conclusion in line with the rest of the texts. Hence, this word ***eka*** does **not show** that the eternal universe of SriVaikunTham etc., are non-existent. It tells us that for this visible universe, it was existing in subtle form for which no specific nomenclature or shape or form were possible before the creation or evolution started, and hence it does not say that the other universes like the eternal SriVaikunTham etc. do not exist.

If that be so, what meaning does the word ***advitheeya*** carry? It has two meanings. The first one says Brahman, the ***upAdAna kAraNa*** – the material cause for the evolution of the entire universe, on His own, without requirement of any other entity as instrumental cause, transformed Himself into the visible universe. Sri S’ankara BhagavathpAda also gave this meaning only. The other meaning can be there was no second entity either equal to or higher than, Him. It is used in the same meaning as the sentence “The emperor is supreme, and has no second. There was no second one like him” has its meaning. According to the s’ruthi VAkyas like ***pathim vis’vasya*** etc., Brahman is the material cause for the entire universe and the controller and ruler of the entire universe. Saying that such Brahman is without a second one like Him, expresses the greatness of the Brahman, but not that there is no other entity existing. It does not negate the existence of millions of entities, which cannot be compared to Him in any way, since all of them are much less than Him in all possible ways and are controlled and ruled by Him. When we say the emperor is supreme and has no second one, it does not mean that he does not have a wife, house or children, he has no retinue etc. Similarly, this word advitheeya in the s’ruthi vAkya ***ekamevAdvitheeyam*** does not mean that He does not have celestial residence or retinue of innumerable ***nithya sUris,*** muktha***Purushas***– the persons released from the cycle of births and deaths and or other eternal entities. The s’ruthi vAkya ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** means that from the knowledge of the upAdAna ***kAraNa*** – the material cause, the entire evolved universe which is the ***kArya prapancham,*** will be known. Since the matter under discussion is about the evolved or created universe – the ***kArya prapancham***, eternal entities like the SriVaikunTham are not in the picture at all. So knowledge about them is of no consequence.

An objection:

The meaning of the s’ruthi vAkya “eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam” is said to be the knowledge of only this visible universe, which has been created – that is the ***kArya prapancham***, will be available from the knowledge of that Unique Single Brahman – the material cause for this universe. Further it is said that it does not matter even if the eternal bodies like the eternal supreme dominion – the ***nithya vibhUthi*** etc.; that are not the created entities; do not form a part of this word ***sarva***. Earlier it is said that all that, other than Brahman, does not exist and such matter is indicated by the word ***sarva*** in the s’ruthi vAkya – “***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam***.” Further it is said that because every material other than Brahman is included in the word ***sarva,*** Brahman alone becomes the instrumental cause in absence of a material which can be the instrumental cause – ***nimiththa kAraNa.*** If that be so, is it not contradicting the earlier statement? Is it proper to say that there exist some eternal entities like ***nithya vibhUthi*** etc., and they do not get covered by the word ***sarva***? If some eternal entities other than BrahmANDa exist, why should not any one of them be the instrumental cause also?

Answer:

This matter definitely needs a careful review. This statement about eka vijnAnena sarva vijnAna is mentioned in many Upanishads. The treatise has been supported in two different ways by different Upanishads. In ChAndOgya Upanishad the thesis of support is as follows – by giving the instances of the lump of clay and the pots etc., the relationship of Brahman and the universe has been confirmed as that between the material cause and effect. It is thus proved that through such relation-ship, the knowledge of the universe – the effect can be had from knowing about the Brahman – the cause. In other words, since there is no entity without being permeated by Brahman – i.e., there is no material which does not have Brahman as its inner controller, it is possible to have the knowledge of the universe consisting of the material having all-permeating Brahman as the inner soul, from the knowledge of the Brahman.

The BRihadAraNyaka Upanishad has the following VAkyas in this context –

***Athmano vA are dars’anena s’ravaNena mathyA vijnAnenedagm sarvam viditham bhavathi| brahma tham parAdAth yo anyathra Athmano brahma veda | kshathram tham parAdAth yo anyathra Athmano kshathram veda | lokAstham parAduh yo anyathra Athmano lokAn veda |***” etc. In this second treatise, the treatise is as follows –

Even though the entities in the eternal world – ***nithya vibhUthi,*** are not the Brahman’s creations, since they all have Brahman as the inner controller (permeated by the Brahman), the word ***sarva*** can encompass them also. So, when the question of the causes for this created universe – the ***kArya prapancham,*** even without the confirmation of the cause-effect relationship with upAdAna, nimiththa causes etc., the material cause for this universe is Brahman alone. Since any other entity, that does not have Brahman as its inner controller, and is not a part of the Brahman’s characteristics, is not qualified to be an instrumental cause, Brahman alone is instrumental cause also. Thus in the second treatise, it has been established by negating the possibility of any other entity other than Brahman to be the instrumental cause.

In the first treatise, when it is proved that sarva vijnAna means the knowledge of the Universe – the effect, by the cause-effect character – the ***upAdAna-upAdeya bhava***, a doubt as to why one of the entities of the eternal dominion – the ***nithya vibhUthi*** cannot be instrumental cause can arise. Even then, it should be understood that Brahman only and none other than Him is forbidden to be the instrumental cause by referring to the s’ruthi VAkyas like ***AthmAnam svayam akurutha***  or the word ***advitheeyam***. Hence there is no contradiction of the earlier statement, where it is proven that none other than Brahman is there to be instrumental cause. This is only reaffirming the same.

In the next posting, we shall show that the argument of the advaitha doctrine in this respect is untenable.

***To continue***

Dasoham,

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-14**

Dear AsthikAs, in this posting we shall see how the s’ruthi vAkya ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** is interpreted by the Advaitins and continue with the treatise of Sriman U.Ve. Raghunathacharya swami on how the Advaithin’s interpretation is proved to be untenable.

According to advaitha philosophy, only Brahman is real and rest in this universe is all illusory. As such the sentence ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** is not applicable at all. There is no possibility of knowing something which is not real. Shall we say that by knowing about that Brahman the only reality, it will be known that the rest is all unreal or illusory? Is it not quite illogical to interpret the meaning of the word sarva vijNAnatho be ***sarva abhAva vijnAna*** – i.e., knowing that everything is non-existent? Applying the same logic, we will have to interpret the word eka vijnAna as eka abhAva vijnAna!

It is possible to know about the rest after knowing one object either by the objects having same characteristics –***sAdharmya*** or objects having opposite characteristics – vaidharmya. If a cow is seen, it will be known that the other cows also are like this cow only. It is known from the same characteristic form of all the cows – the ***sAdharmya of the form and shape*** that all the cows will be similar in form and shape. The illustrations of the lump of clay and lump of gold given in the s’ruthi vAkya are of this type only. In those illustrations, there is similarity of the characteristics from the earthliness and shining characteristics. In this method of similar characteristics, it is surely impossible to know about the other objects is not possible. In the theory of monism, where is the existence of a second real object to know about the other object? Coming to the case of vaidharmya – the dissimilarity of the characteristics, we know about the other from the special characteristics of one being told to separate it from others. Here the illustration is as follows – the sentence “Devadatta is the main person” shows that the persons other than Devadatta are unimportant. In the same way, from the knowledge of the real Brahman, having the knowledge that the rest of the objects are all having opposite characteristic of being real – i.e., they are unreal. This knowledge being obtained should be called as ***sarva vijnAna*** from ***eka vijnAnena.*** This type of deriving a meaning from the words not present in the sentence will become an arbitrary meaning suiting ones likes and dislikes only and not the proper answer. To make this idea clearer let us take the s’ruthi vAkya “***kasminnu bhagavo vijnAthe sarvam idam vijnAtham bhavathi***” in this mantra and try to get the meanings – according to the ***advaithin*** – the monist. For that meaning (meaning as desired by the advaithin to suit monism,) two words sathyathvena and mithhyAthvena are to be borrowed and then the vAkya will be like this – “***kasmin sathyathvena bhagavo vijnAthe sarvam iDammithhyAtvena vijnAtham bhavathi***”. The word ***sathyathvena*** and its antonym – having opposite characteristics – ***mithhyAthvena*** do not appear in the original s’ruthi vAkya. Further, in the illustrations of the lump of clay, lump of gold, and lump of iron, which reads ***yathA Somya ekena mRithpiNDena sarvam mriNmayam vijnAtham*** et al., the knowledge of one (the material cause) is able to provide the knowledge of all (the effect of the material cause) objects derived from that material cause through the principle of having similar characteristics only. Hence to state that from the knowledge of Brahman as the only real entity, the knowledge about the universe that it is unreal – is against the comparative principles of the illustrations. Thus stating that the universe is unreal and is illusory from the knowledge that Brahman is real is not logical and is not tenable.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall see one more objection and the proving the s’ruthi vAkya ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** to be true and valid.

Dasoham

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

**Mundakopanishad-15**

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

We continue with the Mundakopanishad establishing the authenticity of the s’ruthi vAkya eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam to be true and valid by examining the objection and the answer to that.

An objection –

The substance of the illustration of the lump of clay etc. is to make it known that the objects like pot, pan etc., derived from the real material cause clay, are unreal and illusory only. To establish this only the sentence “***mRiththikethyeva sathyam***” is brought out in the s’ruthi. Similarly, from the knowledge of real Brahman, the s’ruthi vAkya ***eka vijnAnena sarva vijnAna*** is there only to make it known that the rest of the objects/entities other than Brahman are all illusory or unreal, because they have opposite characteristics to Brahman. It is similar to the lump of clay being real and its derivatives the pots, pans etc. are being illusory. Hence the objects other than Brahman are only illusory and not real. Further it is to be noted that the s’ruthi vAkya, using the method of comparative characteristics, does not give the meaning that the universe is real simply because the Brahman is real.

The answer:

It is to be noted that neither from the knowledge of the lump of clay one does get the knowledge of the gold rings etc., nor the knowledge about the lump of gold result in the knowledge about the products like pots, pans etc produced from lump of clay. The reason for this is very simple – lack of similarity of the same class of materials in them – the gold and clay do not belong to the same class of materials. If the three illustrations, quoted from the s’ruthi VAkyas, are examined carefully with an open mind, it will be clear that it identifies the sarva vijNAna from the eka vijNAna where the characteristics are similar – the sAdharmya theory.

From this it can be only concluded that as Brahman is a reality, so is the universe. Under the circumstances there is no possibility to draw a conclusion that the universe is an illusion. If so, what could be the meaning for the s’ruthi vAkya – ***mRiththikethyeva sathyam***? It may be noted that it does not say that the lump of the clay only is real and the derivative products like the pot, pan etc are mere illusions. If the s’ruthi vAkya were to read ***mriththikaiva sathyam*** that could have been the meaning. But it reads – ***mRiththikA- ithi- eva- sathyam***. The word ***ithi*** is there in this sentence. The significance of this should be carefully examined.

The thArkikas – one class of philosophers profess wide difference for the material cause and its derivative i.e., for the ***upAdAna kAraNa*** and ***kArya vastu.*** The two hemispheres of the pot – joined two together to form the pot – are considered to be entirely different than the pot. Similar is the case with the threads and the cloth woven with them. These politicians say that a new entity in the form of a pot has come into existence. They are called ***asathkAryavAdins*** or ***ArambhavAdins***. These types of arguments are accepted by neither ***SAnkhyas*** nor ***the pUrvameemAmsakas***. Their method of explaining these formations are as follows - Both the clay hemispheres joined together under a specific procedure obtains the form of a pot. Similarly a number of threads joined in a particular pattern form a piece of cloth. According to them, an entity existing in a particular form – called ***sath***, on transformation gets a different name. Hence, they are called ***sathkAryavAdins.*** According to their reasoning both the objects are single entity only. It can be summarised as follows – The earlier form before the transformation is called the cause – ***the kAraNa*** and the subsequent form as a result of the transformation, different than the previous form is the effect – ***the kArya.*** This line of argument is also called as ***pariNAma vAda*** – the argument of transformation. The s’ruthi vAkya which begins ***sadeva Somyedamagra Aseeth*** has given three illustrations to make it known that by knowing the (material) cause one can know the effect. Thus oneness has been shown to the Brahman and Universe – the cause and effect respectively, and has become authentic to show the ***sathkAryavAda*** as true and valid. Since the context here is proving the ***sathkAryavAda*** to be true and valid, the vAkya ***mRiththikethyeva sathyam*** is showing that both the lump of the clay – the material cause and the pot, pan etc – the effect are constituting the same entity. It is not showing that both of them are different entities. Neither it is showing that the transformations into the pots pans etc as unreal and illusory nor does it show the names like pots and pans etc to be illusions. ***Sathyam*** means it is authentic. The transformation into clay pots and clay pans etc from the lump of clay is found to be real from the authentic sources. The entities like pots and pans etc. from lump of clay – the result of transformation, are said to be clay only -***mRiththikA ithi eva sathyam*** – it is true that it is clay only, from the authentic sources. They are not different from the clay. We observe this phenomenon from the direct perception that these pots pans etc. are the same clay only. Hence the lump of clay, the pots, pans etc. – the different forms of the material cause and the effects are all the same clay only, i.e., it is the same entity only. Thus the asathkAryavAda is refuted and oneness is proved for the forms of lump of clay and the pot – the cause and effect forms. It is confirmed that materials of the cause and effect is the same one and thus the statement ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** is firmly proved. It is a futile exercise to try to prove that in this context there is nothing other than Brahman and thus trying to establish that the universe is illusion only, when the words ***sathyathva*** and ***mithhyAthva*** which are absent in the sentence, are borrowed to draw a meaning that everything is illusory. It is simply an imaginative meaning produced out of the mind.

Further in this exposition or thesis of unreality – the ***mithhyAvAda*** quoting this illustration of the lump of clay is not feasible at all. A happening in the worldly practice only can be shown as an illustration. The people are considering that lump of clay as well as the pots and pans to be real only. They do not consider them to be an illusion like in the dreams. How can you quote that as an illustration to prove the theory of illusion? Apart from that, in your system everything other than Brahman is illusion only; and in such a situation, how can the lump of clay be shown as an illustration? It is not the real entity like Brahman according to your postulations. You may like to coin that as something which is true only for transaction – ***vyAvahArika sathyam***, and justify the illustration. But even in those pots and pans are transactional truths only! They are not objects which appear to be true like the cord appearing to be a snake! Thus when there is no real trueness in the lump of clay compared to the only apparent transactional trueness present in the pots and pans, how can it become an example of the real true Brahman? Is it justified to tell one type of meaning for the word ***sathyam*** – true object in the example and tell a different meaning for the same word in explaining the exemplified object?

There is another fault in your exposition. Yours is ***vivarthavAda­***– the theory of transformation, isn’t it? “Becoming a different object having the same characteristics and belonging to the same class – ***jAthi*** or race***,*** of causative object is called a change and becoming an object totally different than the causative object is called ***vivartha***– transformation” as per your definition. In case of the lump of clay and the pots and pans, the common characteristics are because of the earthiness, being inanimate etc. found in the objects. In cases of the cord and snake; or the universe and the Brahman; there is difference because of the inanimate and animate characteristics. You are establishing that the universe is imaginary transformation in the Brahman due to the ignorance about the Brahman – the intelligence. At the same time you show the unreal snake or the crack in the surface of the earth etc. as the examples of unreal objects apparently seen in a true cord. In such a case, by knowing the cord only, the snake or the crack in the surface of the earth etc are not being made known. Similarly by knowing the shell, one does not know the silver! Similarly, by knowing the Brahman the intelligence, it is not possible to know an entirely different illusory inanimate universe! Hence in your system the s’ruthi VAkya ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** is not applicable and feasible at all.

***To continue***

In our next posting we shall proceed with the fourth and fifth mantras and their explanations.

Dasoham,

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.

**Mundakopanishad-16**

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the fourth and fifth mantras and their explanations.

Mantra-4

***thasmai sahovAcha – dvevidye vedithavye|***

***ithihasma yadbrahmavido vadanthi – parAchaivAparA cha||***

Word meanings:

***thasmai*** = to that S’aunaka

***sah uvAcha ha*** = that Angiras said as follows

***brahmavido*** = the intelligentsia, who knew about Brahman

***vadanthi sma ha*** = said that

***yath (prApthum)*** = to reach that Brahman

***dvevidye*** = two types of knowledge

***parAchaivAparA cha*** = called ***parA*** and ***aparA***

***vedithavye ithi*** = should be obtained

with such knowledge about Brahman, they will be endowed with the knowledge about the whole universe.

The explanation:

When S’aunaka asked Angiras about the entity, by knowing about which, the knowledge about this whole universe will be obtained, he replied as follows –

Sages like ParAs’ara etc. prescribe that to reach the presence of the Brahman, the seeker should obtain the wisdoms called ***parA*** and ***aparA.*** That knowledge about Brahman is the one identified as ***eka vijnAna*** and by having that knowledge, one is considered to have the knowledge about the whole universe. This is the substance of the above mantra. In this mantra, the word ***prApthum*** is to be borrowed to get the meaning of the word ***yath.*** The meaning of this mantra will then be “one will be able to obtain the complete knowledge about the whole universe if he is able to have the knowledge about Brahman. This knowledge Brahman can be obtained only by studying the two sciences called parA and apara.” Otherwise, there will be no coordination between the question “by knowing about which entity, one will be able to obtain the knowledge about the whole universe?”and the answer of Angiras – “the intelligentsia having the knowledge about the Brahman prescribe study of the two sciences ***parA*** and ***apara.”***  If the word is not borrowed, there will be no connection for the word yath with the rest in this sentence.

How do you arrive at the meaning – two sciences for the word ***vidye***? The following lines of the VishNu PurANa shlokas are the basis for arriving at the meaning –

***thathprApthihethurjnAnam cha – karmachoktham mahAmune|***

***Agamoththham vivekAchcha dvithhAjnAnam thathhochyathe||***

***S’abdabrahmAgamamayam parambrahma vivekajam|*** et.al.

The jnAna and karma are the sources to obtain the knowledge about Brahman. The jnAna amongst the two is again of two types – borne out of the science and borne out of judgement. These two types are indicated by the word dvevidye. The next mantra clarifies about these two types of jnAnas – the wisdoms.

Mantra-5

***thathrAparA, Rigvedo yajurvedah sAmavedodharvaveda|***

***s’ikshA kalpo vyAkaraNam niruktham chando jyothishamithi|***

***thathrAparA, Rigvedo yajurvedah sAmavedodharvaveda|***

***s’ikshA kalpo vyAkaraNam niruktham chando jyothishamithi|***

***athha parA, yayA thadaksharamadhigamyathe||***

Word meanings:

***thathra aparA,*** = amongst them aparavidya means

***Rigvedah yajurvedah***  | = the four Vedas viz., Rig-Veda,

***sAmavedo adharvavedah|*** yajurveda, SAmavEda & adharva vEda

***s’ikshA kalpah vyAkaraNam|*** = and the six subsidiaries called Siksha

***niruktham chandah |*** kalpam etc. (the knowledge of Brahman

***jyothisham ithi*** | obtained by studying these ten sciences

is called as aparavidya.

***athha parA*** = now, paravidya means, that knowledge

***yayA*** = obtained through the devotion

to Brahman, from which,

***adhigamyathe*** = one perceives directly

***aksharamthath*** = that Brahman designated by the word

akshara (that is known as paravidya)

Explanation:

The first amongst those two learning process – ***Vidyas,*** which facilitate knowing about that Brahman, by knowing about whom, one gets to know about the entire universe is called ***aparavidya.*** The other is called ***paravidya.*** Meaning of the word ***VidyA*** is the learning process which results in obtaining the knowledge. Amongst them the aparavidya is that obtained from the preceptor – the AchArya, who taught the six subsidiary studies and then graduate to the level of a person knowing about that Brahman, the principal subject of all the four Vedas. It has been declared by Him that ***vedais’cha sarvaih aham eva vedyah*** – all the Vedas speak about Him only. The s’ruthi VAkyas called Upanishads also belong to these four branches of Vedas. Thus, the knowledge acquired through attending the discourses – the teachings of the preceptors, on the four Vedas and their six subsidiaries – the six vedAngas, is the aparavidya. Amongst these the Vedas are well known for their authenticity and the six subsidiaries that help one to understand, recite and practice them. The subsidiary Siksha is that science which teaches the process of reciting the Vedas in proper sound characteristics. The subsidiary ***kalpam*** is that science which describes the various methods of conducting the prescribed rites like daily rituals, occasional rituals like Yajnas etc. the subsidiary called ***vyAkaraNa*** is the science of the words and their different forms, the sentences etc., which is known to us as grammar. The subsidiary ***niruktham*** is the lexicon or dictionary of the Vedic words. The subsidiary ***Chhandas*** is the science of the poetry, their metres, the number of lines a poem should consist of and other rules that govern the poetical works. The last subsidiary Jyotisha is the science of astronomy/astrology. This helps one to study the movement of various celestial bodies like the planets, stars, their positions, and their relation to the various places in the universes and decide about the most favourable and unfavourable time slots for conducting the various rituals to result in the maximum benefits. It is seen from the ***adRis’yatvAdhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam that apart from the above six subsidiaries, the ***ithihAsAs*** etc., are also included in the aparavidya from the statement ***“IthihAsapurANam nyAyomImAmsa dharmas’AsthrANi ithi”.*** However this is only a different version of the mantra.

The knowledge obtained by the practice of unflinching affectionate devotion to Him, which results in the direct perception of Him by the practitioner – the ***upAsaka***. While the ***aparavidya*** is the knowledge acquired about Brahman by attending the discourses of the preceptors of the Vedas, their subsidiaries and other connected subjects, this ***paravidya*** is different in the sense that this is the knowledge of practising the meditation with affectionate devotion, to be able to perceive Him directly. This is the difference between these two ***Vidyas***. This ***paravidya,*** otherwise known as ***bhakthi-thaththva*** will be discussed at a greater length when the mantra ***nAyamAthmA pravachanena labhyah***.

This matter was discussed by Bhagavad RAmAnuja in ***adRis’yatvAdhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam by stating ***dve vidye vedithavye – brahmavishaye parokshAparoksharoope dve jNAne upAdeya ithyarthhah.*** The substance of this statement of BhAshyakAra is as follows –

A seeker of Brahman should first acquire the knowledge of Brahman indirectly through the listening to the discourses of the Vedas and its subsidiaries. After such acquisition of knowledge, he should acquire the knowledge of UpAsana – the meditating with affectionate devotion, which results in his direct perception of Him. These are the two ***Vidyas*** mentioned in this mantra.

An objection:

***dve vidye–***here, for the word VidyA, the meanings should be explained that the knowledge from Rig-Veda and other Vedas along with the six subsidiaries should be called as paravidya and the knowledge from Upanishads etc., detailing about the Brahman, should be termed as apara VidyA. These meanings are obvious and that would be the proper. Instead of giving accordingly, terming the knowledge acquired by listening the Vedas and the six VedAngas as ***paravidya*** – the indirect knowledge, and the knowledge acquired by meditating with affectionate devotion as ***aparavidya*** is drawing meanings which are hard to conceive.

Answer: In case your suggestion is accepted, then the knowledge from the Upanishads has to be called as paravidya and that would have to be out of the purview of the Vedas. But this will be contradicting the s’ruthi vAkya ***yA vedabAhyAh smRithayah yAs’cha kAs’cha kudrishTayah| sarvAsthA nishphalAh prethya thamo nishThA hi thAh smRithAh*** and the paravidya in the form of knowledge from the Upanishads would be out of the purview of the Vedic principles like all the narrow minded and wrongly interpreted theories such as the chArvAkas – the rationalists, which depend more on tricky interpretations and apparent and superficial meanings. Then the Upanishads have to be discarded as unauthentic and useless. Further it will result in stating that the Vedas do not speak about Brahman and only Upanishads detail the Brahman. In that case, the pramANas – the authentic statements such as ***sarve vedA yath padam Amananthi*** and ***vedais’cha sarvai rahameva vedyah,*** would be contradictory. Hence the meanings put forward by Bhagavad RAmAnuja only will be appropriate.

It is worth noting that S’ankara BhagavathpAda also has mentioned the meaning of ***aparavidya*** to be the Vedas. Further he argued that in case the meaning for paravidya is taken to be Upanishads which will have to be different than the Vedas, the Upanishads have to be discarded since they will not follow the dictum ***yA vedabAhyAh smrithayah yAs’cha kAs’cha kudrishTayah| sarvAsthA nishphalAh prethya thamo nishThA hi thAh smRithAh*** and hence the meaning of the second knowledge – ***paravidya*** to be the knowledge about Brahman. Further it was shown by him that the ***aparavidya*** – the knowledge from the Vedas teaches mostly about the rituals and results in temporary worldly fruits of those rituals and hence it is a form of ignorance only. The second VidyA – the apara VidyA, the knowledge about the eternal Brahman only, results in the ***mOkSha***– the release from the bondage. Thus he showed the difference between both the Vidyas. But this is not correct, the reason being – in the phrase ***dve vidye,*** different meanings, which are contradictory, are attributed for the same word VidyA. One meaning is the Vedas like Rig-Veda etc. The second meaning is said to be the knowledge of the Brahman acquired from the study of Upanishads. Further rejecting on the plea that the Vedas do not impart the knowledge about the Brahman, and hence they are forms of ignorance only. This argument is in contravention to the vAkya ***vedais’cha sarvairahameva vedyah.***  Again, if the Vedas are forms of ignorance only and hence fit to be rejected, why should it be said that they are to be learnt – vedithavye? Hence, the meanings given by RAmAnuja that both the wisdoms – the Vidyas, are about Brahman only; that the first aparavidya is the indirect knowledge about Brahman, acquired from listening to the discourses of the preceptors about the Vedas and their subsidiary angams; secondly that this indirect knowledge will lead to the knowledge from direct perception, which is the result of the meditation with devotion to Him laced with affection towards Him. These meanings only are free from any faults.

***To continue***

In the next posting we shall continue with the sixth mantra of the first chapter.

Dasoham

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-17***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the sixth and seventh mantras and their explanations.

***Mantra -6***

***yaththadadres’yamagrAhyamagothramavarNa***

***machakshus’s’rothram thadapANipAdam|***

***nithyam vibhum sarvagatham susUkshmam***

***thadavyayam yadbhUthayonim paripas’yanthi dheerAh||***

Word meanings

***yath thath*** = which famous Brahman is such that it can

***adres’yam*** = not be seen by the sense organs like eyes

***agrAhyam*** = nor be captivated by the work organs

***agothram*** = nor has the race, classification by lineage

***avarNam***  = neither belongs to any class of humans

classified by their duties to the society,

***achakshuh*** = neither has the sensory organs like eyes

***(a) s’rothram*** = or ears etc.

***apANipAdam*** = nor has the working organs like hands, feet etc.

***dheerAh***  = the wise counsel, having the knowledge of the

metaphysical realities or etymological

entities

***paripas’yanthi thath*** = know well that as Brahman, called Akshara,

***yath*** = which is

***nithyam***  = eternal

***vibhum***  = all pervading without the limits of area

***sarvagatham***  = permeates & controls every entity from within

***susUkshmam*** = is atomic

***avyAja*** = and is devoid of any metamorphosis

***bhUthayonim*** = and is the material cause for all entities

Substance:

The one which cannot be known by the organs of perception like eyes etc, nor can be felt or grasped by the organs of action like hands etc, neither has any classification either by lineage or by their duties to the society; neither has the sensory organs nor the work organs, is the famous Brahman designated by the word Akshara. That is the Brahman, which is known as akshara, to the wise having the knowledge of the metaphysical realities or ontological entities. They find it to be eternal, pervading every entity irrespective of time or place or state in which the entity exists, to be atomic and without any characteristic metamorphosis at any time. They know it to be the material cause for every entity.

Explanation:

= The one which cannot be perceived either by organs of perception or organs of action. =The one which cannot be proved to be having a particular descent. = Hence it does not have any caste like a brAhmaNa or Kshatriya etc. = neither it has the organs of perception like eyes, ears etc., =nor it has the organs of action like hands or feet etc. In spite of being so, according to the s’ruthi vAkya ***pas’yathyachakshuh sa s’RiNothyakarNah***-- even without the eyes He sees and without the ears He hears. Even without the organs of perception, he has the power to perceive all the things, i.e., He has . Such is the akshara Brahman. That Brahman is eternal. In other words it is present always. It is present everywhere. It is inside every entity. It is the inner controller of every entity. According to the s’ruthi vAkya He permeates every entity and controls them from being inside them. He is the minuter than the atom in size according to the s’ruthi vAkya so that he can enter the atomic entities also. The six changes., which occur to the entities other than HimThe wise men, who have known Him in reality tell that such akshara Brahman is the material cause for this entire universe. To say it in other way, from the knowledge about this Akshara Brahman, the material cause, one is bestowed with the knowledge of everything. The word ***agrAhyam***  in this mantra can have the meaning that it is not possible to perceive Him by inference also.

Mantra -7









***yasmAth param nAparamasthi kinchith***

***yasmAnnANeeyo na jyAyosthi kas’chith|***

***vRiksha iva sthabdho divi thishThhathyekah***

***thenedam pUrNah purusheNa sarvam||***

Different versions and their impact – This mantra does not find any commentary in S’ankaracharya’s commentary of this Upanishad. Neither has it appeared in some of the original texts which are in vogue in certain regions. But this mantra has been referred by Sudarsana Suri in his S’ruthaprakaas’ika for the adRis’yathvAdhikaraNa of Sribhashyam. He shows that ***akshara Brahman*** is proved to be having another entity neither equal nor higher than

Him. From this it appears that this Mantra is not an insertion by some later writers and it could have been missed by chance. That may be the reason for S’ankara BhagavathpAda not writing commentary for this Mantra. However Sage RangaRAmAnuja had written notes for this mantra in his commentary for Mundakopanishad. Some appear to have mischievously suggested that this mantra has been interpolated by Vis'ishTAdvaithins. It is wrong on their part to say so. Sudarsana Suri is very venerable commentator and his commentary is held in high esteem to be authentic. As such one need not have any misconception about the Mantra being part of original Upanishad. It is worthwhile to note that the same Mantra appears in S’vethaas’vathara also as the 9th mantra in 3rd canto. S’ankarAcharya had given his commentary for this mantra there. It is quite common to find the same mantra to appear in more than one Upanishad either as it is or with some minor deviations. The mantra ***na thathra sUryo bhAthi na Chandra thArakam*** appears in kaThopanishad. The same Mantra as it is appears in the S’vethaas’vathara as well as this Upanishad. Similar is the case with this Mantra appearing in some regional versions of this Upanishad and in S’vethaas’vathara also. That should be the reason; the well known commentators like Sudarsana Suri and sage RangaRAmAnuja had written commentaries on it. It must have been missed in the version available for S’ankarAchArya with the result of no commentary from his side on this mantra. This is the discussion noteworthy on the different versions and the commentaries.

Word meanings:

***kinchith*****=** other

***aparam*** = entity either different or

***param* =** higher than

***yasmAth*** = that Brahman

***nAsthi*** = does not exist;

***kas’chith*** = another entity

***aNeeyah na***  = which is either more minute or

***jyAyah***  = greater or larger power to control

***yasmAth* =** than that Brahman

***nAsthi*** = does not exist

***ekah (sah)*** = that Brahman is

***vRiksha iva***  = like a tree

***sthabdhah***  = unyielding

***divi thishThhathi* =** and is residing in the Highest place

called SriVaikunTham

***thena prusheNa* =** by that Brahman

***idam sarvam*** = this entire universe

***pUrNam*** = is pervaded fully

To continue

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

Mundakopanishat-18

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,   
In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the explanation of the  
seventh mantra and some critical observations involved in this mantra with  
VisishTAdvaithA and its antagonists.  
  
Explanation –  
The previous mantra made it known that the akshara Brahman (the generating  
source or cause for all the elements) is the material cause for the universe. A  
doubt can arise in the common reader about it. Clay is the material cause for  
the pot. Gold is the material cause for the gold ornaments such as a ring. Thus  
when we are seeing different materials as the material causes for different  
entities, how can it be said that Brahman is the sole material cause for all the  
entities of the universe? this mantra exists to clear such doubts only. The  
answer for this question is there in ***thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam*** – the last line of the Mantra.  
It is quite common to say "the king is protecting the subjects of his state" or  
"the king fights wars with and wins his opponents." How can a king residing in a  
palace protect his subject in a corner of his vast expanse of his state? It is a  
fact that his servants do rule them by residing in those areas. Similar is the  
case in the wars. His troops only go to the war fields and fight the battles and  
win. In spite of the reality being such, it is always said that the king rules  
and protects his subjects; the king has fought the war and won. It is so called  
because the officials under the king or the troops under the command of the king  
work or fight according to the orders of him. Thus though there is a vast  
difference between the king and his staff or the troops, because of the power of  
the king's orders and because the staff and the troops work for the king, the  
king is said to be protecting his subjects or winning his battles. However, when  
we see the Brahman and his control, it is different from this illustration. He  
is there as the soul of the universe and the universe is His body according to  
the scriptures. The body does not perform any work without the direction of the  
soul. Similarly for any action to take place anywhere, His orders are essential  
as the scriptures say – even a blade of grass does not move – ***thena vinA  
thriNamapi na chalathi.*** Thus if we examine closely, calling the clay to be the  
material cause for the pot or to say that the gold bar is the material cause for  
the gold ring, is only partially true. The real material cause is thus the  
Brahman, who is present in every entity e.g., clay or gold bar being the inner  
controller of these entities. In other words, it is the Brahman, having the clay  
and gold bar as His bodies is the material cause for the clay pot or the gold  
ornament to come into existence. And this is the truth underlying in the entire  
running of the universe. thus Brahman being omnipresent and the universal soul  
for every entity, the substance of the Vedic sentence ***thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam*** is confirming and supporting the statement that the Brahman is the real material cause for the universe. Those who do not understand this basic truth are under the illusion that those basic elements to be the material cause for  
such of the entities or articles.  
This has been the view of the RAmAnuja and he has strongly argued with the  
necessary reasoning and illustrating the various vEda VAkyas to be  
authenticities in support of his views, in the third section of the second  
chapter of the Vedanta sutras otherwise known as Brahma sutras. The Brahman is  
the direct cause for the creation of the space as per the vEda vAkya – ***Athmana AkAs'a ssambhUthah, AkAs'AdvAyuh vAyoragnih, agnerApah, adbhyah pRithhivee.*** After the creation of the space, the prima facie view – pUrva paksha – is that the air is created from space, the fire or heat is created from the air, water is created from the heat and the water is the raw material for the earth. This  
view is contested. Further it has been shown that Brahman who entered the space,   
created the air, and so on goes the creation by the Brahman who enters those  
entities as the soul and becomes the material cause for further creation in the  
line. Similar is the case in the eekshathyadhikaraNa of the first chapter of the  
Vedanta sutras for the axiom (sutra) ***gauNaschennAthmas'abdAth.*** Here it was said in ChAndOgya Upanishad –***thaththeja aikshatha, thadapo sRijatha – thA Apaaikshantha, thA annamsRijantha*** etc., the fire and the water and created the next in the lineage. It is stated that the fire had willed and created the  
water; this water willed and created the earth. Though it has been said so, it  
is impossible for an inanimate object like fire, water, earth etc. to will and  
create. Hence it is established with sufficient authentications that it should  
be understood that Brahman, who is donning the body of fire, willed and  
created the water; that subsequently He took water as His body, He being the  
soul, willed and created the earth. Thus the last leg of the scriptural  
sentence, reading ***thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam*** confirms to the view that Brahman is the material cause for every entity by being its soul and the entity  
being His body.  
Now coming to the first two lines of the mantra which read ***yasmAth param....  
nANeeyosthi kas'chith,*** its substance is that there is no equal or superior  
entity to Him, who has been established as the controller of all and  
omnipresent; He only can become minuter than the atomic entities and at the same  
time being the most superior entity. This is being substantiated in this.  
***vRiksha iva sthabdho divi thishThathyekah*** – the Brahman is the most potent and most superior amongst all entities! Everyone bows to Him; He need not bow to anyone. So He is firm like a strong tree and not amenable to anybody else; He  
resides in the highest world SriVaikunTham called paramapadam where He is glowing  
with a highly extra-ordinary and most auspicious body. From the simile used by  
comparing Him with the tree, as said ***vRiksha iva sthabdhah*** and from the words  
***divi thishThathi*** – He resides in the highest world, it is indicated that He has  
an extraordinarily auspicious body and He is stationed in the highest unique  
world called SriVaikunTham, that is above the cosmic area enveloping this  
universe. This highest and unique world is the ultimate goal sought after by the  
seekers is unambiguously confirmed and authenticated by the following scriptural  
statements – ***parame vyoman, sos'nuthe sarvAn kAmAn saha brahmaNA vipaschithethi***– in the highest world called parama vyomam – the highest space, the seeker, who had the knowledge of the true reality, enjoys all the enjoyments along with the Brahman – says the thaiththireeya – Anandavalli; ***sodhvanah pAramApnothi thadvishNoh paramam padam*** – the seeker, having achieved the full control of the sensual organs, immersed in the meditation, reaches SriVaikunTham, the abode of Sri mahAvishNu – says the kaThopanishad; ***thadviprAso vipanyavo jAgrivAnsassamindhathe – vishNoryath paramam padam*** – in the extraordinary abode of Lord SrI mahAvishNu, the nithya sUris – the eternal personalities, glow praising Him– says the sAma vEda. However, the monists – the Advaitins, do not accept this statement. They, who propagate that this universe is created by illusion, say that the Brahman having innumerable auspicious attributes, having an extraordinarily beautiful and auspicious body, the multitude of His servants in that highest world, are all created only by illusion; the Brahman devoid of any attributes is a better one than the Brahman having innumerable auspicious attributes. They further propose and argue that for the seeker, becoming one with Brahman – the natural and only reality propagated by them to be, is the ultimate goal to be achieved. This is neither supported by the scriptures nor is according to any logical arguments and conclusion. It is a disservice to the scriptures, which speak the reality beyond the earthly justifications, by drawing conclusions based on the tactics that come to their minds to suit their arguments. In the absence of any teaching aids to educate about the super reality – ***alaukika thaththvam,*** other than the scriptures alone, it is but natural and proper to accept the clear meanings as  
heard to these scriptural statements for all those who wish to accept all the  
scriptures to be authentic and true statements. It is not proper to draw one's  
own meanings for them disregarding the established grammatical rules. Even if  
this mantra does not appear in the Mundakopanishad version accepted by Sri  
S'ankara, it should be acceptable to them as has been explained by Sri S'ankara  
BhagavathpAda in his commentary to S'vethaas'vathara Upanishad. He explained it  
as follows – ***vRiksha iva sthabdhah – nis'chalah; divi – dyothanAthmani, svemahimni, thishThathi ekah advitheeyah paramAthmA.*** Drawing the meaning for the word ***ekah*** as not having a second entity – and then thinking that it would not suit the meaning as proposed if some entities belonging to Him are accepted to be real; or if it is stated that He has extraordinary attributes, deciding to  
conclude that He is totally devoid of any attributes; if it is accepted that  
there is a place where He resides, to be the meaning of the scriptural meaning  
of the statement – ***divi thishThathi,*** then one has to accept the existence of a  
second entity which is contrary to his conclusion. So he arrived at a meaning –  
***divi – dyothanAthmani, – sve mahimni –*** which means in plain words – He is in His own greatness - the form of self luminosity. Anybody who has the knowledge of entomology will tell that this meaning is not correct. One does not find the  
meaning “in His own greatness – the form of self luminosity for the word ***divi***in any dictionary. The word ***divi*** has the meaning – in an extraordinary higher  
world. According to Sri S'ankara BhagavathpAda, the universal form of the  
ParamAtman, His pervading the earth, not to speak of His creation, sustenance  
and withdrawing them back etc., which have been stated in the scriptural passage  
purusha suktham – ***sahasra s'eershA purushah, sahasrAkshah sahasrapAth, sa bhUmimvisvatho vRithvA*** etc., are all illusions only.  
All those statements of various scriptural statements such as the  
***archishamevAbhi sambhavanthi, sa thathra paryethi jakshth kreeDan ramamANah*** etc., are all illusions only according to Sri S'ankara. The celestial  
experiences of the seeker or the discussion about path of archis – the road of  
luminosity to the paramapadam taken by the released soul etc., are not realities  
at all according to Sri S'ankara. They are all illusory creations only.  
If the meaning of the scriptural sentence ***Divi thishThathi*** is shown to be  
"somewhere in the special higher world, will it not be in contra to the meaning  
given earlier for the phrase ***thenedam pUrNam*** about Brahman's all pervading  
nature? This may be the doubt in some minds. The nature and characteristics of  
Brahman, who is personification of the knowledge and eternal bliss, is his  
permeability into every nook and corner. His extraordinarily charming and  
beautiful form itself is an extra ordinary entity in the higher worlds. The  
released soul – the muktha purusha praises His place ***"sodhvanah pAramApnothi thadvishNoh paramam padam"*** – he reaches the other side – the highest place of that Lord Vishnu, to which he begins his journey to have the magnificent sighting of that Lord who is that extra-ordinary form full of light. Let the  
persons saying that – there is no form for the all-pervading Brahman; and an  
entity having a form will not have that omnipresence; should recall and the  
form and characteristics of the Lord who took the form of NRsimhAvatAra and  
accept that He has the form and omnipresence.  
The first line of this mantra reading ***"yasmAthparam nAparamasthi"*** means clearly that there is no other entity higher or greater than akshara Brahman, the  
magnificent, omnipresent, form – qualified by attributes. That being so, the  
monists of the S'ankara school say that there is that reality without any  
attributes higher than this Akshara Brahman. Similar is the case with the other  
schools like the followers of Sakthi etc., who say that there is another entity  
beyond the trinity of an entity having Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as its soul.  
Such arguments are not having any authenticity in the Vedas says the axiom –  
***thadhAnya prathishedhAth*** in the sub-chapter ***paramathah sethUnmAnasambandha bhedavyapades'ebhyah*** of VedavyAsa's VEdAnta sutras. Those who are interested in further study of this aspect may refer that sub-chapter of Sribhashyam.  
  
To continue- In the next posting we shall see how the Advaitins had lamented  
that their arguments are not being accepted by the public.

***Mundakopanishad-19***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the laments of the Advaitins.

Though skilfully S’ankara puts forth an argument that there is another supreme reality devoid of any attributes and having no other reality- the general public has taken the bite of the ***advaithathaththvam.*** Sriharsha, one of the advocate of the monism laments in the shloka ***sApthum prayachchathi... mathAnam, advaitha thaththva iva sathyatharepi lokah* of** his work ***naishadha-***kAvya that the public is not able to have belief in the ***advaitha thaththva,*** the most realistic truth amongst all the philosophical systems. A glance at the below-mentioned shlokas of MadhusUdana Saraswathi, who is another great scholar establishing the monism shows the same lament.

***dhyAnAbhyAsavaSeekrithena manasA thannirguNam nishkriyam***

***jyothih kinchana yogino yadi param pas’yanthi pas’yanthu the|***

***asmAkam thu thadeva lochanachamathkArAya bhUyAchchiram***

***kALindeepulineshu yathkimapi thanneelam maho dhAvathi||***

The substance of the above shloka –

Let the meditators, who have mastered their minds, have the vision of some form of the purest divine light– the purest knowledge. But the bright bluish luminescence – the form of Sri Krishna, making rounds on the sand banks of Yamuna be the subject of my sight. Let that be the long-lasting and pleasing to my eyes and making me happy.

In this the word ***kinchana*** shows the lack of faith and lukewarm response to that entity called ***thaththvam*** devoid of any qualitative intelligence. The style of the sentence from the wording ***“yadi param pas’yanthi”*** leads to the poet’s impression doubting if any of the meditators ever have visualised and perceived that ***thaththvam*** – the reality, devoid of any attributes. Now in the second half of the stanza the poet is saying that he does not get any happiness from that absolute thathva, but from the beautiful heavenly tender Krishna straddling the sand banks of the river Yamuna. Another stanza from the same poet –

***advaithaveedhee pathhikai rupAsyAh***

***svArAjya simhAsanalabdha deekshAh|***

***s’aThena kenApi vayam haThena***

***dAsee krithAh gopavadhU viTena||***

the meaning of the above stanza is as follows –

A number of the seekers of monism meditate on me. I have accepted the ***advaitha peetham*** called ***svArAjya simhAsanam.*** One foolish lover of the GOpikas had made me his disciple, forcibly.

The same poet has written in his book ***advaithasiddhi*** “***krishNAthparam kimapi deiyvam aham na jAne”*** – I do not know anybody other than Krishna to be God. It is very clear that he does not believe in the monism. The poet further in his poem ***Ananda MandAkini Sathakam*** has shown his commitment to the saguNa Brahman and that he is a vaishNavAgresara.

Coming back to the present context, the most apt sum and substance of the present 7th mantra is given below –

The Super Godhead permeating and pervading each and every entity in the universe is the material cause for everything; is the highest entity having an entity which is neither equal to nor superior than Him; is shining brilliantly with a beautiful bedecked form in His place in the exclusive world.

***To continue-***

In the next posting we shall continue the Mundakopanishad with 8th Mantra

Adiyen Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-20***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the 8th Mantra

***yathhorNanAbhih sRijathe gRihNathe cha***

***yathA pRithivyAm oshadhaya ssambhavanthi|***

***yathA sathah purushAthkes’alomAni***

***thathhA ksharAthsambhavatheeha vis’vam||***

word meanings –

***iha viswam :*** this visible universe

***thathhA sambhavathi :*** is evolving in the same way

***aksharAth :*** from the ***akshara*** parabrahman

***yathA :*** in the same way

***UrNanAbhih :*** as a spider

***sRijathe :*** is creating the web from its inside

***gRihNathe cha :*** and takes it back into it,

***yathA :*** in the same way

***oshadhayah :*** as the herbs

***prithhivyAm :*** from the earth

***sambhavanthi :*** are sprouting

***yathA :*** in the same way as

***kes’a lomAni :*** the hair on the head and body

***sathah purushAth :*** of a living human.

***(sambhavanthi) :*** is growing

Explanation:

Three illustrations are being given to show how the ***akshara Para-Brahman*** is becoming the material cause for the entire creation in this universe. In the universe, the material causes viz., the clay etc. are becoming the causes for creation of the pots, pans etc., with the help of other causatives such as the potter, potter’s wheel, wheel staff etc. That clay is getting mixed with water for the malleability and after thoroughly mixed and mashed, is losing its old shape and form and is getting transformed into shapes of the pots, pans etc. Further there are lots of identical properties between the clay and the pots, pans etc. If it is said that Para brahman is the material cause for the universe, a number of objections may arise. There will be required another instrumental cause to this Brahman like in the previous case. Even if we agree for another entity to be the instrumental cause, that should not belong to this effect – the universe. If that instrumental cause is different than the universe, which is a creation from the Brahman, the statement ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam*** is not sustainable. If the characteristic of the clay is known, it is possible to know about the pots, pans etc. but not about the potter, potter’s wheel, wheel staff etc. In other words, the knowledge about every entity does not occur from the knowledge of the Brahman, since, the entity of instrumental cause, being not a part of the creation from Brahman, is not known from the knowledge of the Brahman the material cause. In addition, since the s’ruthi tells that Brahman is devoid of any transformation, if the transformations are attributed to Brahman, it will be contradictory to the S’ruthis. In addition, while there should be great similarity in characteristics of the ***upAdAna kAraNa*** – the material cause and ***upAdeya kArya*** – the material effect, there is wide dissimilarity between the Brahman and the universe. Thus, if it is said that Brahman is the material cause for everything, three objections are arising. Thus it can be noticed by a keen observer, that the three illustrations are given only to answer these three objections.

1. “***yathhorNanAbhih sRijathe gRihNathe cha”*** - the spider is able to create and withdraw at its free will, the threads of the net. In the same fashion, Brahman, without the help of instrumental and accessorial causes is creating the universe by His intention alone as told by the s’ruthi vAkya ***thadaikshatha bahu syAm prajAyeya***.

(This is the prima facie view. The VisishTAdvaithA philosophical view had been given earlier in the postings 12 and 13, giving a number of rebuttals of the objections.)

***yathhorNanAbhih hRidayAth UrNAm santhathya vakthrathah***

***thayA nihRithya bhUyasthAm grasathyevam janArdanah ||***

1. The spider brings out the thread called ***UrNa*** from its mouth, expands it, and runs around for some time and again withdraws the entire web into it. In the same way, Brahman also creates the universe, which was in him in a nano-micro-form, for his entertainment and dissolves back into Him. This is the meaning of the above shloka from PurANa. Thus from the above illustration, it is clarified that Brahman being the material cause, does not require either Instrumental or accessorial causes. So after having obtained the knowledge about such Brahman, it is possible to know about the entire universe including all the entities in the universe. Thus the first doubt is clarified.
2. ***yathhA pRithivyAm oshadhayah sambhavanthi*** – the earth is becoming the cause for a number of medicinal plants to sprout and grow on it without earth getting any change or transformation of its form. Similarly Brahman, without getting His form of knowledge and bliss, transformed in any way, is becoming the cause to the creation of the universe. Thus with this second illustration, it is further confirmed that Brahman can be material cause even when He does not get transformed, and hence the second doubt is resolved.
3. ***yathA sathah purushAth kes’a lomAni*** – a number of entities like hair on the scalp and body, the nails etc are generated and grow from the body. In absence of the soul, there is no such growth and when the soul is present in the body, all of them grow. Hence they are all having the soul as the source cause for them. But there is a lot of difference between the soul and all these entities. The soul is sentient but all these which grow from the body are insentient. There is no similarity at all. All these are totally different from the soul. Thus it has been established that it is possible for the universe to be created from Brahman, even though both the universe and Brahman do not have any similarity of characteristics. Thus the third objection also is resolved.

With all the above, it is established that the Omnipotent Brahman can create the diverse, wonderful and unique universe, without any other instrumental or accessorial cause, and without any change to His form.

There is an intricate point here to note. In the 1st and 3rd illustrations of this mantra, the bodies of the sentient are the bases for the creation or transformation to thread and hair etc. In spite of that, it is an established convention to consider that the spider and the person to be the material cause for the thread and hair etc. due to the inseparable relationship they have. By giving them as the illustrations, it should be noted that, even though the Brahman having the subtle sentient and insentient is the repository of them, He can still be mentioned as the material cause. But it is impossible for an entity without any qualification – ***nirviSEsha Vasthu***, to be the material cause.

***To continue-***

In the next posting we shall continue the Mundakopanishad with 9th Mantra

Dasoham,

Adiyen,

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-21***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the 9th Mantra and its explanations.

***9th Mantra***

***thapasA cheeyathe brahma thathonnamabhijAyathe|***

***annAthprANo manas sathyam lokAh karmasu chAmRitham||***

Word to word meanings

***thapasA*** = by His intention

***brahma***  = ParamAtma, known by the word ***akshara***

***cheeyathe***  = becomes favourable for the creation

***thathah***  = From Him

***annam***  = the primordial matter called ***avyAkRitha***

***abhijAyathe*** = is created

***annAth***  = From that primordial matter

***prANah*** = the main ***prANa*** the means to life

***manah*** = the means to earn the knowledge

***sathyam***  = the sentient known by the word ***sathyam***

***lokAh***  = the worlds like heaven etc.

***karmasu***  = in the religious rituals like religious sacrifices

***amRthamcha*** = the ***karma***, the means for the release from

the cycle of births and deaths

***(jAyathe)*** = are created.

Explanation –

***thapasA cheeyathe Brahma*** – the word thaapa indicates knowledge. From the root ***thapa Alochane*** this word has the meaning of knowledge. The word thapasA means, the knowledge in the form of intention. From the phrase ***yasya jnAnamayam thapah*** also, the same knowledge of intention only has been given as the meaning of the word tapas. In every Upanishad, it appears often the phrase ***bahusyAm prajAyeya***– which means “in the beginning of the creation, He willed to start creation.” The meaning of the 1st line of the mantra thus is – “Brahman, who willed thus, became ready to start the creation.” The word ***cheeyathe*** means to bulge. Sri S’ankara BhagavathpAda gave at this point two illustrations to show the apt meaning of the word ***cheeyathe.*** They are – 1. Like a seed soaked and bulged state just before bringing out the seedling, 2. Like a father who is overwhelmingly happy with a male child who is going to be born.

“thathonnamabhijAyathe” – In the thaiththireeya Upanishad the word ***anna*** is defined by the sentence ***adyathe aththi cha bhUthAni thasmAdannam thaduchyatha ithi***. Adyathe – eaten by the sentient as food – hence called ***anna***. Another meaning – ***bhuthAni aththi*** – the one which eats the sentient (that gobbles up the living) – hence called ***anna***. It is an accepted fact that the death occurs to the living due to the changes of the food. ***Annam mRthyumtham u jeevAthum Ahuh*** – another s’ruthi vAkya also confirms the same. The meaning of the above s’ruthi vAkya is – the food is the one gives life as well as the death to the living beings. Thus the word annam, standing for the food in general, in this mantra is used to show the primordial matter, without acquiring a form or name, being in the subtle state. That primordial matter only transforms as the five basic elements in the gross form, and ultimately gets transformed into the enjoyable food for the living. Hence in the literary forms this primordial matter only is being shown here by this word anna. In other words this anna – the primordial matter, is created from the ***akshara Brahman*** who willed to create.

***annAth prANah ....amRtham*** – it is from that primordial matter only all the life giving ***prANa, manas,*** the living beings indicated by the word ***sathya***, the higher and nether worlds for the experience of these living beings etc have been created. It has been clarified that the word ***sathya*** stands for the living beings, in SribhAshyam and S'ruthaprakAs’ika – the extensive commentary on Sribhashyam. However, S’ankara BhagavathpAda said that the word Sathya stands for the five basic elements viz., ***AkAs’a*** etc. The propriety of these interpretations is debatable.

An objection –

In the VisishTAdvaithA philosophy, it is said that the primordial matter as well as the ***JIva*** – the soul, are eternal. But in this mantra it is being told that they – anna – the primordial matter and ***sathya*** – the soul, are created from the akshara Brahman. Is this not contradicting the VisishTAdvaithA fundamentals by telling that they are created?

Answer –

There are two classes of the philosophical scientists – ***sathkAryavAdins*** and ***asathkAryavAdins.*** The thArkikas or the logic based philosophers belong to the asathkAryavAdins class. Their assumption is that an entity can be created only when it was nonexistent earlier. The VedAnthins, SAnkhyas etc. belong to the second class viz., sathkAryavAdins. It is accepted by them that, an entity which was existing in a subtle form without any form or name, transforms and evolves a specific entity having a particular name and form for the general transactions. It is called as creation according to these philosophers. This is based on the Vedic authority. Similarly, extinction does not mean totally becoming nonexistent according to them, but it’s loosing the specific name and form and returning back to its subtle form. Thus, all the insentient in the universe is the transformed state of the primordial matter only. In this methodology, when it is said that the primordial matter is created from the Brahman, it means, the primordial matter which is in the Brahman in a subtle state, is transforming into the various thaththvas like mahath, avyaktha etc and finally into the five basic elements – viz., the earth, water, fire etc. There is no creating a new entity which was nonexistent earlier. Again in the ***pralaya*** – the deluge, this goes back into the subtle state only and there is thus neither new creation nor total destruction. That is how it is called eternal. Similarly in case of the soul, when it takes a physical body and a name to experience the fruits of its deeds, it is being called the birth and when the body is removed from the soul, it is called the death. There is neither death nor birth for the soul. Thus the soul also is eternal. As such when the s’ruthi vAkya is telling about creation for the soul and the primordial matter, it is telling about the changed state of these entities from subtle state to gross state. The atomic soul does not undergo a characteristic transformation but it undergoes change in the shape and form or state by the relationship of the soul with the body made of the five basic elements e.g., the soul taking the body of a human being or a celestial being or an animal or being a small fly or some such tiny creature. Thus, the creation can be told to be the contraction and expansion of the JIvA’s knowledge – **i.e., jnAna sankocha and jnAna VikAsa only.** One can find a detailed discussion in the famous Sribhashyam etc.

***To continue***

***In the next posting we shall take up the*** 10th mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-22***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue with the Mundakopanishad with the 10th Mantra and its explanations.

10thMantra

***yassarvajnah sarvavith yasya jnAnamayam thapah|***

***thasmAdethath Brahma nAmarUpamannam cha jAyathe||***

Word meanings –

***yah***  = Whichever akshara-Brahman is knowledgeable

***sarvajnah***  = about the nature and characteristics of everything

***sarvavith***  = about the details of everything

***yasya*** = for which akshara-Brahman

***thapah***  = the penance mentioned as ***thapasA*** in the mantra

***jnAnamayam*** = is the form of His intention (Sankalpa),

***thasmAth*** = from that akshara-Brahman

***ethath Brahma*** = this subtle primordial matter (avyAkRitha prakRithi)

***jAyathe*** = is becoming

***nAmarUpam*** = one with name and form and having

***annam cha***  = the form of a mix with the gross sentient, to be

experienced and enjoyed by the sentient

Explanation –

In this mantra, the creation, the subject of previous mantra beginning with ***thatho annamabhijAyathe*** is being further elaborated in the second half. In the second half of the mantra, His characteristics and nature are being spoken. As such there is no defect of repetition of the previous mantra. In sum and substance it means that the Akshara-Brahman is having the total knowledge about every entity which is being created either through a composite or divested creation. This nature of omniscience indicates the presence of other characteristics like knowledge, strength, control etc., which are useful for the creation.

To clarify that These two words are not repetitions, Bhagavad RAmAnuja etc. have shown the difference of meanings. ***Sarvajnah*** = one who knows about everything in general. ***Sarvavith*** = one who knows everything in details about its characteristics; nature etc. is one of the meaning derived from the root 'vid' in the sense of knowing. If the root vid is taken to mean – to obtain – ***vid- laabhe*** then sarvavith is used in the meaning of one who possesses everything. There is another meaning for the root vid – ***vid –saththaayaam,*** to be. In this case, sarvavith means ***sarva prapancharoopeNa vidyathe*** – one who is having the entire universe as his form

***yasya jnAnamayam thapah*** – in the beginning of the sentences describing the creation, there are two sentences ***sa thapo athapyatha*** and ***thapasA cheeyathe***, with the word thapah as an instrument for Him during creation. It should be noted that this word thapah does not mean the difficulty experienced by the body; – the same as when used with ***Rishis*** – the ascetics. When this word thapah is used in conjunction with Him, this word is derived from the root form ***thapa – aalochane*** giving the meaning of the knowledge in the form of intention.

Such an intention to create by the Brahman, endowed with Omniscience and Omnipotence etc. resulted in the primordial matter in subtle form getting transformed into gross universe consisting of entities with specific individual names and forms. This gross universe is ready to be experienced and enjoyed by the souls. Thus from the above sentence “***yassarvajnah....”***of the Upanishad, it is once more established that the argument of the followers of the nirviSEsha - Brahman or Brahman devoid of any attributes is not sustainable and is void. From this itself, it is clear that the previous mantras like ***yaththadadres’yamagrAhyam....*** etc. only forbade the visible attributes to Him and it is thus confirmed that declaring Brahman as abstract and having no attributes at all is wrong. Because of this denial of the visible worldly attributes and confirming here the extra-ordinary attributes like Omniscience etc. for Brahman, the authoritative scholars have declared that this attributes like Omnipotence, omniscience etc., are not conjured abstracts but are real.

At this juncture it is worthwhile to observe that the followers of ***pAs’upathAgama*** give the meaning for this mantra as follows –

To ensure that these words ***sarvajna and sarvavith*** are not synonyms the first word sarvajna stands for Shiva as ascertained from the common practice and the dictionary ***kRis’AnurethAh sarvajnah;*** and the word ***sarvavith*** indicates his greater knowledge, and the phrase ***thasmAdethath brahmanAma-rUpamannam cha*** – from the instrumental cause – Shiva, the *prakRithi*– the primordial matter, standing for the word Brahma, being the material cause creates the universe. They consider that the primordial matter is the material cause and the instrumental and material causes are not one and same.

This interpretation is not proper for the following reasons –

The clause ***athha parA yayA thadaksharam adhigamyathe*** shows that Brahman – indicated by the word ***akshara*** can be attained through the meditation according to the ***paravidya.***  It has been confirmed that akshara-Brahman is the material cause for the entire universe from the mantra ***yaththadadres’yam – bhUthayonim.....*** With three illustrations being given in the mantra ***yathhorNanAbhih...*** it has been established that Brahman only is the material cause. In the next mantra ***thapasA cheeyathe***... the act of creation is confirmed to be that of Brahman; and that it is done by mere intention of Brahman. Further for that akshara-Brahman, omnipotence and omniscience are declared according to the mantra ***yassarvajnah sarvavith.*** With all these above reasons and because the meaning of the word ***thapah*** has been explained in the mantra by the phrase ***yasya jnAnamayam thapah,*** it is quite clear all these mantras are speaking in one voice that Brahman is the material cause, and are not differentiating that the primordial matter is the material cause and Brahman is the instrumental cause. In addition, from the statement ***eka vijnAnena sarvavijnAnam,*** it is clear that the material cause and instrumental cause are one and same only and the instrumental cause being different does not stand at all. If it were different than the material cause, the statement has to become a *sentence void*.

Now for the argument that the word ***sarvajna stands for Shiva***, from the dictionary mentioned above, the same dictionary gives ***Buddha*** as another meaning for the word ***sarvajna*** giving a scope for this ***Buddha*** to be the instrumental cause. As such there is authenticity of this quoted dictionary and hence the argument by the ***pAsupatha*** followers stands fallen flat. Thus it can be seen this phrase ***yassarvajnah*** is only referring by the word ***yah*** to the akshara-Brahman quoted earlier. It further can be deduced from all the above as well as the style of the sentence, that the phrase used the word ***sarvajna*** with meaning derived from the word formation only and not from the practice in vogue.

Thus in the first part of the Upanishad, it is established that the akshara-Brahman is both the material and instrumental cause. Further, the creation of the universe from that akshara-Brahman, endowed with the Omnipotence and Omniscience, also is established. It can be understood that the primordial matter having the sentient also along-with it, like the wax mixed with the gold dust is getting transformed into the gross form in the creation. Before the creation started, it can also be seen that the primordial matter, in a subtle form, is present in the Brahman as a part of Him.

***To continue***

**In the next posting we shall take up the 2nd part of the Upanishad**.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-23***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 2nd part of the Mundakopanishad and its explanations.

**2nd Part – 1st Mantra**

***thadethath sathyam-***

***manthreshu karmAni kavayo yAnyapas’yan|***

***thAni threthAyAm bahuthhA santhathAni|***

***thAnyAcharathha niyatham sathyakAmAh|***

***esha vah panthhAh sukRithasya loke|***

**Word meanings-**

***ethath***= This akshara-Brahman

***thad*** = which has been established as the material cause for every entity

***sathyam*** = is eternal and does not undergo any transformations such as birth, death etc.

***kavayah*** = the ascetics (Rishis)

***apas’yan*** = observed

***yAnikarmANi*** = which religious rituals prescribed

***manthreshu*** = in the Vedas

***thAni*** = those rituals

***santhathAni*** = are prescribed as the ones to be performed by the individuals

***threthAyAm*** = with the householder’s three auspicious fires called threthA

***bahuthhA***= according to the status of the individual performer.

***sathyakAmAh*** = You, seekers of the court of Brahman, known by the word Sathya,

***thAnyAcharathha*** = do perform these rituals

***niyatham*** = regularly without fail.

***esha panthhAh*** = this is the means

***Vah*** = for you,

***sukRithasya loke***= for attaining release, the benefit of the knowledge of Brahman.

Explanation –

Thadethath sathyam – the akshara-parabrahman, who was said to be the material cause, in the previous chapter, is without any transformations. The normal transformations are asthi - come into existence, jaayathe – takes birth, pariNamathe – becomes young, vardhathe – grows into mature stature, apaksheeyathe – starts decline, nas’yathi – perishes. Such changes are not there for the Brahman. A question may arise – Any material cause is bound to get transformed into a particular shape etc! So is it not contradicting the Vedic saying that there are no changes to Brahman? This mantra is giving the answer to that question saying that the Brahman is devoid of any changes, it does not change. The underlying principle is that the changes are not for the Brahman but the changes do occur only to the sentient and insentient which are his bodies only. As such there is no contradiction with the S'ruthi vAkya.

The substance of this mantra can be summarised as below –

“Mantreshu karmANi ...” – the Rishis – the ascetics, by the power of their ***yoga VidyA*** – the concentration of all their capabilities in a single direction, are capable of knowing about the subjects, that an ordinary person with the help of the sensory organs he is endowed with could not know. They could know completely about the various rituals like the sacrificial offerings in the sacrificial fires etc., prescribed in the four Vedas after going through them critically. They concluded that one can obtain the respective benefits by performing with the three auspicious fires called ***Gaarhapathyam, Aahavaneeyam and dakshiNam*** desiring whatever benefits they wanted. All the seekers of the parabrahman identified by the word ***sathya***, should perform these rituals without any desire for reaping the small fruits from them. These will be subsidiaries for the BrahmopAsana being done by you.

The use of the phrase “***thadethath sathyam***” in the first sentence of the mantra makes it known that Brahman is devoid of any transformation and is identified by the word ***sathyam***. It further directs all those ***sathyakAmAs –*** who desire to attain that ***sathyam,*** to perform without fail, these Vedic rituals. From all the above, it is crystal-clear without any ambiguity that ***karmAnushThanam –***the performance of the Vedic rituals is identified as a subsidiary for the BrahmavidyAnishThha.

However, it has been stated in the S’ankara bhashya, that all these rituals, mentioned in this 2nd part of the Upanishad, are prescribed for those desiring the lowly benefits by the Rig-Veda etc, called as avaravidyas; and they are not suitable for the BrahmavidyAnishThhars. This is totally out of context. Why should it be mentioned “***thAnyAcharathha*** – perform those rituals” in the mantra and that too in the chapter of Brahmavidya, if they are not to be performed by the BrahmavidyAnishThhars?

It may be argued that the notes of S’ankara are in concurrence of the main subject in the chapter because, the fruits of the Vedic rituals are of very temporary nature and are of very low category and it is clear that a BrahmavidyAnishThhan should steer away from such practices according to the mantras like ***plavAhyethe adRiDhA yajnarUpAh*** and ***pareekshya lokAn karmachithAn***.

It is clear that there is no contradiction for the present mantra which says ***thAnyAcharathha*** and the above mentioned mantra-VAkyas which conclude that such of the rituals are to be avoided because of the inauspicious fruits of such rituals. The mantra specifies the performers as ***sathyakAmAs*** – desirous of attaining Brahman only and it mandates performance of the Vedic rituals without looking for the benefits to accrue to them. It is proven according to the Vedic sentences like ***nAkasya pRishThe sukRithenubhUthvA*** that those persons, performing the Vedic rituals with a desire of obtaining the fruits of living in the higher worlds like heaven etc. will eventually come back into the worlds which are still lower than what they lived in before attaining the heavens after their enjoyment tenure is completed according to the Vedic sentence ***imam lOkam heenatharam chAvis’anthi***. From the above it is very clear that performing the Vedic rituals aiming at the benefits for self should be avoided. The following shlokas from Bhagavad-Gita amply make it clear that the performance of the Vedic rituals is divided into two categories – one aiming at getting the benefits for self and another without desiring for any benefits.

***yajno dAnam thapah karma pAvanAni maneeshiNAm|***

***evam jnAthvA kRitham karma pUrvairapi mumukshubhih||***

***ethAnyapi thu karmANi sangam thyakthvA phalAni cha|***

***karthavyAneethi me pArthha! Nis’chitham mathamuththamam||***

In our IS'AvASyOpanishad- vyAkhyAna, this aspect has been widely discussed.

Thus for a mumukshu – the seeker of the relief from the bondage, it is clearly established that the performing the Vedic rituals devoid of anticipation of the benefits is to be done. The case being so clearly for the performance of the Vedic rituals by the seeker, stating that performance of the Vedic rituals is only for the ignorant persons desirous of attaining the benefits for themselves is clearly not a tenable one.

Further this phrase ***thadethath sathyam*** appears in the beginning of the 2nd and 3rd parts of this Upanishad. In this 2nd part of the Upanishad, Sri S’ankara establishes that the rituals specified by the Rig-Veda etc. in the aparavidyas are undoubtedly means for the obtaining the desired benefit and hence such performance of Vedic rituals has been praised. In reality, these rituals and the benefits arising out of them are all imaginary only and not real according to Sri S’ankara. But in the 3rd part of the Upanishad, according to Sri S’ankara again, the Brahman, devoid of attributes, as identified by the paravidyas is stated to be real and not imaginary from the same phrase ***thadethath sathyam***. Thus it can be seen that for the same phrase, at one place, the meaning of this phrase is mentioned to be unreal and imaginary and at another place, the meaning for the same phrase is given as real and is desirable one. There appear no reasons for this variance and it appears that what comes to the mind at that time is being given as the meaning without any consistency.

***To continue***

**In the next posting we shall take up the 2ndMantra of this part of the Upanishad**.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-24***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

Let me at the first opportunity offer my sincere regrets in not being able to post in the recent past. That was due to my pressing preoccupations. I request the Bhagavathas to kindly forgive me for this delay

In this posting we shall take up the subsequent mantras of this 2nd part of the Mundakopanishad and its explanations.

***2nd Mantra***

***yadA lelAyathehyarchih samiddhe havyavAhane|***

***thadAjya bhAgAvanthareNAhutheeh prathipAdayechchhraddhayA hutham||***

Word meanings –

***yadA***  = when

***archih***  = the flame

***samiddhe***  = kindled

***havyavAhane***  = in the fire

***lelAyathe hi***  = leaps upwards

***thadA***  = then

***Ahutheeh***  = the sacrificial offerings (to the specific gods)

***prathipAdayeth***  =should be offered

***AjyabhAgAvanthareNa*** = between two consecutive offerings called AjyabhAgas.

Then

***hutham***  = it will be considered to have been offered

***s’raddhayA*** = with reverence.

Explanation –

The previous mantra makes it clear that all the rituals to be performed with the sacrificial fires are prescribed to be definitely performed by the seeker. In this mantra, the procedure to be followed in performing the rituals with the three sacrificial fires called ***threthAgnis.***  The two sacrificial offerings offered in the south and north sides of the sacrificial fire ***Aahavaneeyam*** with chanting ***agnaye svAhA*** and ***somAya svAhA*** respectively are called ***Ajya bhAgas***. The daily ritualistic offerings are to be offered in the area between these two offerings only. It is essential that the offerings should be offered only when the flame is kindled and becomes strong by the sacred fuels. Then only it will be considered that the offerings are done with due diligence and reverence.

***3rd Mantra –***

***yasyAgnihothram adars’am apaurNamAsam***

***achAthurmAsyam anAgrayaNam athithhivarjitham cha***

***ahutham avais’vadevam avidhinA hutham***

***AsapthamAn thasya lokAn hinasthi||***

Word meanings –

***yasya***  = whose

***agnihothram***  = eternal (regular) sacrificial fire

***ahutham***  = is offered

***avidhinA***  = not as per the prescribed procedure and

***adars’am***  = without the offerings due on the new moon day

***apaurNamAsam*** = without the offerings due on the full moon day

***achAthurmAsyam***  = without the offerings due in the prescribed four month period

***anAgrayaNam***  = without the offerings due in the autumn period

***athithhivarjitham***  = without offering the prayers to the guest

***cha*** = and

***hutham***  = offered

***avais’vadevam***  = without performing the sacrificial vais’vadevam

that sacrificial fire

***hinasthi***  = destructs

***thasya*** = his

***lokAn***  = beneficial fruits of the sacrificial offerings

***AsapthamAn***  = up to seven tiers or up to seven generations

Explanations –

Every twice born brAhmaNa should perform the prescribed the ***pancha mahA yajnas*** - the five sacrificial offerings. Along with them he should perform the sacrificial offerings due on every new moon and full moon days; offerings called ***ChAthurmAsyam, AgrayaNa ishTi, vais’vadevam, offerings to the unannounced-guest*** during the prescribed times as per the prescribed procedures. ***chAthurmAsyam*** is a specific sacrificial offering to be performed from the 1st day of dark half of ***phAlguNa*** month till the full moon day of ***AshADha*** month. A special sacrificial offering called ***ishTi*** to be performed for a short period during the Autumn with the new grain received during the period. All these sacrificial offerings are to be performed properly as per prescribed procedure. If there is any deviation during the performance, his sacrificial fire will be useless. Even if done in a wrong sequence, it will be as good as not done and all his efforts in performing them will be waste only.

***AsapthamAn thasya lokAn hinasthi*** – All these sacrificial offerings if done properly, will result in the performer attaining the seven higher worlds called ***bhUh, bhuvah, suvah mahah, janah, thapah, sathyam***. This is one interpretation. There can be another interpretation in which if the sacrificial offerings are not done as per prescribed procedure, the performer and his seven generations will stand to lose their sacrificial fire as well as the benefits from such offerings. The seven generations are considered to be three generations each before and after him.

***4th Mantra***

***kALee karALee cha manojavA cha sulohithA yA cha sudhUmravarNA|***

***sphulinginee vis’varUpee cha devee lelAyamAnA ithi sapthajihvAh||***

Explanation –

During the offering during the Homa period, there are seven types of flames for the sacrificial fire. These flames are named as ***kALee, karALee, manojavA, sulohithA, sudhUmravarNA, sphulinginee*** and ***vis’varUpee.*** The word ***devee*** carries a meaning of the one which is shining. It is an adjective to the flame called ***visvarUpee. JihvA*** means flame. The word ***cha*** means also. Since the words are all having their meanings clear, word to word meanings are not given separately.

***5th Mantra***

***etheshu yas’charathe bhrAjamAneshu yadhAkAlam chAhuthayo hyAdadAyan|***

***tham nayanthyethAh sUryaras’mayo yathra devAnAm pathirekodhivAsah||***

Word meanings

***ethAh Ahuthayah***  = these ritualistic offerings

***sUryaras’mayah cha =*** in the form of the rays of sun

***nayanthi***  = take

***tham***  = him,

***yah***  = that person, who

***charathe***  = offers the ***Homa***

***yadhAkAlam,*** = at the proper times

***bhrAjamAneshu***  = into the strongly leaping

***etheshu***  = these seven flames,

***AdadAyan*** = along with them

to such a place called Sathyaloka,

***yathra*** = where

***devAnAm ekah pathih***= their main lord, the four faced Brahma

***adhivAsah*** = lives.

Explanation –

It has so far been made known that the Vedic rituals such as ***yajnas*** etc., seen by Rishis – the ascetics, will bring all the worldly wealth like higher heavens, cattle, farm etc., as well as the most desirable benefit in the form of the release – the ***mOkSha***. For the seeker who discards the other menial benefits, these rituals like sacrificial offerings in the sacred fires will become the means to achieve the release from the bondage by increasing the devotion in him through the removal of the pollutants of the mind in the form of the heinous deeds – ***the papas.***  For a person, who desires higher worlds like heavens etc, they will be the means to obtain such benefits. In this fifth mantra and the next mantra, it is made known that a person who performs the sacrificial offerings in the seven flames of the sacred fire with the specified items, desirous of higher worlds, these offerings will become like the sun’s rays and through the rays of sun, take this performer to those worlds like the world of the four-faced god etc. We can see the subtle difference in the meaning of the word ***devAnAm pathih*** between S’ankara and RangaRAmAnuja. S’ankara gave the meaning as Indra, where as RangaRAmAnuja gave its meaning as the four faced Brahma. In the next 6th Mantra the word “Brahmaloka” appears distinctly and hence, according to RangaRAmAnuja muni, the ultimate fruit of the meditation, as mentioned in these two mantras is attaining the world of this four faced Brahma only. However, S’ankara BhagavathpAda says this word “Brahmaloka” appearing in these two mantras means the world of Indra only and the phrase “***yathrAmRithah sa purusha hi avyayAthmA”***  of the forthcoming 11th mantra of this section means the world of the four-faced Brahma. In the explanation of the 11th mantra of this section, we shall see the suitableness of these two meanings.

It is perplexing to note that RangaRAmAnuja commented in BhAvaprakAs'ikA – his commentary on Sribhashyam, while explaining version of the Mundakopanishad, supporting RAmAnuja’s line of Brahma sutra Bhashya, mentioned the meaning of this word “***devAnAm pathih”*** as “***indralokam nayantheethyarthhah***” – “it means leading to the world of Indra”.

***To continue***

**In the next posting we shall take up the 6th Mantra of this part of the Upanishad**.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-25***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 6th and subsequent mantras of this 2nd part of the Mundakopanishad and its explanations.

Mantra -6

***ehyeheethi thamAhuthayah suvarchasah***

***sUryasya ras’mibhi ryajamAnam vahanthi|***

***priyam vAcham abhivadanthyo archayanthyah***

***esha vah puNyassukRitho brahmalokah||***

******

******

******

******

***Word Meanings***

***Suvarchasah*** = bright

***Ahuthayah*** = sacrificial flames

***sUryasya ras’mibhih***  = along with the sun’s rays

***ehyeheethi*** = beckoning with

***abhivadanthyah*** = singing

***priyam vAcham*** = welcoming voices

***vahanthi*** = are taking

***tham yajamAnam*** = that performer of the yajna to the World of Brahma

***eshah puNyo brahmalokah*** = (saying) here is the heavenly Brahmaloka earned

by you

***vah sukRithah ithi*** = by virtue of your meritorious pious deeds

Explanation:

The sacrificial offerings in the sacred flames offered for the gods in the various sacrifices – ***Yajnas***, are joined by the bright rays of the sun-god. They invite honourably the performer of these sacrifices on his leaving the mortal body saying “here is your desired virtuous world, you had earned by the virtuous acts done by you. They take him to those worlds of four-faced brahma or the world of bhUh, bhuvah etc. The world of the four faced Brahma mentioned in this and the previous mantra stands for the other higher worlds like bhUlOka bhuvarloka, suvarloka etc. The substance of these two mantras is that the persons desirous of benefits like achieving these higher worlds obtain them by the power of their offerings in the sacred fires.

**7th Mantra**

***plavAhyethe adRiDhA yajnarUpAh***

***ashTAdas’oktham avaram yeshu karma|***

***ethachchhreyo ye abhinandanthi mUDhAh***

***jarAmRithyum the punarevApiyanthi||***

******

******

******

******

Word Meanings

***karma*** = this deed like a sacred sacrifice

***ashTAdas’oktham***  = mentioned in the 18 scriptures called ***smRithis***

***yeshu***  = being performed by such persons

***avaram***  = is of low value since it is performed with a motive of

accruing benefits

***ethe yajnarUpAh***  = These persons, who perform mainly such sacrifices

***adRiDhAh plavAh hi*** = are like disabled boats (unfit for sailing)

***the, yemUDhAh*** = such fools, who

***abhinandanthi*** = glorify

***ethachchhreyo***  = that such sacrifices are the best ones

***apiyanthi*** = obtain

***punareva*** = again

***jarAmRithyum***  = old age and death. (life and death)

Explanation –

Lord Krishna says in the shloka

***AbrahmabhuvanAllokAh punarAvarthino arjuna|***

***mAmupethya thu kauntheya punarjanma na vidyathe||*** of Bhagavad Gita that all the worlds situated in the BrahmANDa – the great shell, are all only of a temporary nature. He further states that those souls who reach such worlds by virtue of their good deeds, enjoy those higher worlds, and after the enjoyment is completed have to go back to the cycle of deaths and births. Returning to the cycle of the births and deaths does not happen only to those, who reach the extra-ordinary and non-primordial world of SrivaikunTha in His court. Thus it is concluded that those who perform the sacrificial Yajnas etc with a motive of obtaining benefit – ***phalAbhisandhi***, like attaining the world of Indra or four-faced Brahma etc., by spending lot of energy and money etc., are only ignorant or fools. Further, it is established by this mantra that they cannot cross over the sea of this cycle of births and deaths.

When it is said ***ashTAdas’oktham avaram karma***, it can be taken as those sacred rituals as specified in the 18 books of ***smRithis*** – the scriptures, when performed with the motive of enjoying the benefits by the self. In such case, they belong to the lower order only. That is what is meant by the word ***avaram karma.*** It can be also taken as those rituals performed by the head, his wife and 16 priests – in total by 18 persons and hence can be termed as ***ashTAdas’oktham.*** Whoever performs such rituals, are considered as dilapidated boats. Such boats cannot complete the sailing to the other side and are destined to sink midway. Similarly these persons also will not be able to tide over and come out of the cycle of births and deaths.

***Ethachchhreyah ye abhinandanthi mUDhAh*** – who ever considers these rituals – these sacrificial rituals – to bring about a permanent well being and eternal bliss, he is a fool or ignorant person. For him there is no respite from the miseries of these primordial bondages. From the next three mantras also it will be clearly observed that those persons who perform the ritualistic deeds in anticipation of benefits instead of renouncing the benefits are considered as ignorant beings only.

**8th Mantra**

***avidyAyA manthare varthamAnAh***

***svayam dheerAh panDitham manyamAnAh|***

***janghanyamAnAh pariyanthi mUDhAh***

***andhenaiva neeyamAnA yathhAndhAh||***

******

******

******

******

Word Meanings –

***varthamAnAh*** = those who are

***avidyAyAm anthare*** = in deep ignorance

***manyamAnAh***  = those who consider them to be

***dheerAh***  = wise

***svayam***  = and themselves to be

***panDitham***  = scholastic, and

***mUDhAh***  = the fools

***janghanyamAnAh***  = suffering repeatedly by the three miseries of the humans

***pariyanthi***  = are rotating in the cycle of births and deaths only

***yathhA*** = like

***andhAh*** = the blind persons

***neeyamAnAh***  = being led

***andhena*** = by another blind person

***eva*** = only

Explanation –

***avidyAyAm anthare*** – considering the insentient body, which is not the soul – as soul is the first ignorance. Considering the self, who always belongs to and controlled by Him, to be independent, is the second ignorance. This is according to “***anAthmani AthmabuddhiryA asve svamithi yA mathih –*** the authentic statement of the scriptures. Thus those fools, who are totally drowned in spiritual ignorance, boasting to be highly intelligent and very learned, start spreading that those rituals, known to them only are the means to ensure well being, while performing those rituals, are simply and repeatedly gyrating in the cycle of births and deaths without any relief from such gyrations. Taking them as models for them to follow, some more fools are continuing to perform such rituals and go round on the cycle of births and deaths. This situation is like the blind persons being lead by another blind person and going round and round without reaching their goal.

***To continue***

**In the next posting we shall take up the 9th Mantra of this 2ndpart of the Upanishad**.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-26***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 9th Mantra of this 2nd part.

**9th Mantra**

***avidyAyAm bahuthhA varthamAnAh***

***vayam kRithArthhAh ithyabhimanyanthi bAlAh |***

***yathkarmiNo na pravedayanthi rAgAth***

***thenAthurAh ksheeNa lokAh chyavanthe||***

Word Meanings –

***bAlAh***  = the ignorant (unintelligent),

***varthamAnAh***  = deeply sunk

***avidyAyAm***  = in the ignorance

***bahuthhA*** = in a multitude

***abhimanyanthi***  = are having a false pride that

***vayam***  = we

***kRithArthhAh ithi***  = have made it to the realisation of benefit.

***karmiNah***  = but they, the performers of all the rituals as prescribed,

***AthurAh***  = being deeply mired in miseries

***chyavanthe*** = slide down

***ksheeNa lokAh***  = from those higher worlds – the benefits of their rituals performed they were enjoying,

***yath na pravedayanthi***=without knowing the reality that

***thena***  = due to the reason of

***rAgAth***  = their desire to reap the benefits for themselves out of the rituals they have performed.

Substance of the Mantra – The ignorant performers of the rituals, desirous of the benefits from these rituals to accrue to themselves, will slide down to the cycle of births and deaths after their tenure in those higher worlds comes to an end because their fruits of the rituals they had performed are fully spent. When they are returning, they become sad because they had to return. At the same time they are sad because they are not aware as to why they had to return back.

Explanation –

The word ***bahuthhA*** is indicating the attaining the various bodies of the humans, devatas – the lesser gods, etc. In addition It indicates the soul having an attachment for that body. Such ignorant persons have that false pride thinking that all these benefits in these bodies are obtained by their efforts and they feel that these are permanent to them. They have an infatuation in these benefits from their deeds as an addiction. Because of this infatuation with these menial benefits, they are unable to know the reality. Thus without knowing their own nature, it became an ageless matter of them getting into the lowliest cycle of births and deaths, as soon as the effect of their deeds is exhausted by experiencing them.

Bhagavad-Gita says “***phale saktho nibadhyathe”*** – bound by the infatuation with the fruits of their deeds. The bondage with this earthly cycle of births and deaths is the result of their strong infatuation for enjoying the fruits of their deeds only. If the human being sliding to this stage where he thinks that if he does not enjoy a particular earthly pleasure, he will not be able to live even for a moment; it is due to his strong addiction to experiencing these pleasures – the fruits of his deeds, only. Kalidasa, the famous poet laureate of Sanskrit literature says while describing the lowly state of ***agnivarNa –***

***gauravAdyadapi jAthu manthriNAm dars’anam prakRithi kAnkshitam dadau|***

***thadgavAksha vivarAlambinA kevalena charaNena kalpitham.***

This agnivarNa was born after many generations of the kings who had been trained and refined by sage VasishTha. He was a Casanova and died with tuberculosis as a result of his nature of flirting with the women of harem. It was so full that when his subjects wanted to see him and pay their obeisance to him, he did not want to leave the harem. When his ministers insisted that they cannot sustain the pressure from the public demanding that the king should appear in his court for them to have his dars'an, instead of acceding to their strong desire, he offered to show his feet through the window of the harem so that they can see them and pay their obeisance. This is an illustration to show the extent to which a man can slide down in his stature because of his strong addiction to enjoy the worldly pleasures. No further illustrations are needed since the present condition in the society is similar.

***To Continue*** –

In the next posting we shall take up the 10th Mantra of this 2nd part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-27***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 10thand 11thMantras of this 2nd part.

**10th Mantra**

**Mantra – 10**

***ishTApUrtham manyamAnA varishTham***

***nAnyachchhreyo vedayanthe pramUDhAh|***

***nAkasya pRishThe sukRithe anubhUthvA***

***imam lOkam heenatharam chAvis’anthi||***

Word Meanings:

***pramUDhAh*** = highly ignorant persons

***manyamAnAh*** = considering

***ishTApUrtham*** = the Yajnas prescribed by the S’ruthis and digging of wells and big tanks as prescribed in the smRithis,

***varishTham*** = as the best means to achieve the desired benefits

***na vedayanthe***  = are unable to know

***(ithi)*** = that

***anyath s’reyah*** = the other one – the court of the Lord, is the most and best desired benefit

***the,***  = and they

***anubhUthvA***  = experience

***sukRithe***  = benefits from the virtuous deeds done by them

***nAkasya***  = in the higher worlds of the heavens’

***pRishThe***  = backyards

***Avis’anthi***  = reach

***imam lOkam*** = this world of the humans

***heenatharam cha*** = and still lower worlds like the hell etc.

Explanation:

The deeds like the Yajnas – the sacrifices in the auspicious fires, etc., are called ***ishTis*** and digging the wells and constructing fresh water and irrigation tanks etc., for the benefit of the public, are called ***pUrthams***. Some of the ignorant persons misconstrue these deeds to be the means to obtain the eternal happiness. They are not aware that only the ***BrahmajnAna*** – the real knowledge of Brahman, begets the eternal bliss. They enjoy the heavens and other higher worlds by virtue of their virtuous deeds like the performing the Yajnas and pUrthams. These experiences after using the result of these deeds will make these persons to go back to the earthly world and still nether worlds to experience the result of the heinous deeds done by them. Obviously these experiences in the higher worlds are not eternal. But they do not know this. Thus by these mantras so far explained it is established by them that the fate of those, who perform their ritualistic deeds with a desire that the benefits arising out of these deeds to accrue to them, is as explained above only. The eternal bliss is available only through the ***BrahmajnAna*** is also thus established by the mantras so far explained.

***11th Mantra***

***thapas’s’raddhe yehyupavasanthyaraNye***

***s’AnthA vidvAnso bhaikshacharyAm charanthah|***

***sUryadvAreNa the virajAh prayAnthi***

***yathrAmRitha ssa purusha hyavyayAthmA||***

Explanation:

***yevidvAnsah*** = those having acquired the knowledge of Brahman

***s'AnthAh*** = and having total control on all their sensory organs

***charanthah*** = and eke out the living

***bhaikshacharyAm*** = by seeking alms (being ascetics).

***upavasanthi hi*** = stay by

***thapas’s’raddhe***  = performing their deeds and having the knowledge of Brahman

***araNye*** = in the woods (forests).

***the*** = they

***virajAh*** = having been cleared off the fruits of their deeds,

***prayAnthi*** = travel

***thathra*** = there,

***sUryadvAreNa***  = through an area of the solar effects

***yathra*** = where

***avyayAthmA***  = the personality, devoid of any changes to his personality

***amRithah*** = and is having the most auspicious body

***sah purushah*** = that He-man

***asthi*** = is there.

Substance of the mantra –

# The wise having acquired the true knowledge about Brahman and His worship living in the forests and eke out their living by the alms collected, and having control of their sensory organs are cleared of the fruits of their deeds. They proceed through the sphere of the sun-god to the highest world –SrivaikunTha, where Sriman nArAyaNA resides having the most beautiful and eternal body, devoid of any changes.

Explanation:

The discussion on the performance of the rituals is the subject from the beginning of this second part as is said in the saying ***manthreshu karmANi kavayah.***  In the first mantra, it was prescribed ***thAnyAcharathha niyatham sathyakAmah –*** that the ***mumukshus*** – the seekers of the court of Brahman should perform all the prescribed ritualistic deeds without anticipation of any benefit out of these deeds for them. Further the excellence of the sacrificial fire, in which the offerings are offered in these deeds, was explained. It is explained there that the performers of these deeds with a desire to get the benefits for them will be taken to the higher worlds by these offerings on the medium of the sun’s rays. Further, it has been told that such benefits are of totally temporary nature only after they have exhausted the effect of the virtuous deeds, they will be sent back to this earthly world only as all the favours they enjoyed in these higher worlds – the heavens etc., are expendable and purely of a temporary nature. And hence, these people are termed as ignorant persons or ***ajnAnis***. they come back to the earthly world after their fruits of the deeds are spent as enjoyment in the higher worlds.

In the present mantra, it is explained that the conducting the deeds prescribed for the JIvA’s stage as ascetic and the meditation on Brahman being the daily ritual for him, will be giving a peaceful mind during his stay in the forests as ***vAnaprasthan***. These deeds will result in the effect of the fruits of his deeds – both puNya and papa karmas being brought down and this person will be taken through the sun’s field to the court of Him for His enjoying the presence of this JIvA. In turn this JIva will be enjoying the presence of Him and his service to Him. Thus from the words ***s’AnthAh, araNye, bhaikshacharyAm,*** it will be seen that such persons as mentioned above are not having even an iota of interest in the worldly enjoyments. Further the word ***vidvAnsah*** that such persons are not the ignorant persons but highly learned about Brahman. These persons do perform the scriptural rituals prescribed for them indicated by the word ***tapas*** and the meditation on Brahman indicated by the word ***s’raddhA.*** As a result of such performance, he gets released from the bondage of Karma and attains the presence in the court of the Lord. This is the result of such strict adherence to the scriptural directions as per the Vedas and scriptures. From this it will be known for obtaining the release from bondage of births and deaths and with the karma, it is essential for one to perform not only the meditation on the Brahman but also the scriptural rituals as prescribed without anticipating any benefit for the self as an accessory to the meditation on Brahman.

This has been explained by Bhagavad RAmAnuja in ***adRis’yatvAdhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam in the phrase – ***thapas’s’raddhe ye hyupavasanthyaraNye – ithyAdinA punarapi phalAbhisandhi rahitham jnAninAnushThitham karma brahmaprApthaye bhavatheethi pras’asya***. It means that as said in the scriptural sentence ***thapas’s’raddhe ye hi upavasanthi araNye*** etc., it is once more stated that the daily routine of performance of the rituals by the wise, without anticipating any accrual of the benefit for self, will result in the wise attaining the mOkSha – the presence in the court of the Brahman. By putting a question as to how the performing the ritualistic deeds prescribed by the scriptures for the respective stages of the humans, will become the means to attain the release of the soul – the Atma, Srimad RAmAnuja in the ***laghusiddhAntha*** by quoting the authoritative statements, has justified that performing the prescribed rituals as an accessory to the Brahmavidya – having the knowledge of Brahman, will become the means to attain the Brahman. He authenticated this statement, by quoting a number of authenticities from a number of scriptures such as the following quotes -– ***avidyayA mRithyum theerthvA vidyayA amRitham as’nuthe*** from the IS'AvASyOpanishad, ***dharmeNa pApam apanudathi*** another quote from the Vedas, ***iyAza sopi subahUn yajnAn – brahmavidyAm adhisThAya...***from the VishNu purANa, thapasA ***kilbisham hanthi vidyayAmRithamas’nuthe*** from the Manu smRithi etc.

It has been explained that performance of such rituals will be able to remove the total quantity of the heinous deeds done by him. When this obstruction is removed from the path of attaining the release from this bondage of births and deaths, uninterrupted and continuous meditation on the Brahman will become possible and through this, the release from the cycle of births and death will be resulting. So, performing the rituals is the accessory for the meditation on the Brahman. Thus the direct means for the release is the meditation on Brahman in the form of the love and devotion to Him only.

In the present mantra, from the quotations ***avidyayA mRithyum theerthvA,*** and ***thapasA kilbisham hanthi,*** it is established that the word ***tapas*** means the performing the prescribed deeds and gives rise to the form of freedom from the attachment. The words ***s’raddhA*** and ***amRitha*** remind us the quotation ***vidyayA amRitham as’nuthe*** and make it clear that the meditation on the Brahman along with the accessory – the performing the rituals as prescribed, is the means for attaining the release from the cycle of births and deaths. Thus it is established that the performing the prescribed rituals without anticipating the benefits becomes the accessorial means for attaining the Brahman. This is the substance of the above mentioned quote from ***adRis’yatvAdhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam.

Here, Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni mentioned that the word ***tapa means*** Brahman and the word ***s’raddhA*** means the profound dedication. The source for such mention is RAmAnuja’s statement in Sribhashya - as follows – the words ***s’raddhA and tapas*** in the sentence from ChAndOgya – ***thadya iththham viduh ye chemeraNye s’raddhA thapa ithyupAsathe*** are explained as ***s’raddhApUrvakam brahmopAseenAms’cha*** - so the word tapas denotes Brahman as understood by RAmAnuja – concludes RangaRAmAnuja muni. He further strengthens this from SrI S’ruthaprakAs’ikAchArya’s commentary also in this respect. Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAchArya mentions that in the phrase ***s’raddhAm sathyamupAsathe*** of BRihadAraNyaka the word ***sathya*** is used in place of ***tapas*** after the word ***s’raddhA.*** Hence the word ***tapas*** thus mean ***sathyam***. The word ***sathyam*** again means Brahman only in the scriptures and hence the word ***tapa denotes*** Brahman. In view of the above interpretations, Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni says that he had concluded the meanings as above.

***To Continue*** –

In the next posting we shall continue explanation of the 11th Mantra of this 2nd part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-28***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of the 11th Mantra of this 2nd part.

In the ***aniyamAdhikaraNa*** though the meanings of these words ***s’raddhA*** and ***tapas*** have been commented by S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya as in the previous Para, in the ***adRis’yatvAdhikaraNa Bhagavad RAmAnuja***  has commented as ***thapas’s’raddhe yehyupavasanthi ithyAdinA punarapi phalAbhisandhi rahitham jnAninAnushThitham karma brahma-prApthaye bhavatheethi pras’asya***  which confirms that this sentence from Mundakopanishad is meaning that the performance of the deeds by the meditator is to be performed without fail to attain the Brahman. Hence it is our considered opinion that it is quite appropriate to assert that the words ***tapas ‘s’raddhA*** denote the karma and jnAna only. Since this 2nd part of this Upanishad is about the karma only such meaning only will be the most appropriate to the context. If the meaning for this word tapas is said to be Brahman there is no supporting statement to state that the Karma is praised in this context when the statement from Sribhashyam – ***punarapi phalAbhisandhirahitham jnAninA anushThitham karma ….pras’asya.*** Further it has already been shown earlier that the word tapa denotes the karma – the performance of the deeds, from the authentications like ***thapasA kilbisham hanthi***. The commentary by Sri S’ankara also shows the meanings of the words ***tapas*** and ***s’raddhA*** in the same light.

An examination of Sri S’ankara’s commentary

It may be recalled that at the beginning of this 2nd section there was already a mention of the explanation by Sri S’ankara while explaining the 1st mantra. He stated that the souls having performed the deeds alone will be blessed with the heavens while explaining the mantras which begin with ***yathra devAnAm pathirekodhivAsah*** and ***esha nah puNyassukRitho brahmalokah***. His commentary for the present mantra reads as follows – ***thapah – svAs’ramavihitham karma. S’raddhA – hiraNyagarbhAdi vishayA VidyA. the thapas’s’raddhe upavasanthi – sevanthe. araNye varthamAnAh s’AnthAh – uparathakaraNa grAmAh vidvAnsah – gRihasthhAs’cha jnAnapradhAnA ithyarthhah. virajAh – virajasah – ksheeNapuNya pApakarmaNa ithyarthhah. prayAnthi - prakarsheNa yAnthi. Yathra – yasmin sathyalokAdau amRithassa purushah prathhamajo hiraNyagarbho avyayAthmA – avyayasvabhAvo yAvathsamsArasthhAyee ethadanthAsthu samsAragathayah aparavidyA gamyAh – nanvetham mokshamichchhanthi kechith, na “ihaiva sarve pravileeyanthe kAmAh”, the sarvagam sarvathah prApya dheerAh yukthAthmAnah ithi s’ruthibhyah prakaraNAchcha. aparavidyA prakaraNe hi pravriththe nahyakasmAth mOkSha prasngosthi. virajasthvam thu apekshikam”*** The substance of the above portion of S’ankara bhashya is as follows – The word ***thapas*** means the deeds (***karma)*** prescribed according to their status such as gRihasthha, vAnaprasthha etc. the word ***s’raddhA*** means the meditation or worship of the four-faced Brahma and others like him. Such persons like the wise householders, the forest dwelling seekers, and the ascetics, who had renounced the materialistic views should move away from the relationship with the deeds. Such of those who perform their deeds along with the upAsana – the worship, while staying in the forests etc., away from human settlements, and having control over their sensory organswill be reaching Sathyaloka, the world of HiraNyagarbha– the first JivA. This HiraNyagarbha lives as long as this world of births and deaths is there till being taken over by the huge deluge – the MahApraLayam. So he is called ***avyayasvabhAvi***. The material benefits that could be obtained by the meaner meditations– the ***avaravidyas***, are only limited to attaining the ***Sathyaloka.***Some say that this itself is the mOkSha. However, it should be noted that it is not correct. In the 2nd mantra of the sixth section of this Mundakopanishad which begins with the words “***ihaiva sarve…”*** it is said that the soul need not wait till the end of this life in this body. It can have the relief from all the desires and be relieved from the bondages. In the next 5th mantra, the wise by knowing the all pervasive monistic Brahman, will get the relief from the bondages in this world itself and hence there is no need for the soul to travel to the other world. Hence, this attaining the Sathyaloka is not mOkSha – the relief from the bondage. Again in the present context, dealing with the subject of the ***aparavidya, abruptly bringing the subject of the benefit of mOkSha achievable through the paravidya***is totally out of context and is against all the norms. The word ***viraja*** does not mean the decline of the karma but has the meaning of reduction of some of the paapams – the heinous acts, standing in the way to attain the world of the four faced Brahma” This is the style of his commentary. It can be easily noted that this commentary is totally in variance with style of the Mantras. ***One contradiction*** is saying that the study of the ***apara Vidyas*** and performing the prescribed duties by the meditator should be totally done away with. In fact, it has been prescribed in the Upanishad that - dve ***vidye vedithavye***–the two Vidyas (paravidya and aparavidya) should be learnt by the seeker of relief from the mortal bondage. Even according to his commentary, the second part of the Upanishad which deals with the aparavidya, and the third part of the Upanishad dealing with the paravidya, there is one sentence viz., ***thadethath sathyam.***  For the word ***sathyam***  of this sentence, the meanings have been told differently on two occasions. At one place, the meaning is given as ***paramArtha sathyam*** while in the second instance, the meaning is given as ***vyAvahArika sathyam.***  This is again another – i.e., the ***second contradiction.***The special world – the specified destination for the seekers, which has been mentioned in the parts of mantras viz., ***yathra devAnAm pathirekodhivAsah,*** and ***esha vah sukRitho brahmalokah*** according to the commentator, is identified as ***the svarga lOka*** – theheaven, in spite of being clearly mentioned as ***brahmalokah*** is another contradiction. In the present 11thmantra,” ***sÁnthAh vidvAmsah, thapass’raddhe upavasanthi”***is the quote which says about the seekers clearly. In this it has been proved that they, having been relieved of their accumulated ***puNyapApams*** will attain the relief from the cycle of births and deaths in the form of attendance in His court being very near to Him, the greatest personality denoted by the words ***avyayAmRitha.*** In spite of being so proven the commentator is adamant to mention that they are not the seekers of relief from the bondage of cycle of births and deaths. Further it is highly improper on his part to append the inappropriate meanings for the words ***avyayah, amRitham,*** and ***virajah.***The akshara purusha being told as ***thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam*** is proven to be much above the status of the four faced brahma etc., by the words ***avyayAthmA*** and  ***amRithah.***Further it is clearfrom the phrase- ***virajAh prayAnthi***that the persons who have been relieved from their outstanding karmas, will be attaining mOkSha.It is very clear that the word***virajAh***is used to denotepersons, who are totally relieved from the fruits of all the karmas done by them. They are not the persons who have performed the karmas anticipating the fruits to accrue to them and to enjoy those fruits. It is further made clear that such wise persons having the knowledge about Brahman, are a class themselves above all others. The matter being so, it is very unfair to say that they have not achieved the total relief from the puNyapApa-karmaphala by stating ***virajasthvam thu apekshikam***. The adjective ***amRitham***for the word ***purusha*** does not mean the nectar which is taken by the devas of svarga lOka. In the parlance of vEdAnta the word ***amRithathva***  denotes only the relief from the bondage of this materialistic world. Again the adjective ***avyayAthmA*** as mentioned by the phrase ***AbrahmabhuvanAllokAh punarAvarthinah*** is denoting the eternal Brahman, who is entirely different from the short-lived persons like the four-headed Brahma etc. Is it fair to show the meaning for this word in a totally restricted way by stating the phrase ***yAvath samsArasthhAyee***? What is that special status of the four-headed Brahma when even in your parlance, all the jivAs are having the status of ***yAvath samsArasthAyi*** only. all the wise seekers of the relief from this world are attaining the relief much before the four-headed Brahma by totally destroying the Karmaphala with their ***jnAnAgni***– the fire of their knowledge about Brahman. The four-faced Brahma has to wait till the great deluge to happen. Hence he is in fact ***yAvath samsArasthAyee*** purusha only. In view of all the above, it is improper by all means to explain this mantra to mean reaching the world of the four-faced Brahma, and for supporting the above meaning, portraying the meaning of the word ***Brahma*** of the sixth Mantra of this section as the world of ***Indra*** the lord of heaven.

***To Continue*** –

In the next posting we shall continue this critical study further in our next posting.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-29***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with thecritical study of Sri S’ankara’s explanation of the 11th Mantra of this 2nd part.

Sri S’ankara’s statement that some say the attaining of the world of the four-faced Brahma is the ***mOkSha***– the release from the bondage,is acceptable. However stating that this release can happen in this mundane world itself being in this body itself is neither supported by any scripture nor acceptable. His arguments that for release from this mundane world one need not leave this world for other worlds; and that attaining the supreme Lord, who pervades everything everywhere at all the times, in another limited world will be resulting in temporary release form this mundane world, are also not tenable.A number of the s’ruthiVAkyas such as “***vRiksha iva sthabdho divi thishThathi”, “so adhvanah pAramApnothi thadvishNoh paramam padam”, parame vyoman”*** authentically state that that special world of Him is the place to get release from the mundane world; and that special world to be the place where He, who pervades and permeates everything, everywhere at all the times, resides with His extraordinary body. Under such circumstances, it is highly improper for S’ankara to give the meaning as mentioned earlier, as we had mentioned previously.

It may be argued that the ***VAkyas*** “***ihaiva sarve pravileeyanthe kAmAh”,*** and “***the sarvagam sarvathah prApyadheerAh”*** etc., are from this Upanishad only, and they are stating that attaining the other worlds is not the release from this mundane world of the cycle of births and deaths. Readers are requested to refer to the explanation of these mantras in the sixth part of this Upanishad for knowing the real meaning of these ***VAkyas*** and why the odd explanation given by Sri S’ankara for ***kAryAdhikaraNa*** of Brahma-sutras where the release from the cycle of births and death in this mundane world is the subject to be ascertained and defined is not proper.

***Mantra-12***

***pareekshya lokAn karmachithAn***

***brAhmaNo nirvedamAyAth, nAnthyakRithah kRithena,***

***thadvijnAnArthham sa gurumevAbhigachchheth***

***samithpANih s’rothriyam brahmanishTham||***

**Word meanings**

***yah brAhmaNah*** = the Brahmin, having learnt the complete vEdas with the requisite subsidiaries

***nirvedam AyAth,***  = becomes despaired,having

***karmachithAn***  = obtained through the rituals

***lokAn***  = the fruits like enjoying the heavens etc

***pareekshya***  = and knowing these fruits to be of temporary nature, after examining with the help of the scriptural sciences of mImAmsa etc., and

***akRithah*** = the eternal ***akshara purusha***

***kRithenanAnthy,ithi*** = cannot be attained by performing the rituals alone.

***sah*** = such Brahmin

***samithpANih***  = with the necessary fuel-twigsin hand

***abhigachchheth*** = should approach

***gurumeva***  = the preceptor,

***s’rothriyam***  = the person who studied the Vedantas fully

***brahmanishTham***  = and the person who visualised the Brahman

***thadvijnAnArthham***  = to know the characteristics of such ***akshara purusha***

Substance of the Mantra: A Brahmin, who studies the scriptural sciences such as mImAmsa etc., comes to know that the fruits of his karmAnushThanam yield only temporary benefits like enjoying the heavens etc. Thus he becomes dissatisfied and becomes disgusted that these rituals alone will not result in release from the bondage of this mundane world and attain the eternal place of ***akshara purusha***, the place of eternal bliss. Such a Brahmin should approach a well versed preceptor with reverence to know the true characteristics of the eternal ***akshara purusha*** and the ways to attain Him.

**Exposition**

It is explained in this mantra that a person, not interested in the mundane worldly enjoyments, seeking the ways and means of attaining the Brahman the eternal, should approach a highly qualified and good preceptor to know the characteristics of the Brahman, and the means to attain Him. The word Brahmin denotes a person who had learnt the vEdas in traditional process under an AchArya after acquiring the necessary qualifications by undergoing the necessary upanayana samskAram etc. Learning vEdas does not mean reading the vEdas from the books but repeating the vEdas exactly in the same tone as the AchArya recites them. This is to be done by residing with the AchArya all time and learning not only the recitation of the vEdas but the way one should conduct himself, and learning the subsidiaries like mImAmsa, vyAkaraNa etc. as specified by the s’ruthi vAkya ***svAdhyAyo adhyethavyah.*** In other words, the pupil learns it by heart the recitation exactly as the AchArya recites them with the high and low tones and extended spelling of the letters. He will be learning in general to some extent the subsidiaries like vyAkaraNa etc. by virtue of his association with the AchArya. He will have an idea of the meaning of these vEdas also but not the complete meaning. Thus, he is aware that these rituals are taught by the first part of the vEdas, and in the latter part of the vEdas the subject taught is Brahman. A brahmachari (a boy who got initiated into the life of a Brahmin learning the recitation of vEdas in the same tone as his preceptor, performing all the rituals prescribed for a boy initiated into the learning the scriptures as well as performing the rituals like offering the sacrificial obligations in the sacred fires etc.) knows that reciting the vEdas has been prescribed for a brahmachari and that the scriptures do not prescribe any ritual without any benefit as an outcome. So now, he proceeds to find out the meaning of the words he utters while reciting the vEdas with the help of the science of the mImAmsa which he had already learnt from his preceptor. There also, from the axiom ***prathhamAthikramaNe kAraNAbhAvAth,*** he will explore the rituals that are taught in the first part of the vEdas. While doing so, he will observe that the fruits of the ***ChAthurmAsya YAga*** which is prescribed to be performed every year are small and limited and are not eternal, and he concludes that by repeating the ritual every year over a number of years, it will result in an accumulated benefit but still is limited and is not eternal. Similarly, he observes over the time that the benefits out of the rituals like as’vamEdha***, vis’vajith, dars’apoorNamAsa*** etc., give the benefits slightly better and lasting little longer than the usual benefits. But he comes to know that all these give only temporary benefits and after enjoying those benefits the AtmA has to return back to the cycle of births and deaths again. Thus it becomes clear that he gets disinterested in these rituals prescribed in the previous part of the vEdas and proceeds to find out everything about the Brahman, the subject of the later part of the vEdas.

In this mantra, it has been spelt out that the seeker of the knowledge of Brahman should approach a learned scholarly preceptor, who had already acquired the knowledge about Brahman, since it is a very difficult part to know the substance of the later part of the vEdas without the help of a preceptor.

To continue

In the next posting, we shall see the meaning of the 12th mantra of the 2nd part of the Upanishad in this light.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-30***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with thestudy of the 12th mantra.

***samithpANih:*** It is stated in the scriptures - ***rikthapANisthu nopeyAth rAjAnam daivatham gurum*** – that one should not approach a king, god and preceptor with empty hands. Hence the brahmachari should not approach his preceptor with empty hands. He should take such objects which please his preceptor as said ***AchAryAya priyam dhanamAhRithya.*** What does an AchArya who is a scholar in the knowledge about Brahman and is totally disinterested in the worldly matters? The needed materials such as the kus’a grass and the twigs suitable for the rituals to be performed with sacred fires are the ones he will be pleased with. The word ***samithpANih*** denotes such materials being held in the hands.

***s’rothriyam brahmanishTham*** – these are the words describing the AchArya. A person who had undergone the learning of the vEdas in the traditional way of listening to his preceptor reciting and repeating the same exactly as his preceptor had recited; and subsequently explored the meanings of the latter part of the vEdas, is called a ***s’rothriya***. A person who had the direct perception of the Brahman right in his meditating stage itself is called a ***BrahmanishThan***.

**The qualities of a preceptor and a pupil**

***Achinothi hi s’AsthrArthhAn AchAre sthhApayathyapi|***

***svayamAcharathe yasthu tham AchAryam prachakshathe||***

is one verse from the scriptures specifying an AchArya – the preceptor. A preceptor is one who is well versed in the scriptures, leading the others in the path of righteousness, by practising the path which he preaches the others. The same has been specified by Sri Vedanta Desika in his NyAsavims’athi as follows –

***siddham sathsampradAye, sthhiradhiyamanagham s’rothriyam, brahmanishTham***

***sathvasthham sathyavAcham samayaniyathayA sAdhuvRiththyA sametham|***

***dambhAsUyAdi muktham jithavishayagaNam dayALum***

***skhAlithye s’AsithAram svaparahithaparam des’ikam bhUshNureepseth||***

This verse has specified in totality about the qualities an ideal preceptor should be equipped with. He should be a person connected with the legacy of established preceptors and should be well read and trained in the system. He should not be switching from one system to another and should follow steadfastly his preceptors. He should be averse to the heinous acts and should be well versed in the Vedantas. He should be one who had the direct perception of the Brahman. He should follow the sAththvik characteristics and should be truthful. He should always follow the pious scholars in his behaviour and practices. He should be free from hypocrisy, jealousy etc. He should be free from temptations of material pleasures. He should be a well wisher for life of all the pupils under him, kind to them but at the same time should punish the pupil on his wrong doings. He should be always working for the good of him and the pupils with steadfastness. One should approach such a preceptor for his uplift. In this verse every word is important to be followed.

***samayaniyathayA sAdhuvRiththyA sametham*** is the particular quality which stands tall among all the qualities mentioned above. The scriptures have specified the deeds one should perform at each period of the day. By the above phrase, it is clear that a preceptor should follow the schedule as prescribed in the scriptures and follow the life of a pious and a good or virtuous or honest man; in addition to having the knowledge of reality of Brahman, JivA and primordial nature. His wisdom sans such a religious practice is of no use. Further, the word ***sAdhuvRiththi*** means leading the life in a pious way. Even though one is a wise man, he should earn money for leading his life throughout his life. But that earning should not lead to ostentatious life style. He should continue to live with the money he earns through performances of the yAgas and teaching the pupils. He should not distinguish the amount a pupil offers him and impart the education of the pupil by taking note of his anxiousness to learn the philosophy and other religious matters. He should impart the education to the pupil in the right earnest way. This should not lead him to the lustful life. He should examine the pupil.

Do we get such a preceptor in this mundane world which is a mix of the three characteristics of sattvA, rajas and tamas during this period of kali? Even though this preceptor is highly knowledgeable, and is totally disinterested in the mundane pleasures, he may get effected by this primordial cosmic matter and is subjected to lust and anger as can be seen with many a number of seers from the PurANas and ithihAsAs. Yes it is true, though he is affected by the primordial matter, it is only a temporary affair and because of that he should not be considered to be at par with the ordinary being subjected continuously to the primordial matter. One should not doubt as to what sort of a Brahmavidya he can impart to the s’ishya the pupil and how does it benefit the s’ishya in a useful manner. The important characteristics in this preceptor are the wealth of wisdom and his unfailing regular conduct of the religious rituals. These are the requirements for a pupil to get the desired uplift.

An incident is being narrated here in this connection. Once a Srivaishnava named Nanjeeyar approached ParAsara Bhattar. At that time Nanjeeyar had offered some gold at the feet of Bhattar. Accepting that, Bhattar told him “You may be thinking - Bhattar had accepted this gold from me, probably he is greedy about the wealth. What wisdom and Brahmavidyas can he pass on to me and are they going to be fruitful to me?- Do not have any apprehensions like that. Though I did not expect any offering from you, this wealth offered by you with reverence is going to be used for the service to the Lord and His devotees – the Bhagavad-bhAgavathaseva – only. I am not a person who thinks like an ordinary human considering that the ultimate is to enjoy the desires and is interested in the money and desires. So you should not have any apprehensions. Even when the preceptor as said in Bhagavad Geetha – “***sadRis’am cheshTathe svasyAh prakRitheh jnAnavAnapi”*** – though a person who is a Wiseman, is affected by the primordial matter once in a while, one should not doubt about his being a preceptor. The primordial mattereffects even the wise also. It is natural. But due to their wisdom and pious and unfailing regular conduct, they should be considered to be of a different tenor other than the ordinary humans. Consider the following instance carefully – A prince was bitten by a poisonous snake. The king had announced that he will give away his entire kingdom to the one who will treat the prince and bring him back to life. A number of great doctors came and tried but failed in their attempts. Then a poor snake charmer came and said- “ O king, give me a morsel of the food. That is sufficient. I shall bring the prince back to life.” As promised, he treated the prince and the prince was back alive. The king could have doubted about the capabilities of the snake charmer, asking for only a morsel of food like any other who works for food for survival,in bringing back the prince to life. But actually in the end, it is proven that his doubt is unfounded. Similarly, be sure, that the powerful Brahmavidya being taught by the preceptor also will surely break the bondages with the primordial matter and take the taught to the ultimate realm of eternal bliss. Soon after hearing this from Bhattar, Nanjeeyar got relieved of all his doubts and prostrated to Bhattar as though he also said “***sthhithosmi gatha sandehah”***  like Arjuna. Thus it is clear that the preceptor should be a well read wise man as well as a person with a pious and good conduct.

Now coming to the pupil described as ***samithpANih,*** approaching a preceptor, should be endowed with some primary characteristics in addition to being totally disinterested in the worldly mundane pleasures. Such characteristics have been stated by Sri vEdAnta Desikar in his works ***NyAsavims’athi***as follows –

***sadbuddhih sAdhusevee samuchithacharithah thaththvabodhAbilAshee***

***s’us’rUshusthyakthamAnah praNipathanaparah pras’nakAlapratheekshah|***

***s’AnthodAnthonasUyuh s’araNamupagathah s’Asthravis’vAsas’Alee***

***s’ishyah prApthah pareekshAm kRithavidabhimatham thaththvathah s’ikshaNeeyah||***

The meaning of the above shloka is as follows –

A preceptor should thoroughly test the pupil, who approaches him for the learning for the following qualities – sharp intellect, serving the elders, having unblemished conduct, anxious to know the reality, is interested in listening to the elders initiations or teachings, devoid of ego, obedient, seeks clarifications at the proper times, capable of controlling the external as well as the internal sensory organs, does not have jealousy, firm believer in the preceptor being the saviour, has belief in the scriptures, and is grateful, and on confirming, should initiate him into the ***thaththvas*** – the realities. The initiation into a Brahmavidya to a pupil who does not have such qualities will not be fruitful. The preceptors used to put forth a number of conditions on the pupils desirous of being initiated into the Brahmavidyas keeping in mind that the Brahmavidya will be derided by such pupils. They were initiating their pupils into the Brahmavidyas only after being satisfied after the repeated tests that the pupil is really endowed with such qualities as mentioned above and is really worthy to receive such initiations. It is well known that RAmAnuja had to approach his preceptor – Thirukkoshtiyoor Nambi repeatedly 18times without achieving his desire of learning the inner meaning of the Geetha charamashloka. Thus the present mantra is prescribing the qualifications of the preceptor and his pupil for the initiation of the Brahmavidya.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall see the meaning of the 13th mantra of the 2nd part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-31***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of Mundakopanishad with thestudy of the 13th mantra of the 2nd part.

**Mantra 13**

***thasmai sa VidwAn upasannAya samyak***

***pras’AnthachiththAya s’amAnvithAya|***

***yenAksharam purusham vEda sathyam***

***provAcha thAm thaththvatho brahmavidyAm||***

**Word Meanings**

***VidwAn sah*** = that preceptor, knowledgeable about Brahman

***provAcha*** = should impart

***thaththvathah*** = in true spirit

***thAm brahmavidyAm***  = such wise study of Brahman

***yena*** = by which

***purusham*** = the supreme Godhead, who is

***aksharam*** = not having any transformations in his characteristics

***sathyam*** = and having no change in either the attributes

***vEda*** = is known,

***thasmai*** = to that pupil

***upasannAya***  = who has approached him

***samyak*** = with proper

***pras’AnthachiththAya*** = controls over his internal

***s’amAnvithAya*** =and external sensory organs.

**Explanation:**

In this mantra, two adjectives viz., ***aksharam***and ***sathyam***are used for describing the Supreme God-head. Each of these words denotes distinct and different attributes and characteristics of the Supreme God-head. The word ***aksharam*** shows the extra-ordinary nature of Him that He does not undergo any transformation in His characteristics or nature like the insentient, undergoing a change in its characteristics and nature continuously. The second word ***sathyam*** indicates that He is not affected by any of the contractions or expansions of ***jnAna –*** the knowledge like the sentient, experiencing the contraction or expansion of his jnAna due to the effect of his deeds. In other words, the attributes of Him such as the knowledge etc., are not affected by any external influences and thus is denoted by the word ***sathyam.*** Thus there is no repetition of the meanings of the two words used to describe Him.

Similarly to qualify the pupil, two words viz., ***pras’AnthachiththAya*** and ***s’amAnvithAya*** are used. They are used to denote the controls a pupil should practice. The first word is used to denote the control of the internal sensory organs and the second is used to denote the control of the external sensory organs. This control of the external and internal sensory organs is shown to be the essential requirement for the undisturbed listening practice of the pupil that is required. It does not mean that the pupil should have total control of his sensory organs even before his approaching the preceptor. Such a total control is going to be specified during meditation, practised after he obtains the knowledge of the Brahma VidyA, in the forth coming chapter on meditation by the axiom ***s’amAdyupethassyAth*** etc as indicated by the ***s’ruthi vAkya – s’AnthodAntha uparatha —AtmanyevAtmAnam pas’yeth.***

The word provAcha appears to indicate past tense. But it is an instruction – in the sense of ***vidhi*** as per the grammatical axiom ***chandasi lungn liTah.*** It is being specified that the preceptor should consider the uplift of the pupil as the main intention and so without withholding any explanation while initiating the pupil into the Brahmavidya.

Thus in this second part of the Upanishad it is being made known that performing the rituals without anticipating any benefit for his self as a part of meditating upon the Supreme god-head, is the means for attaining the court of ParamAtma. It is stated that such of those who perform the rituals with a desire to have the benefits for the self are only fools. Further it is established that, to obtain such knowledge of Brahman – the means to get relieved from the mundane cycle of births and deaths and to attain the court of ParamAtma, one should approach a pious AchArya, who is well-versed with the knowledge of Brahman.

This brings us to the end of second part of the Mundakopanishad.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall take up the 3rd part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-32***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 3rd part of Mundakopanishad.

**Mantra-1**

***thadethath sathyam-***

***yathhA sudeepthAth pAvakAth visphulingAh***

***sahasras’ah prabhavanthe sarUpAh|***

***thathAksharAdvividhA ssomya! bhAvAh***

***prajAyanthe thathra chaivApiyanthi||***

***Word Meanings***

***Somya!*** = O, Somya, the good person!

***thath ethath***  =This parabrahman who has been established as the material cause for every entity in this universe,

***sathyam-*** = is devoid of any transformations like creation or destruction etc.

***yathhA***  = the way

***visphulingAh***  = the sparks,

***sarUpAh*** = having similar shape and characteristics of the glowing fire,***sahasras’ah***  = in thousands(innumerable)

***prabhavanthe***  = are generated from

***sudeepthAth*** = glowing

***pAvakAth***  = fire

***thathhA*** = similarly

***vividhA bhAvAh*** = the various gross entities having different forms in both sentient and insentient

***prajAyanthe***  = are created

***aksharAth***  = from Akshara parabrahman who has the sentient and insentientin the subtle forms, as His body

***apiyanthi cha*** = they are getting finally absorbed or merged also

***thathra eva***  = in the same Akshara parabrahman.

**Explanation:**

In the first part, it is established that the ***akshara parabrahman*** is the material cause for the entire universe. In this third part, the process of creation from that Brahman is being elaborated. The substance of the phrase ***thadethath sathyam*** is given in the beginning of the second part already.

In this first mantra, it is being stated that entire grossand visible entities – both sentient and insentient, are created from that ***akshara Brahman*** only.When a glowing fire or semi molten iron is hammered, the innumerable sparks do emanate from them. In the same way, the entire gross entities in thousands and millions do emerge from the ***akshara Brahman.*** The example of sparks emanating from the glowing fire or extremely hot iron is suitable only for the creation of the gross entities from the Brahman. Since the sparks do not go back into the fire or Hot iron, that example does not hold good for the destruction or merger of the gross entities in the Brahman, it has been specifically stated that they on their destruction are absorbed back by Brahman. This illustration shows the relationship between the Brahman and the universe in the form of gross sentient and insentient entities. The visible glowing fire consists of the elements which are transformed into sparks. In the same way, the causative Brahman is having the subtle forms of the sentient and insentient in Him and on transformation, they emanate as gross forms of sentient and insentient making up the Universe. Thus the relationship between the Brahman and the universe is established as ***ams’a – ams’i – relationship.*** From the S’ruthi vAkyakhanDas such as ***“pAdosya vis’vA bhUthAni”,“mamaivAms’o jeevaloko jeevabhUthassanAthanah”, “am’so nAnAvyapades’Ath”*** it is clear that the relationship is the same ***ams’a – ams’i – relationship.*** This entire gross universe, unlike the sparks in the illustration, which get burnt out, does not get destroyed but gets transformed into the subtle form. Hence it is clear from the phrase ***thathra chaivApiyanthi*** that they are not short-lived and destroyed but, they always form a part of the Brahman whether in gross visible form or in subtle invisible form. We have earlier established in detail, that the Brahman, who is the source and cause for the entire universe is characterized or qualified by the subtle sentient and insentient only and it is not without any attributes or unqualified or is not a ***niravayavi*** – without any parts or limbs; when we discussed the ***eka vijNAna s’ruthi*** quoting the authority or testimony from Bhagavad Gita and ManusmRithi etc. S’ankara’s ***adhyavasaya***–the argument that the visualisation of a snake in the real rope does occur because of ignorance and in the same analogy, one sees the unreal universe in the Brahman who is devoid of any characteristics and attributes because of ignorance, stands negated due to absence of or lack of any authority or testimony from the vEdas, smRithis etc.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall examine critically the explanation given to this Mantra by Sri S’ankara.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-33***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the study of the explanation given to this Mantra by Sri S’ankara.

Let us study the exposition of Sri S’ankara for this mantra. The text for this is as follows –

“***yathhA … pAvakAth agneh visphulingAh agnyavayavAh sahasras’ah prabhavanthe …. thathhoktha lakshaNAdaksharAth vividhAh … bhAvAh jIvAh AkAs’Adiva ghaTAdi parichchhinnAh sushirabhedAh ghaTAdyupAdhi prabhedamanubhavanthi, evam nAnA nAmarUpakRitha dehopAdhi prabhedamanu prajAyanthe| thathrachaiva – thasminnehi kshare apiyanthi dehopAdhinilayamanuleeyanthe ghaTAdi nilayamanviva sushirabhedAh”*** etc.

Sri S’ankara found that the fire and spark illustration which has been given in the S’ruthis is not supporting the monism principle. So he is embarking on to establish the monism with another illustration – “AkAs’Adiva ghaTAdi parichchhinnAh sushirabhedAh….” In this he is attempting to bring the forms of ‘ghaTAkAs’a – the space in the pot’ and ‘mahAkAs’a – the great space’. He had his own interpretation and he explains his interpretation as follows – The same Great space gets different names by its position such as being enclosed in the pot, it is called ***ghaTAkAs’a,*** it at the same time is the great space called ***mahAkAs’a.*** Similarly, the Brahman also becomes different objects because of the various bodies which are the different images visualized due to the***avidya*** – the ignorance which is engulfing the Brahman.

But there is no word which becomes the cause for giving a scope to the differentiation of JivA and Brahman, in the illustration or the illustrated in this mantra. Clearly the illustration of fire and the sparkis showing that the spark is a part of the fire only. That illustration could have been explained instead of picking up another illustration which in real sense is not an illustration for the context.

Sri S’ankara feels that the part and whole relationship of the JivA and Brahman being shown by either this illustration or another authority, is not real and is created by the ignorance only. So he explains the Brahma-sutra – ***ams’o nAnAvyapades’Ath anyathhA chApi dAs’akithavAdithvamadheeyatha eke*** in his BhAshyam ***ams’a iva ams’ah.*** Instead of explaining the word ***ams’a*** as direct part of the whole, he explains that the JivA is like an imaginary part of the Brahman and not a direct part of the Brahman. When the primary meaning suiting to the context is available, how far is it justifiable to pick up a secondary and indirect meaning for this word? Even if accepted that the JivA is a creation of ignorance in the supporting Brahman devoid of any qualifications, it is not possible to explain the ***ams’Ams'eeBhava*** – the relationship of part and whole, which is supported by the authoritative quotes like ***ams’o nAnA vyapades’Ath*** and ***mamaivAms’o jeevalokah*** form different scriptures. The imaginary creations of the snake or the tear in the surface of the earth on the real supporting rope cannot be said to be the parts of the real rope. Thus the impartial critiques can observe thatneither in the present mantra, nor in the ***ams’AdhikaraNa*** of Brahma-sutras, the commentary of Sri S’ankara appears to be a forcible imposter of his imagination on the S’ruthi-sutras leaving aside the logical and primary meaning.

An objection:

In the S’ruthis Brahman is clearly mentioned as without any parts by the words nishkalam etc. Without contradicting that statement of the S’ruthi, Sri S’ankara has chosen to explain the quotes like ***ams’o nAnA vyapades’Ath*** and ***mamaivAms’o jeevalokah*** that the JivA is an imaginary creation like the space inside the pot being named as ***ghaTAkAs’a*** different from the great expanse of the space the ***mahAkAs’a*** though they are same in reality. Thus the difference is only an imaginary creation for the same AkAs’a or Brahman. Thus it is quite proper to explain that there is nothing like part and whole. If it is not explained so, the S’ruthi saying that Brahman is ***nishkalam*** etc. will be negated which is not correct.

Answer to the above objection –

It is not proper to give incorrect and unreal meanings to the authentic statements like ***pAdosya vis’vA bhUthAni thripAdasyAmRitham divi, ams’o nAnA vyapades’Ath*** and ***mamaivAms’o jeevalokah*** of the Vedas just because of a possible contradiction of Niravayava S’ruthi. There is contradiction if it is told that for the same person and in the same state, there are contradictory peculiarities or characteristics. By the authentic statements like nishkalam, nishkriyam etc., only the nature of the Brahman which is all pervading knowledge and bliss. In the other statements of the sAvayava S’ruthis the nature of Brahman qualified by the sentient and insentient. This qualified Brahman is the cause for the creation of the universe. Thus where is the contradiction for the S'ruthi-VAkyas which teach the different natures of Brahman? In the system of the ThArkikas, the JivA is all pervading where as in some other systems, JivA is atomic. In both the systems it does not have any ***avayavas***. When it puts on a body due to the actions it had done, is it not called as an entity having body – sas’areera, having the parts of the body – sAvayava, having births and deaths etc.? with the same analogy, the Brahman being the cause of creation of the Universe, is with the avayavas or is ***sAvayava.*** The absolute part of the Brahman – the qualified entity, is being told as niravayava by the S’ruthi. What is an ams’a? Is it not part of a body that is qualified? In the Brahman who is qualified by the sentient and insentient – like an apple qualified by the colour and taste of the apple, where neither the colour nor the taste can be called as apple but both of them are parts of the apple, the JivA or the sentient is a part of the Brahman, and the primordial matter or insentient is another part of the Brahman. In this the absolute Brahman, devoid of the qualifying parts – the sentient and insentient, has the characteristics of knowledge and bliss, and not having any parts. For the qualified Brahman, being the cause for the creation of the universe, and having parts etc., are the characteristics.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall concludeexamining critically the explanation given to this Mantra by Sri S’ankara and proceed to the next Mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-34***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall conclude the study of the explanation given to this Mantra by Sri S’ankara in view of its inconsistencies.

In the beginning of ***kRithsnaprasakthyadhikaraNa***, it is stated by SribhAshyakAra – SrimadRAmAnuja ***“kAraNAvasthhAyAm nirastha chidachidvibhAgathayA niravayavam brahmaivAseeth.”***For this statement, Sri Sudars’anabhattar – the S’ruthaprakAsíkAchArya gives the explanation as follows – ***“dyupRithhivyAdi jagadavayavAbhAva kathhanAth niravayavathva siddhirithi bhAvah”*** and ***“vedAntheshu ‘eka’s’abdaprathipannathvAth niravayavathvam, atho nirastha chidachidvibhAgamithyarthhah***” – in the state of the seed – i.e., ***kAraNAvasthA***, prior to the creation of the universe, though the Brahman is having the sentient and insentient in Him in the subtle form, it can be said that He is without any parts – ***niravayava.***In such a state, because of the state of subtlety of the sentient and insentient, it is not possible to differentiate between sentient and the insentient which is merged with Brahman. Hence, the Brahman is termed as the whole and without parts or***niravayavi.*** However after the creation, the gross entities like the earth etc. are visible and hence they are the ***ams’a*** of the Brahman. So that Brahman is being termed as ***sAvayavi*** and ***jagachchhareeraka*** – the entity having parts and having the universe as its body. This is the way to give the explanations for the S’ruthi VAkyas of both ***niravayava***and ***sAvayava.***

When with such an explanation, the primary meaning can be given for the Vedic authentic statements, why should S’ankara opt for an irrational meaning for the Vedic statements mentioning that Brahman is ***sAvayavi*** – having parts? So, in the present mantra, S’ankara’s negation of the ***ams’Amsi-bhAva*** – the part and the whole configuration for the Brahman as evident from the given illustration of the fire and the sparks; and bringing another mythical interpretation by showing the illustration of the space inside a pot and the general space to be same, is definitely not proper. It ispure necessity for Sri S’ankara to take the route of negation of the ams’Amsi bhAvaonly to justify his preconceived notion of the whole inert Brahman without any portion of it being shown as separate entities in total variance with the VedicVAkyas and their natural meanings.

Now we shall proceed with the second mantra of this second part of the Upanishad.

***Mantra – 2***

***divyohyamUrthah purushah – sa bAhyAbhyantharohyajah|***

***aprANohyamanA s’s’ubhro – hyaksharAthparathah parah||***

***Word Meanings***

***sah purushah***  = that parabrahman denoted by word ***akshara,***

***divyah*** = the person residing in the higher worlds

***amUrthah***  = without body with hands, feet etc.,

***ajah***  = without being born,

***aprANah***  = having no lives,

***amanAh***  = having no mind,

***s’ubhrah***  = totally pure and who

***bAhyAbhyantharah***= pervades and permeates all entities

***parah*** = is higher, greater and

***parathah***  = higher than four-faced Brahma, the high Jiva entity

***aksharAth***  = and the primordial matter – the subtle form of the***prakRithi,*** being denoted by the word ***akshara.***

Explanation –

The substance of this mantra is as follows –

In this mantra the main theme is to show that the parabrahman denoted by the word ***akshara*** is the entity which was in the earlier part of the Upanishad as well as the previous mantra to be the material cause for the entire universe to be created and is much higher and greater than the subtle primordial matter which cannot be distinguished separately since it does not have either a form or a name for it; is much higher and is bigger and greater in all respects than the sentient being created in the various greater globes. He is the ultimate resort for all the sentient beings in the gross form and is much higher and greater than the four-faced Brahmas who are entrusted with the responsibilities and authorities to give the gross forms for all the entities in the various globes. In other words, it is being stated that the sentence ***sah aksharAth parathah parah*** is making it clear that this Brahman being the creator of that primordial matter and the four-faced Brahma, is at a much higher status in power as well as other statures than either the primordial matter or the four-faced Brahma.

One should not think that the word ***akshara*** in this mantra is denoting the akshara parabrahman. This word here is denoting the primordial cosmic matter only. The reason for the above statement is as follows – the word ***sah*** in this mantra denotes the Brahman, established as the meaning of the word ***akshara*** in the previous mantras – the VAkyas being ***thathhAksharAth sambhavatheeha vis’vam*** , ***yenAksharam purusham veda sathyam*** and ***thathhAksharAth vividhAh Somya bhAvAh.*** Since it is said that sah= that akshara purusha, ***aksharAth parathah parah***= is greater and higher in status and stature than the four-faced Brahma, who is greater and higher than the akshara, the word akshara in this mantra cannot be denoting the Brahman. This word ***akshara*** if it is denoting the Brahman as in the earlier mantras, an absurd meaning stating that this akshara purusha is greater than Himself. How can an entity be greater than itself? So there is no possibility of this word denoting the Brahman. In this light, this word ***akshara*** can mean an entity as per the etymological derivative meaning as ***as’nuthe ithi*** aksharam or ***na ksharathi ithi aksharam i.e., an entity which is pervading in the form of the universe;*** or ***the one that does not undergo any transformation by which it cannot be named as another entity.*** Thus it can be told to be denoting the primordial cosmic matter only. Further, this word akshara is used in the subAlopanishad vAkya – mahAn avyakthe leeyathe, aksharam thamasi leeyathe, thamah pare deva ekee bhavathi, denoting the primordial matter prakRithi only. As such it is established firmly that the word aksharam is denoting prakRithi only and not Brahman here in this mantra.

Note. The subAlopanishad vAkya quoted above is narrating the destination of the various realities – the thaththvas during the great dissolution – MahA pralaya. The meaning is – the reality thaththva of mahath is merging in the avyakta and avyakta is merging with aksharam, aksharam is merging in thamas and finally the thamas is merging in the Brahman. In this all the three words avyakta, akshara and thamas denote different stages of the primordial matter only. The state of primordial cosmic matter called avyakta thaththvam is a clearer combination of the three basic attributes viz., sattvA, Rajas and thamas than the mahath reality, another state of primordial cosmic matter – an unspecified and unclear combination of the three basic attributes or characteristics viz. the sattvA, rajas and thamas. When this composition of the three basic attributes is a further complicated mixture in such a way that it is no more possible to specify that this portion is sentient and this is insentient; that stage of the primordial cosmic matter is called thamas. It was explained by Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya in his commentary for the Upanishad, that this subtle form of primordial cosmic matter is known only to the Brahman and is totally mixed up in Brahman like the salt in water, or the water element in the moon light or the fire element in the Sunlight.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall examine critically the meaning of the word akshara.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-35***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the explanations given to this word akshara.

This word akshara appears in this Upanishad at quite a number of places beginning with ***yayA thadakshara madhigamyathe,*** and some S’ruthi VAkyas like ***ethasya vA aksharasya pras’Asane GArgi sUryAchandramasau vidhRithau thishThathah*** in BrihadAraNyaka Upanishad. In all these VAkyas, akshara is used to denote Brahman. Similarly in the present mantra as well as in the SubAlopanishad, it denotes the prakRithi – the cosmic matter. While it is used to denote the sentient JivA in the Bhagavad Gita Shloka***ksharassarvANi bhUthAni – kUTasthokshara uchyathe*** and S’vethaas’vathara Upanishad vAkya – ***ksharam pradhAnam amRithAksharam harah.*** Thus in all these instances the different meanings of this word akshara are seen. A question arises as to the etymology of this word akshara – is the meaning a ***yougika-*** theetymologically generated meaning or is it rUDhi– an indirectconventional meaning as necessitated by the context. According to Sri RAmAnuja, we come to know that all the three meanings are direct ones generated. In the aksharAdhikaraNa, there is a sentence in Sribhashyam which reads – “akshara s’abdasya avayava s’akthyA svArthhaprathipAdane pramANAntharAnapekshaNAth. This has been commented clearly by S’ruthaprakAsíkAchArya. He made it clear that according to the rule of prokshaNyadhikaraNa of pUrva meemAmsa, the meaning should be taken as a generated one only.

This prokshaNyadhikaraNa appears in the 4th quarter of the 1st chapter of pUrva meemAmsa. The context is description of the dars’a pUrNamAsa YAga. In this there is one sentence which goes on like this – prokshaNeerAsAdaya. The prima facie view of the meaning of the word prokshaNee as water as per the context only. But it was made clear that as per the general usage the word prokshaNee is not used to denote water and as such deriving the meaning for this as water by common usage is not possible. According to the grammatical rules, it is established that word proksha is generated from the root uksha – sechane with preposition pra with suffix of lyut on to the root. It means a means to sprinkle. According to the context one can take the meaning of water. By not accepting the meaning of the common usage, it can be taken as denoting the ghee also for this word prokshaNee. Since there is a vAkya – ghrithaprokshaNAmin the maithrAyaNee samhitadirecting that the ghee to be used as a means for sprinkling in a particular sacrifice. There this sentence ***prokshaNeerAsAdaya*** means the direction to sprinkle the utensils to be used in the sacrifice to be sprinkled with ghee. In case the common usage meaning of water is accepted for this word prokshaNee, the ghee cannot be meant there. Hence it is clear that the word prokshaNee is ***yougika –*** the etymologically generated one only.

In a similar process instead of giving the meaning of the word akshara as the commonly used meaning, taking the etymologically derived meanings for this word as either the sentient JivA or the cosmic matter – the ***prakRithi*** as per the grammatical derivations as ***as’nAthi ithi aksharam***  or  ***na ksharathi ithi aksharam***is proper according to Sri RAmAnuja. Thus it is quite justified to take the meaning of the word akshara in the present sentence ***aksharAth parathah parah*** as the primordial cosmic matter in the subtle state devoid of both the name and form. In the commentary by Sri S’ankara also, the meaning for this word is taken as the primordial cosmic matter only. But the word ***parathah*** is considered to be associated with this word akshara and Sri S’ankara derived a meaning according the anvaya – the sequence – ***parathah aksharAth parah*** - which gives a meaning that the akshara Brahman is higher and greater than the great***prakRithi called avyAkRitham since***compared to all the insentient, the bodies of effect – the ***kAryas***, He, the akshara purusha is greater and bigger, being the cause – the ***kAraNa*** for all these***kArya vasthus***. Sri RAmAnuja considered that this akshara parabrahman is greater and higher than even the four-faced Brahma, the compounded form of all the sentient together, who is greater and bigger than the primordial cosmic matter the prakRithi. There is one advantage in Sri RAmAnuja’s interpretation. When the word ***parathah*** is taken for interpretation, a question arises – greater than what? Then a sequential arrangement of the words in the sentence as ***aksharAth parathah parah*** – He is nirvikAra svarUpa – unsusceptible for any change, is greater and bigger than the four-faced Brahma who is greater than the primordial cosmic matter. According to Sri S’ankara, the word parathah is made as an adjective for the word aksharath giving a meaning - than the great primordial cosmic matter. But there is no answer to the question – the primordial cosmic matter is greater than what when you say the great primordial cosmic matter. Thus it needs to bring some additional words to obtain a sensible and complete meaning for the sentence – the primordial cosmic matter greater than the entire universe, the effect. Such a requirement of supplementing additional words to derive a complete meaning, which is considered to be a defect in the statements, does not arise in Sri RAmAnuja’s interpretation.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue this critical examination.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-36***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall conclude the study of the explanation given to this word akshara.

The words ***divyah, amUrthah, bAhyAbhyantharah, ajah, aprANah, amanAh, s’ubhrah***– all of the in first declination are the adjectives that show the nature of the ***akshara purusha.*** In these, word –***divyah*** reminds us about the relationship with the ***divya lOka*** – the SrivaikunTha established in the former part of this Upanishad previously. The word ***amUrtha*** shows the absence of the limbs like the hands, feet etc. as was earlier described as ***apANipAdam.*** The word ***bAhyAbhyantharah*** shows the permeating and pervasive nature of expansion for Him. The words ***aprANah, amanAh*** show the absence of manas and prANas for Him as was established by absence of sensory organs as explained by the phrase ***achakshus’s’rothram.*** The word s’ubhra establishes the absence of any defect of change in form as meant by the word ***sathya*** in the sentence ***yenAksharam sathyam***. Thus the adjectives starting from divya to s’ubhra confirm the nature of the ***akshara purusha*** as told in the previous two parts of the Upanishad. ***sah*** – such an entity depicting the akshara Brahman is above the primordial cosmic matter and the sentient as said by the phrase ***aksharAthparathah parah.*** This is the sequential interpretation according to Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni.

However, the interpretation of Sri RAmAnuja in the ***adris’yathvAdhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam, while concluding the meaning of the third part of this Upanishad says as follows – “thadethath ***sathyam yathhAsudeepthAth – ithyAdinA so vidyAgrandhim vikiratheeha Somya! Ithyanthena pUrvokthasyAksharasya bhUthayoneh parasya brahmanah parama purushasya anukthai ssvarUpa guNai ssaha sarva bhUthAntharAthmathayA vis’va sareerathvena viswarUpathvam, thasmAdvis’vasRishTim cha vispashTa mabhidhAya”.***In this text, the phrase ***anukthai ssvarUpaguNaih ssaha*** needs a critical study. This phrase makes it clear that His qualities which have not been established In the first and second parts are now being established in this third part. What are those qualities which have not been established so far? Sri SudarsanaBhattar had explained them to be the qualities such as the divyathva etc being mentioned in this mantra by his explanation – ***anukthai ssvarUpaguNai rithyanena ‘divyohyamUrthah purusha’ ithyAdyukthAh divyathvAmUrthathva vibhuthvAdayo guNAh vivakshithAh.***  Thus if one studies the explanation of Sudarsana bhattar in S’ruthaprakaas’ika, it appears that explanation of Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni - that the words divya, amUrtha etc. are only consolidating the qualities established in the first and second parts- is contradictory to S’ruthaprakaas’ika.

But it does not sound convincing to ignore the explanation given by Sri Ranga RAmAnuja muni since there is suitability or decorum in his explanation. The word divya in this mantra is only reiterating what was said in the clause “divithishThathyekah”. The word amUrtha is only explaining what was earlier said in the word apANipAdam. The word bAhyAbhyantharah is only summarising what was said in “***thenedam pUrNam purusheNa sarvam***. It is true to say that all the other words are only either reiterating or further explaining what has been said earlier. (Sri Muni has not mentioned about the word ***ajah*** only) Not only that. Even S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya says ***amUrthas’abdena apAnipAdathva prathyabhijnAnAth, bAhyAbhyantharethyanena sarvagathathva prathyabhijnAnAchcha*** in his commentary of adris’yathvAdhikaraNa only. From all this, it is clear that these qualities are only either reiterating or offering further explanation of the qualities mentioned earlier in the two parts. One cannot say that the text of S’ruthaprakaas’ika to be contradicting the Sribhashya even by not taking into account the RangaRAmAnuja muni’s explanations.

For a concurrence of both the explanations – that of Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni and S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya, it forces one to construe that the text of Sribhashya should read ***ukthai ssvarUpaguNai ssaha*** instead of ***anukthai ssvarUpaguNai ssaha.***One can conclude that the S’ruthaprakaas’ika text mentioned in the previous para also should read ***ukthai ssvarUpaguNai rithyanena … divyathvAmUrthathva vibhuthvAdayo guNAh vivakshithAh.***

The expansiveness meant by the word ***bAhyAbhyantharah*** in the previous part, is also only a further explanation of what was explained earlier and not a new one. Similar is the absence of the births meant by the word ***ajah*** is only explaining the established meaning of the word***nithya*** of the earlier phrase ***nithyam vibhum*** of the previous part or section. Thus all the first declination words beginning with ***divya*** are only confirming the nature of the akshara Brahman, already established in the earlier parts. The preceding mantra ***yathhA sudeepthAth*** also is only reiterating that akshara Brahman is the material cause of all the sentient and insentient. If all that mentioned in the first part is being reiterated in the third part, there shall be the error of repetition. Considering such a possibility, Sri RAmAnuja answers – ***vis’vasRishTimcha vispashTamabhidhAya.*** S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya says ***vispashTamithyanena praThama thRitheeya khaNDayoh paunarukthya parihArah pUrvoktha sRishTi prapanchana parathvAth na punarukthirithyabhiprAyah.***  Thus from all the above, the text should read as ***ukthai ssvarUpaguNai ssaha,***  and it is not improper to conclude that the commentaries of both Sri Ranga RAmAnuja muni and Sri S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya could have come out from such a reading of the text only.

But in many a printed version the text appears to be ***anukthai ssvarUpaguNai ssaha*** only and it is not possible to confirm that it is improper. The great scholar Sriman KunnappAkkam SrinivAsAchArya swamy also in his ***thaththvarathnAvaLi*** has considered the text as it appears in most printed versions and translated in his shloka the meaning to be ***akathhitha suguNaih.*** But there was no explanatory comment. If the text is ***anukthai ssvarUpaguNai ssaha*** there appears a contradiction between the RangaRAmAnuja – SruthaprakAs’ika commentaries. They are showing all these qualities to be mentioned earlier ones only. It is not possible for me with the limited and insignificant wisdom to bring both the views to concurrence. The wise are requested to study the inconsistency and show a method of concurrence with benevolence towards me.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue by taking up the 3rd Mantra

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-37***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the further mantras.

**Mantra 3**

***ethasmAjjAyathe prANo manassarvendriyANi cha|***

***kham vAyurjyothi rApah pRithhivee vis’vasya dhAriNee||***

**Word Meanings**

***prANah*** = the life called prANa,

***manah*** = the mind,

***sarvendriyANi cha*** = all the sensory organs,

***kham*** = the space,

***vAyuh*** = the air,

***jyothih*** = the fire,

***Apah*** = the water and

***pRithhivee*** = the earth,

***Vis’vasya dhAriNee***= which bears all the sentient and insentient,

***jAyathe*** = are evolving

***ethasmAth*** = from this akshara Brahman only.

The explanation –

The prANa – the life of all the sentient and insentient, the mind – the internal sensory organ, all the external sensory organs, the five basic elements viz., the space, the air, the fire, and the water along with the earth which bears and sustains the sentient and insentient – all these are evolved or created from the akshara Brahman only. This mantra gives the answers to two wrong assumptions.

A person who undertakes the study of various scriptural sciences like the science of logic etc., assumes that the prANa, the mind and all other sensory organs are eternal being atomic; that all pervading space is also eternal and the gross earth water etc., though perishable, too are eternal since their basic elements are atomic. But these sciences specify the process of evolution or the process of creation only by an assumption. this process of evolution is quite opposite to the process given by the S’ruthis. The VAkyas from Upanishad, like “***sadeva somyedamagra Aseeth”, “AthmAvAidam eka evAgra Aseeth”*** are confirming that there was none other than Brahman before the creation started. Again from the same Upanishad vAkya – Athmana AkAs’a ssambhUthah, AkAs’Ath vAyuh – vAyoragnih – agnerApah – adbhyah prithhivee, clearly spelt that the five basic elements and others have evolved from the Brahman only. Thus we get the answer that all these sensory organs, space, air etc., are evolved only from Brahman and all these elements are not eternal contrary to what the sciences of logic etc teach. It is also known from this mantra that their theory of evolution is contrary to the Vedic principles.

There arises another assumption from the study of these sciences that only the space is evolved from the Brahman and all other viz. Air, fire, water and earth are evolved or generated from one another in that order only and hence it is not proper to say that this air etc are evolved from the Brahman only. To correct this assumption, the mantra is saying ***“ethasmAjjAyathe***” as the answer reiterating that all these elements and sensory organs etc are brought out only from the Brahman. A question may arise in that case, as to what will the substance of the text of the Upanishad – “AkAs’Advayuh, vAyoragnih…”etc.? The answer for this question lies in the Upanishads only. If one studies the ChAndOgya UpanishadvAkya – ***thadaikshatha bahusyAm prajAyeyethi – thadapo sRijatha – thA Apa aikshantha… thA annamasRijantha –*** in the chapter on creation. The Brahman willed to create the universe and the vital power tEjas is created. Then that tEjas willed to create water and water was created. Then that water willed to create earth and earth is created. Though it has been said so, itis impossible for an inanimate object like fire, water, earth etc. to will andcreate. Hence it should be understood that Brahman, who first willed to create the vital energy the tEjas or fire, is donning the body of tEjas or fire, willed and created the water; subsequently He took water as His body. He being thesoul willed and created the earth. There is neither capability to will nor the power to create. All of them are created by the Brahman who has them as His body. This is the answer given for clearing the doubts and apprehensions by the vEdAnta Sutrakara in the axiom ***thadabhidhyAnAdeva thu thallingAthsah.*** Hence for the s’ruthi vAkya***AkAsÁdvAyuh…*** the meaning should be taken as the Brahman who has all these elements as His body has created all these. In that case, the phrase ***ethasmAth jAyathe*** saying that all these have been created from that – the Brahman will hold good. On the other hand, if one takes the meaning that the space is the cause for the air, the air is the cause for the tEjas or fire, it will be contra to the Vedic doctrine which says that the Brahman is the cause of every Vasthu in the universe. Hence, the air from the Brahman who had the space as His body, the tEjas from the Brahman who has the air – the Vayu as His body etc., are created in the lineage. Thus it should be taken as the Brahman who has all the materials or vasthus as His body, is the cause for all of them to be created. Taking this mantra as the source, the ***prANothpaththyadhikaraNa, prANANuthvAdhikarana, viyadadhikaraNa and thejodhikaraNa*** have come up in the Vedanta Sutras.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue by taking up the 4thMantra

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-38***

Dear RAmAnuja Dasas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up from the 4th Mantra onwards.

***Mantra -4***

***agnirmUrdhA chakshushee Chandra sUryau|***

***dis’as’s’rothre vAgvivRithAscha Veda|***

***vAyuh prANo hRidayam vis’vamasya|***

***padbhyAm pRithiveehyesha sarva bhUthAntharAthmA||***

***Word meanings***

***asya*** = for this akshara Brahman

***agnih*** = the heaven

***mUrdhA***  = is the head

***Chandra sUryau***  = the moon and sun

***chakshushee*** = are the eyes

***dis’ah s’rothre*** = the directions are the ears

***vedAh***  = the Vedas

***vAgvivRithAh***  = are the spoken words

***vAyuh prANah***  = the air is the form of life

***vis’vam***  = the entire universe

***hRidayam***  = is the heart.

***pRithivee*** = the earth

***padbhyAm***  = is the feet

***esha*** = this akshara Brahman

***-antharAthmA*** = is the inner controller

***sarva bhUtha-*** = for all the sentient

.

**Explanation**:

The form of this akshara Brahman in His Gross form are being made known. The higher worlds viz., the heavens are His head. Here the word ***agni*** stands for the higher worlds – the heavens. The vAkyas from the S’ruthi and smRithi viz., - ***asau vai lokognih***and ***dyAm mUrdhAnam yasya viprA vadanthi*** are the testimonies or authenticities for this meaning. Further, the sun and the moon are the eyes for this virAT purusha. The directions are His ears. The Vedas are his words. The air which moves everywhere is his life. The entire universe is His heart. The earth is like His feet. His form is described in a similar fashion in the ***vais’vAnara vidyA*** of Chandogyopanishad. The vishNusahasranAma Stothra also describes Him in the similar way in the shloka ***bhUh pAdau yasya nAbhirviya dasuranilah….*** The substance of this mantra is that the supreme God-head taking the entire world as His body is the controller residing inside the sentient and insentient.

The study of S’ankara’s commentary –

Who is this Huge personality? S’ankara answered this question saying that it is none other than the MahAvishNu in his sentence in his commentary - ***esha devo vishNuh – praThama s’areeree thrailokyadehopAdhih sarveshAm bhUthAnAm antharAthmA.***At the same time, the introduction for this mantra is having strange sentences. Note them – “***paravidyA vishayam aksharam nirvis’esham purusham sathyam divyohyamUrtha… ithyAdi manthreNokthvA punasthadeva savis’esham visthareNa vakthavyamithi prakramathe….. yopi prathhamajAth prANAth hiraNyagarbhAth jAyathe asyAntharvirAT sah thaththvAntharithathvena lakhyamANopi ethasmAdeva purushAjjAyathe….”*** Substance of this introduction can be summarised as follows – It has been stated briefly in the previous 2nd mantra- ***divyohyamUrthah,*** that the akshara Brahman devoid of any attributes and qualities only is real. From the mantra ***agnirmUrthhA...*** the detailed form of that Brahman, who is said to be devoid of any attributes and qualities, is going to be described. … This virATpurusha – Vishnu is born to HiraNyagarbha, who is known by the word PrANa. This HiraNyagarbha, is the first offspring of that akshara Brahman, devoid of any attributes or characteristics. Thus even though there is another entity – HiraNyagarbha in between the attribute-less akshara Brahman and this virAT purusha – VishNu, since this vishNu is born from that attribute-less akshara Brahman, this VishNu also is the form of that attribute-less akshara Brahman only.

There are two subjects which need to be examined in the above statement. The first is examining the Brahman who is devoid of any attribute. The second aspect is the birth of the virAT purusha - Vishnu from HiraNyagarbha.

1. Stating that Brahman is devoid of any attributes. Statement that absence of any attributes to the Brahman is established by the Mantra ***divyohyamUrthah …***. By any testimonial or evidence, it is not possible to prove the existence of an entity without any attributes. Whatever testimonial or authenticity acknowledging the existence of an entity does it so by its specific characteristics or attributes which are unique to it. If an authenticity cannot acknowledge a quality or an attribute different than other entities, it cannot be termed as authenticity or testimonial at all. ***Idam iththham*** – this is that specific entity – is the form of acknowledgement of an entity by the authentic or testimonial. In this phrase, idam is the entity. ***Iththham*** tells about the unique properties or characteristics or attributes of that entity. In absence of these specific and unique characteristics, it cannot be identified as ***iththham.*** The testimony of direct perception – the Prathyaksha pramANa, obtained by the various sensory organs, acknowledges an entity by the presence of characteristics like its form, taste or sound or touch sensitivity etc. The anumAna pramANa or the perception by inference, concludes the presence of an entity by the presence of a known effect due to a characteristic present in an entity, which can be acknowledged by the direct perception.

Now coming to the words in a language, they are of four types, viz., denoting the race, the characteristic, the action and the matter. All these denote the attributes or characteristics like the race etc. Not only that any word has two components viz., the prakRithi – the root, and prathyayam – the suffix of declination. These two elements of the word do denote separate meanings only. Thus the combination of these two only make a complete word denoting an entity having specific characteristic like action, form, taste etc. denoted by the suffix – the prathyayam. Without the declination suffix, usage of a word is absurd and serves no purpose. Thus when a word itself is a qualified one, a sentence having many words together will be denoting an entity having more characteristics and attributes only and it cannot denote an entity devoid of attributes or characteristics. Thus neither of the testimonies viz., Prathyaksha - the direct perception, AnumAna – the inference, or the s’abda – the word from a well-wisher cannot acknowledge an entity devoid of characteristics. The advaithins – the followers of monism contradict the Buddhists negating that the Brahman is not of momentary existence and establish thus the eternity of Brahman. They argue that it is self luminous and is not illuminated by another wisdom or knowledge. In case they argue that the characteristics of eternity, self luminosity etc., are not there in this Brahman, their argument for negation of the doctrines of Buddhists etc. become fruit-less exercises only. To make their arguments meaningful, accepting the characteristics for the entity, then the Brahman is no more devoid of attributes. Thus in any case, the Brahman is not devoid of attributes and He is a qualified entity only.

1. The statement that the 2nd Mantra – ***divyohyamUrthah….***  Establishes that the Brahman is devoid of attributes – also is improper. Why should there be so many words in the mantra to explain a Brahman without any attributes? If the adjective ***divya*** does not indicate the specific characteristic for the subject word purushah what purpose does this adjective word serve? Further, this word ***divya*** itself is a combination of two words ***div*** and ***yath*** the root and suffix portions of the combination word the meaning for this combination is ***dyothanavAn*** – self-luminous entity. Thus, in the word Purushahas the word divya which denotes the characteristic of self luminosity. Thus even this word ***divya***  itself is not a word which denotes an entity without any characteristic. Thus all the words including the last word ***s’ubhra*** are all denote individual characteristics only. Otherwise, there is no purpose of using them at all.

It is not proper to argue that the brahman is said to be without any form by the mantras ***amUrthah – aprANah – amanAh*** and  ***achakshuh s’s’rothram apANipAdam*** etc., is again being described as having a head, body, limbs etc by the mantra ***agnirmUrthhA chakshushee Chandra sUryau – dis’as’s’rothre*** etc. To explain this contradiction, arguing that the absence of any attributes or characteristics is real and the huge form denoted by the word virAT is generated by ignorance and is not real is also not proper. The meaning of the words amUrtha etc. is to mention that the mundane body with the eyes, ears, feet hands etc with limitations is not the form of the Brahman. The next mantra immediately qualifies the Brahman as having the fire energy as its head, whole earth as feet etc. It is stating that the Brahman is of an extra-ordinarily big form by using the word virAT. This form and the characteristics are being confirmed by various smRithi vAkyas like “***na thasya prakRithA mUrthih – mAmsa medosthhi sambhava*** etc. Thus when there is no contradiction in the sentences, stating that there is contradiction between the various sentences and hence deciding that some sentences are true and the others are not true statements is highly improper. S’ankaracharya tried to establish that Brahman without any body – the ***amUrthathva*** only is the reality and the enormous form of the Brahman as explained by the mantra ***agnirmUrthha*** etc. is a mythical creation due to the ignorance only. However while writing the commentary for the ***vishNusahasranAma***he gives a different and proper explanation. His statement for the passage “visvamUrthi ***rmahAmUrthih deepthamUrthi ramUrthimAn “is*** as follows – ***visvam mUrthirasya sarvAthmakathvAth, ithi visvamUrthih. Seshaparyankas’Ayinosya mahathee mUrthirithi mahAmUrthih. deepthA jnAnamayee mUrthirasyethi deepthamUrthih. karmanibaddhanA mUrthirasya na vidyatha ithi amUrthimAn. avathAreshu bahveermUrtheeh bhajatha ithi aneka mUrthih…..”***  Here it is clear that the word ***visvamUrthih*** is denoting that He is having an enormous form of the body. Without bringing any contradiction to this meaning, the meaning for the word ***amUrthimAn*** he explains – ***“karma nibaddhanA mUrthih asya na vidyathe –*** that His form is not bound by the acts performed due to the connection with the primordial matter as in the case of the jIvAthmas. This is the correct approach since He is above the bondages of the primordial matter. By stating that His form of body is not like that of the demigods and humans who are endowed with limited powers for their bodies, who obtained their bodies suitable to experience the fruits of the deeds they had done previously, S’ankaracharya had brought the concurrence of both the sas’areera and as’areera ***S’ruthi vAkyas***which state that He has a body form and He is without a body form. Is it proper to classify a S’ruthivAkya which has stated that His body is an enormous heavenly one, to be unauthentic? Hence giving the meaning of this mantra to be according to unqualified or without any attributes is totally away from the proper understanding of the Scriptures.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue the critical examination of Sri S’ankaracharya’s

Commentary.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja Dasan

***Mundakopanishad-39***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the critical appreciation of Sri S’ankaracharya’s commentary for the 4th mantra.

Now we shall study the description by Sri S’ankaracharya of the purported birth of VishNu from HiraNyagarbha. This statement of Sri S’ankaracharya is self-contradictory. Not only that; it is contra to all the authentic sources i.e., Vedas etc. Sri S’ankara has written in his VishNusahasranAmaBhashyam for ***HiraNyagarbha bhUgarbhah –*** as follows – ***hiraNmayANDa antharvarthithvAth hiraNyagarbho brahmA virinchih thadAthmA.***  HiraNyagarbha means the four faced Brahma who is born in the extra-ordinarily highly luminous ***brahmANDa***as explained in Manu smRithi –***thadanDam abhavath haimam sahasrAns’u sama prabham. thasmin jajne svayam brahmA – sarvalOka pithAmahah.*** Further VishNu being the inner soul of this four-faced Brahma, ultimately it means that VishNu is being denoted by the word HiraNyagarbha. This is the substance of Sri S’ankara’s explanation for this.

In the same VishNusahasranAma there is another quote ***HiraNyagarbha s’athrughnah*** for which, Sri S’ankara’s commentary runs like this – ***HiraNyagarbha sambhUthi kAraNam hiraNmayam anDam yadveeryasambhUtham, thadasya garbha ithi hiraNya-garbhah.***The meaning of the above can be summarised as follows –“The energy of the Supreme Godhead has caused the huge shell called the brahmANDaof vital power, with golden hue, to be created. That shell called BrahmANDa is the cause of birth of HiraNyagarbha – the four-faced Brahma.Since that energy which created the BrahmANDais in the belly of this VishNu,ultimately this VishNu is the HiraNyagarbha.”

In both the contexts, Sri S’ankara said that the HiraNyagarbha is residing in the BrahmANDa. Further he states that VishNu is the soul of that HiraNyagarbha and for this BrahmANDa, VishNu is the resort.

Now he says in this Mundakopanishad that VishNu is born with an extraordinary huge form from that brahmANDa which is born from the HiraNyagarbha. Thus both the explanations of same Sri S’ankara are contradicting each other. Isn’t it self-destructive? From many of the scriptures and ithihAsas like Manu SmRithi and Mahabharata it is clearly spelt out in the following sentences that the four-faced Brahma is created by NarAyaNa –“***purA nArAyaNo devah svayambhUh prapithAmahah …. thathassa bhagavAnsthoye brahmaNam asRijath svayam”***. As such stating that VishNu is born out of HiraNyagarbha is against all the authenticities.

Again the same Sri S’ankara, who wrote in his VishNusahasranAma Bhashyam that this HiraNyagarbha resides in the brahmANDa, wrote in the first part of this Mundakopanishad for the Mantra “***thapasA cheeyathe”*** as follows – “***avyAkRithAth vyAchikeershathAvasthhAth annAth prANah hiraNyagarbhah …. abhijAyathe thasmAchcha prANAnmanah… thathopi sankalpAdyAthmakAnmanasah sathyam … sathyAkhyam AkAs’Adi bhUthapanchakam abhijAyathe. thasmAchcha sathyAkhyAth bhUthapanchakAth aNDakrameNa sapthalokA bhUrAdayah”*** etc... The meaning of the above quotes is as follows – The HiraNyagarbha, who is called as prANa is born from the ***avyAkRitha*** which is known as anna also. From that HiraNyagarbha the Manas – that which has the intention as its soul, is born. From that Manas, the five basic elements viz., AkAs’a etc. are born. From that five basic elements the brahmANDa, the seven worlds – bhU, bhuvar etc. are born – one from the other in that order. Thus in this it is stated by Sri S’ankara that HiraNyagarbha is created much earlier than the creation of the brahmANDa. This is another contradiction of his own words.

The same S’ankara BhagavathpAda while explaining ***“ethasmAth jAyathe prANo manassarvendriyANi cha”*** - the order of the creation, in the third part of this Upanishad, says – prANa means the ***mukhya prANa*** – the source of the life for all the living beings. He should have stated according to his previous statements that the meaning of the word prANa is the HiraNyagarbha, but chose to say differently. Thus, for the word prANa which is associated with the Manas, he gives the meaning as HiraNyagarbha at one place, and again as mukhya prANa – an entirely different meaning at a different place – obviously totally without any possible reason. As such, the first creator is NarAyaNa only, and the HiraNyagarbha, born in the brahmANDa created by NarAyaNa, is the creator for all that is inside the brahmANDa; in this brahmANDa NarAyaNa – the ParamAthmA – the highest soul is pervading everything and hence the all the worlds like dyu etc. are His parts of the body starting from the head to toes. It is indeed to be noted by all the learned that such form is called the extra-ordinarily great and huge form called the ***virAT svarUpa***, and this has been corroborated by all the authentic texts such as smRithis, purANas etc.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 5th Mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-40***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with 5th Mantra.

***Mantra 5***

***thasmAdagni ssamidho yasya sUryah***

***somAthparjanya oshadhayah pRithhivyAm|***

***pumAn rethassinchathi yoshithAyAm***

***bahveeh prajAh purushAth samprasUthAh||***

**Word Meanings**

***yasya***  = For which *dyuloka* **–** (higher world)

***sUryah samidhah***  = the Sun is the giver of luminosity,

***agnih***  = that *dyuloka* (the heaven)

***thasmAd (sambhavathi)*** = is born from that ***akshara brahman*** only.

***parjanyah (sambhavathi)*** = parjanya (the cloud) is born

***somAth***  = from that body of soma, that is born from that

*dyuloka*

***(thasmAd) oshadhayah***  = from that cloud, many of the medicinal herbs

***pRithhivyAm (sambhavanthi)*** = are born in the earth.

***pumAn yoshithAyAm*** = the man

***bahveeh***  = deposits the ***rethas*** (– sensory body) which is

generated in him from the food coming out of the

herbs

***rethah sinchathi***  = in the woman

Thus

***prajAh***  = many persons

***purushAth samprasUthAh*** = are born from the ***akshara purusha***

***Explanation –***

There is one sub-chapter called ***panchAgni vidyA*** in the 5th prapAThaka of ChaAndogya Upanishad. The aim of this sub-chapter is to explain in detail the pure nature of the JIva, who is dissociated from the cosmic matter. Explained in that chapter is the series of events taking place from the time the JIva having acquired a subtle body (***sUkshma Sareera),*** ascends from the previous gross body after death till he again enters another gross body. The *dyuloka***, *parjanya, pRithhivi, purusha and the woman*** are identified as five sacred fires in this process. The JIva, with the subtle body which he takes on ascending from the previous body after the death, enters each of these sacred fires as a sacred offering in the order given above for the five fires and finally is born with a gross body to the woman. That order is being retold in this mantra. The dyuloka which extends upwards and is having its luminosity from the sun is created by none other than the akshara Brahman. The JIva with the subtle body he acquires on demise from the last gross body is sacrificially offered into the first sacrificial fire – the *dyuloka. Here he gets into a heavenly body called soma. After he experiences some of his karmaanubhava,* he comes out of that body –soma and is brought into the world of parjanya – rather he is offered as sacrificial offering in the sacrificial fire called parjanya. There he gets into the body made of the water particles. Then he is again offered sacrificially into the third sacrificial fire of pRithhivee. That means he is transferred from the water borne cloud in the form of rain to the earth. Here he enters the various botanical entities called medicinal herbs in the form of the various food grain crops. Thus he enters the body of food grain. This means that he is again sacrificially offered in the sacrificial fire called purusha. Here the JIva gets into the body of the rethas – the semen of the man. Now he is again offered sacrificially in the sacred fire called the woman in the form of rethas being deposited in the woman. There again he gets into the gross body and takes birth with another gross body form. This cycle of birth and death is thus finally concluded that the cycle along with the so called sacrificial fires viz., the dyuloka, parjanya, pRithhivee, purusha and the yoshith, is created by the ***akshara purusha – the brahman*** only. This is confirmed by the Upanishad viz., ***asauvAva lokognih Gautama! Thasya Adithya Eva samith*** of ChAndogya. From this it is known that the world of Dyu – the dyuloka is denoted by the word agni – the sacrificial fire. Further to the above, from the S’ruthaprakAs’ika commentary it is found that there appears an additional vAkya – ***thasmAd agni ssamidhas’cha sUryah somah parjanyah.*** Like the small twigs being the source of luminosity for the sacrificial fire, the sun is the source of luminosity for dyuloka – the sacrificial fire and the same analogy holds good for the next sacrificial fires and their sources of the luminosity.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 6th Mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-41***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 6th Mantra.

**Mantra- 6**

***thasmAdRichassAma yajUmshi deekshA***

***yajnAs’cha sarve krathavo dakshiNAs’cha |***

***samvathsaras’cha yajamAnas’cha lokAh***

***somo yathra pavathe yathra sUryah||***

**Word Meanings**

***Richah***  = the Rig Veda

***sAma***  = sAma Veda

***yajUmshi***  = and yajur Veda

***deekshA***  = the consecration like wearing the sacred mounjee belt etc.

***sarve***  = all

***yajnAh***  = the religious sacrificial rituals

***cha***  = and

***krathavah***  = the different forms of sacrificial offering rituals like Somayaaga etc

***dakshiNAh***  = the offerings of wealth etc to the performers of the rituals

***cha***  = and

***samvathsaram***  = the time e.g., The year etc.

***cha***  = and

***yajamAnah***  = the beneficiary of these rituals,

***cha***  = and

***yathra***  = whichever worlds

***pavathe***  = are made pure by the rays of

***somah***  = the moon, and

***yathra***  = whichever worlds are

***sUryah***  = purified by the sun god

***pavathe cha*** = with his rays, and

***(the) lokAh***  = such pious worlds also

***sambhavanthi*** = are created.

***thasmAth***  = from that akshara brahman

<http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/mwquery/>

**Explanation**

In this mantra it is stated that the rituals like the yajnas – the sacrificial religious rituals, the required procedures and accessories of those yajnas, their benefits etc., are all created by that akshara brahman only.

The Riks – the mantras which are created by following certain rules governing the number of lines, their constitution by defining the number of letters etc are called Riks. They appear in that part of Veda which is called Rig-Veda. The mantras which are in the form of musical compositions are called SAmas and they constitute that part of Veda called Sama Veda. The mantras which are in the form of sentences, not controlled by any rules regarding either the number of lines in a mantra or the number of letters in a line, are found in that part of Veda called yajurveda. These three types of mantras are recited in the religious rituals called yajnas etc. The precursory regulatory requirements to be observed by the performer of these rituals such as wearing a girdle made out of Munja grass etc are called deekshas – the consecrations. According to Sri S’ankara BhagavathpAda there appears a minor difference between yajnas and krathus. There is an altar called yupasthambha in the rituals called krathus. Yajnas are such rituals in which the altar is not required. According to Ranga RAmAnuja muni the yajnas which are modified version of the Soma yaga, are called krathus. The honorariums offered to those who officiate as the ritviks – the scholars who officiate conducting the yajnas are called dakshiNas. They are of many varieties and can be offered in kind as well as cash, gold, silver etc. The auspicious periods of time for performing the yajnas are called the kaalams. The benefits accrued to the performers of these yajnas are the higher worlds, to be enjoyed by the performers of these yajnas. They are called bhogasthanas. All the above are created by the ParamAthmA only, who is also known as the akshara brahman.

**Mantra- 7**

***thasmAchcha devA bahuthhA samprasUthA***

***ssAdhyA manushyAh pas’avo vayAmsi |***

***prANApAnau vreehiyavau thapascha***

***s’raddhA sathyam brahmacharyam vidhis’cha||***

Word Meanings

***devA*** = The gods who receive the offerings in the yajnas

***bahuthhA*** = of different races like vasu, Rudra, Adithya etc.

***samprasUthAh*** = are created

***thasmAchcha*** = by that akshara Brahman only

***sAdhyAh*** = another class of the gods named SAdhyas,

***manushyAh***  = the human beings,

***pas’avah***  = the various animals moving in the villages and in the forests,

***vayAmsi***  = the various birds,

***prANApAnau***  = prANa and apAna winds - those which sustain the lives

***vreehiyavau***  = the grain crops that give the materials for the sacred offerings

***thapascha*** = the penances like the ***kRichchhra, chAndrAyaNa*** etc.

***s’raddhA***  = the mind that has reverence to the Vedas as authorities -

***sathyam***  = the truthfulness while speaking out

***brahmacharyam***  = practice of celibacy

***vidhis’cha*** = the various scriptural procedures

***samprasUthAh*** = are created by the same akshara brahman.

Explanation –

All the entities in these worlds right from the four-headed brahmA –responsible for the creation inside this world up to the tiniest worm and fly are created by the akshara brahman only. He is the creator of the life giving and sustaining gases called ***prANa*** and ***apAna***. The grains which are used in preparing the ***puroDAs’am*** – the sacrificial food offered to the gods on culmination of the sacrifices are created by Him only. The various regimes of penances, the strong beliefs that the Supreme God-head will bestow the best of the worlds on being pleased by these persons through the rituals prescribed in the scriptures, the regime of speaking truth without causing harm to the others are created by the Akshara Brahman only.

The code of conduct of Brahmacharyam, the daily and occasional rituals prescribed in the scriptures etc are also created by Him only.

The meanings of few words used in the mantra are given below –

Thapas – the regime often known as penance to please gods to bestow the person following the regime with the benefits of higher worlds. They usually are known as ***kRichchhra, chAndrAyaNa*** etc. and following these regimes results in famishing the body by regulating the food intake. Thus the performer of the penance is showing his utmost concentration towards the God even at the cost of the body.

S’raddhA – having strong belief that there exist the higher worlds which have better living conditions, and that the performer of the various religious rituals as prescribed in the scriptures will result in him attaining these higher worlds.

Brahmacharyam – (celibacy) the scriptures define the brahmacharyam as follows –

***smaraNam, Keertanam, keLih, prekshaNam guhyabhAshaNam samkalpo- adhyavasAyas’cha – kriyAnirvRithireva cha| ethanmaithuna mashTAngam – pravadanthi maneeshiNah| vipareetham brahmacharyam ethadevAshTalakshaNam.***

As said in the above, not having the eight types of contact with the women is called brahmacharyam.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 8th Mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-42***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In the previous posting in the 2nd paragraph beginning with, there appeared a sentence “The auspicious periods of time for performing the yajnas are called the kales.” In this inadvertently a typographical mistake had crept in. This sentence should read as follows. “The auspicious periods of time for performing the yajnas are called the kaalams.” This error had been pointed by my friend Sriman Prattipati Ramaiah. I am grateful to him for pointing out this error. Readers are requested to kindly take note of this and correct the last posting.

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 8th Mantra onwards.

***sapthaprANAh prabhavanthi thasmAth***

***sapthArchisha ssamidha ssapthahomAh (\*sapthajihvAh)|***

***saptheme lokA yeshu charanthi prANa***

***guhAs’ayA nihathAssaptha saptha||***

***(\*sapthajihavAh*** instead of ***sapthahomAh*** in a version according to Ranga RAmAnuja muni.)

**Word meanings**

***sapthaprANAh*** = The seven sensory organs on the face,

***sapthArchisha***  = the sacrificial fires viz., Ahavaneeya etc.

***samidhah***  = the twigs required for those fires,

***sapthahomAh***  = the seven flames of those seven fires, and

***prANah***  = the sensory organs

***guhAs’ayAh***  = resting in the space in the heart while in deep sleep and

***yeshu nihathAh***  = being placed in the respective places like the eye sockets by the Brahman

***saptha saptha***  = numbering seven each in every body,

***ime saptha lokAh***  = these seven sensory organs

***charanthi***  = which are working for capturing the mundane pleasures

***prabhavanthi*** = are created

***thasmAth***  = by the akshara brahman

**Explanation –**

In this Mantra, there appear two versions one with the word saptha jihvAh in place of saptha homas. Sage Ranga RAmAnuja muni had picked up the version with jihvAh and S’ankara BhagavathpAda had picked up the version with homas for their respective commentaries.

The seven sensory organs on the face are two eyes, two ears, and two nostrils plus one tongue. The seven flames of the sacred fires are identified as kALee, karALee etc., earlier in the 2nd part of this Upanishad in the mantra which begins with “kALee karALee….” The seven organs which have been placed on the face, take rest in the space in the heart, while in the deep sleep. In the awakened state, they capture the mundane pleasures through the eyes, ears, nostrils and the tongue placed in their respective places on the face. All these eye balls, ears, nostrils, the tip of the tongue – are created by the akshara Brahman only.

Sri S’ankara BhagavathpAda, picking up the version with the word saptha homas wrote his commentary taking the mantra to elaborate the various parts of the sensory organs only. It is stated in his commentary that sapthArchishah mean the rays emanating from these organs towards the objects of pleasures of these seven organs. Samidhah mean the objects like the form and shape, the taste, smell etc. to be captured by these organs. The word saptha homas stands for the senses created by these organs.

Since the word sapthArchis teaches in general the fire and hence the fuel denoted by the word samidhah also should mean the respective fuels necessary for the fires according to Ranga RAmAnuja muni. In that light only he commented these words like saptharchis etc. to denote the sacrificial fires since the creation of the fires and their fuels was not taken up in the mantra. It is quite a reasonable assumption. The repetition of the word saptha indicates the presence of these seven places for the organs in every body.

Mantra-9

***athassamudrA giriyas’cha sarve***

***asmAth syandanthe sindhavas sarva rUpAh|***

***athas’cha sarvA oshadhayo rasas’cha***

***yenaisha bhUthaisthishThathe hyantharAthmA||***

**Word Meanings**

**sarve**  = all the

**samudrAh**  = seas,

**girayas’cha**  = mountains etc., are created by and

**athah**  = from this akshara Brahman only.

**sarva rUpAh**  = many types of

**sindhavah**  = the rivers

**syandanthe**  = are flowing

**asmAth**  = because of Him only.

**athah**  = this Brahman only created

**sarvAh**  = all varieties of

**oshadhayah**  = medicines (the farm products, herbs, creepers etc.)

**rasAs’cha**  = also the six juices of taste available in the above.

All the above are happening only

**yena**  = because

**eshah**  = this akshara Brahman

**thishThathe** = is standing

**antharAthmA**  = as the soul and inner controller of

**bhUthaih** = all the entities and

**(parivRithah)**  = surrounded by them.

Explanation –

The various seas, the mountains such as the Himavath and Meru, the rivers of various types etc. are all created by the akshara Brahman – the ParamAthmA only. The various medicinal plants and the juices present in them are His creations only. One may have a doubt as to how can all the above be claimed to be created by Him, when actually they are sprouting and growing from the earth? The answer for the above doubt is given in the fourth line of the Mantra reading ***yenaisha bhUthaih thishThathe hyantharAthmA.*** He being the soul and controller of all the entities like the earth etc., without Him intending, there is no power in any of these entities to enable the creation by sprouting and growing of these entities as said in the line ***thEna vinA thRiNamapi na chalathi.*** It is to be noted that since He is the soul and controller every action and result, He is the cause of all these.

While there exists this possibility of this plausible and straight meaning being given, Sri S’ankara BhagavathpAda gave a very complicated note on this Mantra. It runs as below –

***antharAthmA – lingam sUkshmam s'areeram – thaddhi antharALe s’areerasya athmana s’cha aathmaa varthatha ithyantharAthmA.*** The meaning is given – antharAthmA means the subtle body. antharAthmA – the one which is placed between the body and the soul. Thus his explanation for the word antharAthmA is quite complicated and is an indirect one. He further explains that this subtle body is surrounded by the gross entities made from the five basic elements viz. the pancha bhUthas. The reader can easily understand the complicity as well as the impropriety of this explanation.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 10th and last Mantra of the third part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-43***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

My friend Sriman PrattipAti Ramaiah had raised the following points from the 42nd posting to be clarified.

“Request elaborate

1. Correlation of seven sense organs and seven flames indicating names of each.

2. What is the relation of Samidhas with seven flames?

3. Corelation of seven flames and seven chakras

4. Correlation of Veda mantras recited with seven flames.

Further are there any geometric shapes of seven flames?”

My humble clarifications are

1. The seven sense organs on the face may be correlated with the seven flames or JwAlas. The names of these JwAlas were already given earlier in the Upanishad. Now I have included them in the write up for a ready ref.
2. There is no specific relationship with the seven JwAlas. However, there may be because of the seven types of the fuel twigs being used to kindle the sacrificial seven flames or JwAlas.
3. The chakra theory has not been a part of the system of these Upanishad explanations. Neither Sri S’ankara has mentioned such a correlation to the best of my knowledge. If there is any correlation, it may be explained by any learned member of the group.
4. There does not appear to be any specific correlation with the Veda mantras and the seven flames. It appears that the seven flames are part of the receiving mouths and the offerings may be accepted through the respective JwAlas which may have specific functions like receiving the Ajya bhAga or the charu or the puroDAs’am etc.
5. There does not appear any reference for the form of these JwAlas. There may be references in the Veda Purva bhAga.

In this connection I am giving a few points below, which I hope will establish a connection with the required clarifications and may be an elucidation for the other readers as well.

The VishNusahasranAma sthothra has ***saptha jihvAh*** as one of His names. The explanation for this name as given in ***paushkara samhitha*** is given below-

***thadvakthra devathAnAm cha huthabhuk parames’warah|***

***mantrapUtham yadAdAya – hutham Ajyapurassaram|***

***brahmANDa bhuvanam sarvam santharpayathi sarvadA||*** The substance of the above quote is given below –

The fire has seven faces or tongues. They are called flames or JwAlas. They are known as ***kAlee, karALee, manojavA, sulohithA, dhUmravarNA, sphulinginee and visvarUpA,*** as mentioned in the second part of this Upanishad. They have different colours as well. The ***agnihothra*** – the sacrificial fire receives the sacrificial offerings of clarified butter or ***ghee***, cooked rice called ***charu***, a kind of cake called ***puroDAs’am,*** made of powdered grain and other ingredients through the seven flames or the faces of the sacrificial fire. Thus they may be considered to be the seven organs of senses on the face which have been mentioned. These offerings are safely transmitted to the concerned demy-gods in whose names the offerings are made by the performer of the Yajnam. They get satisfied by the offerings through the sacrificial fires and bestow the benefits on the performer who prays them for requisite benefits like happiness; cures form the illness, wealth etc. They are delegated such powers by the Supreme Godhead who is present in them as ***antharyAmi,*** to bestow some benefits as per their delegation. Thus the Akshara Brahman – the Supreme God-head is directly pleased like a father who gets pleased when his sons are respected and honoured, when the demigods like Indra, Rudra, VaruNa etc, the various elements of the Akshara Brahman are prayed and offered the sacrificial offerings through the seven flame heads of the sacrificial fire. Hence the seven flames are also considered as parts of that Akshara brahman only.

There is another name for Lord VishNu – the supreme God-head which has connection with the present context. That name is ***sapthaidhAh.***

The explanation of this word is given below by Sri Paraasara Bhattar –

***indhanAni pAka havissoma samsthhAni prathyekam sapthasamkhyAni ishTApUrtharUpANi saptha vAnaspathyAssamidhosyethi sapthaidhAh.***  The meaning and ***explanation*** are given below –

The one who has seven Edhas is called sapthaidhAh. What is an Edhas? They are the Vedic rites performed by the house-holders. The person, propitiated by these Edhas is none other than the Para brahman. These Edhas can be called as ***ishTApUrthas*** which are the works carried out for the benefit of commoners. They are like building the huge water reservoirs which serve for drinking purposes and irrigation purposes. They are again seven types as said. There can be another interpretation of this word Edhas. These are the twigs used to kindle the sacrificial fires. They are called samidhas. They are also of seven varieties as per the scriptures. They are basically from the trees and hence called vAnaspathya samidhas. These seven types of trees are raavi (asvaththa. Ficus religiosa), jammi (Jambi- Prosopis cineraria, moduga (palAs’a -Plaso monosperma, aththi (mEDi- HarithAksha- Ficus racemosa), pullaregu (Mulu Tiruman- Flacourtia Indica), as’anihathamu and pushkaravarNam. The twigs to kindle the sacred fires are only from these seven trees. These twigs are called ***indhanas*** or ***vAnaspathya.*** Since He is being propitiated by these yajnas being kindled by these twigs He is called as ***sapthaidhAh***

The Vedic rituals performed by a householder are of three types, viz., pAka yajnas, haviryajnas and somasamsthas. They are named as ***indhanas***. ***aupAsanam, vais’vadevam, sthhAleepAkam, ashTakA, masis’rAddham, ees’Anabali,*** and ***sarpabali*** – these seven are called pAkayajnas. The seven Haviryajnas are ***agnihothram, dars’apUrNamAsam, pinDapithRyajnam, pas’ubandham, AgrayaNam, chAthurmAsyam, and sauthrAmaNi.*** The seven somasamsthas are – ***agnishTomam, athyagnishTomam, ukthhyam, shoDas’am, vAjapeyam, athirAthram and apthoryamam.*** Since He is being propitiated by these Vedic rituals, He is called ***sapthaidhAh.***

Then there is one more name for Him as ***sapthavAhanah.***  The explanation for this name is as given below as given by Sri Paraasara Bhattar.

***thathprakAs’aka gAyathryAdichchhandaska Vaidika mantrAbhimAneeni ravirathhadhuryANi sapthavAhanAni asya ithi sapthavAhanah. yadvA saptha vAhayathi yathhA AmnAyathe “saptha prANah prabhavanti” ithyAdi. “guhAs’ayA nihithAssaptha” ithi uktham. Saptha vAyuskandhAn vahathi ithi vA – sri paushkare,***

***“vis’ves’a prANas’akthervai vAyvAkhyam adhidaivatham|***

***jagathsandhArakam chaiva – nAnA skandhAthmanA thu vai|***

***ethe bhagavadArAmAh thishThanthi yasmin jagathraye||***

The meaning of the above is as follows –

The one who has seven chariots or carriages is called ***sapthavAhanah.***  Here the word vAhanam stands for the horses. Thus the Sun-god moving around in a one wheeled carriage being drawn by seven horses is denoted by this word and since the ParamAthmA is in the Sun-god as antharyAmi this name ultimately denotes the Para Brahman only. Further as quoted in the mantra “***saptha prANah prabhavanthi” “guhAs’ayA nihithAh saptha saptha”*** He is the creator of entities or worlds seven each in numbers and executor for these seven entities – or prANAs and the worlds – the seven different airs that move the body with life or seven worlds that make up this universe. The seven airs are named as ***Avaha, pravaha, samvaha, udvaha, vivaha, parivaha and parAvaha.*** They are known as prANa s’akthis. These seven airs are the places for Him to make strolls.

Now reverting to the Upanishad, in this posting we shall continue with the 10th and last Mantra of the third part out of the six parts of the Upanishad will get concluded.

***Mantra-10***

***purusha evedam vis’vam***

***karma thapo brahmA parAmRitham |***

***ethadyo veda nihitham guhAyAm***

***so avidyAgranthhim vikiratheeha Somya||***

***Word Meanings***

***Somya*** = oh good natured S’aunaka!

***idam vis’vam***  = this entire world

***purusha eva***  = is the form of that akshara brahman only.

***karma thapah***  = the entire creation also is only by His intention.

***iha yah***  = That person in this world, who

***veda***  = comes to know

***ethath brahmA***  = that this akshara Brahman,

***parAmRitham***  = being the uppermost and greatest power

***nihitham***  = is residing

***guhAyAm***  = in the secret space of his heart,

***sah***  = that knowledgeable person

***vikirathi***  = shall untie and throw away

***avidyAgranthhim***  = the ignorance, which is in the form of a tight and difficult to untie knot.

Explanation –

We come to know from S’ruthaprakAs’ika that there is another version with ***purusha evedam sarvam*** in place of ***purusha evedam vis’vam.*** However the meaning remains the same. From all the previous mantras, the answer for the question of S’aunaka – ***kasmin vijnAthe sarvamidam vijnAtham bhavathi*** is given. According to the gist of all the previous mantras, the answer is as follows – If one learns that by knowing about the Brahman, he will be knowing everything in this world, since He is the ***upAdAna kAraNa*** – the basic raw material and cause of all the creation. It is like by knowing the characteristics of the clay, one can know all about the articles made out of it. By knowing that before the creation, all the sentient and insentient in the subtle form is merged in the Brahman; and that Brahman with the sentient and insentient merged in Him is the basic raw material and cause for the creation, one is bound to know all about the created entities! One need not think about how enormous are the efforts put in by the Brahman for creating this entire world. His intention is sufficient for the creation to happen. We may recall the S’ruthi vAkya ***yasya jnAnamayam thapah.***  Thus the Brahman the Omnipotent and much more than the primordial cosmic material and the ***purusha – the*** man, is the eternal unending bliss denoted by the word ***amRitha.*** He is known to be aksharAth parathah parah – much higher and powerful than the primordial cosmic matter and ***purusha*** – the man. That Brahman is the soul and inner controller, residing in the secret space in my heart. That person who is aware of this most guarded secret, he will be able to remove the strong bonds binding him to this mundane cycle of births and deaths, because of his knowledge of the Brahman.

While making commentary on the words ***brahma parAmRitham***, Sri Ranga RAmAnuja Muni says ***brahmas’abdika prakRithi parabhUtha mukthAthmanAm amRithavath paramAnandathayA bhogyabhUtham.*** The word brahmA here means the primordial cosmic matter. The ***muktha purusha*** – the relieved person (from the bondage of the prakRithi and the cycle of the births and deaths) are of higher status than this prakRithi. For them this akshara purusha – the Brahman is like the divine nectar. The substance of the explanation is that the Brahman is the giver of eternal bliss to them and is enjoyable to the relieved person. His interpretation of the above words is a compound word or ***samAsa***. There exist two compounds in that, the first being those persons higher than the brahmA – the primordial cosmic matter – brahmaNah parAh – the thathpurusha compound of fifth declination and the second being brahmaparANAm amRitham – the thathpurusha compound of sixth declination.

But this format is not according to the S’ruthaprakAs’ika. As per S’ruthaprakAs’ika, which reads ***thapasA cheeyathe brahmA – thapo brahmA parAmRitham – ithyanayo raikakanThyam dars’itham parasya brahmaNa ithi,*** the words brahmA and parAmritha denote the parabrahman. Again the word brahmA may be the object qualified by the adjective compound parAmRitham. As in the case of the word Brahma appearing in the mantra “***thasmAdethath brahma*** at the end of the 1st part, here also the word brahmA in the word ***brahmA parAmRitham***, denotes only the Para brahman and not the primordial cosmic matter. Further the Brahman is being qualified by the word Para. This is the view expressed by S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya and SribhAshya. The word meanings have been given with that background.

In the commentary of Sri S’ankara, it is explained that the akshara purusha only is the reality and the universe is subjected to number of changes and hence is only a myth, as explained in the various preceding mantras. Further it is mentioned that this is the meaning of the Vedic sentence ***eka vijnAnena sarva vijnAnam…*** If one has the knowledge of the real causative Brahman it is as good as knowing the mythical universe which is another form of Him only. Giving a meaning for the ***ekavijnAnena*** Vedic sentence in this way is proven by us to be improper earlier in the 1st part of this Upanishad. Is there any need of so many mantras to say that the universe is a myth?

Further, the explanation given by Sri S’ankara for the sentence ***brahmA parAmRitham ethad yo Veda*** rewriting it as ***brahma Param amRitham aham Eva ithi yo Veda*** is also improper. There is no word ***aham*** in the mantra to know that “I am that Para brahman”. This is twisting the meaning by adding additional words to suit once own interpretation, when the existing words in the mantra are sufficient to give a proper and logical meaning. Thus it gives a clear impression to the reader that Sri S’ankara tried to impose his interpretation on the S’ruthi in this part.

The third part of the Upanishad is concluded.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-44***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 4th part of the Upanishad.

**Mantra -1**

***Avissannihitham guhAcharam nAma***

***mahathpada mathrai thathsamarpitham|***

***ejath prANath nimishas’cha yadethath jAnathha sadasadvareNyam***

***param vijnAnA dyadvarishTham prajAnAm||***

**Word meanings**

***jAnathha***  = (you all should) know that akshara brahman.

***(thath)*** = which is

***Avih***  = the one which is directly perceivable by the saints,

***guhAcharam***  = being present in the cavity of the heart,

***sannihitham nAma***  = being very near for everyone and

***mahathpadam*** = the greatest among all the desired to be possessed.

***ejath***  = that which moves when it is awake,

***nimishas’cha***  = and is in the state of sleep; and

***prANath yath***  = which is the conglomeration of the living beings -

***ethath athra samarpitham***  = all that as above, is dependent on this akshara brahman.

***prajAnAm varishTham yath***  = that akshara brahman, worship-able for all the people and

***sadasadvareNyam***  = being the repository for all– the gross and subtle entities

***vijnAnAth param***  = is greater than the JIva.

**Explanation** –

This 4th part deals with the nature and characteristics of the UpAsana – the meditation for obtaining the eternal bliss which is otherwise called as attaining Him – the ***brahma prApthi.*** This akshara brahman cannot be a subject of the direct perception to the common mundane person. However it is directly perceivable only to those saints and ascetics who meditate on Him. Hence it cannot be wished away as something which does not exist. Though it is not perceptible to the common man, it is very near to everyone since it dwells in each person’s heart-cavity. That entity which gives happiness and eternal bliss is the one most desirable for every living being. All the physical bodies give only short lived and miniscule happiness. On the contrary this akshara brahman is the form of eternal – unending and massive bliss as said by the Vedas as ***amRitham, raso vai sah, mahath padam.***

The entire living population – a conglomeration of all living beings, whether in the awakened state or in the state of sleep, is totally dependent on this akshara brahman only. One may recall the quotation elsewhere in another Upanishad – ***thadyathhA rathhasya Areshu nemirarpithA – nAbhau arA arpithAh.***  The spokes of a wheel rest on the central hub and the outer rim is supported by the spokes for the wheel to run. Similarly, the lifeless body depends on the JIva for its existence and the JIva depends on Him, dwelling and controlling the JIva by His presence in the JIva’s heart cavity. This is the meaning of this passage.

Ethath jAnathha… -

This akshara brahman is greater and higher than the JIva. It has been indicated by the usage of the phrase ***vijnAnAth param –*** higher than the JIva. This akshara brahman is the sustainer of the sentient and insentient in both the subtle and gross form. It is the refuge for all the living in this world and is the form of eternal bliss for all. The word ***vijnAna*** is used to denote the JIva in the Vedas viz., in the Vedic sentences such as ***yo vijnAne thishThan*** and ***vijnAnam yajnam thanuthe.*** As such in the present context also it is used to denote JIva, the place of refuge for the knowledge, instead of its simple meaning – the knowledge – the attribute. The AchArya – the preceptor is preaching his s’ishyas – the pupils to know such great akshara brahman and meditate on Him.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 2nd Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-45***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 2nd Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Mantra -2

***yadarchimath yadaNubhyoNu***

***yasmin lokA nihithA lokinas’cha|***

***thadetha daksharam brahma, sa prANa sthadu vAjn~manah***

***thadethath sathyam thadamRitham thadveddhavyam Somya viddhi||***

**Word Meanings**

***Somya***  = O gentle S’aunaka!

***viddhi***  = know

***veddhavyam thath*** = that Brahman which is worthy of knowing with a pure

mind that is to be meditated upon

***yad***  = which is

***archimath***  = full of the Power of brightness

***yad***  = which is

***aNu***  = smaller

***aNubhyah*** = than the smallest atom

***lokAh*** = the worlds

***lokinas’cha***  = and the population in them

***nihithAh***  = are dependants placed

***yasmin*** = in whom,

***thadethath***  = that which has the greatest powers

***aksharam brahma*** = is the akshara brahman

***sa prANah*** = that is the life giver for all the living beings

***thadu vAk manah*** = that is also the spoken word and mind

***thadethath sathyam***  = that Brahman is without any changes for all the times

***thadamRitham*** = that is the most desirable to be experienced

**Explanation –**

yadarchimath – that which is having the brightest form of body of most enormous proportions like the one which has been described in the S’ruthi by the phrase – ***ApraNakhAth sarva Eva suvarNah*** – is full of the golden hue from the nails of the toes to the tip of the golden crown resting on the golden hair on the head. ***yadaNubhyo aNu*** – it is the smallest in size which enters in the atom sized JIva also as said in the Vedic phrase – ***ya Athmani thishThan*** – that which stays in the JIvAthma. ***Yasmin lokAh nihithAh lokinascha*** – in which Brahman, the entire population and the worlds are placed, being dependents on Him for their sustenance. It may be recalled that all the worlds such as ***dyuloka*** etc. – the higher worlds of skies are part of that ***virAT svarUpa*** – the enormous form of Him. ***thadethath***…. Manah – He is the ***prANa –*** the cause of life of every being, He is also the spoken word and thinking mind – the instruments for all transactions and actions. ***Thadethath sathyam –*** that akshara brahman is real and eternal since it does not have any changes for all the times.

Objection –

It is being stated by you that both the Brahman and the worlds are real. However the monists, the followers of Sri S’ankara’s postulations say that only Brahman is real and the worlds created by Him are mere mirages. Presently it is being told that this akshara brahman, the cause of the entire creation, is eternal and real. If that is the case, the worlds, which are the manifestations of the primordial cosmic matter being created by Him, definitely should be not eternal and real. In such a situation, why should you not accept the postulation of the monists which states that the Brahman only is real and the worlds created by Him are only myth or mirages? You do not agree with them, saying that their postulation is not supported adequately by the S’ruthis – the Vedas and other authenticities. Can you support your argument?

Answer-

We do not contest that Brahman is real as observed in this vAkya ***thadethath sathyam.*** What we do not agree is their statement ***jaganmithhyA*** that the world created by Brahman is not real. You may like to note that in the beginning of the 2nd part of this Upanishad, it was mentioned that the rituals and their resultant fruits are true being told by the words ***thadethath sathyam*** there also. However there Sri S’ankara says that sathyam– the reality of the rituals etc., are not really real but are considered to be real only for the purpose of saying. At one place that sathyam does not mean real and at another place he says that it is real, without giving any reason for saying so. Is it not inconsistent and unfair? Again in the 1st part of this Upanishad, while commenting on the mantra ***thapasA cheeyathe,*** he says the meaning of the word sathyam in the phrase ***manassathyam***, stands for the five elements namely space etc. his quote is “***sathyAkhyam AkAs’Adi bhUtha- Panchakam***”. There he does not say that that sathyam also is only real for sake of telling and not real in the real sense, when the S’ruthi itself is calling the five elements namely space etc., to be real. All the above show the inconsistencies of his theory of myth or mirage. Hence it is clear that his theory of mithyaavAda – the theory of the myth or mirage is his own imagination only and is not supported by the Vedas. Hence it is rejected by us.

***thadamRitham thad veddhavyam Somya viddhi*** – that is as much enjoyable as the ***amRitham*** the heavenly nectar. What does not die is amRitham. The death is for him who is bound by the cycle of births and deaths. So here the word ***amRitham*** stands for the absence of the bondage to the cycle of births and deaths. ***Veddhavyam*** means the target, which is to be struck. The target has to be perfectly known and shot with a perfect aim. Similarly, the brahman, the target here, also has to be known by examining and understanding with an attentive mind and then aimed by meditation. in place of thadu ***vAngmanah***  there is another version ***thadavAngmanah.*** in such a case, it should be read as ***avAngmanah*** – not perceptible either by the mind or the word – the Vedas. Such brahman is the object one must know – ***viddhi***.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 3rd Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-46***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 3rd Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

**Mantra 3.**

***dhanurgRiheethvaupanishadam mahAsthram***

***s’aram hyupAsAnis’itham samdadheetha|***

***Ayamya thadbhAgavathena chethasA***

***lakshyam thadevAksharam Somya! Viddhi||***

**Word meanings**

***Somya!***  = Oh S’aunaka!

***viddhi|*** = know

***thadevAksharam*** = that akshara Brahman

***lakshyam***  = as the goal or aim

***(veddhavyam ithi)*** = to be shot at by taking

***gRiheethvA***  = hold of (that bow of PraNavam)

***dhanuh***  = the bow called PraNavam, which is

***aupanishadam***  = the famous one in the Upanishads

***mahAsthram***  = and to be most effective and powerful armour.

***samdadheetha***  = Mount – make ready for firing

***s’aram hi***  = the Atma known here as the arrow

***Ayamya***  = aiming for attaining the brahman,

***upAsAnis’itham***  = sharpened by the meditation

***chethasA*** = with the mind

***thadbhAvagathena***  = being made to concentrate on the Brahman

Explanation –

In the next mantras, it is being told that one should meditate on the Akshara Brahman by repeated chants of ***aum – the*** PraNavam. In this process, the 3rd and 4th mantras are figurative to mention that method of meditation. Om (aum) – the PraNavam is figuratively mentioned to be the bow that is the most effective ordnance to aim reaching the Brahman. By mounting an arrow in that bow, it directs that one should mount the arrow meditation on the Akshara Brahman in the bow called Om (aum) – the PraNavam. The aim is obviously the Brahman. In substance it says that the Akshara Brahman is the one which should be the most sought after object for a soul or sentient being.

A very powerful bow has been mentioned in the Upanishads. One should take that bow into his hands and mount a sharp arrow in that bow. After aiming perfectly the arrow should be released to hit the target. Then only he will be able to obtain the desired object. This is a mundane affair to obtain the fruit that is too high on the tree to reach by normal means. In the spiritual affairs, obtaining the most desirable fruit of release from the cycle of births and deaths is also similar affair. For obtaining this mOksha, one should mount a sharp arrow in a bow and release it to strike at the targeted mOksha. Here the PraNavam, the ***omkAra*** is the bow. This is obtained from the Upanishads. In other words, the Upanishads state ***Omithi brahma –*** the PraNavam is the Brahman***, Omithi idagm sarvam*** – all this is PraNavam – the Brahman***.*** The arrow is the JIvAthma. The target is Brahman. Striking with the arrow is the UpAsana. According to the Upanishad – ***OmithyAthmAnam yunjeethha*** – propitiate the ParamAthmA with ***Om*** (aum) – the PraNavam. PraNavam means that the JIva – denoted by the third syllable M of the PraNavam, belongs to the ParamAthmA denoted by the first syllable A of the PraNavam. The first syllable A denotes ParamAthmA by virtue of the root A meaning the saviour; and the word A which stands for the universal cause – the cause of all the syllables, the cause of everything in the universe. These two characteristics of the ParamAthmA i.e., being the saviour of all and the cause for everything are thus indicated by the first syllable A of the PraNavam – the OM (aum). By repeatedly chanting the PraNavam – repeatedly recollecting the meaning of the PraNavam that the JIva belongs to ParamAthmA for all the times, one should meditate the ParamAthmA having the divine body the most auspicious, beautiful and decorated with ornaments, through this PraNavam, one should aim at achieving the mOksha by pleasing Him. Before embarking on the aiming with the bow and arrow, one should sharpen the arrow – the Atma, so that it can hit the bull’s eye of the target – the ParamAthmA. What is this sharpening of the arrow – the Atma? Knowing that the Atma – that is eternal and the form of pure knowledge is entirely different from this body and sensory organs made up of the primordial cosmic matter. This is the meaning of the words ***upAsA nis’itham s’aram.*** There is another version of this mantra with word ***sandheeyatha*** in place of ***sandadheetha.*** The meaning of the mantra remains the same in both the versions.

***thadbhAvagathena chethasA Ayamya -*** Here Ranga RAmAnuja Muni says the phrase should read as ***thadbhAgavathena chethasa***. In that case, it means ` with a mind totally dedicated to the ParamAthmA. The present version has the vigraha of the compound as follows – thasmin bhAvah thadbhAvah, thadbhAvam gatham thadbhAvagatham. This phrase also has similar meaning – having a mind which has dedication and love towards the svarUpa of that ParamAthmA. ***thadbhAvam means*** attaining the state of being with the ParamAthmA, ***thadbhAvagathena chethasA*** – with a mind desirous of a state of being with the ParamAthmA. This is the second meaning which has been given Sri Ranga RAmAnuja Muni.

***Ayamya*** means make sure of the arrow – the Atma, being aimed properly. The meaning of this is – to turn the sensory organs away from the mundane objects towards the ParamAthmA.

Thus it has been explained that one should make himself turn towards the Para-brahman by meditating on Him through the repeated chanting of the PraNavam and thus reaffirming that He is the Lord and the self being the servant of Him – the meaning of the PraNavam explained earlier. This is the meaning of the striking the target with the arrow. What benefit does one get by following this? The benefit is elaborated and confirmed in the next mantra by the phrase ***s’aravath thanmayo bhaveth.*** An arrow strikes the bull’s eye of the target and becomes part of the target for all practical purposes when aimed perfect and released from the bow. Similarly the meditator – the JIva offers himself to Him, and lo he comes out in his original form endowed with the eight auspicious characteristics as stated in the S’ruthi vAkya ***apahatha pApma…***etc., like Him. He will be enjoying the eternal bliss called brahmAnanda as mentioned in the Brahma Sutra – ***bhogamAthra sAmyalingAchcha*** and obtains the same status of Brahman, as said in the phrase ***paramam sAmyam upaithi*** appearing in the 5th part of this Upanishad. This is the form of ***mukthi*** – the release from the bondage of births and deaths.

Explaining the meaning of the phrase ***s’aravath thanmayah*** as the JIva becoming the Brahman is not correct. An arrow or a bullet released from the bow or the gun enters the target and looks as though it has become a part of the target, but it retains its original form. The phrase ***paramam sAmyam upaithi*** appearing in the 5th part of this Upanishad also states that JIva attains the same status as of Brahman only but does not become Brahman. Thus it affirms that ***mukthi*** for a JIva means that the JIva also enjoys the same status of Brahman. Even in ***mukthi –*** the stage of release from the mundane cycle, a JIva is atomic where as the Brahman is a Vibhu – occupying the entire universe. A JIva is always a servant of the Brahman and Brahman is the Lord of all the entities. The form of mukthi as per the VisishTAdvaita system is that the JIva obtains the same status as Brahman and enjoys the divine enjoyment as endowed by the Brahman after being released from the bondages with the primordial cosmic matter. We shall have a detailed explanation of the mukthi stage in the 5th part of the Upanishad, when we come to the explanation of the sentence ***paramam sAmyam upaithi.***

According to Sri Ranga RAmAnuja Muni, there should have been a mantra which reads ***Rigdhanuh yajurbANah sAma jyAGhoshaNAdinA| adharvaNamayam s’ubhram prApthi gRihNeetha suvrathah***, as the reference he gave in his BhAvaprakAs’ika commentary. But the aforesaid mantra has not been commented by any of the commentators. Neither there appears any mention by Sudras’ana Suri, the author of S’ruthaprakAs’ika commentary of Sribhashyam. It could have been a later insertion to explain the phrase ***praNavo dhanuh s’aro hyAthmA.***

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 4th Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-47***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 4th Mantra onwards of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

**Mantra -4**

***praNavo dhanu s’s’arohyAtmA – brahma thallakshya muchyathe|***

***apramaththena veddhavyam – s’aravaththanmayo bhaveth||***

**Word Meanings**

***praNavah*** = The syllable Aum – the praNavam

***dhanuh***  = is the bow

***s’arah***  = the arrow

***AtmA hi***  = is Atma – the soul

***brahma***  = the akshara Para brahman only

***uchyathe thath*** = is identified to be that

***lakshyam***  = target or aim

***veddhavyam***  = which should be shot (should be meditated upon)

***apramaththena***  = with full attention.

***s’aravath***  = (the Atma), like that arrow without fail

***thanmayah*** = becomes one like (that akshara Brahman) the aim

***bhaveth*** = on reaching the target

**Explanation**

The bow and arrow that were mentioned in the previous mantra are clarified here to be praNavam and Atma respectively. An archer holds the bow, sets a sharp arrow in position, aims at the target carefully, pulls the string to the ear, releases the arrow and hits the target. The target that was hit by the released arrow is broken up and comes under the control of the archer. One has to apply this analogy to the present scene. The PraNavam (Aum) is the bow for the seeker after liberation. His Atma which has been rendered pure by his Yoga is the sharpened arrow. This arrow has to be placed in the bow viz., the praNavam (Aum), very carefully aimed at the target, i.e., the Brahman and released. The meaning is that one has to surrender the Atma to the Brahman, who is the target to be attained, reciting the PraNavam The Lord, pleased by the total surrender of the Atma, would then become subordinate to (comes under the control of) the devotee.

**Mantra-5**

***AthmAnam araNim kRithvA praNavam choththarAraNim|***

***dhyAna nirmathhanAbhyAsAth – devam pas’yeth nigUDhavath||***

**Word Meanings**

***kRithvA***  = one should make

***AthmAnam***  = his own mind

***araNim***  = a block of a special wooden block called ***araNi***

***praNavam cha*** = and the syllable aum – the praNavam

***(kRithva)*** = be made

***uththarAraNim*** = as the churning wooden block to create auspicious fire

***pas’yeth***  = should be able to visualise

***dhyAna***  = by the meditation – a serious exercise by the mind to find the Brahman. This meditation in the form of churning the praNavam in the mind has been figuratively represented in this mantra as the action of churning the wooden block called ***araNi*** in the specially made deep depression in another wooden block called ***uththaraaraNi***. By churning vigorously a fire is generated. This generated fire is considered to be auspicious and is the only fire qualified to be used in the sacrificial rituals called yAgas or ishTis.

***nirmathhanAbhyAsAth*** = a continuous and vigorous meditation of praNavam in the mind

***devam***  = the akshara brahman – the paramAtma

***nigUDhavath*** = who is present with a subtle form in the mind of the meditator and in the praNavam as well,

**Explanation –**

There is no commentary for this mantra either by Sri S’ankara or by Sri Ranga RAmAnuja Muni. But in the commentary of Sri Sudars’anaBhaTTar (S’ruthaprakAs’ikAcharya) for the ***adRis’yathva adhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam, the following text appears – ***praNavo dhanuh s’arohyAthmA – AthmAnam araNim kRithvA – ithyAdibhih upAsanasya prakAra ukthah ithyarthhah.*** (the meaning is that the method of meditation or upAsana is specified by the text ‘praNavo dhanus’s’aro hyAthmA, AthmAnam araNim krithva’) From this statement it is clear that this mantra does form a part of the Mundakopanishad – the version made available to Sri Sudars’ana BhaTTar. Since he is considered to be a very astute scholar of high repute, this version is taken as an authentic version of the Upanishad and the explanation for this is being given by us.

Further in the present context, **(1)** the type of meditation, mentioned in the previous mantra and **(2)** its duration are being specified in this mantra. The type of meditation which was described as similar to aiming and shooting an arrow from a bow is being reiterated with another example in this mantra. According the Brahma Sutra ***“AvRiththih asakRidupades’Ath”***, a meditation should be a continuous exercise of visualising without any breaks like the flow of oil which is devoid of any breaks instead of a onetime exercise.

The sacred fire, which is required for a YAga, the sacrifice, is ignited by rubbing “Khadira (**Botanical-Acacia catechu Wild (Fam., Leguminosae) Tamil-Karungali, Telugu-Chandra**” and Sami (**Tamil- parambai/jambu, Telugu- Jammi**) wooden logs against each other. In Sanskrit these wooden blocks are called araNi. When one churns one block into hollow made in the other rigorously, due to the friction, heat is generated and fire erupts. This fire is considered to be sacred and is used for the yajna. In the same manner, one has to churn his Atma - the uththaraaraNi against the PraNavam, the araNi. Here churn means meditate. As the meditation continues progressing stage by stage into a serious dhyAna etc, the Brahman, who is in the Aum in subtle form and the Atma, will emerge successful in visualising the Brahman’s gross form in mental frame as if He is present in front of him and this is called maanasa sAkshAthkAra. The meaning is that this meditation, which is practised in the form of churning of the Atma for visualising the Brahman in the praNavam – the Aum, should be continued till the Brahman manifests.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 6th Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-48***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 6th Mantra onwards of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

**Mantra – 6**

***yasmin dyauh pRithhivee chAnthariksham***

***otham manassaha prANais’cha sarvaih|***

***thamevaikam jAnathhAthmAna manyAvAcho vimunchathha***

***amRithasyaisha sethuh***

**Word Meanings**

(O wise men!)

***jAnathha***  = Know about that akshara Brahman

***yasmin***  = on whom

***dyauh***  = the upper world,

***pRithhivee cha*** = the earth,

***anthariksham*** = the skies

***manas***  = and the mind

***sarvaih prANais’cha saha***= along with the sensory organs

***otham***  = depend for their existence.

***thameva ekam***  = That akshara Brahman only

***AthmAnam***  = is the antharAtma ***–*** the inner controlling and sustaining

soul for every entity.

***anyAh vAchah***  = The other statements not speaking the true nature of Atma

***vimunchathha*** = should be discarded as of inconsequence.

***eshah***  = Only this akshara brahman

***sethuh*** = is the means for the Atmans

***amRithasya*** = to achieve ***moksha*** – the relief from the cycle of births and

deaths

**Explanation**

The Bhagavad-Gita says ***mayi saran idam protham – sUthre maNigaNA iva.*** It means that this entire universe is totally dependent on Him for its existence like the string which joins all the gems in a necklace. This statement from the Gita is the explanation for the first half of the present mantra. ***HRisheekes’a*** – the Lord of all the sensory organs is being mentioned by the phrase ***manah prANais’cha sarvaih.*** The etymological derivation (esp. in gram.) of the word HRisheekes’a is as follows – ***hRisheekANAm ees’ah hRisheekes’ah.***  It means that the controller of the indriyas – the sensory organs is called hRisheekes’a. From this one can easily conclude that the mantra is not specifying the JIva by the word Atma and the word Atma is used to denote the akshara Brahman only.

The portion of the mantra that starts with ***thamevaikam*** asks one to know about the akshara parabrahma – the paramAtma who alone is the entity that pervades and controls every entity other than Him by permeating it. All other statements which do not teach about that paramAtma are not worthy of being considered as testimony or authenticities. Hence they are to be left alone since they do not contribute any significance to the context. Since He is the entity that bestows the moksha which is in the form of eternal bliss, one should learn that science of knowledge of soul or of spiritual truth – the philosophy. He is the only means that joins the Atma with Moksha. This bridge – the sethu is the means for a person to cross over the cycle of births and deaths and reach his destination – the moksha. It is worth noting that Kulasekhara AzhwAr also used this expression to identify the means for a JIva to tide over this mundane world – ***bhavathi s’araNameko vishNupotho narANAm.*** –Vishnu becomes the only boat-refuge for the humans for crossing over the mundane world and to reach the destination of moksha.

It is stated in the commentary of S’ankara for this context as follows – ***amRithasya esha sethuh – ethadAtmajnAnam, amRithasya – amRithathvasya mokshasya prApthaye, sethuh - samsAra mahodadheh uththaraNahethuthvAth -*** . the word ***eshah*** is a masculine gender word. In this mantra. It clearly refers to the paramAtma mentioned in ***thameva AthmAnam jAnathha -*** the sentence of the first half of the mantra. This being the case, commenting that this ***eshah*** word denotes the neutral gendered word AtmajnAnam, without taking note of the **gender difference** does not appear to be appropriate.

**Objection-**

one can reach the destination – the ParamAtma only after crossing the sea of the mundane world by the sethu. This being the case, how can anyone identify the ultimate destination – the ParamAtma as the Sethu – the bridge or boat, the means to reach the destination? So in spite of the word ***eshah*** being of masculine gender, there is no impropriety in Sri S’ankara stating that this word denotes the AtmajnAnam, which is to be the Sethu – the bridge or the boat – the means to reach the destination.

**Answer** –

If one takes cognisance of the ***chAndogya mantra – “athha ya AthmA sa sethuh vidhRithih”*** which very clearly shows the ParamAtma as the Sethu, the above objection does not stand to reason. Again in this Upanishad itself, it is said ***yamevaisha vRiNuthe, thena labhyah -*** the paramAtma only bestows the ***upAsaka*** – the meditator, and here it is very clear that this word ***eshah*** is used to denote paramAtma only. Further the word ***thena*** also identifies the ParamAtma as the means in addition to being the destination. It is worthwhile to note the axiom ***paramathah sethUnmAna sambandha bhedavyapades’ebhyah*** of the Brahma Sutras also in this context.

The ***dyubhvAdyadhikaraNa*** which appears in Brahma sutras has this mantra as the vishayavAkya. The prima-facie view and the settled opinion or doctrine obtained after the refutation of the prima-facie view, are given below according to Sribhashyam of RAmAnuja.

Purva paksha – the prima-facie view –

There is a doubt about the place of refuge for the dyu, pRithhivee etc. whether it should be the JIva or paramAtma. According to the vAkya ***manassaha prANaih,*** the relationship of the mind and ***prANas*** are with the JIva only. Further according to the vAkyas ***samhathA yathra nADyah,*** and ***bahudhA jAyamAnah*** in the next Mantra, the relationship of the neurons or veins and the many births is with the JIva only as such the entity denoted by the vAkya ***thamevAthmAnam jAnathha*** is the JIva only as per the pUrva pakshi the first arguer.

The ***siddhAntha*** – the settled opinion or doctrine obtained after the refutation is as follows- The extra ordinary characteristic in the form of bestowing the ***moksha*** – the release from the cycle of births and deaths and serving the Lord by being with Him, is the characteristic of Him only and no one else has that capability or authority to bestow ***moksha*** on the JIva. It is not possible hence for a JIva to bestow another entity with such a release or the servitude to Him. The object entity described in the next few mantras ***yadA sadyah*** and ***yadA pas’yah*** etc., is only He being shown to be the destination for the JIvas, who have earned the release from the mundane worlds by His benevolence after being pleased with these JIvas. Further in the mantra starting with ***samAne vRikshe,*** He has been denoted by the words ***anyam Is’am*** as the meditated entity. In the same context, the mantra starting with ***dvA suparNA,*** the JIva has been identified as the entity enjoying the fruits of the deeds and ParamAtma as the one who shines brilliantly without enjoying any fruit. From the foregoing arguments and Veda vAkyas, it is established that the ParamAtma alone is the cause of creation and is the meditated entity. This is in short the doctrine settled by RAmAnuja.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 7th Mantra of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-49***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 7th Mantra onwards of the 4th part of the Upanishad.

**Mantra – 7**

***arA iva rathhanAbhau samhathA yathra nADyah***

***sa eshonthas’charathe bahudhA jAyamAnah|***

***omithyevam dhyAyathha AthmAnam***

***svasthi vah pArAya thamasah parasthAth||***

**Word Meanings**

***sa eshah***  = this akshara Brahman

***jAyamAnah***  = who incarnates

***bahudhA***  = in many ways.

***charathe***  = resides

***anthah***  = inside (such heart) of the every living entity,

***yathra***  = in which

***samhathA***  = are placed together

***nADyah***  = the veins and arteries of the body,

***arAh iva***  = like spokes of the wheel of a carriage (placed)

***rathhanAbhau***  = in the hub of the carriage.

.One should

***dhyAyathha***  = meditate

***AthmAnam***  = that akshara Brahman

***omithyevam***  = with the praNavam only

***pArAya***  = to reach the far side shore that is in the form of release from the births and deaths, and which lies

***parasthAth***  = beyond

***thamasah***  = the primordial cosmic matter – the great darkness.

***vah svasthi***  = Let there be happiness and prosperity for you all.

The place of that paramAtma is identified to be the heart chamber of a meditator in the ***nArAyNopanishad of thaiththireeyam.*** The relevant passages read as follows – ***padmakos’a pratheekAs’am hRidayam chApyadhomukham*** and ***hRidayam thath vijAneeyAth – vis’vasyAyathanam mahath.*** Further, ***santhatham sirAbhisthu lambathyAkos’a sannibham.*** It is said that the heart chamber looks like an inverted bud of a lotus flower. From that only all the veins and arteries extend to all parts of the body. In essence, the heart is considered to be the origin for all such veins and arteries. Like the assertion in the thaiththireeyam, presently in this mantra also, all the ***nADis*** – the tubes in the body – the veins and arteries are said to originate from the heart chamber only like the spokes of a wheel are emanating from the central hub of the wheel. Further it is stated in the present Mantra that the paramAtma is there in that heart chamber in a subtle form.

**The descent of ParamAtma – and study of its nature.**

***bahudhA jAyamAnah –*** It is felt that the elaboration of bhagavad avathAra thaththvam is the necessity here. Though it takes some space in the book it is essential to understand the nature of His descent in the p43resent context. The ParamAtma who resides in the heart of every entity takes many descents – avathAras for the sake of restoring the universe to its normalcy and safeguarding His devotees. His descent is not that He is born but there appears a need for Him to descend into this universe. He is in fact ***ajAyamAna*** – a person who does not have births. In spite of that He takes descent many times as said ***bahudhA vijAyathe*** – takes birth in many ways, in the Vedas. What is the reason for this unusual birth? The Vedas say that only those who are in the knowledge of the reality of the nature and characteristics of paramAtma know the reason behind His descents. ***Thasya dheerAh parijAnanthi yonim*** – ***dheerAh –***the well read scholars (only) ***thasya yonim*** – the reason of His descent (birth) ***parijAnanthi*** – know in full. When He is an ***avApthasamasthakAma*** – that person whose every desire has been fulfilled, what for should He descend? The answer for this question is given by Him in Bhagavad-Gita. Krishna the paramAtma himself reveals the reason for His descents –

***parithrANAya sAdhUnAm vinAs’Aya cha dushkRithAm|***

***dharmasamsthhApanArthhAya sambhavAmi yuge yuge||***

He does not descend for Himself. His ***avathAram*** is only for safeguarding the interests of sAdhu ***purushas*** – His devotees who are good and honest. That is the primary and important benefit of His descent. He is Omnipotent, who can perform the creation and other such acts by His intention itself. When He is so powerful, there can be a minor doubt that when He could have protected His devotees – the PAnDavas from His abode SrivaikunTham itself, why should He take all the trouble of descending as Krishna? Bhagavad RAmAnuja in his commentary to Gita had elaborated on the qualities and characteristics of the ***sAdhu purushas*** gave a very apt and heart-warming reply for this doubt. He says – ***sAdhavah ukthalakshaNa dharmas’eelAh, vaishNavAgresarAh, mathsamAs’rayaNe pravRiththAh, mannAmakarma svarUpANam vAn~gmanasAgocharathayA maddars’anAdvinA svAthmadhAraNa poshaNAdikam alabhamAnAh kshaNamAthrakAlam kalpasahasram manvAnAh pras’idhila sarva gAthrA bhaveyurithi, mathsvarUpacheshTitha avalokanAlApanAdi dAnena theshAm parithrANAya….*** Its meaning can be summarised as below – the good and honest persons having the characteristics as established earlier do follow the scriptural duties. They are in the forefront of the devotees of VishNu. They are on the pursuit to visualise Him. They cannot stand or live even for a minute without visualising my form in person and consider that period of not being able to visualise me in person to be some ages. Unable to see me in physical form they have their parts of body getting drained out and becoming totally dependent on me. Considering all these, to protect them and make them happy, I come down with my physical form and all my qualities and characteristics. They become happy by seeing my form, characteristics and acts.

The characteristics of a vaishNava – the follower of vishNu is given in VishNu purANa as follows –

***na chalathi nijavarNa dharmatho yassamamathih AthmasuhRidvipakshavarge|***

***na harathi na cha hanthi kinchiduchchaih sithamananam thamavehi vishNubhaktham||***

one who does not abrogate deviate from the prescribed duties under any circumstances, who treats all persons equally irrespective of them being friends or foes, does not look for acquiring others properties, does not harm anybody, becomes a pious person and he can be construed as a true devotee of BhagavAn VishNu. Such persons show their vexation with the samsAra – the mundane life and they proceed with firmness to approach BhagavAn for the relief from this mundane world. They have a strong desire to visualise physically the beautiful form of Him, behold the extra-ordinary acts of Him, and have chat with Him. Being innumerable in number and not capable of capturing the beauty and sweetness of those innumerable names of Him, extra-ordinary acts of Him and unthinkable form of Him with this mundane body and sensory organs, they are unable to bear the anxious and painful wait for them. Thus they spend their time as if a minute is like ages as said ***thRiTi yugAyathe – thvAmapas’yathah*** – a minute part becomes a yuga – a very long period of lakhs of years as You are not being visible to us; in ***GopikAgeethas.*** Their bodies and organs tend to lose their vitality. How does He protect such of His devotees if He does not descend in front of them and let them see His physical form, His unusual acts and talk with Him? Thus His descent is only for the protection of His devotees.

The scriptures do say ***dars’anam thu parAbhakthih*** – physical visualisation is called parAbhakthi. In other words, a devotion which leads one to the physical visualisation of Him is known to be called as ***parabhakthi.*** Personalities like ***PrahlAda, Dhruva, and AkrUra are such people who longed to be able to see or visualise physically His form and succeeded in having their wish fulfilled.***  AzhwArs also belong to such a category only. The purpose of His avathAram or descent is to protect and fulfil the wishes of such of His devotees only. There lived a scholarly Brahmin called Govindaswamy in Tirupati in the olden times. He did a very hard penance to visualise His exciting physical form and acts as described and detailed in the various scriptures. The Lord also being extremely pleased with him re-enacted and showed him all His acts and forms in various avathArams to him. This was stated by Sri Thirumangai AzhwAr in his work Periya thirumozhi in the pAsuram ***mAka mAnilam muzhuthum vandiRainjum malaraDi kaNDa mAmaRaiyALan (5-8-5)***

Similar was the experience of the famous poet MadhusUdana sarasvathi who says ***kRishNAthparam kimapi daivamaham na jAne.*** He desired to see Him in this life itself and was blessed also with such a benefit from Him. Whatever alms he could get daily was being offered to Lord KrishNa and was partaking the same food along with Him with utmost pleasure. He expressed that happiness in one poem of his work named Ananda mandAkinI sthavam as given below

***madhyAhne yamunAthaTe viTapinAm mUle vayassyaissamam***

***dadhyannAnyupabhujyu rajyathi punasthath kreeDane cha thvayi|***

***nAkes’a sthripurAnthakah kamalabhU ranyecha nAkAlayAh***

***kAkAkAra jusho muhuh kabaLayanthyuchchishTamishTam thava||***

Its meaning – O young KrishNa! When you are playing after eating the curd rice with other cowherd boys during midday, the celestials like Indra, Rudra, and the four-faced Brahma etc. appeared there in the form of crows and are picking up the auspicious leftover rice again and again. Thus MadhusUdana Sarasvathi is blessed by the visualisation of BhagavAn.

There are many more such devotees like St. ThyAgarAja etc. who were longing to have the dars’anam of BhagavAn. It would not have been possible to give them the physical dars’anam to them from SrivaikunTham unless He descended in front of them. Thus His descent was necessitated to grant the wishes of His devotees and this is the beautiful explanation given by Sri RAmAnuja in his commentary to Bhagavad-Gita.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with some objections and the answers to this view.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-50***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the objections and their answers in respect of the descent of BhagavAn.

Other objections

The birth in the form of a man or celestial or an inanimate object is made available for the souls as a result of their deeds either as heinous or virtuous. When the ParamAtman is not subservient to His deeds, how can He have a birth or the so called descent? Further it is being told that He has the stages of a child, boy, youth, full-fledged man etc. Does it not mean that He has a body made up of the five basic elements, which undergoes the continuous transformation like every other body of primordial cosmic matter made up of the three attributes viz. sattva, rajas and thamas? Is it not despicable that He entered into this quagmire, into which knowingly no worthy being enters? By virtue of having the primordial body, would not His attributes and characteristics of sathyakAmathva, sathyasamkalpathva etc, also be subjected to being shielded off by the ignorance? Such objections capable of being raised by the low intelligent common man can come up.

Answer –

The S’ruthivAkya ***thasya dheerAh parijAnanthi yonim*** shows that the wise counsel like sage VyAsa and ParAs’ara etc. have given answers for such objection. Sage ParAs’ara in his Vishnu purANa viz., ***jagathAm upakArAya na sA karma nimiththajA*** – His descent is for the purpose of helping the universe, ***ichchhA gRiheethAbhimathoru dehah*** – He takes up a body which is to His liking, make it known that these bodies which are taken up by Him are not of the usual cosmic matter. The same is said by sage VyAsa in Mahabharata – ***na bhUthasangha samsthAnah dehosya paramAthmanah –*** His body is not made up of the conglomeration of the primordial cosmic elements. In vAyu PurANa it is said - ***na thasya prAkRithA mUrthih – mAmsa medosthisambhavA*** – His body is not made of the primordial matter consisting of the flesh, bones and marrow. Thus it is amply made clear by the S’ruthis, purANas and ithihAsas that His body in the form of Rama and KrishNa is not the mortal one but made up of the five extra-celestial elements of His SrivaikunTha, though it appears as if His body is made up of the usual blood, flesh and bones, like all the humans or celestials. It is well known that His characteristic attributes such as His Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and capability to see and know everything shine even in His descents also without any effect of the primordial matter on them. (not like those attributes of the Atmans (JIvas) which get shrouded by the primordial ignorance) It is clearly said by Him in Bhagavad Gita –

***ajopi san avyayAthmA bhUthAnAm eesvaropi san|***

***prakRithim svAm adhishThAya – sambhavAmi AthmamAyayA||***

It is clear from these words – “svAm prakrithim adhishThAya” – having an extra-ordinary body of mine, “Athma mAyayA” – I take birth as I intend – that He takes His descent at His will with an extra-ordinary body. From this it is known that His descent is not like the birth of the JIva, which happens as soon as the time comes for experiencing the fruits of his deeds. There is no effect of the primordial cosmic matter on His capabilities, attributes or characteristics even when He descends into this primordial universe. This reality of His descent is indicated by the phrase “***bahuthhA vijAyathe”*** of this present mantra.

AchArya the preceptor blesses his meditating pupils – OmithyAthmAnam ***dhyAyathha – svasthinah pArAya thamasah parasthAth –*** meditate by chanting the praNava on that ParamAtma for reaching that eternal place called Parama Vyoma which is eternal and beyond the primordial cosmic sphere. Let there be success in your journey towards reaching that most desirable thing for the JIvas,

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 8th Mantra.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-51***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 8th and 9th Mantras.

**Mantra -8**

***yah sarvajna ssarvavith – yasyaisha mahimA bhuvi|***

***divye brahmapure hyesha – vyomanyAthmA prathishTithah||***

**Word Meanings**

***esha AthmA***  = that akshara brahman

***yah***  = Which

***sarvajnah***  = knows the nature of every entity and

***sarvavith*** = the specifics of every entity

***bhuvi***  = on this earth, and

***yasya***  = whose

***esha mahimA***  = great power ensures that every entity exhibit their pattern of specific behaviours,

***prathishTithah hi*** = is sitting with most auspicious and beautiful form

***divye brahmapure*** = in the metropolitan city of brilliantly glowing Sri VaikunTha

***vyomani***  = in the eternal celestial higher world called Nithya vibhUthi

**Explanation –**

The meaning of the phrase ***yassarvajna ssarvavith*** may be seen in the explanation of the 10th Mantra of the 1st part of this Upanishad. The phrase ***bhuvi esha mahimA yasya*** stands for the entire universe that exists in the Great Eggshell of the universe – the ***brahmAnDa.*** The substance is that all the entities of this universe like the Sun, Moon, the five basic cosmic elements are performing their respective functions solely by the power of that akshara brahman only. It is thus established that this akshara Brahman is the sole cause for all these entities of the universe to perform their designated functions. This has been amply reflected in the various S’ruthi vAkyas like ***bheeshAsmAdvAthah pavathe – bheeshodethi sUryah – bheeshAsmAdindras’chAgnis’cha, ethasya vA aksharasya pras’Asane GArgi! sUryAchandramasou vidhRithau thishThathah*** – (the wind blows due to the fear of Him punishing the erring, the sun Rises in the east because of the fear of Him, punishing the erring, the Indra, the god of fire also perform their functions due the fear of punishment of the erring, meted out by Him ) It is further confirmed that He is the administrator and controller of every entity right from the four-faced creator Brahma to the smallest creature; and by this it is established that He is the Lord of all these universes.

Now, from the sentence ***vyomani divye brahmapure prathishThithah***, it is amply made clear that He is the Lord of the higher eternal worlds in the form called Nithya vibhUthi. From the Vedic sentences ***adhvanah pAramApnothi thadvishNoh paramam padam*** and ***devAnAm pUrayodhyA,*** it is further established in this mantra that the ***nithya vibhUthi*** – the eternal higher worlds, and the ***leelA vibhUthi*** – the visible Universe, are totally under His Lordship.

**Mantra -9**

***manomayah prANa s’areeranethA***

***prathishThithonne hRidayam sannidhAya|***

***thadvijnAnena paripas’yanthi dheerAh***

***AnandarUpam amRitham yadvibhAthi||***

**Explanation**

the ParamAtma,

***prANa s’areera***  = having the body made up of the five-action prANa, and

***manomayah***  = who can be known and understood only by a clean mind,

***nethA*** = and the Lord

***prathishThithah***  = is firmly placed as the intestinal fire called jAThara

***anne*** = in the body, the transformed form of the food intake.

***dheerAh***  = the wise

***paripas’yanthi*** = visualise in totality

***thad yad*** = that Brahman, who

***yadvibhAthi*** = who shines with an extra-ordinary glow, and

***amRitham***  = is devoid of the ills of the births, diseases and death

***AnandarUpam***  = and is in the form of eternal bliss

***hRidayam***  = by keeping Him in the mind

***sannidhAya*** = and meditating on Him

***vijnAnena***  = with the wisdom gained from the meditation in the form of prayer

Explanation –

Bhagavad RAmAnuja has elaborated the meaning of the word ***manomaya*** in Sribhashyam while dealing with the ***Sarvathra prasiddhyadhikaraNa.*** His explanation runs as follows – “***paris’uddhena manasA ekena grAhyah. viveka vimokAdi sAdhana sapthakA-nugRiheetha******paramAthmopAsana nirmaleekRithena hi manasA gRihyathe”.***  According to the S’ruthi vAkya ***na chakshushA gRihyathe nApi vAchA – manasA thu vis’uddhena,*** He can be perceived only by a meditator who, by virtue of meditation on Him he carries on, makes his mind pure and clean. That meditation is identified to be the one, qualified by the seven types of practices called the ***sAdhana sapthakam consisting of vivekam, vimokam etc.*** This aspect needs a detailed explanation which will be posted in the next posting.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the detailed explanation of the sAdhana sapthakam.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-52***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 8th and 9th Mantras.

Sage BodhAyana maharishi was the first person who presented an excellent and voluminous commentary for the Vedanta Sutras or Brahma Sutras of Sage VyAsa. He showed seven causes for the upAsana – the meditation to be successful. He had taken the various references from the S'ruthis and confirmed that these causes are the essentials for achieving a meditation which has the format of the unshakable and continuous visual perception of the meditated during the meditation. Bhagavad RAmAnuja had taken the same and elaborated them in Sribhashyam. The text of BodhAyana on this is as follows –

***thallabdhih viveka-vimoka-abhyAsa-kriyA-kalyANa-anavasAda-anuddharshebhyah sambhavAnnirvachanAchcha.***

Now let us go through these seven essentials for the successful meditation.

1. **Vivekam –**

What is vivekam? Cleaning the mind by partaking the food that is not polluted by either its association with – As’raya-dosha, or by the instrument – nimiththa dosha or by the race – the jAthi-dosha, is called as vivekam. ***jAthyAs’raya nimiththA dushTAth annAth kAyas’uddhih vivekah*** is the definition given for cleansing the mind. It should be noted that In this context the word ***kAya*** in the phrase kAyas’uddhih denotes the mind or anthahkaraNa. Sri Varavara Muni popularly known as Sri MaNavALa MAmuni had said in his commentary for the 2nd chapter of AchArya HRidayam book as follows – ***kAyas’uddhih engiRa viDaththil kAyas’abdaththAl anthahkaraNaththai chchollugiRathu*** – the word kAya in the phrase kAyas’uddhi is denoting the cleanliness of the anthahkaraNa or the mind. The S’ruthi VAkya ***AhAras’uddhau saththvas’uddhih*** demands that one should partake only such a food which is not polluted. By virtue of belonging to the race or type the polluted or detrimental foods for a clean mind are the foods like ganja, garlic, meat etc. which belong to a particular type. The pollution due to the association is for the foods which are cultivated, and or stored and sold by a person who does not have a clean and pious behaviour. The instrumental pollution of nimiththa dushTa is such foods which are contaminated with hair, worms, partly eaten foods etc... By taking food which is not contaminated or polluted by the above three types of pollution, will give rise to the multitude of increase of saththva-guNa and decrease of the Rajas – the egoistic and haughty behaviour and thamo-gunA – the stubbornness, ignorance etc. This helps the mind to be clean and suitable to receive the right type of wisdom.

1. **Vimokam.**

This is defined as follows – ***vimokah kAmAnabhishvangah.*** From the etymological derivation – kAmyatha ithi kAmah, the ***kAma –***means the pleasurable experience desired by the human. An addiction for enjoying a particular mundane object, without which the person feels that he cannot live, is called as ***abhishvangam.*** Absence of such a strong desire to experience that object is called ***anabhishvangam.*** The substance of this definition is that absence of addiction is called ***vimokam.*** This strong desire, to enjoy a particular object ***is called abhishvangam.*** Absence of such abhishvangam is called anabhishvangam. A person who is afflicted with abhishvangam will not be able to concentrate on his UpAsana since his mind will be wavering due to the abhishvangam or a strong desire to enjoy the mundane objects. The substance of this is that he should be free from such strong desires to enjoy the mundane objects. Bhagavad RAmAnuja has explained elaborately the word kAma which occurs in the sentence ***sangAth sanjAyathe kAmah*** of Gita (2-62) His explanation runs as below – ***purusho (a) yAm das’AmApanno vishayAn abhukthvA sthhAthum na s’aknothi sa kAmah.*** – kAma or desire is that desire which brings a person to a state of mind in which he is unable to stand without enjoying a particular set of (mundane)objects. Sri Sudars’ana Bhattar in his S’ruthaprakAs’ika defines the word ***anabhishvanga*** as follows - ***vishayamabhukthvA sthhAthum na s’aknothi yena sa vikAro abhishvangah*** – a stage that is obtained by a person, who is unable to live without experiencing the mundane objects, is called abhishvangam. ***thadabhAvo anabhishvangah*** – absence of such a state is called anabhishvanga. Thus, if one understands the meaning of both ***kAma and anabhishvanga*** to be the same, it does not suit the phrase ***kAmAnabhishvangah*** of sage BodhAyana. So in the present context, it will be apt to interpret the meaning of the word kAma (***kAmyatha ithi kAmah)*** as desire to experience an object.

1. ***ArambhaNasams’eelanam punah punarabhyAsah***. ***ArambhaNam*** means refuge. In essence it means that most auspiciously beautiful form of the Lord is the refuge of all the auspiciousness. AbhyAsa means frequently repeated reviewing of the most auspicious and beautiful form of the Lord in one’s mind as said in the phrase ***sadA thadbhAvabhAvithah.*** Thus in other times also if one is remembering the exquisite most auspiciously beautiful form of the Lord with affection, that visualisation in the mind gives a unique concentration of the mind during which except the most beautifully auspicious form of Him, no other extraneous forms or objects will occupy the mind.
2. ***kriyA*** – it is defined as follows – ***pancha mahAyajnAdyanu-shThAnam s’akthithah kriyA.*** It means that one should perform according to one’s own capability, the five great ritualistic yajnas is called ***kriyA.*** These five yajnas are 1. Deva yajna – worship of one’s deity. 2. Brahma-yajna. Continuous study of the Vedas. 3. pithR yajna – offering sacred pleasing waters to please the pithR class of spirituals.
3. ***kalyANa***. The qualities mentioned as ***sathya Arjava, dayA, dAna, ahimsA and anabhidyA*** are called the kalyANas – the auspicious qualities. A speech which is good for all the living beings is called as ***sathya –*** the truth. Arjavam is having behaviour devoid of cunningness and having the mind, body and word following the same object in unison. DayA is such tenderness in the mind in which one is unable to bear the others miseries. Not causing injury to the others by mind body and words is called as ahimsa. Not desiring to acquire other’s property is called as anabhidya. All these qualities are required to be present in a person who is a meditator.
4. ***anavasAda*** -  mental despondency in adverse circumstances caused by unfavourable place, time etc. is called anavasAda. Always being with enthusiasm and not getting bogged down with such a mental despondency is essential for a meditator to have a successful meditation.
5. ***anuddharsha***. being extremely happy is not suitable for a meditator to have a successful meditation.

Thus by following these seven types of practices one who meditates will be able to have a clean and pious state of mind which is most suitable for serious meditation. A person who has such a clean and pious mind only can visualise the paramAthman. This is the substance of the word ***manomaya***.

The word ***prANa*** in the phrase ***prANa s’areera-neTha*** indicates the JIva or the soul. ***nethA*** means one who makes one to attain a body. Here, it is such a person who makes the JIva to have the body. it is He only who makes each JIva to attain a body suitable to the deeds of that JIva. It is said in the bhagavad Gita, ***anne prathishThathah, aham vaisvAnaro bhUthvA prANinaam dehamAs’rithah. prANApAnasamAyukthah pachAmyannam chathurvidham.*** The essence of these statements is as follows – The food that is eaten by all the living beings is transformed into various parts of the body like blood, muscle, bones, mind (brain cells) etc by the Lord in the form of a fire called ***jaTharAgni*** – the fire which is in the stomach. Since the body gets all the transformations due to the food which is taken, the word ***annam*** used here denotes the body or ***s’areera.***

***“hRidayam sannidhAya…thadvijnAnena”*** etc. – the wise, who know about the Brahman – the brahmaveththas, can have visual perception of the paramAthman, through their meditation by concentration their mind on Him with single minded devotion and affection towards Him. This practice is called as ***bhakthiyoga, dhyAna, upAsana*** etc. These words are all synonyms. Brahman’s form is stated to be the form of eternal bliss by thaiththireeya-Upanishad. It says ***raso vai sah*** – He is the essence of the eternal bliss. Further since it is devoid of any transformations like the birth, old age, death etc., it is denoted by the word ***amRitha.***

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the 10th Manthra onwards.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-53***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue by taking up the 10th Mantra.

***bhidyathe hRidayagrandhih – chhidyanthe sarva sams'ayAh|***

***ksheeyanthe chAsya karmANi – thasmin dRishTe parAvare||***

Word Meanings.

***bhidyathe hRidayagrandhih – chidyanthe sarva sams’ayAh|***

***ksheeyanthe chAsya karmANi – thasmin dRishTe parAvare||***

***parAvare thasmin*** = that parabrahman, who is the greatest one,

***dRishTe*** = on being perceived by the meditation,

***asya hRidayagrandhih*** = the states of love, hate etc. which are strongly settled in the meditator’s mind,

***bhidyathe*** = are destroyed.

***sarva sams’ayAh*** = all the doubts

***chhidyanthe*** = are cleared

***karmANi*** = All the deeds that were performed by him

***ksheeyanthe cha*** = loose their capabilities to inflict their results.

Explanation –

parAvare thasmin – all the powerful entities like the four-faced brahma etc. who are the residents of the great shell – the brahmANDa are of lower status than that person, who is called parAvara – the Brahman who is of the highest status.

dRishTe – is perceived by the power of the meditation undertaken by the meditator. It may please be noted that the word dRishTe does not mean see Him physically. As said by the s’ruthi vAkya ***sadA pas’yanthi sUrayah,*** achieving the capability of seeing Him with His extra-ordinarily beautiful and auspicious form is possible in that far off universe called srivaikunTham only. This was stated in the ***kaThopanishad, “so adhvanah pAramApnothi thadvishNoh paramam padam”*** – the meditator reaches his goal which is the highest land belonging to that vishNu. That is the ultimate goal or destination. This word drishTe shows only the perception of the meditator during the meditation only. Hence this is not physical visualisation – getting the view or visual perception of the Brahman. In the present statement ***dRishTe – bhidyathe chhidyanthe – ksheeyanthe,*** it is made clear that one shall on perceiving Him during his meditation, will be having the results stated in this sentence. Hence it is not that real seeing Him. Hence, this word dRishTe means only that in that meditation where the meditator perceives His form as if it is visual perception, these results of the desires getting destroyed etc do occur.

**What is Bhakthi?**

Bhagavad RAmAnuja had quoted this S’ruthi vAkya in the beginning of Sribhashya and arrived at explaining the word Bhakthi. A synopsis of his explanation is given below –

Some of the S’ruthi vAkyas such as ***thamevaikam AthmAnam jAnathha, thamevam vidithvA athimRithyumethi, brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavathi etc.*** specify the (spiritual) knowledge as a tool for attaining liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. Some more like ***omithyAthmAnam dhyAyathha, AthmAnameva lokam upAseetha, nididhyAsithavyah*** etc. Some other statements as given next, say that visualisation of Brahman is the tool for release from the bondage of this prakRithi and cycle of births and deaths. These texts are ***nichAyya tham mRithyumukhAth pramuchyathe*** (nichAyya = after visualisation), ***thasmin dRishTe parAvare*** etc. If these statements and texts are to be understood properly, i.e., without any contradictions, one should co-ordinate these properly by using the ***sAmAnya vis’esha nyAya.*** This nyAya is illustrated below. There is a general rule in the scriptures which says one should perform a sacrifice using an animal. This does not specify which animal should be used. This is called the sAmAnya nyAya – the general instructional logic. This statement has been further qualified by another sentence ***chAgasya vapAyAh medasah.*** This sentence qualifies as to which material is to be used in the sacrifice. In this vis'esha nyAya, the animal which was mentioned as a ***pas’u*** in the general statement is identified as a ***Chaka ­*** - a lamb. Thus both the sentences are to be read together to get the full meaning. This is what is known as ***sAmAnya vis’esha nyAya.***  In the same way, the words which denote in general, the knowledge and are being used to denote the prayer – ***jAnathha – Veda – vidithvA,*** are to be considered to mean the various forms of prayer such as meditation, prayer etc. The words ***dhyAyathha*** and ***upAseetha*** are used in different contexts of the meditation etc. They mean same. However there is a subtle difference between the two. The ***dhyAna*** is a state in which one has continuity in the mental visualisation of the form of deity on whom he is meditating. There is no break in the visualisation and that stage is called the dhyAna. Such exercise of meditation or dhyAna if done repeatedly continuously is taken as upAsana. This has been specified in the Vedanta sutras of sage vyAsa in the axiom ***AvRiththih asakRith upades’Ath.***  The meaning of this axiom is that one should do the upAsana by having repeated meditations – the dhyAnas. Then how long should one do this? The S’ruthi vAkya says ***nakhalvevam varthayan yAvadAyusham*** – one should do this type of upAsana as long as he lives or till the death.

Another rule has been specified in the Purva meemAmsa in the second chapter at the end. This rule is called ***sarva s’AkhAprathyaya nyAya.***  This rule specifies that the same type of specific ritual element has been specified in different major rituals in which a number of ritual elements are performed in a series to constitute a major sacrifice like ***ishTi or a yAga.*** Even though the elements have been mentioned in a number of major rituals, some of the details might have not been specified in some of these major rituals. However, all the details of the element might not have been mentioned in one but some details in one type of ritual and some more details which were not covered in one ritual might be detailed in another ritual etc. So to have a complete details of a particular element, one should consider all the various rituals in which this particular element has been specified to collect the complete details of the element. And after getting all the complete details of the element only, the performance of those major rituals like ***ishTi*** or sacrifice etc. should be undertaken. The Vedanta sutra – “sarva Vedanta prathyayam chodanAdyavis’eshAth” is similar to the above mentioned meemAmsA-nyAya. This is to include the rule in all studies in Upanishads. According to this rule, the characteristics and procedures of various types of ***upAsana***s which are not specified comprehensively in one upAsana but in bits and segments in different upAsanas or meditative procedures, should be made comprehensive by adding all of them together and then only one should proceed with the meditation or upAsana. So from the quotes like “***nichAyya….” and “thasmin dRishTe…”*** etc. it becomes clear that this upAsana should be practised so that one can achieve an unbroken visualisation of the paramAtma. In other words, this meditation should turn out to be a form of continuous and unbroken visualisation – seeing the form and characteristics of the paramAtma, as clearly as one sees in front of him in physical form. This is not seeing the paramAtma in physical form. Since the meditator is still in the stage of meditation only, it is only virtual vision, but it is as clear in minute details as though he is seeing in front of him in physical form. It is possible to attain such a state through unending and continuous practise. It is the same status of a person, who, enamoured by the unending thoughts of his consort or fiancé, as said in the Sanskrit classics “prAsAde sA, ***pathhi pathhi cha sA, pRishThathassA, purassA*** – she is there in the buildings he sees, she is seen in every route he takes, she is there behind him, she is there in front of him; visualises her in every moment. Is it physically seeing and beholding? No. this is the state of ecstasy one experiences in such a state of meditation – always – continuously having the paramAtma in his thoughts, words and deeds. In VAlmeeki Ramayana, VAlmeeki describes the mental state of MAreecha, who was tortured by Sri Rama in words spoken by MAreecha like ***vRikshe vRikshe cha pas’yAmi*** – I see Srirama in every tree and nook and corner, wherever my vision goes, I see Rama only there. So here also, such a state of visualisation of paramAtma by the meditator is spoken by the part of the Mantra – ***thasmin dRishTe parAvare.***

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the treatise on Bhakthi.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-54***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue to dwell upon understanding Bhakthi.

In the sixth part of this Upanishad, as well as in the second part of kathopanishad there is one mantra which reads as follows – “***nAyamAthmA pravachanena labhyah… yamevaisha vRiNuthe thena labhyah”*** The word meanings will be given when we discuss about that mantra. The sentence ”***yamevaisha vRiNuthe, thena labhyah”*** in this mantra states that such a meditator, whom the paramAtma desires to have in his courtship, and whom He likes very much, only will be able to achieve the court of Him. When a question arises as to know whom does He want to take to His court for His service, the answer will be whoever is dear to Him will be such a person. Who will be dear to Him? As said by Sri YAmunAchArya in his Sthothrarathnam –

“***na deham na prANAn na cha sukhamabhilashitham,***

***na chAthmAnam nAnyath kimapi thava s’eshathvavibhavAth |***

***bahirbhUtham nAthha kshaNampi sahe yAthu s’athadhA***

***vinAs’am thath sathyam madhumathhana vijnApanamidam|| (***- Oh Lord! Neither the body, nor the prANas nor the happiness coveted by all, nor even the self, nor anything else that is outside the requirements for Your service, can I, even for a moment put up with them? Let them perish in a hundred ways. This is in all the truth my entreaty to You, Oh slayer of Madhu!), whoever has no desire to put up with the body, lives etc, and is totally dedicated to Him only with utmost affection, he will be the person will be the most endearing to Him. This was confirmed by Lord Krishna Himself in Bhagavad-Gita by saying “***priyo hi jnAninothyarthham aham, sa cha mama priyah***” (– I am most liked by that wise man, who is a jnAni; he becomes endeared to me). From all the above, it is clearly established that the meditator should meditate, without any interruption, filled with utmost affection towards Him, in which he is able to visualise mentally a continuous vision of Him as though He is standing in front of him with all His characteristics and capabilities. Then only it will be fruitful. This type of visualisation can occur when he is filled with fear also. But as said in the foregoing, what is required in this meditation is it should be with a total affectionate dedication. This specific knowledge – the visualisation obtained by the meditation, uninterrupted, continuous chanting prayers about Him with full affection, alone is called Bhakthi. This is the substance of Ramanuja’s definition of Bhakthi – which he states as “***snehapUrvakam anudhyAnam bhakthirithi abhidheeyathe***. The seven characteristics viz., ***viveka, vimoka etc.*** are the instruments for obtaining this Bhakthi. There is none other than this Bhakthi which is nurtured by these seven instruments for attaining the salvation or Mukthi. That is what the s’ruthi vAkya “***thamevam vidvAn amRitha iha bhavathi, nAnyah panthhA ayanAya vidyathe (***– that person, who had been able to visualise as said above becomes immortal- like. There is no alternative.); and its explanatory sentences from Gita viz., “***nAham vedaih na thapasa … bhakthyaa thvananyayaa s’akyah”*** and ***“bhakthyaa labhyah thu ananyayaa”*** are making clear. The variants of this Bhakthi can be known form the other scriptures.

Coming to the present context, the substance of the present mantra – ***bhidyathe hRidayagrandhih*** is as follows. (27/104) –

When this type of Bhakthi on Him – virtual visualisation of His form and stature, happens, the emotions like love or enmity in one’s mind do get removed. All the doubts and ignorance like considering the body as the soul etc do get cleared and they are nullified as said ***chhidyanthe sarva sams’ayaah.*** All the deeds both virtuous as well as heinous will lose their power to be effective on the soul – the atman.

The characteristics of virtuous and heinous deeds and their nullification

What are these virtuous or heinous deeds, which are otherwise known as ***puNya*** and ***pApa karmas***? How do they lose their power on the individual who meditates or propitiates on Him? The answer for these questions – as per the postulates and concept of Bhagavadramanuja is as follows –

In the chapter called ***rachanaanupapaththyadhikaraNa*** of Sribhashyam, he defines the virtuous and heinous deeds – ***puNyapApasvarUpe hi s’Asthraika samadhigamye.... s’Asthram cha ‘paramapurushArAdhana – thadviparyayarUpe karmaNee puNyapApe, thadanugraha nigrahaayaththe cha thathphale’ ithi vadathi.*** The meaning of the above is – such deeds which are the causes for pleasing Him and his commandments to be executed, which are in the form of prayers, are called as virtuous deeds or ***puNya karma***s. Such deeds which cause anger in Him and run contra to His commandments are said to be the heinous deeds or ***pApa karma***s. Those in the form of devoted meditations and prayers, amongst such deeds, will please Him and He being pleased blesses the devotee with happiness and this is called the resultant of the virtuous deeds or ***puNyaphala.*** The deeds which run contra to His commandments displease Him and He being displeased brings unhappiness and misery to the doer and this is called as result of the heinous deeds or ***pApa phala.***  KUraththAzhvAn also confirms this in his VaikunTha sthavam – ***yath thvath priyam thadiha puNyam apuNyam anyath. Naanyath thayorbhavathi lakshaNam athra jAthu –*** which ever act pleases Him is puNyam. Other one is apuNyam. This is the definition of these two words.

These virtuous or heinous deeds getting nullified means that they are made by Him powerless by Him who is pleased by the upAsana of the jIva.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with the understanding of Sage Jaimini in this regard.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-55***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue to dwell upon the system or understanding of Sage Jaimini

Sage Jaimini had asked himself in ***PUrva MimAmsa S’Astra*** as to how the ***yAga, dAna*** and ***Homa kriyas*** (performing the holy sacrifices, charity and offering the oblations to the deities in the sacrificial fire) which are of momentary nature do give the long-lasting fruits of enjoying Svarga etc. and then answered as follows- Since these yAga, dAna etc are of momentary existence and are lost after they were performed, they create an energy bank called ‘apUrva’. Created by properly performed yAgas etc. and capable of causing happiness and unhappiness, this energy bank called apUrva gets attached to the Atma. It is known by the words puNya and pApa, and remains active till the specified phala is experienced fully, and on the balance becoming zero is deleted. The heat in the embers is transferred to the water used to cool the embers. In a similar way, the special energy called apUrva s’akti gets transferred as an attachment to the kartha ` the performer of these yAgas etc. Though the existence of such a bank of energy called apUrva s’akti cannot be substantiated by any of the S’Astras, or the pramANas like pratyaksha etc., by applying logic, it must be established. Otherwise, the phala which is to be experienced after a very very long time when it becomes due to be experienced by the Atma, cannot be said to be created by the ritualistic karmas. If these Vedic rituals become fruitless, the rituals like yAga, dAna etc., prescribed by the vEdas become wasteful exercises and the vEdas will be unsubstantiated. So to ensure that the procedures prescribed by the Vedas do give the benefits, the energy bank called apUrva must be created after the special energy is formed as a result of the Vedic rituals like yAga, dAna etc are completed successfully. This kind of Jaimini’s postulate is mentioned in the works of commentaries and likes of pUrva mImAmsa, as well as in the axiom “dharmam Jaimini ratha eva” of Brahma sutras. Sri S’ankara explains this concept briefly while commenting on the above Brahma sUtra as follows` “s’rutischet pramANam yathA yam karmaphalasambandha upapadyate, tathA kalpayitavyah| na cha anutpAdya kimapyapUrvam karma vinas’yat kAlAntharitham phalam dAthum s’aknoti| athah karmaNo vA kAchit uththarAvasthhA, phalasya vA pUrvAvasthhA apUrvam nAma astheethi tharkyathe||”. The meaning had been explained earlier.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall continue with understanding the understanding of Sage Vyasa in this regard.

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-56***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we continue to dwell upon the system or understanding of Sage VyAsa in this regard.

Sage VyAsa has postulated Bhakti as he understands from various scriptures in the axiom “***pUrvamthu BAdarAyaNo hethuvyapades’Ath” in the chapter “phalAdhikaraNa of the*** Brahmasutras. That is given below.

It is not feasible for the inanimate various ***karmas viz., yAga, dAna, Homa etc., to bestow the*** benefits to the performer. Moreover, creating an extraordinary energy bank called ***apUrvam*** which will store the energy which is obtained by performing the above karmas till they are being experienced by the ***kartha*** is also improper. The words came up from the root ***yaja*** which means praying the demi-Gods... Hence the objective of performing the various ***yAgas dAnas and Homas*** is praying the respective demi-Gods only. These demi-Gods are pleased by the above said prayers and they do bestow the suitable benefits. This is the logical conclusion instead of stating that the inanimate ***karmas*** bestow the benefits. Hence, it will only be proper to state that the propitiated demi-Gods get pleased by conduction of the various ***karmas,***  which are formats of praying the demi-Gods concerned and they in turn being pleased with the performers, bestow the suitable benefits like ***svargavAsa,***  or getting the wealth in the form of money, children, cows farms etc. These ***yAgas, dAnas etc.,*** are the causes for the various demi-Gods to be pleased. Likewise, the ***BhagavadupAsana*** also results in the Supreme God ***BhagavAn*** is pleased and He will be considering to bestow the ***upAsakAs*** with nullifying all the accumulated ***puNyapApas***. What is meant by nullifying of these karmas? These Karmas loose the power/energy to bestow the resultant benefits like happiness or sadness to the performer This power/energy, which had been stated by Jaimini as ***ApUrva,***  is nothing other than the happiness of BhagavAn as a result of the ***DhyAna***  of the ***upAsakAs*** only. This, following Sage VyAsa, has been established by ***BhagavadRAmAnuja*** with help of several ***SmRithi*** and ***S’ruthi vAkyas. SrIbhAshyakara – RAmAnuja*** mentions this aspect as “***S’akthis’cha paramapurushApreetireva***” in his commentary ***SrIbhAshya*** for the ***thadadhigamAdhikaraNa.***  The substance of the above quote is as follows- “instead of serving the Parama purusha – the Lord of All, the Jivas, desirous of enjoying the worldly wealth and desires are performing the various ***yAgas*** etc., and hurting the animal sacrifices. This is contra to the specified attaining the ***BhagavAn.*** Since these are not pleasing Him, He makes them experience the fruits of those ***karmas***. If the ***bhaktha*** does the ***upAsana with Bhakthi, He*** bestows the ***upAsakAs*** with good behaviour and removes the displeasure which the ***bhaktha*** had earned earlier. This is what is meant by nullifying the ***puNya pApa karmas.*** This is the meaning of the phrase “***ksheeyanthe chAsya karmANi***” in the present mantra.

Thus the nullified ***karmas*** are the accumulated deeds called as pUrva ***sanchita karmas*** and they are yet to result in bestowed fruits to the ***upAsaka.*** They are not those deeds, fruits of which are already being experienced in this present life. Such deeds are called ***Arabdha karmas.*** Such ***karmaphalas*** must be experienced by the ***upAsaka,*** till the end of this present body. This is the meaning of the ***Brahma sUtra “anArabdha kArye eva thu thadavadheh”.*** The deeds, excepting those, whose fruits are presently being experienced by the ***upAsaka,*** will get nullified by the ***BhagavadupAsana,*** done with ***Bhakthi,*** the devotion.

***To continue***

In the next posting, we shall examine an objection to the exclusion of th***e Karmaphala*** which is already being experienced from being nullified as a sequel to the ***BhagavadupAsana*** done with ***Bhakthi.***

Dasoham,

Adiyen

Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan

***Mundakopanishad-57***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall examine an objection to the exclusion of the ***Karmaphala*** which is already being experienced from being nullified as a sequel to the ***BhagavadupAsana*** done with ***Bhakthi.***

It has been explained by SribhAshyakAra RAmAnuja that for a brahmopAsaka who is a brahmajnAni, the nullification of all his karmas happens on renouncement of the body i.e. at the time of death, in the detailed explanation of the axiom “***sAmparAye tharthavyAbhAvAth tathhAhyanye”.*** In contra, if it is said that during the ***BhagavadupAsana*** time the nullifying of ***Karmas*** does occur as the substance of the ***mantra “thasmin dRishTe parAvaRe…. Ksheeyanthe”,*** will it not be negating what has been explained by ***BhagavadRAmAnuja?***

The answer for this objection is given by ***Sri S’rutaprakAs’ikAchArya*** while explaining the ***SUthrabhAshya*** for the axiom ***(sUthra)*** “***thadadhigame uththara pUrvAghayoras’lesha vinAs’au thadvyapades’Ath”***. The summary of his explanation is as follows-

It may appear that there is a contradiction in the timing of nullification of the ***karma in*** the explanations given in the ***sAmparAyAdhikaraNa*** and the current ***thadadhigamAdhikaraNa;*** but in reality there is no contradiction. In ***sAmparAyAdhikaraNa,*** the nullification of all the ***karmas*** was mentioned to happen at the time of renunciation of the body (***s’areerathyAga***) from some of the ***s’ruthi vAkyas.*** Similarly in the ***thadadhigamAdhikaraNa*** the nullification of the ***karmas*** does happen at the beginning of the ***upAsana*** itself though there is considerable time gap for the renunciation of the body due to the remaining period of ***Ayush.*** But in reality there is no contradiction. What is the meaning of the nullification of the ***karmas***? It is pardoning the ***upAsaka*** by ***BhagavAn, pleased by the upAsana*** of the ***upAsaka,*** on His anger on him due to his earlier deeds being replaced by His happiness on the ***upAsaka*** following His scriptures and doing the ***upAsana.*** When the ***bhaktha*** having acquired the real knowledge of the ***thaththvas***, commences the ***upAsana,*** He had assured him that his karmas will be nullified if you do the prescribed duty of yours without any attachment. This is in tune with the assurance given by ***ParamAtma*** (***BhagavAn)*** in the ***charama s’loka of Bhagavad GItha.*** that as soon as the ***upAsaka*** attains ***upAsanasiddhi*** by being steady in his mind, He will definitely pardon on the renunciation of the body. This is the resolution of the intent in the beginning itself. The same nullification of the ***Karmaphala*** or ***karmas*** has been told in the ***Mantra “thasmin dRishTe parAvare….ksheeyanthe”*** of ***thadadhigamAdhikaraNa.*** It is the result of the ***siddhi***. ***BhagavAn*** decided that all the ***karmas*** of the ***upAsaka*** will be pardoned on attaining the ***upAsanasiddhi*** and renunciation of the body. This is called ***Athyanthika karmakshaya*** as mentioned in ***sAmparAyAdhikaraNa.***  Hence there is no contradiction.

With this resolution of the objection, we completed the 10th ***mantra***.

To continue.

In our next posting, we shall study the 11th ***Manthra*** which starts with the words ***hiraNmaye pare kos’e.***

dAsoham

aDiyen

SrInivAsa RAmAnuja DAsan.

***Mundakopanishad-58***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 11th ***Manthra*** which starts with the words ***hiraNmaye pare kos’e.***

Manthra-11

***hiraNmaye pare kos’e virajam brahma nishkalam |***

***thachchhubhram jyothishAm jyothih thadyadAthmavido viduh||***

Word Meanings

***hiraNmaye =*** one with extreme beauty

***kos’e =*** a repository for extensive joy like a mine

***pare*** = in the ***paramapadam*** which is called ***paramAkAs’am***

if the word is alternated with ***pure*** then the meaning will

be ‘in the city of ***srI vaikunThapuram.***

***virajam*** = which is beyond the realm of the three attributes called

***saththva***, ***rajas*** and ***thamas***.

***nishkalam*** = and does not have limbs

***s’ubhram*** = and blemishless

***jyothishAm jyothih*** = and luminous one which gives light even to the other

celestial luminous bodies such as sun etc.

***thath Brahma (asthi)*** = that ***Akshara parabrahman*** exists.

***Athmavidah*** = the Rishis, endowed with the knowledge of ***Athman***,

***yath viduh*** = learn about which ***paramAthman***

***thath*** = that is the ***Akshara Brahman.***

**Explanations**

The celestial luminous abode of ***BhagavAn,*** who was established in the previous manthras by the sentences “***vRiksha iva sthabdho divi thishThathi”*** and “***divye brahmapure hyesha vyomani AthmA prathishThithah”*** is mentioned here as ***“hiraNmaye pare kos’e”.*** From the Vedic evidences such as ***“thamasah parasthAth”*** etc., that was mentioned earlier as the one which is permanent in nature and is beyond the reach of this ***mUla prakRithi.*** That world is of pure saththva, and has extremely beautiful sceneries and is extra-ordinarily luminescent. Hence it is called ‘***HiraNmaya’***. Since it has innumerable opportunities of enjoyment with the required infrastructures, and hence here it is called ***kos’a***, that is mine or repository. The word '***pare'*** calls back from memory the phrases “***pare divi”*** and ***“parame vyoman****”* etc. of Vedic terminology and indicates that ***paramapada,*** the celestial abode of ***BhagavAn.*** There exists an alternate word “***pure”*** for the word ***“pare”*** in the text of the Manthra.

***“virajam nishkalam s’ubhram jyothishAm jyothih”*** – The qualities or attributes viz., ***rajas and thamas*** mixed with ***saththva*** are existing in our sphere of the ***mUla prakRithi,*** in which we all including the ***devathas*** etc. also exist. Brahman has a nature which has only pure saththva, i.e., does not have even an iota of ***rajas*** and ***thamas.*** That Brahman is an embodiment of ***jnAna –*** the knowledge and Ananda – the joy or happiness. It is Omnipresent and hence does not have any limbs or parts It does not entail the mood changes or sorrow. Brahman is the sole provider of energy of luminosity to the worldly luminous bodies like sun moon stars etc.

“***thadyadAthmavido viduh” –*** even the maharishis endowed with the knowledge of the ***thaththvas*** can learn about that ***Brahmathaththvam*** through their power of ***yoga*** only. In other words, such ***Brahman,*** having a lustrous form is in the ***paramapadam,*** which is beyond the realm of this mundane ***(prakRithika)*** world.

To continue.

In the next posting we shall take up the 12th Manthra which starts with the words ***na thathra sUryo bhAthi na chandrathArakam.***

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-59***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 12th ***Manthra*** which starts with the words ***na thathra sUryo bhAthi.***

Manthra-12

***na thathra sUryo bhAthi na chandrathArakam***

***nemA vidyutho bhAnthi kuthoya magnih |***

***thameva bhAnthamanubhAthi sarvam***

***thasya bhAsA sarvamidam vibhAthi||***

*न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रत्तारकम्*

*नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोयमग्निः|*

*तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वम्*

*तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ||*

***Word meanings***

***thathra*** = near the brilliance of that ***Brahman***

***sUryah na bhAthi*** = there is no brilliance for Surya.

***Chandra thArakam na (bhAthi)*** = there is no brilliance either of moon or stars

***imAh vidyuthah na bhAnthi***= there is no brilliance for the lightnings.

***ayamagnih kuthah*** = it need not be said about this ***Agni*** the fire.

***sarvam anubhAthi***  = all the brilliant entities like Sun, moon, stars etc., get their brilliance.

***tham bhAnthameva***  = from that ***Brahman’s*** brilliance only.

***thasya bhasA*** = From the power of brilliance of ***Brahman***

***sarvamidam vibhAthi*** = all these brilliant entities get their brilliance and shine.

***Explanations***

This ***Manthra*** tells the nature of the thumb sized ***ParamAthman.*** This ***Manthra*** appears in ***kathopanishath*** and ***S’vethAs’vatharopanishath*** also. This has been elaborated by ***SrIbhAshyakara*** as well as ***S’rutaprakAs’ikAchArya*** also while giving the elaborating the axiom of ***Brahma Sutra*** - “***jyothirdars’anAth***” in the ***pramithAdhikaraNa s’esham***. There the authorities for those elaborations are also given. The extra-ordinary brilliance of the celestial auspicious form of ***Brahman*** is proposed and established in the ***S’ruthis*** and ***SmRithis***, by the ***vAkyas*** viz., “***AdithyavarNam***”; “***ApraNakhAth sarva Eva suvarNah***”; “***divi sUrya sahasrasya – bhaveth yugapaduththhithA | yadibhA ssadRis’ee sA syAth ` bhAsasthasya mahAthmanah***”. That extra-ordinary brilliance only is being elaborated in this ***Manthra***.

***“na thathra sUryo bhAthi …. Kuthoyamagnih”*** This is the first half of this Manthra. Because of the extra-ordinary and limitless brilliance of ***BhagavAn,*** in its presence, the brilliance of Sun, moon etc. does not count at all just like the brilliance of the fireflies becomes insignificant in the presence of enormous brilliance of Sun. This has been explained by SrIbhAshyakara using the phrase “***sarva thejasAm chhAdakam”***.

The third quarter of the Manthra is ***“thameva bhAnthamanubhAthi sarvam”.*** The everlasting and extra-ordinarily bright ***thejas*** - brilliance ***of BhagavAn*** is the cause of the brilliance of all e.g., Sun, Moon, stars etc. In the verb ‘anubhAthi’ the word anu means that which follows. It is an established fact that the effect or ***kArya*** follows the cause – ***kAraNa.*** Hence without the cause, there is no effect at all. Hence, the entire range of the brilliant objects like Sun, moon, stars etc., gets its brilliance only from the brilliance of BhagavAn only. By saying so, it is established that the brilliance of BhagavAn is the source or cause of the brilliance of all the worldly bodies of luminosity. Thus the third quarter of the Manthra was explained by SrIbhAshyakara.

The fourth quarter is ***“thasya bhAsA sarvamidam vibhAthi”.***  There is a s’ruthi vAkya ***yasyAdithyo bhAmupajeevya bhAthi***. This tells that- the Sun after getting his brilliance from BhagavAn becomes the light giver for the entire universe. There is another s’loka from Bhagavad-Gita – ***yadAdithyagatham thejah jagadbhAsayathe-khilam| yachchandramasi yachchAgnau thaththejo viddhi mAmakam”*** In this s’loka also, Lord Krishna says – “The brilliance that you see in Sun, moon, stars etc is mine only. Being worshipped by them I bestow that energy of brilliance to them. From both these illustrated authorities, it is clear that the brilliance of these Sun, moon etc., which lights up the worlds, is obtained by them only by the benevolence of ***BhagavAn.*** To explain this aspect only, SrIbhAshyakara used the phrase “***anugrAhakam cha***”. In the previous quarter of the verse, it is made clear that the source of the brilliance of Sun, moon etc., is the extra-ordinary brilliance of ***BhagavAn*** only, and in the fourth quarter of the Manthra makes it clear that the extra-ordinary brilliance of Brahman only has given Sun, moon etc. the power to brighten these worlds. Thus it is clear that there is no duplication in the third and fourth quarters.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the critical examination of the explanation of Sri S’ankara for this12th Manthra.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-60***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall see the explanation of Sri S’ankara for this 12th ***Manthra.***

In S’ankara’s bhAshyam for this Manthra, the meanings of the words thathra and the phrase SUryo na bhAthi are given which attract our attention. For the word “thathra”, the meaning is given as “in that Brahman – the SvarUpa of the Athman”. The meaning of the phrase “sUryah na bhAthi” is given as “Sun is not making them visible”. In Sanskrit grammar, Nijantha verb bhAthi is taken as the one which simply illuminates. But Sri S’ankara gives the meaning as the one which drives something to illuminate. or promotes the illumination by someone. If the verbal word BhAthi is the one which had driven to illuminate, naturally this meaning expects the object for this verb bhAthi. In other words a question will arise, which object is not being illuminated? Obviously this will show that Brahman, which is the SvarUpa of Athman. Then this word Brahman should be in the second case – dvitheeyaa vibhakthi. However, this word thathra is used in the Manthra with seventh case – sapthamee vibhakthi which gives meaning as “in that Brahman”. Thus the word “bhAthi” does not show the verb in a passive voice to give the meaning that is driving something to illuminate.

Objection to the above line of argument- In Bhagavad-Gita, for the 6th verse in the 15th chapter, the phrase “na thadbhAsayathe sUryah ` na s’as’Anko na pAvakah” is used to mean that the Sun, Moon etc. cannot make that Brahman illuminated. We can see that “the sun, moon etc, cannot make that Brahman illuminated” being the meaning for “thath na bhAsayathe sUryah, na s’as’Ankah, na pAvakah”. The verb “bhAsayathe” is in the passive voice – used for driving someone to do an action – here that (Brahman) being illuminated. Similarly the word “thath” is used with second case as object – that Brahman. So why can’t we take that Sri S’ankara had explained according to the usage in Bhagavad-Gita?

Answer for the above objection.

The subject of the said GItha vAkya and the present Manthra are totally different. As such you cannot illustrate that GItha vAkya to explain the usage in the present Manthra. The latter part of that s’loka reads “yadgathvA na nivarthanthe – thaddhAma paramam mama”. So the passive voice verb “bhAsayathe” is used to tell that Surya etc cannot make that Divyaloka, which is mine and described in the latter half of the s’loka, illuminated. The latter part means “those, who attained that Divyaloka, which is my auspicious Divyaloka, will not come back into this primordial world. These primordial entities of brilliance – Surya, Chandra etc., are not available in that Divyaloka. In short, as mentioned by the phrase “***hiraNmaye pare kos’e”*** earlier, that luminous Divyaloka is by nature, a unique extra-ordinarily brilliant world. So to bring that s’loka, where, the Divyaloka is mentioned, for comparison with this ***Manthra*** which explains about the ***BhagavAn*** is not proper. Hence, “***thathra*** – while the sun is shining brightly, there, ***sUryo na bhAthi*** – the Sun will not be shining. That means, the brilliance of Sun will be pigmy in that ***Divyaloka”*** as explained by SribhAshyakAra only is proper and correct.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 13th Manthra which starts with the words ***Brahmaiveda mamRitham purasthAth*** etc.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-61***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 13th ***Manthra.***

***Manthra***

***Brahmaiveda mamRitham purasthAth brahma pas’chAth***

***Brahma dakshiNatha s’choththareNa |***

***adhas’chordhvam cha prasRitham brahmaivedam***

***vis’vamidam varishTham***

*ब्रह्मै वेद ममृतं पुरस्तात् ब्रह्म पश्चात्*

*ब्रह्म दक्षिणत श्चोत्तरेण |*

*अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं*

*विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ||*

Word meanings-

purasthAth idam = all this matter in front of us

amRitham brahmaiva = is having for its AthmA that Brahman which is eternal and is to be enjoyed like nectar.

Pas’chAth = all the matter that is behind,

Brahma = is also having Brahman as its AthmA.

dakshiNathah, uththareNa cha = all the matter that is on the south side and north side also

Brahma = is having Brahman as its AthmA.

idam = all the matter

vis’vam Pras’Ritham = that which has permeated every where

adhas’cha oordhvam cha = both below and above also

brahmaiva = is having Brahman as its AthmA,

idam varishTham = that Brahman is the one which is to be approached (for protection and salvation) by everyone.

Explanation

All the matter which is seen everywhere in this universe, has that Akshara Brahman only as its AthmA. It may be recalled that at the end of the third part of this Upanishad it was said –“yenaisha bhUthaisthishThathe hyantharAthmA – येनैष भूतै स्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ““purusha evedam vis’vam `पुरुष एवेदं विश्वम्”. As said in those vAkyas, the Brahman, is all permeating and pervading – Omnipresent, has this entire matter in the universe as his body. So also this universe is quoted as “brahmaiva idam” that Brahman only. Thus the universe consisting of matter and Brahman do appear as though both are synonyms. This non-duality is only in the appearance of Brahman having the matter of the Universe as his body. By nature, both Brahman and the primordial matter- the universe is different only. It is not oneness by nature as is said in the phrase “rajju ssarpah – रज्जुः सर्पः (what I assumed to be a snake is this rope only). This oneness concept was discussed earlier in this Upanishath as well as in our commentary on ***Is’AvAsyopanishat*** also. Those who are desirous to know in detail may kindly refer to that place.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 14th Manthra which starts with the words ***padmakos’a pratheekAs’am*** etc.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-62***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 14th ***Manthra.***

***Manthra***

padma kos’a pratheekAs’am – sushiram chApyadhomukham |

hRidayam thath vijAneeyAth – vis’vasyAyathanam Mahath ||

पद्मकोश प्रतीकाशं – सुषिरं चाप्यधोमुखम् |

हृदयं तत् विजानीयात् – विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ||

Word meanings

vijAneeyAth = it should be known that

padma kos’a pratheekaas’am = one which has a shape like a lotus bud,

sushiram = one which has a hole on the end portion,

adhomukham = the one which is upside down and

thath hRidayam = the heart of such an upAsaka

is the

mahath Ayathanam = best place for direct visual perception of

vis’vasya = ParamAthman who has the Universe as His body.

Explanation.

This Manthra does not find a place in the commentary of Sri S’ankarAchArya as well as Sri RangaRAmAnuja. But according to S’ruthaprakAs’kAchArya, it appeared in the fourth khanDa of this Upanishath, as mentioned in his commentary of adRis’yathvAdhikaraNa of SribhAshyam. Hence included here and the explanation there of. Further it is brought to the notice of the readers that this Manthra with minor changes appears in the portion called NArAyANam of Thaiththireeya Upanishad. There exists a brief explanation for this Manthra by Sri RangaRAmAnuja.

Instead of “sushiram chApyadhomukham” the text in that version reads “hRidayam chApyadhomukham”. And before the phrase “hRidayam thadvijAneeyAth” two quadrants viz., “adhonishTyA vithasthyAnthe” and “nAbhyAmupari thishThathi” appear.

It was said that the Akshara parabrahman appears in the hRidayaguha – the heart cave of the upAsaka by the usage of the word “guhAcharam”. By saying so, it is indicated that the upAsaka should meditate on the Akshara parabrahman, as found in his hRidaya guha – the heart cave, instead of being in places like the sUrya maNDala etc. as mentioned in other scriptures. Thus the SvarUpa – the nature of the heart cave, the place for the meditated parabrahman, is being detailed in this Manthra. According to the extra quadrants of the Manthra – as it appears in Thaiththireeya nArAyaNam, “adhonishTyA vithasthyAnthu – nAbhyAmupari thishThathi”, the location of the heart is one measure of the extended palm of hand below the neck in the front and its shape is an inverted lotus bud, which has a hole at the end. The upAsaka with the powers obtained by continuously doing Yoga, should turn this bud up and should open the hole or opening at the end to visualise the Parabrahman, staying inside the bud. The upAsaka should now meditate on that parabrahman.

With this the fourth khanDa – comes to an end.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 5th Khanda

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-63***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall begin the study of the fifth Khanda or the 5th Chapter.

1st ***Manthra.***

***dvA suparNA sayujA sakhAyA***

***samAnam vRiksham parishasvajAte |***

***tayoranyah pippalam svAdvatti***

***anas’nannanyo abhichAkas’eeti ||***

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते |

तयो रन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्ति अनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ||

**Word meanings**

sayujA = individuals having same characteristics

sakhAyA = who move together

dvA suparNA = two sentient beings like two birds having beautiful wings

parishasvajAte = reside

samAnam vRiksham= in the same body, which grows and perishes like a tree

tayoh anyah = the jeeva, the sentient one, among both of them

atti = eats

svAdu pippalam = delicious fruit of his karma- the deeds done by him

anyah = Is’wara, the other sentient,

abhichAkas’eeti = shines brightly,

anas’nan = in spite of not eating that fruit of the karma.

**Explanation**

In the Sanskrit grammar there exists a branch called figure of speech. In the Sanskrit literature, there is the figure of speech Metaphor, - in Sanskrit it is called “Roopaka alankAram\*\* In that the upamAna – the object, which is being identified with an upameya- the exotic object, is shown to be not different than the object with which it is compared. This is the prime purpose of this figure of speech. The examples of this figure of speech are the words i.e., mukhachandra- moon-face, krodhAgni- fire called anger,, ajnAnAndhakAra- the darkness, the ignorance, jnAnadeepa light, the knowledge etc. In all these words the object of comparison is shown to be the same as the exotic object. i.e the face is the moon, anger is same as fire, ignorance is same as darkness. In similar fashion, some of the upanishdic sentences are structured. The following sentences are some of them

AtmAnam rathinam viddhi, manah pragrahameva cha| indriyANi hayAnAhuh” आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि, मनः प्रग्रहमेव च , इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुः, from kathopanishad. “praNavo dhanuh, s’aro hyAtmA” प्रणवो धनुः, शरो ह्यात्मा- the sentence from this Upanishat belong to that category. There are two types of usage this metaphor - this alankara. They are called Aropa or superimposition and adhyavasAya ` the conclusive assertion. When both the upamAna, the object and upameya - its comparative subject, are dealt with showing that they are one and same object and there is no difference. The examples given in the previous paragraph viz, moon-face etc. belong to this type called Aropa paddhati- the superimposition. The second type of usage is without using the comparative subject, the object itself is used to show the comparative subject. The examples of such usage are – “moon is seen on the stairs”. “mind is totally covered with darkness”, “the light is lit in me” etc. In such usages, the face of a lady is spelt as moon, the ignorance is spelt as darkness and the knowledge as light. This type of metaphor- the roopaka alankAra is called adhyavasAya or conclusive assertion.

In the present mantra, this second type of metaphor is is used. “There are two sentient identities in the body, they being, the Jiva, the doer – karta; anf the observer ParamAtma, in the body. Amongst them the first one is the jiva, the doer or karta. He experiences the fruits of his deeds. The second one is simply shining with effulgence being observer of the first one, who is experiencing the happiness and sorrow- the results of his deeds. The second one – the ParamAtma without experiencing the fruits.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the 1st mantra of the 5th Khanda

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-64***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of the fifth Khanda or the 5th Chapter.

It can be noted that in the mantra, the names of Jiva or ParamAtma are not used. Instead “Two birds having the same form, and moving together, live on the same tree. Among these birds one does eat the fruits of that tree, while the other bird, without eating these fruits, has effulgence” is the statement of the mantra. Even though both the birds are having same form in the beginning, one of the two had fallen into bad habits of getting lured by them and becomes addicted and thus loses its natural lustre. The second bird is not affected by such lures and is free from the addiction; it does not eat the fruits and maintains its natural effulgence. By giving this comparison the reader is being taught ` that the Jiva by nature is having the eight auspicious qualities like free from the evil deeds, free from old age, free from death, free from sorrow, free from desires free from thirst and is endowed with all auspicious attributes and has the capability to complete his intention without any hindrance. These are the eight qualities that are found in ParamAtma also. However, the Jiva by his attachment to the worldly deeds, which are due to the age-old ignorance, is bound to the body and by the uncontrolled habit of the evil deeds, experiences the joys and sorrows arising out of the evil deeds carried out by him. Due to these acts and their results he has lost all that natural effulgence. The ParamAtma enters the body along with Jiva and resides in the heart space to control the Jiva and thus lives in the same body as Jiva. However, ParamAtma, not being subservient to the deeds, does not experience the joys and sorrows like Jiva, and thus he has full lustre due to his effulgence not being affected due to the deeds.

In the four words, i.e., dvA, SuparNA, sayujA and sakhAyA, though as per Sanskrit grammar, the first two words should have read as dvau and suparNau, are left as dvA and suparNA due to the rules of Vedic grammar. The next word sayujA has the following etymology “yujyate iti yuk- samAna guNakah - sayuk”. As defined by S’rutaprakAs’ikAchArya, the well known commentator, sayujau means two entities having similarity to each other. That is, both Jiva and ParamAtma by virtue of having the above mentioned eight qualities- are equal. The word “sakhAyau” indicates that both of them are inseparable form each other.

“vRiksham parishasvajAte” – Here, the word vRiksham- the tree, indicates the body. Here also the root “O vraschoo- chedane” gives rise to the word vRiksha- the tree. It means the one which gets cut. The quote “asanga shastreNa dRiDhena chhitvA” from Gita shows that this word VRiksha-the tree shown the body of a tree which is amenable for cutting by a sharp tool. Applying the same theme to a Jiva, it is quite apt to show that the word vRiksha means the body in which the Jiva stays, and this body is as amenable for cutting down like a tree n the case of a mumukshus, the person desirous of getting released from the bondages of the cycle of births and deaths.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the interpretation of the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-65***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of the 1st mantra in the fifth Khanda or the 5th Chapter.

This mantra clearly shows that there is a difference between the Jiva and the ParamAtma by the usage of dual number for the words Jiva and ParamAtma. Further the difference between Jiva and ParamAtma is due to the fact that Jiva is dependent to the deeds performed by him, while such dependence is not there for ParamAtma since He is totally independent. Thus it is clear that the statement by the Advaita that the parabrahman has got Him transformed into a multitude of Jivas and hence there is no difference between Jiva and ParamAtma, does not stand supported by the scriptures.

In addition to this, in the next mantra which reads “jusTam yadA pas’yatyanyamees’am”, it is stated that this Jiva gets released from this cycle of births and deaths, only when the Jiva propiates (upAsana) the ParamAtma after he realises that (1) the ParamAtma is the second identity along with him in the hRidaya guha- the cave in the heart; (2) ParamAtma is the one who is shining with His effulgence and is the controller of all. It is further stated that he gets release from the cycle of SamsAra only “anyamees’am yadA pas’yati – when he sees the other Is’vara- the Lord”. It should be noted that the mantra did not spell that the Jiva gets released when he knows about himself.

The study of the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa.

Objection

It is not proper to comment this mantra to be supportive of the difference between Jiva Is’vara- the ParamAtma. That is because of the section of Veda called Painga Rahasya BrAhmaNa. In that it is clearly shown that this mantra is establishing the two Tattvams namely Jiva and antahkaraNa. There the VAkyas are as follows `

Tayoranyah pippalam svAdvatteeti – sattvam. Anas’nan anyo abhichAkas’eeteeti jnah| dvAvetau sattvakshetrajnau. तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्तीति – सत्त्वम् | अनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीतीति ज्ञः | द्वावेतौ सत्त्व क्षेत्र ज्ञऔ क्षेत्रज्ञौ | The agency that enjoying the pippalam – the fruit of the deeds shown By the phrase pippalam svaadvatti is the one shown as “sattvam” i.e. the antahkaraNa- the mind and the phrase “anas’nan anyo abhichAkas’eeti” is indicating the kshetrajna – the Jiva. These two entities Sattva and kshetrajna i.e. antahkaraNa and Jiva respectively are indicated by the words “dvau suparNau”. The same scripture continues in another sentence “tadetat sattvam, yena svapnam pas’yati – तदेतत् सत्त्वम्, येन स्वप्नं पश्यति - which shows that the instrument used to see and experience the dreams is the mind, which otherwise has been said to be antahkaraNa. Further it says “atha yoyam s’areera upadrashTA sa kshetrajnah – अथ योऽयं शरीर उपद्रष्टा स क्षेत्रज्ञः “which means that the Jiva who resides in the body is shown by the word kshetrajna. Thus it made clear the meanings of the words Sattva and kshetrajna do mean the antahkaraNa and Jiva only and does not show that Jiva and Is’vara are two different entities.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the answer to the objection raised by quoting the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-66***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of the examination of the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa for the 1st Mantra in the fifth Khanda or the 5th Chapter. The objection has been stated in the previous posting. The answer is given in this posting.

Why should somebody bring from sentences from Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa situated somewhere away, to decide the meaning of this Mantra? The next Mantra in this Upanishath itself can decide the meaning as can be seen now. On the same lines of the present mantra which reads “samaanam vRiksham parishsvajAte” goes the 2nd Mantra which again reads as follows – “samAne vRikshe purushonimagnah”. From the word “purusha” and the words “s’ochati, muhyamAnah, veetas’okah”, the entity who experiences the fruits of the deeds and consequently is in distress can be only the sentient Jiva only and it cannot be antahkaraNa, The meaning of Purusha is definitely not antahkaraNa. Similarly the second entity meant by the phrase “anyamees’am” is clearly the Is’vara. The Jiva, who is enslaved by the deeds and is in a delusion as far as the state of his real knowledge is concerned, cannot be Is'wara, who controls everything. The person, whom this Jiva, who is subservient to his own deeds, will become free form the distress by beholding him, can surely be called as Is’vara, the Supreme Lord. Thus above mantra clearly spells that the entities who are on the tree or so called body are Jiva and Is’vara only. Hence there is no scope for the second entity to be antahkaraNa. Further, the one which eats deliciously – svAdvatti- cannot be antahkaraNa. AntahkaraNa is also an instrument in the hands of Jiva to experience the fruits of his deeds, like all other indriyas – the sensual organs. It cannot be a doer. In the same way, the word “anas’nan” cannot mean a Jiva. The Jiva has the body only to experience the fruits of his deeds only.

If all this is accepted, what is the meaning of this Paingarahasya S’ruti? Is your question and the answer is as follows-

“pippalam svAdvatteeti sattvam” stands for the Jiva only and not antahkaraNa. The nighanTu says that the word Sattva stands for a living being. In Raghuvams’a, a statement appears “vanyAn vineshyanniva dushTasattvAn”. Hence it can be conclusively said that the word Sattva means only a Jiva. The sentence “anas’nannanyo abhichAkas’eeteeti jnah” also is clearly the one which means the ParamAtma – the supreme Lord only and not the Jiva. “tAvetau Sattva kshetrajnau” mean only the Jiva and Is’vara – the ParamAtma. We can see that in Vishnu sahasranAma stotra- the one which had been taught by BhIshma, the usage of the word “kshetrajna” to show the Supreme Lord. Similar is the quote “sarvAvAsam vAsudevam kshetrajnam viddhi tattvatah” in the Moksha Dharma Chapter of MahA Bharata, where VAsudeva, the Supreme Lord has been addressed as kshetrajna. In the same chapter, from the sentence “anyadudakam anyatpushkaraparNam | tathA anyat kshetram – anyah purushah panchavims’akah | anyas’chAsmAt kshetrajnah” found elsewhere, it is clear again that “kshetrajna”, the Supreme Lord is different than the Purusha, the Jiva. Hence the words Sattva, kshetrajna are used only to indicate the Jiva and ParamAtma – the Supreme Lord and not antahkaraNa and Jiva. Hence, the present Mantra, which has the difference between Jiva and Is’vara – the ParamAtma for the subject, the sentences from Paingarahasya also follow the same terminology as in the present mantra.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the examination of the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-67***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of the examination of the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa for the 1st Mantra in the fifth Khanda or the 5th Chapter. The objection has been answered in the previous posting. Further explanation of the words Sattva and kshetrajna is being given in this posting.

One may state that from the s’ruti vAkyas **“tadetat sattvam yena svapnam pas’yati” and “atha yoyam s’Areera upadRishTA sa kshetrajnah**“ of Painga- Rahasya BrAhmaNa, it is clear that the antahkaraNa which is the instrument to experience a dream, is the Sattva; and the entity, having knowledge and is residing in the body, is really Jiva. But that is not correct. The sentence “**yena svapnam pas’yati”** also tells about Jiva only. “yena (upalakshitah)” – the one, with whatever relationship to the PrakRiti he has, experiences the dream; tadetat sattvam- it is the characteristic of the Jiva having that relationship to the PrakRiti. In other words, the baddha purusha – the bonded Jiva is the one who is called “Sattva”. As said in the previous (3-2) mantra, ParamAtma being the entity having no manas – amanaskah, there is no possibility of Him seeing or experiencing a dream. Similar is the case with insentient – the achetana. Now for the Jiva, who is relieved of the connection with the PrakRiti, also does not have possibility of seeing or experiencing the dream – the svapnam. Finally with all the above, it is concluded that the entity, having characteristics – SvarUpa, similar to the entity, shown by the word “yena” in the above s’ruti vAkya, with such characteristics – the SvarUpa (mentioned in the sentence), and is able to see or experience the dream – the svapnam, is the bonded Jiva – the baddha Jiva, and is being called as Sattva. Hence the word ‘yena’ does not stand for the antahkaraNa, the instrument for seeing and experiencing the dream – the svapnam. Further it is the Jiva, who is the entity that is deliciously eating the fruits of the deeds, mentioned in the mantra – svAdvatteeti sattvam; and it cannot be antahkaraNa. The antahkaraNa is only an instrument and not the Karta – the doer. In this context, the word ‘yena’ shows the entity shown by the word Sattva – the eater of the fruits of the deeds. As such there cannot be a possibility of antahkaraNa being that entity. Hence it is concluded that the word ‘yena’ shows only the Jiva, the entity which sees and experiences the dream- the svapnam.

Similar is the case with the sentence **“yoyam s’Areera upadRishTA sa kshetrajnah”**. This sentence shows only the Is’vara. As mentioned in TaittirIya Upanishath vAkya – **‘’tasyaisha Eva s’Areera AtmA”**, the word ‘s’Areera’ shows only the ParamAtma who has every entity as his body, and not the Jiva. The word “upadRishTA” shows only the Is’vara, the one who resides and controls every entity and who is the witness to everything in this universe. Hence the explanation given by the Paingarahasya BrAhmaNa also explains that the present mantra teaches only the difference between the Jiva and ParamAtma and antahkaraNa is not a part of the mantra. The meaning of the sentence is explained in the SUthrabhAshya of Sutra – “sthityadanAbhyAm cha” of Brahma sutras.

With this the commentary for the 1st mantra is completed.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 2nd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishat.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-68***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 2nd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

samAne vRikshe purusho nimagnah

anees’ayA s’ochati muhyamAnah |

jushTam yadA pas’yatyanyamees’am

asya mahimAnamiti veetas’okah ||

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः

अनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः |

जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्य मीशं

अस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः ||

**Word meanings**

Purushah = the Jiva,

nimagnah = attaining a mental faculty which perceives body to be

Atma the soul, and

samAne vRikshe= residing in the same body, (that which can be cut

like a tree)

S’ochati = keeps lamenting,

muhyamAnah = forgetting his real SvarUpa, the nature

anees’ayA = due to the effect of the delectable PrakRiti which is

made up of the three types of qualities viz., Sattva,

Rajas and Tamas.

yadA = when (he)

pas’yati = visualises

anyam ees’am iti = that the other entity is the ParamAtma, who is different

than himself due to the inherent characteristics like

controlling everything, lordship etc. and

asya = his

mahimAnam cha = distinction like His holding the entire Universe,

tadA = then

veeta s’okah = gets away from the drudgery of living as part of the cycle

of births and death and becomes relieved of that

drudgery and consequent lament.

Explanation

As mentioned in the previous mantra, the Jiva keeps experiencing the drudgery of the cycle of births and deaths, doing the inauspicious and heinous deeds. This is due to the fact that though he is living in the same body along with Is’vara, he is influenced by the PrakRiti, the primordial matter, and is blinded by it, so that he considers his body to be himself – the Atma, unable to realise that he, the Atma or Jiva has also been endowed with the knowledge and bliss as being his SvarUpa, but which has been totally covered by the effect of primordial matter. When he comes under the tutelage of a capable preceptor, he will realise that there is Sarves’vara, different than him, who is the creator, saviour and destroyer of the entire universe. He further learns that by propitiating Him with devotion, he can get released from the clutches of the PrakRiti the primordial matter. This is the synopsis of the above mantra.

In this mantra, the meaning of the word ‘anees’ayA’ can be mentioned as ‘due to his own incapability’ also. I we deeply study the word ‘nimagnah’ and the phrase “anees’ayA muhyamAnah anyamees’am yadA pas’yati – tadA veeta s’okah”, the latent meaning can be drawn to be as follows –

A person is mired in a swamp. He is totally covered by the dirt and raucous odour of the boggy dirty material and is crying as he is unable to come out of it. As soon as he sees a friend, who is equipped to pull him out of this mire, he pleads with him to pull him out and finally becomes relieved of the dirt and raucous odour of the mire and his crying stops. Similar is the case of a Jiva. Being mired in the cycle of births and deaths, he is suffering and crying. He continues to suffer being unable to come out of it on his own. He gets pulled out of this drudgery by the Is’vara. Bhagavad RAmAnuja explains in his SrIbhAshya, the commentary to the Brahma sutras, while commenting on the Sutra “bhedavyapades’At”, that Sri VedavyAsa who authored the Brahma sutras, had established the difference between Is’vara and Jiva, based on the words “purusham anyam Is’am” of the present mantra only.

With this the commentary for the 2nd mantra is completed.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishat.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-69***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

yadA pas’yah pas’yate rukmavarNam

kartAramees’am purusham brahmayonim |

tadA vidvAn puNya pApe vidhUya

nirajnanah paramam sAmyamupaiti ||

यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णं

कर्तारमीशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् |

तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय

निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति ||

**Word meanings**

yadA = when

pas’yah = the person who has the knowledge of the Brahman

pas’yate = is able to visualise

rukmavarNam = one, who has body with shade of gold,

Is’am = is the controller of the Universe,

kartAram = is the creator

brahmayonim = is the material cause of the universe

purusham = and is the one identified by the word VAsudeva,

tadA = then

vidvAn = he, having knowledge of Brahman,

vidhUya = shakes off

puNyapApe = the fruits of deeds both righteous and heinous

upaiti = and is able to achieve

paramam sAmyam= near absolute similarity with ParamAtma by unveiling his

inherent eight qualities that are the same for Him as well

nirajnjanam = having relieved of his association with the PrakRiti,

the primordial matter.

Explanation**:-**

It is mentioned in the Upanishads by the phrases “Aditya varNam tamasah parastAt”, “hirNyas’mas’ruh hiraNya kes’ah, “ApraNakhAt sarva Eva suvarNah” that the body shade of ParamAtma is like the 24ct Gold. Similarly In Srimad VAlmIki RAmAyaNa also it is mentioned that Sita devi described the form of BhagavAn as having the brightness and shades of God. The same expression has been used here by the word “rukmavarNam”. However a doubt arises about the real shade of the colour of ParamAtma’s body form whether is golden shade or it is bluish black. This doubt arises due to the different description of ParamAtma’s body shade in different scriptures` i.e., the phrases “neelatoyadamadhysthA” in TaittirIya NArAyaNAnuvAka, which means that the shade body of ParamAtma is like the bluish black rain bearing cloud; and Sri rAma being described to have a body which has a bluish tinge, The answer is that there is no contradiction. It is possible to have the shade of golden hue also in the bluish black colours as can be seen in the shades of the neck of a peacock. Due to this fact only many of the erstwhile AchAryas have mentioned the similarity in the shades of BhagavAn’s body colour to be like that of the various colours found on the neck of a peacock.

Thus the upAsaka, who is knowledgeable of Brahman: is able to visualise and have virtual vision of the glowing auspicious form of ParamAtma, the creator and the Omni-controller, during his meditation, becomes mukta and is relieved of the fruits of the virtuous and heinous deeds. By this, he relinquishes the mortal body and achieves near absolute similarity with ParamAtma.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the explanation of 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-70***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of the 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

Here it should be understood that the absolute similarity is by SvarUpa and from the angle of experiencing the Ananda and other KalyANa guNas of ParamAtma. ParamAtma’s SvarUpa is having the eight attributes as mentioned by the Mantra “apahatapApmA…satyasankalpah”. The Jiva’s SvarUpa also is endowed with the same eight attributes mentioned by the above PrajApati vAkya from ChAndOgya Upanishath, in the same way as ParamAtma is having these attributes or qualities. The Jiva achieves the revelation of the ashTaguNas as soon as he is relieved of the connection with the PrakRiti. The connection with PrakRiti totally covers the real SvarUpa of the Jiva and as soon as he is relieved from the PrakRiti the natural ashTaguNas become visible like the dirt which covers a precious store and makes the stone dull its lustre, is washed away. On clearing the connection with the PrakRiti, the guNAshTaka gets revealed and he achieves his similarity with the ParamAtma. This absolute similarity has been explained in the s’ruti vAkya “sos’nute sarvAn kAmAn saha brahmaNA vipas’chitA – सोश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ब्रह्मणा विपश्चिता” and in the Brahma sutra “bhogamAtra sAmya lingAchcha – भोगमात्र साम्य लिङ्गाच्च” to be in the form of experiencing the exotic experience of the mahAnanda by the grace of ParamAtma. It ensures that the Jiva does not return to the cycle of births and deaths and he will remain free of the contact with the PrakRiti. The same situation has been explained by the Gita vAkya “mama sAdharmya mAgatAh – मम साधर्म्य मागताः” to be the moksha phala.

NirguNa mukti nirAsa - Refuting the idea of a release with no attributes.

The doctrine of Advaita mentions Moksha as the unity by nature of Jiva with ParamAtma on the removal of the ignorance – the Avidya. However this doctrine is in direct contradiction with this Upanishath VAkya – “nirajnanah paramam sAmyam upaiti”. He divides the mukti or Moksha into two types viz. saguNa mukti and NirguNa mukti. The saguNa mukti is described as a state in which the Jiva reaches the world of ParamAtma who is endowed with the attributes or qualities; and is enjoying experiencing that status along with ParamAtma having attained the same form like ParamAtma. However as per the advaitin, the Jiva in this state is still being covered by some more ignorance and hence this is not the absolute release or moksha. The advaitin says that from this state, the Jiva has to further progress by knowing the real nature of the Brahman devoid of any attributes, the ultimate status of the Brahman and then only the Jiva becomes one with Brahman and according to him, the last s’ruti vAkya in this Upanishath “Brahma Veda brahmaiva bhavati – ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति. But all this is his imagination and is not supported by the scriptures.

It has already been established that there does not exist any entity devoid of qualities or attributes. Sri S’ankara himself had admitted in a number of places like “sAkshee chetA kevalo nirguNas’cha” of SvetAs’vara, and “nirguNam niranjanam” etc. that the word NirguNa does not mean absolute absence of any quality or attribute but absence of the guNas like Sattva etc. it is worth noting that Sri S’ankara had not said that the word NirguNa means that devoid of all attributes or qualities.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the refutation of 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-71***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the refutation of the mukti-said to be devoid of any attributes or qualities.

Further to what Sri S’ankara mentioned about the meaning of word “NirguNa”, the same Sri S’ankara while giving the commentary for the words “satya dharma trivikramah – सत्य धर्मा त्रिविक्रमः –“ of Sri Vishnu sahasranAma s'abdas- wrote “satyAh jnAnAdi yosya dharmAh – iti satya dharmAh”. From this it can be seen that the meaning of the above explanation is – “the qualities of knowledge etc of ParamAtma are eternal (true), natural, and not appended. However there is a possibility of this explanation being interpreted to have been told are only for the sake of convenience in day to day usage only. But the same logic should apply to Jiva also. More than that, it has not added anything extra. Hence, the intention of Sri S’ankara is clear that these qualities such as jnAna – the knowledge etc., have been qualified to be eternal – having satyatva or nityatva.

The proposed nirguNamukti for Jiva – the release which is totally devoid of any qualities can be thus seen to be not supported by the scriptures in the same way the Brahman – the ParamAtma devoid of any attributes or qualities is not supported by any scriptures.

Now coming to the oft quoted scriptural sentence “Brahma Veda brahmaiva bhavati – ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति” in support of the idea of a Jiva attaining mukti devoid of any qualities similar to Brahman devoid of any qualities – again not supported by the scriptures, does not mean that this Jiva becomes that Brahman only. A person, who performs a yAga propitiating Vishnu Deva, is said to become Vishnu after the yAga being successfully completed – by the sentence “vishNureva bhootvA imAn lokAn abhijayati”. Though the sentence appears to say so prima facie, the word “Eva” is not a word to indicate decidedness, but it only shows similarity like the word “iva” and the meaning stands to be the yAgakarta – the performer of the yAga becomes one with highest status and regards like Vishnu. This meaning is accepted universally.

In the same way, here the word Eva in the word “brahmaiva” does not decidedly mean that the doer will become Brahman but he will become similar to Brahman and his natural eight qualities are revealed and he will become mostly similar to the Brahman – the ParamAtma. Hence it can be concluded that the mukti ` the release, said to be unifying with Brahman is not supported by the scriptures and vEdas. More over the Mukti as Unifying with Brahman is in contradiction to the s’ruti vAkya “niranjanah paramam sAmyam upaiti – निरञ्जनं परमं साम्य मुपैति”.

Hence the idea of mukti as unifying with Brahman is thus stands rejected.

Further the statement of the advaitin, that the Jiva in this state is still being covered by some more ignorance and hence this is not the absolute release or moksha, is also in contradiction to the scriptural evidences. By the words “puNyapApe vidhUya – पुण्यपापे विधूय”, the total destruction or removal of the heinous deeds has been told. Further the word “niranjanah – निरञ्जनः” establishes that this Jiva becomes totally free form the connection with the primordial matter – the PrakRiti or connection with ignorance – the Avidya and hence this release is the ultimate and absolute, which is totally devoid of any connection with the PrakRiti – the primordial matter. This word niranjanah itself refutes his postulation mukti devoid of attributes and unification with the Brahman.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath, with a new Akshepa – the objection arising...

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-72***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the 3rd mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath, with a new Akshepa – the objection arising...

Objection – The words “paramam sAmyam” in this Mantra have the same meaning – that is the unison of SvarUpa only, and not similarity. The meaning of the word ‘sama’ is ‘ekam’ – oneness. समस्य भावं साम्यं is the etymological explanation about the evolution of the word. It is like the nature of oneness is called as aikyam – ऐक्यम्. And as such this word sAmyam means oneness only. There are any number of such usages for the word sama. For example, the sentence “krishNArjunau samakAlavartinau – कृष्णार्जुनौ समकालवर्तिनौ “means that KrishNa and Arjuna are of the same time period. Further, the words ‘sama’ and ‘samAna’ are synonyms and the word ‘samAna’ is used to show the same meaning as the word ‘sama’; and as such it is crystal clear that the word ‘sama’ is used to mean the sameness. Hence, the word ‘samAnam’ used in the phrases – ‘samAnam vRiksham’ and ‘samAne vRikshe’ in the previous mantras also gives the same meaning of oneness – the same tree. In the grammatical rule viz., “Ekasminnarthe vRittih sAmAnAdhikarNyam – एकस्मिन्नर्थे वृत्तिः सामानाधिकरण्यम्” also, the word samAnAdhikarNatvam is used to show the “same meaning”. Hence, the word ‘sama’ has the same meaning as the word ‘samAna’ having the meaning of the oneness or ‘the same’. That same oneness is the meaning of the word ‘paramam’ is asserted in the present mantra. This word has been used so that even an iota of the mythical idea of difference should not arise in the oneness the mukta Jiva attains with the Brahman; and that is the idea to be established by this parama sAmyApatti. Hence the sentence “niranjanah paramam sAmyam upaiti – निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यमुपैति” establishes the meaning of the phrase parama mukti to be the unison of the muktAtma with Brahman – the mukta Jiva becoming one and the same with the Brahman like the sentence “brahmaiva bhavati – ब्रह्मैव भवति”.

The refutation of the above objection –

This argument reminds one the assistance of born blind person being given to a blind person. Your argument of the oneness of Jiva and Brahman could have been achieved only when it is established that the meaning of the word ‘sama’ is ‘eka - oneness”. That meaning itself is nonexistent. Not a single dictionary tells you that the word ‘sama’ is synonym of the word ‘eka’. Such a usage does not exist in any established texts to facilitate your argument. The usage of these words viz., ‘sama’ and ‘samAna’ to mean similarity only – can be seen very widely among the contemporary as well as older literary works. There does not exist any text like “ayam samo ghatah – अयं समो घटः” to give the same meaning like “ayam eko ghatah – अयं एको घटः”. The usage of a phrase similar to “chandrah samah” to have the same meaning of the phrase “chandrah ekah could have validated your argument but alas there does not exist any such absurd usage. Hence, it is concluded that the words ‘sama’ and ‘eka’ are not synonyms in absence of established usage or the support from the dictionaries etc. Hence “sAmyam” does not mean oneness.

You may ask “in that case, what is the meaning other than oneness in the usages like ‘samakAlavarti’ or ‘samAnam vRiksham’?” The answer is as follows – whichever is the meaning of the words sama and samAna in the usages of sentences like “this wealth of money, agricultural produce etc. is the same for Devadatta and Yajnadatta”., and “the husbandry of Draupadi among the PAnDavas is same for each of them”, the same is the meaning for the words or phrases like “samakAlavarti” or “samaanam vRiksham”. The wealths of Devadatta and Yajnadatta are only similar or having same denominations, but the wealth of Devadatta and Yajnadatta is not the same wealth. Isn’t it? Similarly the husbandry relationship with Draupadi for all the five PAnDavas is equal for each of the, Similar relationship applying to many objects or persons is termed as the relationship is same or similar for everybody. Even when the objects are not one and the same and they are many, this word ‘sama’ is used to mean common for everybody or every object. This commonality or similarity is the meaning for the usage of the words “samakAlavarti”, “samaanam vRiksham” etc. The time is the same for both is the meaning of the first word. In the other phrase, it means that the body (indicated by the word vRiksham) is common or same for Jiva and Is’vara. In the phrase “neelAni utpalAni”, the adjectives viz. neelatva and utpalatva – and the lotuses – the utpalas - qualified noun in both the cases are not the same, but they have the same base- samAnAdhikarNatva. Though the meanings taught are many, the lotuses – the bases of the adjectives neelatvas and utpalatvas are similar but do not say that the same lotus is the base for both the adjectives. In other words, all the lotuses are having the same adjectives neelatva and utpalatva, but all the adjectives, viz., neelatva and utpalatva are not vested in one lotus but they are common for all the lotuses. This commonality is sometimes indicated by the word “eka”. There, the word is not indicating numerical one but it shows the commonality only. It should be understood that the oneness – “ekatva” and “sama”- commonality for both – are two different words and meanings. Without understanding this finer distinction, saying the word ‘sama’ and the word ‘samAna’ are synonymous with the word ‘eka’ is an aberration in understanding. Nobody uses ‘samaschandrah – similar moon’ for expressing ‘ekaschandrah – one moon or the same moon’.

Hence, the mantra “niranjanah paramam sAmyam upaiti” does not show that Jiva and Brahman – the Is’vara becoming one and same is the mukti – the release from the cycle of births and deaths.

It can be summarised as follows – that the mantra means that – the JIva has similar experience like Is’vara, the Jiva will also have the eight qualities like Is’vara, and this status is the mukti- the release. Is’vara has unique capabilities to create and control the universe. Excepting these capabilities, the Jiva will be enjoying similarity in all other aspects with the Is’vara.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 4th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-73***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up with the 4th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

Mantra 4

**prANohyesha yassarvabhUtairvibhAti**

**vijAnan vidvAn bhavate nAtivAdee |**

**AtmakreeDa Atmaratih kriyAvAn**

**esha brahmavidAm varishThah ||**

**प्राणो ह्येष यस्सर्वभूतै र्विभाति,**

**विजानन् विद्वान् भवते नातिवादी |**

**आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावान्**

**एष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ||**

**Word to word meanings**

**tena**  = by His grace

**ativAdee bhava** = be an ativAdee – one who is the most learned about

Brahman.

**AtmakreeDah** = be the one who always has his mind on the Atma

**Atmaratih** = be the one who experiences the Atma only

**kriyAvAn (Bhava)** = be the one who performs his duties without any

returns for himself.

**(tam) vijAnan** = by knowing Him, who has been described above, by

listening and meditating,

**vidvAn** = and through subsequent worship through meditation,

**Yah** = of the one, who is known by the word Akshara,

**prAnah eshah** = this ParamAtma, who is the cause of the universe,

**sarvabhUtaih** = who is sought as refuge by all the sentient beings

**vibhAti**  = is glowing.

**eshah**  = such an entity (only)

**varishThah** = becomes the top ranking one

**brahmavidAm** = among the knowers of the Brahman, the ParamAtma

Synopsis or the meaning of the mantra in short –

. The ParamAtma – the Brahman is known in the scriptures by the word Akshara. He is the cause of the universe and He is the one sought out by all sentient entities as their ultimate refuge By knowing that glowing ParamAtma, through (1) listening of the scriptures and lectures of learned, (2) by performing your duties unfailingly without expecting any returns for yourself, and (3) by repeatedly remembering them and worshipping Him through meditation (UpAsana), (you) should become, by His grace, (1) an ativAdee – the one, who is most learned about Brahman, (2) the one who always has his mind on the Atma, and (3) the one who experiences the Atma only. . By doing so, you will become, by His grace only, the top ranking entity, among the knowers of the Brahman, the ParamAtma.

Explanation.

One must understand that the word **PrANa** in this mantra shows only the ParamAtma, the Brahman, who is the cause and source for sustenance, of the universe. This is deduced from the scriptural sentences like “sarvANi ha vA imAni bhootAni prANamevAbhi samvis’anti” and the etymology of the word prANa ` derived from “prANayati iti prANah”. One should learn from his learned preceptor about Him, who is the cause and sustainer for every sentient in this universe, keep on repeatedly recollecting what he has learnt from his preceptor and then proceed with worshipping Him. By doing so, he will be blessed by Him and will be able to perceive Him and see Him with his eyes. After one experiences this viewing Him, he should teach every one about Him. On doing so, he will be called an “ativAdee” (one who speaks all the while about Brahman and His glory and qualities etc. From the etymology of the word “ativAdee” (अतीत्य वदतीति अतिवादी) one who can preach about Brahman being the highest and best entity, is called an “ativAdee”. Further he should be experiencing with interest the Atma only leaving aside the worldly objects as the meaning of the word “AtmArAmah” suggests. His interest in experiencing Atma should be similar to the interest the common man shows for enjoying and experiencing the worldly objects of enjoyment. Moreover, he should perform all the ordained duties with full involvement but without expecting any return for himself by performing such ordained duties.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the explanation of the 4th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-74***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this postingwe shall continue with the explanation of the 4th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

The preceptor is teaching his ward that as mentioned in the scriptural sentence - “धर्मेण पापमपनुदति - dharmeNa pApamapanudati – one removes his fruit of heinous deeds by performing the deeds ordained for him by the scriptures”, One who diligently continues performing his duties ordained for his varNAs’rama only gets his mind – the Chitta, cleaned and he only can go through the Brahma VidyA. He becomes one of the best Brahmavetta – the knower of Brahman. This phrase “kriyAvan esha brahmavidAm varishThah – क्रियावान् एष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः” is the answer to the advaitin, who argues that there is no relationship for the brahmajnAna with the karmajnAna. By this scriptural phrase itself it can be concluded that advaitin’s argument is not supported by any of the scriptures. The advaitins state in their commentary that the external deeds like daily offering in the agnihotra – the sacred fires maintained by a strict Brahmavetta, are in contradiction to the knowledge of Atma and hence are not to be followed and hence the meaning of the word kriyAvAn as “the one who has the DhyAna, jnAna and VairAgya kriyas - the deeds being performed during DhyAna, learning and mid getting alienated from the primordial matters. But this meaning is in contradiction to the Upanishath VAkyas – “tam VidyA karmaNee samanvArabhete – तं विद्या कर्मणी समवारभेते “, “vidyAm cha avidyAmcha yastad vedobhayagm sa – विद्यां च अविद्यांच यस्तद्वेदोभयगं स”. These vAkyas have established a natural relationship – the relationship between the main and the subordinate deeds for the karma and jnAna, and now the advaitin is negating that relationship. From the S’ruti vAkyas like “yakshyamANo ha vai bhagavantohamasmi – यक्ष्यमाणो ह वै भगवन्तोहमस्मि”, there are IthihAsAs confirming that the precepting maharishis, who are Brahmavettas themselves and are established preceptors – AchAryas of Vedantas, performing the yajnas – the auspicious sacrifices in sacred fires. We have dealt with this subject in our commentary for the 11th mantra of Is’AvAsyopanishat and the readers may refer the same.

Again, Sri S’ankara had broken the sentence as “bhavate na ativAdee” and gave the meaning for this as “ one who has understood that there is no entity in the universe other than Brahman, does not discuss with others.” The meaning looks beautiful but there is one problem. Sri S’ankara has taken the Atmanepadi verb form “bhavate”, but alas! Such a form does not exist as per the grammatical rules. As such, it is proper to go with the interpretation and explanation of Sage RangaRAmAnuja rather than that of Sri S’ankara.

With this we conclude the 4th mantra

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 5th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-74***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this postingwe shall take up the 5th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

**Mantra -5**

**satyena labhyastapasAhyesha AtmA**

**samyagjnAnena brahmacharyeNa Nityam |**

**antas’s’areere jyotirmayo hi s’ubhro**

**yam pas’yanti yatayah ksheeNadoshAh ||**

**सत्येन लभ्य स्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा**

**सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् |**

**अन्तश्शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो**

**यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीण दोषाः ||**

**Word Meanings**

**yatayah** = persons, having their sensory organs under control,

**ksheeNa doshAh** = free from passion and wickedness,

**yam pas’yanti** = are able to know Him,

**eshah AtmA** = that ParamAtma

**antahs’s’areere** = who dwells in side the body of that person, and

**jyothirmayah** = is the brilliant glow called knowledge, and

**s’ubhrah** = is pure

**labhyah** = can be obtained by

**satyena** = those who speak beneficial truth for all entities, and

**tapasA** = practice the penance

**samyagjnAnena** = having knowledge obtained from the scriptures, and

**brahmacharyeNa** = is in a state of continence and chastity,

**nityam** = for the rest of life

**Summary of the Mantra**

The persons having their sensory organs under their control and are free from the passion and wickedness, and those who can visualise and know that ParamAtma, can attain Him, only (1) by speaking truth that is beneficial to all the entities, (2) having knowledge by going through the scriptures on a continuous basis, (3) practicing the penance (worshipping and meditating on Him, and (4) are in a state of continence and chastity for the rest of their life.

**Explanation**

The ParamAtma can be visualised and perceived by ascetics, who have their sensory organs under their control. This ParamAtma permeates the entire body of Atma and controls the Atma. This ParamAtma is pure and is by nature knowledge itself. He is pure because He is devoid of any heinous deeds and their consequences and no heinous deed can ever be found near Him. It was explained earlier by us that He can be attained by the sentient beings only by meditation and worshiping which are together known by the word bhakti. The viveka, vimoka etc, the various angas – the supplementaries of the main body – Bhakti UpAsana were already explained by us in the study of Mantra “manomayah prANa s’areeranetA” (ref our posting Mundakopanishat-51). Some of those supplementaries only are stated here.

Amongst them is speaking truth, which is beneficial to the living entities. Having single minded devotion to the ParamAtma by turning the mind and sensory organs towards Him as the word tapas is defined as such by the sentence – manasas’cendriyANAm cha aikAgryam paramam tapah – मनसश्चेन्द्रियाणाम्च ऐकाग्र्यं परमं तपः. Samyak jnAna is that knowledge, gained after attending the venerable preceptors regularly and recalling and reviewing the essence of those teachings on a continuous basis. This only can give the capability to decide and know the real nature and qualities of ParamAtma. The brahmacharya mentioned in this mantra is continence and chastity practicing those eight functions such as recalling and repeated chanting etc. – viz., SmaraNa keertana etc. (ref. posting Mundakopanishad -41). All these practices help in obtaining the proper knowledge of Brahman and are the procedures to attain Him by release from the cycle of births and deaths. There is no other way to get relieved from this cycle of births and deaths and attain Him other than BrahmopAsana, as said is the scriptural sentence “tamevam vidvAn amrita iha bhavati – nAnyah panthA. From this it is concluded that there are no direct procedures other than practising the Bhakti and BrahmopAsana as said above. It should be understood that all these are supplementaries to the main BrahmopAsana in the form of practising Bhakti.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 6th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-75***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 6th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

**Mantra - 6**

**satyameva jayati nAnRitam**

**satyena panthA vitato devayAnah |**

**yenAkramantRyishayo hyAptakAmAh,**

**yatra tatsatyasya paramam nidhAnam ||**

सत्यमेव जयति नानृतम्

सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः |

येनाक्रामन्ति ऋषयो ह्याप्तकामाः

यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ||

**Word Meanings**

**Satyameva** = the truth only

**jayati** = remains as the best one.

**anRitam na** = the untruth does not win.

**Satyasya** = the fruit of the practise of remaining true,

**paramam** = and the ultimate and highest

**nidhAnam** = goal to be attained

**tat yatra** = that place, where, the ParamAtma who is,

**Aste** = resides,

**tat bhavati** = that can be attained

**satyena hi** = only by the practise of being truthful

**Rishayah** = by the learned meditators, who are

**AptakAmah** = not interested in worldly matters

**yena Akramanti** = reach and occupy that place, by travelling on

**vitatah** = the wide

**devayAnah**  = celestial

**panthAh** = high road

Synopsis of the Mantra:

Truth alone is the most virtuous one. Untruth never succeeds. The ultimate fruit of remaining true is reaching ParamAtma’s place and joining Him there. The learned meditators, who are not interested in the worldly objects and matters, attain that ParamAtma travel on the **archirAdi mArga** – the celestial wide high road. This is possible only by practicing the truth.

Explanation

The virtue of truth, glorified in the previous mantra is described in this Mantra. In the PhalAdhyAya, the 4th and last Chapter of Brahma sutras has elaborately discussed this subject under various axioms – the sutras like “archirAdinA tatpradhiteh – अर्चिरादिना तत्प्रधितेः”. The learned meditators, who are relieved of the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths, are able to travel on this wide celestial high road will be able to visit and behold the extra-ordinary form of ParamAtma in SriVaikunTham, called paramAkAs’am, which is beyond the realm of the primordial matter – the wide field of PrakRiti. There is another road called “dhoomAdi mArga”- on which the Jivas travel to reach the various worlds of the primordial matter like, Svarga, BhUmi, Naraka etc. to experience the fruits of their virtuous and heinous deeds. Both these roads were mentioned by Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita by the s’loka “S’ukla kRishne gatee hyete – शुक्ल कृष्णे गती ह्येते”. These have been mentioned in ChAndOgya Upanishath also.

Sri vAtsya varadAchArya Swamy popularly known as NadAdUr ammAL has explained these in the following s’loka which is recommended to be recited every day as soon as one gets up in the morning.

Muktorchirdina poorvapaksha shaDudagnmAsabda vAtAms’umat

Glau vidyudvaruNendra dhAtRimahita sseemAntasindhvAplutah |

S’ree VaikunTha mupetya nityamajaDam tasmin parabrahmaNah

sAyujyam samavApya nandati samam tenaiva dhanyah pumAn ||

**मुक्तोर्चिर्दिनपूर्वपक्ष षडुदङ्मासाब्दवातांशुमत्**

**ग्लौ विद्युद्वरुणेन्द्र धातृ महितस्सीमान्तसिन्ध्वाप्लुतः |**

**श्री वैकुण्ठ मुपेत्य नित्यमजडम् तस्मिन् परब्रह्मणः**

**सायुज्यं समवाप्य नन्दति समं तेनैव धन्यः पुमान् ||**

This describes the journey of a muktAtma- the released Atma to SriVaikunTham.

“ archis, dina, s'uklapaksha, uttarAyaNa, samvatsara, vAyu, sUrya, Chandra, Vidyut, VaruNa, Indra, Chaturmukha worlds – gradually going up from one to the other, being received and honoured by the respective heads of those worlds and after crossing all these worlds, reaching the sacred river VirajA taking a purifying bath in it, proceeding further to reach the everlasting SriVaikunTham. After reaching there, he will have an audience with ParamAtma, and be with Him forever, continues to enjoy the celestial enjoyments along with Him.

The essence of this mantra is that only those who practice the truth can tread on this road. That entity only is considered to be the top-rung, by everybody.

In this mantra RangaRAmAnuja Muni reads the mantra with the word “jayati” – the passive voice form, where as Sri S’ankara reads the mantra with “jayate” – the active voice from.

This sentence “satyameva jayate” appears in the official emblem of Govt. of India.

With this we complete the mantra 6.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 7th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-76***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 7th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

**Mantra 7**

**brihachcha tat divya machintya roopam**

**sookshmAccha tat sookshmataram vibhAti |**

**doorAtsudoore tadihAntike cha**

**pas’yatsvihaiva nihitam guhAyAm ||**

**बृहच्च तत् दिव्य मचिन्त्य रूपम्**

**सूख्माच्च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति |**

**दूरात्सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च**

**पश्यत्स्विहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ||**

**Word meanings**

**tat** = that ParamAtma

**BRihat** = big by nature and by qualities

**divyam** = that one in the highest parama vyoma

**achintyaroopam** = the celestial form which is beyond the comprehension of

words and mind

**tat** = that ParamAtma, who is,

**sookshmataram** = more minute than

**sookshmAt**  = the Jiva, atomic in size

**vibhAti** = is glowing with splendour

**tat** = that ParamAtma

**nihitam** = resides

**ihaiva guhAyam** = in the space in the heart of

**pas’yatsu** = the learned with the knowledge of the entities, their nature and their

qualities,

**antike ihacha** = in the corona of the Sun in the primordial matter, and

**doorAt sudoore** = in the far distant parama vyoma farther than the reach of the

primordial matter.

Synopsis of the Mantra.

The ParamAtma, who takes a miniscule form extremely smaller than the atomic Jiva and glowing splendidly, resides in the space in the heart of the learned jnAnis, who are endowed with the knowledge of the nature, qualities etc of all the entities in the universe. He is available in the corona of the Sun, and in the Parama vyoma, that is far far farther than the reach of the primordial matter. He is inexplicably extremely big, by nature and by his qualities and is beyond the comprehension of the mind and the available vocabulary.

Explanation:

ParamAtma is considered as BRihat – vary large. When one seeks the answer for the question as to in which aspect this largeness applies, the answer is that 1. Because of its Omni presence and because of the qualities of ParamAtma which are great beyond any comparison to anything other than ParamAtma. So ParamAtma is called Brahman. The word Brahma means great, big etc. Bhagavad RAmAnuja has detailed the definition of word Brahma as “bRihattvam cha svaroopeNa, guNais’cha yatra anavadhikaatis’ayam, soasya mukhyArthah”. Meaning of this passage is what has been mentioned above at beginning of the para. Such ParamAtma is having a celestial form, a beacon of Tejas - limitless brilliant glow. That great ParamAtma is at the same time is of such smallness that it enters the atomic Jiva to sustain it and control it. It is unknown of any entity which s both smallest and hugely large measure. This is one of the extra-ordinary capabilities and qualities that are part of His SvarUpa – the nature. That ParamAtma is found to be in the space called ‘DaharAkAsam’ in the heart region of meditators, as well as in the Surya maNDala – the corona of the Sun.

The Jiva who is atomic in size, can conveniently enter into any small inanimate object like body of a single cell bacterium, and is indicated by the word ‘sookshma’, and this ParamAtma is shown to be “sookshmAt cha tat sookshmataram – the minutest entity that is minuter than the minutest sized atomic Jiva” as described by the commentator Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni. From this it can be concluded that the postulation of some that there is no penetration and presence inside the smallest atomic Jiva is not acceptable as per the scripture. Their further argument that if it is accepted that there is space inside a Jiva as well as outside Jiva, the nature of Jiva needs to be having limbs and is of temporary stature, also stands not supported by the scriptures as could be seen from the explanation provided for this mantra by Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni. The relevant passage from his commentary in Sanskrit reads as follows – “sookshmAt sarva chentanAntah praves’a samarthAt, Jeeva vargAdapi tadanupraves’a samarthatayA sookshmataram – सूक्ष्मात् सर्वाचेतनान्तःप्रवेशसमर्थात् जीववर्गादपि तदनुप्रवेश समर्थतया सूक्ष्मतरम्” The meaning of the passage is given above earlier. With this we complete the explanation of the 7th mantra.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 8th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-77***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 8th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

**Mantra 8**

**na chakshushA gRihyate nApi vAchA**

**nAnyairdevaih tapasA karmaNA vA |**

**jnAna prasAdena vis’uddha sattvah**

**tatastu tam pas’yate nishkalam dhyAyamAnah ||**

**न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा**

**नान्यैर्देवैः तपसा कर्मणा वा |**

**ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वः**

**ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ||**

**Word meanings**

**sah** = that ParamAtma

**na gRihyate** = cannot be perceived

**chakshushA** = with the eyes.

**sah gRihyate** = He is perceived or seen

**vAchA api na** = neither by the speech sense

**anyairdevaih cha**= nor by any other sensory organs.

**sah gRihyate** = He is perceived or seen

**tapasA vA na** = neither by observing the austerities

**karmaNA vA na** = nor by performing ordained deeds.

.

**sattvah** = that upAsaka – the meditator,

**tatah** = only after

**vis’uddha** = having clean mind

**dhyAyamAnah** = by doing DhyAna – the repetitive remembering and meditating

**nishkalam tam** = on that ParamAtma, who is devoid of any limbs

**pas’yate** = is able to visualise and see

**tam** = that ParamAtma

**jnAna prasAdena** = by His benevolence

**synopsis**

The ParamAtma cannot be either seen or visualised by any of the sensory organs. A devotee can see Him only by His benevolence, after cleansing his mind by continuously doing the DhyAna – the repetitive recalling His SvarUpa – the nature, rUpa – the auspicious form and guNas – the attributes and meditating on Him.

**Explanation**

The ParamAtma has been shown by the word JnAna in this Mantra. This is in line with the Taittireeyopanishat. In that the passages “satyam jnAnam anantam Brahma” and “prajnA cha tasmAt prasRitA purANee” show Brahman as jnAna the knowledge and the one who increase the power of knowledge. By His grace (benevolence) only the meditator devotee is able to remove ignorance and have a clean mind, enabling him to see and visualise His form with an unparalleled celestial beauty, The following s’loka says that the graceful glance of the ParamAtma falling on the one during his birth, improves one’s Sattva guNa – the quality of Purity, and becomes the cause for removal of Rajas and TamO GuNas (qualities of passion and darkness or ignorance respectively) thereby enables him to meditate on Him.

“jAyamAnam hi purusham yam pas’yenmadhusoodanah |

sAttvika ssatu vijneyah savai mokshArthachintakah”.

Subsequently his devotion to Him – the bhakti gets matured and he is able to visualise and have a stable vision of Him in his mind. In absence of His benevolence and grace, neither the physical primordial senses nor the pious deeds result in having that sort of a vision. This was well explained by the Bhagavad-Gita s’lokas

*nAham vedairna tapasA na dAnena na chejyayA;*   
*s'akya evamvidho drashTum drishTavAnasi mAm yathA. (BG-11-53)*.

Neither by the *Vedas,* nor by austerity, nor by gift, nor by sacrifice, can I be seen in this form as thou hast seen Me (so easily).

*bhaktyaa twananyayA s'akyam aham evamvidho’rjuna;*   
*jnAtum drashTum cha tattwena praveshTum cha parantapa. (BG-11-54)*

But by single-minded devotion can I, of this form, be known and seen in reality and also entered into, O Arjuna!

With this we come to end of the 8th Mantra.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall take up the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-78***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall study the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

In the chapter called Jnaadhikarana of SribhAshyam, detailing the characteristics of Jiva, BhagavadRAmAnuja had quoted this mantra, where it is established that Jiva’s characteristic shape and size are atomic in nature- the SvarUpa, to establish the shape and size of the Jiva to be atomic – aNu-svaroopa, which according to sage VyAsa – the author of Brahma Sutras, also is an aNu – the atom. However, it is intriguing to find that Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni – the upanishdbhAshyakAra had interpreted this mantra to be about ParamAthman, in spite of RAmAnuja’s SribhAshyam establishing the mantra to detail the Jiva SvarUpa. Interpretation of UpanishdbhAshyakAra is quite intriguing and is at variance with both Sage VyAsa as well as BhagavadRAmAnuja. We can only draw a conclusion that it was his desire to show his mettle in Vedic Sanskrit language, the commentary has been made to show that the mantra can be interpreted to Show paramAthman also.

Now we go into the Mantra and its commentary`

**9th Mantra of the 5th Khanda.**

***eshoNurAtmA chetasA veditavyah***

***yasmin prANAh panchadhA samvives’a |***

***prANais’chittam sarvamotam prajAnAm***

***yasmin vis’uddhe vibhavatyesha AtmA ||***

***word meanings***

***eshah AtmA*** = this Akshara parabrahman

***vibhavati*** = is visible physically in front of that Jiva,

***yasmin*** = in whom

***prANAh*** = the life giving breath

***samvives’a*** = is enjoined

***panchadhA*** = in five different forms;

in which Jiva,

***sarvam chittam*** = the whole mind

**prajAnAm** = of the living beings

***prANaih*** = along with the sensory organs

*otam* = is totally inlaid- woven, and

***eshah AtmA*** = that Jiva, which is

***aNuh*** = atomic in size,

***veditavyah*** = is the object to be known

***chetasA*** = by the mind, which is refined by the jnAna-yoga

***yasmin vis’uddhe*** = when that bonded Jiva is released from the bondage of primordial matter

Synopsis of the Mantra

The Akshara parabrahman is visible to that Jiva in physical form, when that bonded Jiva gets released from the bondage of the primordial matter. The PrANas – the life breathing airs, are enjoined with this Jiva in five forms. Again, the whole mind associated with the sensory organs is totally woven – inlaid into this Jiva, who is also atomic in size. This Jiva is the one to be fathomed and known by the mind which has been refined and conditioned by the jnAna-yoga done by the upAsaka Jiva.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue to study the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-79***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study of the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

Explanation.

In this khanDa – the section, considering that the present context is the same that existed in the 7th mantra viz., bRihaccha tat divyam, describing the ParamAthman, it could have been justified that Sri RangaRAmAnuja muni had taken this present mantra to be that of ParamAthman. However it should be noted that BhagavadRAmAnuja, the author of SribhAshyam, had quoted this mantra in SribhAshyam while explaining the Sutra “svas’abdonmAnAbhyAm” to establish the characteristics of Jiva. It cannot be said that BhAshyakArar had erroneously felt the subject of the present mantra to be Jiva. The mention of relationship of the five PrANas, being the base for the manas and the indriyas – the mind and the sensory organs, being atomic is the size and shape clearly establish this mantra to be pertaining to the Jiva only and not ParamAthman. Further it is worth noting that the parabrahman or ParamAtma had been mentioned by the phrases, “aprANohyamanAh” and “achakshus s’rotram which have clearly spelt out the characteristics of ParamAthman and are at variance to the characteristics mentioned in this mantra. It is very much appropriate to conclude from all the reasons mentioned above, that the mantra is mentioned to describe Jiva only and not ParamAthman by Bhagavad BhAshyakArar. The present context also supports that view by starting with the mantras – “dvA SuparNa sayujA sakhAyA” and “samAne vRikshe purusha nimagnah” which deal with the Jiva. Further, Sri Sudars’ana Bhattar, popularly known as S’rutaprakAs’ikAchArya, the well known commentator of SrIbhAshya, also writes “eshoNurAtma, chetasA veditavyah iti aNupariNAmasya mumukshuveditavyatva s’ravaNAccha ANutvam svAbhAvikam.” Etc. to show that in the same jnAdhikaraNa also, the atomic size and nature of the Jiva is occurring naturally to Jiva quoting this mantra. As such it is very much clear that this mantra pertains to the discussion of Jiva’s characteristics and nature only and not of ParamAthman.

At the beginning of this mantra and at the end also the phrase “esha AtmA” is repeated twice. The first word aNu shows that the relationship of the PrANa etc is only Jiva. The words – “vis’uddha sattvah” used to indicate the Jiva in the previous mantra is used here also. The second word “aNu” shows the ParamAthman by the words – “yasmin vis’uddhe” and vibhavatyesha AtmA to be “anyamees’am” of the first mantra. A mumukshu, desirous of getting released from the bondage of cycle of births and deaths, should know the nature and characteristics of Jiva. This is the synopsis arrived at for this mantra. This knowledge of the Jiva’s nature and characteristics is called jnAna yoga. This is the part of the main Bhaktiyoga, described earlier.

It is being brought to notice of the reader that the entry of Jiva in the body and the consequent relationship with the five PrANas – the life giving breath in five different forms, the mind and the sensory organs is vividly explained in the first three questions of the “pras’nopanishat”

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the study with a discussion on the nature of the Jiva being atomic in size.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-80***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the assertion of the postulate that Jiva is atomic as part of the study of the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

The tArkikas - the logician-philosopher and the meemAmsakas – those who study the karma mImAmsa concerning the Vedic rituals and text claim that the Jiva is vibhu – the all pervading entity. But in fact this postulate is not supported by the Vedic texts themselves. The advaitins – the monists, who say that there is no difference between the Jiva and Brahman. Their statement is that the Brahman who is all pervading, appears to be atomic due to the reason that the Brahman or ParamAthman being the subject to the antahkaraNa – the conscience or the thinking faculty and hence the appearance of Brahman as Jiva, the one, atomic in size, is only temporary and is caused due to an upAdhi – a particular situation. Both these views and interpretations are refuted by Bhagavad RAmAnuja as they are contradictory to the views of sage VyAsa, the author of Brahma Sutras as explained below.

The following reasons have been shown for ascertaining that Jiva is atomic in size and nature.

1. In the present mantra starting with “eshoNurAtmA”, it is clearly spelt out that the Atma- the Jiva is aNu – the atom.
2. Another s’ruti vAkya – “vAlAgra s’atabhAgasya s’atathA kalpitasya cha bhAgo jeevah sa vijneyah” says that the tip of a hair follicle – on dividing into a hundred parts, is of the size of a hundred Jivas. As such from the Vedic sentences itself it is established that the Jiva – the Atman is atomic in nature and size.
3. The movement of Jiva – the Atma has been mentioned in the S’ruti vAkya – “tena pradyotena esha AtmA nishkrAmati” – that the Atma exits the body. Another S’ruti vAkya, viz.ly – “ye vai ke cha asmAllokAtprayanti chandramasameva te sarve gacchanti” – which means that the Jiva – the Atma moves from this earthly world to the worlds of Chandra and others, for experiencing the fruits of his deeds. Another S’ruti vAkya – “tasmAt lokAt punaretya asmai lokAya karmaNe” – which means that after enjoying the fruits of the virtuous deeds in the worlds of Chandra and others, he comes back to the earthly world for further experiencing the next set of fruits of his deeds. These movements viz. coming out of the body, going to the higher worlds and coming back to this world do not happen for an entity if it is vibhu – the all pervading. Hence it is imperative to conclude that Jiva- the Atma is not all pervading but atomic.
4. There are two more instances which establish the Jiva to be atomic. They are – 1.”hRidihyayam AtmA- tatraikas’atam nADeenAm” – which means this Jiva – the Atma resides in the heart, where there are hundreds of the carrier lines – tubes. 2. “yoyam vijnAnamayah prANeshu hRidyantarjyothih”- meaning the one (Atma) which is full of knowledge among the PrANas and which is a beam of luminosity. These establish the Jiva to be full of consciousness of knowledge basically residing in the heart. If the Jiva (Atma) is taken to be all pervading vibhu in nature, it cannot be said to reside in heart – a small portion of the body.

From the above it can be seen that the author of Brahma sutras – or the Vedanta Sootras made it clear that the Jiva is not a vibhu but an aNu- the atom.

The statements of TArkikas – the logician philosophers, PUrva meemAmsakas etc. are in contradiction to the S’ruthis and are in variance with the author of Brahma Sutras.

An objection –

If a Jiva – the Atma being atomic, is placed in the heart, how can he feel pain or pleasure in various parts of the body like pain in the foot or pain in the head, sweetness on the tongue or sweet voices in the ears etc? This cannot happen unless the Jiva is all over the body. Then as per the Jainas, the Jivas size will depend on the body in which it enters and hence a Jiva has to be the size of an ant or an elephant according to the body size only. With all these, the Jiva cannot be an eternal. As such it is obvious that the Jiva – the Atma can be only a vibhu – the all pervading.

Refutation

It is not the job of the prAmANikas to negate the concept of Jiva being atomic in size and nature, based on some likes and dislikes and logics. Even if the Atma, being atomic in size, resides in the heart, it being a concentrated source of knowledge or conscience, the portion of the conscience called Dharmabhooota jnAnam travels to the entire body and it can bring back the experiences to be felt by the Atma, - the dharmi, the other part of the conscience and the repose or the source of this knowledge. An analogy can be drawn between a source of light and the rays of light. The same answer was given in the Brahma SUtra ` “guNAdvA Alokavat” Thus the argument of the logician philosophers – the tArkikas stands effectively refuted.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the study with a discussion on the nature of the Jiva being atomic in size.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-81***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the assertion of the postulate that Jiva is atomic as part of the study of the 9th mantra of the 5th khanDa of the Upanishath.

However, the monists - the advaitins, say that this Jiva being atomic is not natural but imposed because of a specific situation where the Brahman has to become a Jiva and because of such a situation, has to take the position in the antahkaraNa – the mind and hence, In reality it is only absolute knowledge only. Their contention is not supported even in the mantras “dvaa SuparNa”, “anyamees’am” etc. which are telling that there is difference between Jiva and Is’vara is natural and Jiva being atomic and Is’vara or paramAthman being all pervading. We may go into further details in this aspect.

Is this atomic nature lasting as long as Jiva exists or not? If the answer to this question is affirmative, then in that case, the nature or characteristic of an object if it lasts as long as the object exists, then that nature or the characteristic is a natural characteristic for that object. It cannot be depending on a particular situation or in other words is not conditioned by particular condition which is called aupAdhikam. As long as the earth is there, it specific smell will be there. The sweetness of milk as long as the milk exists etc are natural characteristics of those objects only, they cannot be conditional characteristics as the monists say. If the atomic nature of Jiva appears only as long as a particular condition is fulfilled instead of throughout the existence of Jiva, then the Jiva also is no more existing if the atomic nature does not exist. But this is contradictory to the statement of monists, which says that Jiva exists till he becomes Brahman i.e., till the Jiva attains moksha – the release from the cycle of births and deaths. Thus the enquiry into the Vedanta is infructuous if the Jiva does not exist till becomes Brahman. The postulation of the monist is that once the characteristic of a Jiva is no more in the Brahman, then that stage is called moksha or the state of release from the nature of Jiva. When the Jivatva is no more there in Brahman without any effort, where is the necessity to enquire into the moksha? Or alternately if the atomic nature – the characteristics of Jiva caused due to a particular situation or condition is no more existing, because the condition or situation is no more existing, and the Jivatva – the characteristic of a Jiva is reappearing when the antahkaraNa – the mind is conditioned, then also the Jivatva is not eternal. With that happening your postulation “shadasmAka manAdayah – our six conditions are eternal” is negated by this argument.

Further the monists have to establish that the condition which brings Jivatva and atomic nature in Brahman. Is it ignorance? Definitely not. Since it is not accepted that the condition is atomic nature, it is not possible to postulate the atomic nature to Brahman (when Brahman becomes a Jiva). Again, if it is said that the antahkaraNa is the source of conditioning, that also does not stand because the scriptural sentence “etasmAt jAyate prANo mana ssarvendriyANi cha” states that this manas is being created in every creation. This means the Jiva is being created every time fresh with every creation. The result – Jiva is no more eternal.

. The conditional atomic size has been specified for ParamAthman for the purpose of the meditation by the Jiva in the scriptural sentences like “ya eshontarhRidaye aNeeyAn vreeheh” but no where it has been stated in the scriptures, for Jiva. Further, the conditional atomic size of ParamAthman has been specified as the object of meditation – the upAsana in the scriptural sentence “eshoNurAtmA chetasA veditavyah”. Normally the real form is usually the object of meditation – the UpAsana. But to facilitate the UpAsaka, this atomic form of ParamAthman has been specified. The gross form, obtained due to the connection with the physical body, or the condition of happiness or sorrow in the Jiva, are not the objects of meditation. Is it not? As such the atomicity which is to be known and understood in this mantra is real only and not conditional.

Again the exit mentioned in the scriptural sentence “tena pradyotena esha AtmA nishkrAmati” is said to be not for the all pervading Atma but limited for the condition of the limited space in the antahkaraNa – the mind as per the monists. But the exit – the utkrAnti - for all the sensory organs including the mind has been specifically stated along with the exit of Jiva from the body by the scriptural sentence “tamutkrAmantam….. sarve prANa anootkrAmanti” makes this amply clear that this exit is only for the Atma which is different than the manas – the mind. Hence, the entity having this exit is only the Jiva and hence, he does not have the all pervading nature.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue the study with discussion on the nature of the Jiva being atomic in size answering another objection.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-82***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the study with discussion on the nature of the Jiva being atomic in size answering another objection.

***Objection***

The sentence ***“vAlAgra S’atabhAgasya….”*** Is being referred here. At the end of this sentence, it is mentioned that this atomic nature of the Jiva the sentient has the eternity. After all the eternity means, all pervasiveness only. If this all pervading nature is appearing, it is clear that the earlier nature of atomicity of Jiva is lost forever. Hence it is again confirmed that the atomicity of the Jiva is only during certain situation or in other words, the ***aupAdhikatvam*** – the conditionality is confirmed. When it is stated ***“bAlo yuvA kalpate”*** it means that ***the bAlyam*** – the childhood gives way to ***youvanam*** – the youth. So, the atomicity is no more eternal.

***Answer***

Yes. There it is stated “***sa cha AnantyAya kalpate*** – that gets for the eternity” meaning the atomic Jiva gets eternity. But this eternity is not for the all pervasiveness as you infer. You have drawn a conclusion that the Jiva becomes one with the Brahman who is eternal, by removing the atomicity. But unfortunately the words in the statement do not give such a meaning. If it is stated ***“devatvAya kalpate***” does not give the meaning of becoming one with the Devata. When one says “***arogatvAya kalpate***” it does not mean that one does not become one with a man who is not sick. The real meaning of these words is “this atomic Jiva becomes an eternal entity.” The knowledge or ***jnAna*** is shrunken due to the relationship with the karma the deeds in a Jiva. This shrunken power of knowledge due to his relationship with the deeds will become free of the shrinkage once the effect of deeds is nullified by the grace of Him and it will get back its original fullness. This is the meaning of the sentence “***mAmeva ye prapadyante – mAyAm etAm taranti te***”. Thus from the clear ***pramANa vAkyas*** which mention ***t***he ***utkrAnti*** – the going upwards, “***gatyAgati”*** – the going and coming back from the higher worlds, attributed to the Jiva, it is clear that the Jiva remains atomic from the sentence “***eshoNurAtmA chetasA veditavyah***”. Hence the postulate of RAmAnuja that the Jiva is atomic in size stands vindicated.

Now we move to the 10th Mantra.

***Mantra***

***yam yam lokam manasA samvibhAti***

***vis’uddhasattvah kAmayate yAms’cha kAmAn |***

***tam tam lokam jayate tAms’cha kAmAn***

***tasmAdAtmajnam hyarchayedbhootikAmah ||***

***Word Meanings***

***vis’uddha sattvah*** = one who has clean manas – the mind by the

knowledge of Brahman

***yam yam lokam*** = which ever world he proposes, to go to

***manasA samvibhAti*** = intends in his manas – the mind,

***yAms’cha kAmAn*** = whichever desires

***kAmayate*** = he wishes

***tam tam lokam*** = that world

***jayate*** = will be able to obtain after winning over it.

***tAms’cha kAmAn*** = will be able to fulfil those desires.

***tasmAt*** = therefore

***bhootikAmah*** = one desirous of getting wealth

***archayet hi*** = should propiate

***Atmajnam*** = that person who has the knowledge of

Brahman.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the explanation of 10th Mantra.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-83***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue the posting with the explanation of 10th Mantra.

In this mantra, the greatness of the brahmajnAni is being narrated. It is being mentioned that this brahmajnAni is respected by everyone. This brahmajnAni is having greatness and is powerful. He is capable of going to any world he wishes to go. He can get any of his desire fulfilled without any obstruction. Any person other than the brahmajnAni, desirous of getting any of the benefit in either world i.e., either in this world or in the higher worlds called oordhvalokas can get his desire fulfilled by propitiating this BrahmajnAni. The BrahmajnAni is endowed with the power and jnAnam, which facilitates the fulfilment of the desire of the person, propitiating the BrahmajnAni. These worlds are called iha lokam and para lokam. Hence the benefits in these worlds are called aihika prayojanam or Amushmika prayojanam. This section or the 5th Khanda of this Upanishad is completed.

Next we shall take up the 6th and last khanDa of this Upanishad. There are 11 mantras in this section.

***1st Mantra***.

***sa vedaitat paramam Brahma dhAma***

***yatra vis’vam nihitam bhAti s’ubhram |***

***upAsate purusham ye hyakAmAh***

***te s’ukrameta dativartanti dheerAh ||***

***Word meanings***

***sah veda*** = that knower of the Brahman – the brahmajnAni who

has the knowledge of the nature and qualities of

ParamAthman as well as the other two Tattvams i.e.

sentient and insentient entities, has learnt about

***paramam Brahma*** = the paramAthman.

***etat dhAma*** = this place, to be attained by the mukta purusha

***yatra***  = in which that para Brahman,

***(yat) s’ubhram bhAti*** = who is effulgent on his own. (he does not require

to be shown by any external source.) and

***vis’vam nihitam*** = by whom the entire universe is sustained.

***te Dheeraah ye*** = Those, having the firm belief in the Vedas,

***akAmAh*** = and have no other expectation other than the servitude

to the ParamAthman.

***upAsate*** = propitiate

***(tam) purusham*** = that brahmajnAni, with devotion,

***ati vartanti*** = keep away

***etat s’ukram***  = the connection with retas which is the cause for the

birth.

Synopsis of the Mantra.

The upAsaka, detailed in the previous mantra, had now known all about the ParamAthman, the sustainer of this entire universe, is self effulgent, and is the desirable place for all the Jivas. Those, who have no other desires other than attaining Him, in paramapadam, and are totally devoted to the ParamAthman only, will keep away the cause of the birth away from them by worshipping the BrahmajnAni, mentioned earlier.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the explanation of the Mantra.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-84***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of 1st Mantra.

In the last mantra of the previous section the 5th khanDa, it was said that the Brahmavetta – the knower of Brahman is venerable by everybody by the statement “bhootikAmah Atmajnam archayet”. Again in this section, the same Brahmavetta is being introduced. It will be shown that by worshipping him, one can get relieved from the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths. It is quite obvious that on taking refuge of a venerable AchArya – sadAchArya lifts up the Jiva. But in the previous mantra, a person, desirous of obtaining the benefits in the both the worlds viz., the aihika wealth and Amushmika wealth, will get them on taking refuge of a sadAchArya. . In this mantra, the one who is desirous of getting Moksha – the release from the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths or the bondage of the PrakRiti by denouncing the external desires, also can obtain Moksha, by taking refuge of the sadAchArya. Such entities are called “akAmAh” – those who have denounced all desires to enjoy the aihika wealth or Amushmika wealth. “s’ukram ativartanti” – the word ‘s’ukram’ means the semen – the sperm from which the body is being created... In the 5th mantra of the 3rd section, the subject of reproduction has been mentioned that it is explained in “panchAgnividya. That may be recalled here. By taking refuge of the sadAchArya, one gets relieved of such a lowly connection with the reproduction, and a series of miseries – a result of such connection with a new body.

***Mantra 2***

***kAmAn yah kAmayate manyamAnah***

***sa kAmabhirjAyate tatra tatra |***

***paryApta kAmasya kRitAtmanastu***

***ihaiva sarve pravileeyanti kAmAh ||***

***कामान् यः कामयते मन्यमानः***

***स कामभिर्जायते तत्र तत्र ।***

***पर्याप्त कामस्य कृतात्मनस्तु***

***इहैव सर्वे प्रविलीयन्ति कामाः ।।***

***Word Meanings.***

***yah***  = who is

***kAmayate*** = desires

***kAmAn*** = those enjoyments

***manyamAnah*** = considering that they are for his enjoyment,

***sah***  = that person

***jAyate***  = takes birth

***kAmabhih*** = along with those desires.

***paryApta kAmasya*** = he, who desires only the total Brahman, and

***kRitAtmanah*** = having acquired the full knowledge about the Atma

***sarve kAmAh*** = all the other desires

***ihaiva*** = here, in this life only,

***pravileeyanti*** = get removed.

***Synopsis***

One who desires to enjoy the various desires keeping in mind that these are for his enjoyment only will take rebirth along with those desires in such worlds which are suitable for enjoying his desires. He, having acquired the full knowledge of the Atma, and desires to join the Brahman in totality, will get his other desires removed from him in this life itself.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the explanation of the Mantra.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-85***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of 2nd Mantra.

Explanation of the Mantra

A Jiva, who is part of this world, is called a SamsAri as long as he is bound by the PrakRiti. He will be making efforts to increase the desires to enjoy the worldly enjoyments and to experience them. His efforts will result some times in this life itself. If the efforts have not culminated in this life itself, the deeds which were done by him in that process, will become the reason for another life, and he takes birth in another life and he will experience those enjoyments. This cycle continues with him performing pious deeds and heinous deeds to fulfil his desire to experience these external enjoyments and taking another birth to experience the fruits of his deeds. These are the reasons for him to be born again and again for experiencing these fruits, and performing the various deeds as explained above. If one desires to avoid the miseries of living in the mother’s womb, experiencing the miseries of diseases, old age, death etc. which are the resultants of his participating in the cycle of births and deaths, he must abstain from desires to experience the worldly enjoyments. He must develop the desire to experience his Lord BhagavAn. He should learn about the nature of both Him and his own self. He should meditate and suitably propitiate the BhagavAn. Thus from the propitiation of BhagavAn, and abstinence from the desires to enjoy the worldly enjoyments, he will be relieved from the bondage of the worldly affairs and attain the moksha the ultimate release from the cycle of births and deaths and will attain the moksha in the form of being in the presence of ParamAthman in the SriVaikunTham. It is natural that he will be devoid of desires for enjoying the small and short periods of worldly enjoyments once he comes to know the nature and characteristics of BhagavAn, the reason for experiencing unending bliss in the presence of Him. The fourth line of the Mantra which runs - “ihaiva sarve pravileeyanti kAmAh” proves this point only.

With this the 2nd Mantra is concluded.

3rd Mantra

***nAyamAtmA pravachanena labhyah***

***na medhayA na bahunA s’rutena |***

***yamevaisha vRiNute tena labhyah***

***tasyaisha AtmA vivRiNute tanoom svAm ||***

***नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः***

***न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।***

***यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः***

***तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूम् स्वाम् ।।***

***Word meanings***

***ayam AtmA*** = this paramAthman

***na labhyah*** = is not obtained (attained)

***pravachanena*** = by repeated uttering

***medhayaa na***  = nor by meditation and propitiation He

***(labhyah)*** is attainable (obtained)

***bahunA s’rutena***  = nor by listening the Vedas and Vedantas and their

***na labhyah*** subsidiaries like grammar etc.

***eshah*** = This paramAthman

***tena labhyah*** = will be attainable only by such a Jiva

***yameva vRiNute*** = whichever Jiva, he chooses to bring in His audience.

***esha AtmA*** = This ParamAthman

***vivRiNute*** = will exhibit

***svAm tanoom*** = His effulgent form

***tasya*** = only to that Jiva, whom he likes and had chosen.

.

***To continue.***

In the next posting we shall continue with the explanation of this 3rd Mantra.

***dAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-86***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of 3rd Mantra.

**Synopsis**

This paramAthman is neither attained by mere repetitive recitations of His glory and actions, nor by worship by meditation etc. He cannot be attained by listening to the Veda and VedAngas recitations. He can be attained only by that Bhakta whom He intends to bring him to Him and likes his devotion. He reveals Himself to such a person only.

***Explanation***

An essential part of worshipping Him is being indicated and explained in this Mantra. Without that feature, the worshipping by listening to the various pravachanams, recitations , repeated recitations of what was heard in the pravachanams etc., prescribed in the mantra viz., “AtmA vA are … s’rotavyo, mantavyo, nididhyAsitavyah” do not get one success in worshipping Him and visualising Him in Person. In the process of worship prescribed by the above mantra, the last stage is called nididhyAsana, is indeed the worshipping only. However, it needs to be qualified by the devotion and love towards Him. This devotion is called Bhakti. The Bhakti is defined RAmAnuja as “preetipoorvakam anudhyAnam bhakti rityabhidheeyate प्रीतिपूर्वकं अनुध्यानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते- continuous thinking about Him with friendly disposition”. In short, the first half of the mantra means that a meditation, listening, reciting, etc., without that friendly disposition is not the means to attain Him. That does not mean that meditation, reciting etc are not the means to attain Him, but it is being emphasised that such meditation etc should be carried out with a passion towards Him. Otherwise, the S’ruti vAkya mentioned above become infructuous.

In the first half of the present mantra the listening of the discourse or recitations have been indicated by the word “s’rutena” and with the word “medhayA” the worshipping by meditation have been mentioned. The word AtmA reminds one of the s’ruti vAkya “AtmA vA are drashTavyah s’rotavyah….” Thus it is being made clear in the latter half of the mantra, that the listening to the discourses and recitations, reciting repeatedly with recalling the meaning of the recitations and nididhyAsana – the profound repeated meditative worship, are not the independent means to attain Him. They should be qualified with bhakti – a friendly disposition towards Him. This has been made clear by the phrase “yam evaisha vRiNute tena labhyah”. It means in other words – whomever He desires to bring near Him, such a loving and dedicated devotee only gets to know Him and attain Him. Thus it is amply being made clear that a devotee with an intense yearning to be with Him and serve Him with an immeasurable affection and devotion towards Him only is liked by Him and that entity only attains Him.

Thus it is once more being emphasised that an Atma with immense and immeasurable devotion and friendly disposition towards Him is the main means of attaining Him, and the listening the discourses, repeated recitations etc. associated with the devotion and affection and love towards Him only are the means to attain Him. It may be recalled that this point was told earlier in the 10th Mantra of the 5th Khanda.

***To continue***

Next we shall proceed to study the 4th Mantra.

***DAsoham***

***ADiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-87***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall continue with the explanation of 4th Mantra.

***Mantra 4***

***nAyamAtmA balaheenena labhyah***

***na cha pramAdAt tapaso vApyalingAt |***

***etai rupAyairyatate yastu vidvAn***

***tasaisha AtmA vis’ate brahmadhAma ||***

*नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः*

*न च प्रमादात् तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।*

*एतै रुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वान्*

*तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ।।*

***Word meanings***

***ayam AtmA***  = this ParamAtma

na labhyah = is not attained.

balaheenena = by that man who is week in his mind.

na cha pramAdAt = not attained also by being inattentive.

tapaso vApi = Even by following the sanyAsAsramam

na labhyah = (He is) not attained.

alingAt = without the characteristic insignia like the staff and

saffron colour etc...

However,

yah tu vidvAn = which ever knower of the Brahman

yatate = makes efforts (to attain Him by UpAsana, the prayers)

etaih upAyAih = with the strong mind, full concentration on Him in the

Mind, and renunciation of everything and everyone.

eshah AtmA = that knower of the Brahman

vis’ate = attains

tasya brahmadhAma = the presence of the ParamAthman who is dwelling in his heart. the final place destined for the Atma

Synopsis

A Jiva – the upAsaka, with a weak mind, cannot attain the ParamAtma. When he is inattentive also he will not attain Him. Even when the Jiva- the upAsaka follows the sanyAsAsramam, without the essential insignia of SanyAsAsramam – viz., the staff and the saffron robes, cannot attain Him. However, whichever knower of the Brahman makes efforts to attain Him by upAsana – the devoted prayers, with a determined mind and full concentration of the mind only on Him, by renunciating everything else, attains Him, who has made the Jiva’s heart as his dwelling place. This is the final destination- that is the presence of ParamAthman.

Explanation

Here the words balaheenena in the phrase “nAyamAtma balaheenena labhyah” indicates the weak minded upAsaka. It is well known from the statement “mana eva manushyANAm kAraNam bandha mokshayoh” which means that the mind is the sole cause for a man’s release or bondage from the cycle of births and deaths. If the mind is strong and does not get weaned away from Him and His prayers, the Jiva becomes bonded with the cycle of births and deaths. Instead if he has a determined and strong mind and is steadfast in the meditating prayers to Him, without losing heart because of the existence of the bondage with the PrakRiti, he will attain Him – the release from the bondage. Even when he is inattentive as an upAsaka, then also he will not reach his goal. This inattentiveness is number one enemy for his goal of attaining Him by release from the cycle of births and death. The word tapas here means the fourth Ashramam viz., sanyAsAsramam. For them there are many conditions are prescribed in the scriptures. For them having the sacred thread and the tuft of hair on the head , wearing the ochre dress, carrying a staff etc are essential external symbols. Similarly there are a number of restrictions in the movements, food to be taken etc. Unless they practice all of them typical of the fourth As'rama, attaining the release from the cycle of births and death and attaining the presence of Him is not possible. The word “tapas\* used here is indicative of the other As'ramas viz., brahmacharya, gArhsthya and vAnaprastha . The eligibility for one to get release from the cycle of births and deaths and joining the ParamAthman is not restricted to only the fourth As’rama viz., sanyAsAsramam. Moreover, a number of instances show that the persons from the other As’ramas like Janaka from the gRihastha As’rama etc. also have attained the release from the cycle of births and deaths. So the phrase “tapaso nApyalingAt” indicates that any person from any of the As’ramas, is unable to attain moksha – the release from the cycle of the births and deaths without following these conditions and restrictions meant earlier.

Hence, from the second half of the mantra – viz., “etaih upAyaih….. vis’ate brahmadhAma”, it is made clear that an UpAsaka – the meditator, who follows all the conditions laid down in the scriptures applicable to the four As’ramas and having the mental steadfastness, single minded concentration, observing all the conditions and restrictions which have been prescribed for his As’rama, his Atma only can attain the presence of the Brahman by attaining the moksha.

Here, though there is no difference between the UpAsaka and his Atma, when it is said that the Atma attains the Brahman, it is to be taken in spirit only not literally. RAhu the astronomical figure is known only to have a head and the body only is of Ketu, another astronomical figure. However, we find that in usage, we find the phrase Raho s’sirah – the head of RAhu. Similar usage is the phrase “tasya eshah AtmA” – the Atma of this upAsaka is only a figurative usage. This is the interpretation of RangaRAmAnuja muni, the commentator of the Upanishads. In a different way. It can mean as follows – “eshah AtmA” means the paramAthman only as used in previous mantra. Brahma dhAma stands to indicate the space in the heart of the upAsaka, which is called “DaharAkAsam” whichever upAsaka attempts to visualise the BhagavAn with the various means like strong mind etc, this ParamAtma – “esha AtmA” enters – “vis’ate” that “Brahma dhAma” – that space in the heart of that AtmA. It means that ParamAtma appears to give his view to the upAsaka. In this explanation it is not figurative but literal.

With this we come to end of the explanation of the 4th mantra.

***To continue***

Next we shall proceed to study the 5th Mantra.

***DAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-88***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 5th Mantra.

***Mantra 5***

***samprApyaina mRishayo jnAnatRiptAh***

***kRitAtmAno veetarAgAh pras’AntAh ||***

***te sarvagam sarvatah prApya dheerAh***

***yuktAtmAnah sarvamevAnis’anti ||***

***संप्राप्यैनम् ऋषयो ज्ञानतृप्ताः***

***कृतात्मानोवीतरागाः प्रशान्तः ।***

***ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्यधीराः***

***युक्तात्मानः सर्वमेवानिशन्ति ।।***

***Word to word meanings***

***(ye)Rishayah*** = the ascetics (munis) who have the knowledge of

the realities

***enam samprApya*** = having visualised this paramAthman in their hearts

***jnAna tRiptAh*** = satisfied with that visual knowledge

***kRitAtmanah*** = being happy that they had succeeded

***veetarAgAh*** = without any desire of the worldly matters

***pras’AntAh (santi)*** = are having control on their sensory organs

***te dheerAh*** = such knowers of the realities

***sarvatah*** = everywhere both in and out

***sarvagam*** = Brahman who permeated

***prApya*** = having reached Him (at the end of the life)

***yuktAtmAnah*** = the eight auspicious attributes had resurfaced and

thus made the mind clean of the dirt of heinous

and pious deeds

***Avis’anti*** = are able to fulfil or realise successfully

***sarvameva*** = every desire intended by them.

***Synopsis***

The upAsakAs having the true knowledge of the realities do not have any desires of enjoying the worldly pleasures. They are in full control of their sensory organs including the mind. . They have fulfilled their wish to have visual presentation of Him in their hearts and thus are fully satisfied. They can fulfil all their desires by attaining the presence of ParamAthman in His abode SriVaikunTham. This paramAthman is omnipresent – permeating every matter. They attained the SriVaikunTham to be with Him after they have discarded the earthly body and hence their natural eight qualities mentioned in the PrajApati vAkya “apahata pApma….” Have resurfaced in them. With all such faculties they can achieve the fruition of every desire they intend to enjoy.

Explanation:-

In this mantra attaining Brahman has been mentioned twice – once by the phrase “enam samprApya” in the beginning and again in the third quadrant by the phrase “sarvagam prApya”. To ensure these two phrases do not have the same meaning and hence to avoid repeating the same phrase twice, which is considered to be a fault, it meanings for both of these words “samprApti” is explained as the virtual visualisation of Him in the mind during the final stages of the upAsana – the meditative prayer. (attaining the state of “Dars’ana samAnAkAra). The second word “prApti” is said to have the meaning of being freed of every result of virtuous and heinous deeds – the puNya and pApa deeds, at the terminal stage by discarding the earthly body, and reaches the place of Him – the SriVaikunTham. Keeping these interpretations, the synopsis as given above is obtained mentioning that the UpAsaka attains the fruition of all desires by the resurfacing of the auspicious eight qualities of a Jiva.

An objection is raised at this juncture. The objection is as follows –

One need not go to another world to be in the presence of Brahman, since He is said to be - omnipresent and Omni permeating – “sarvatah sarvagam” Further, the other world – SriVaikunTham has not been mentioned here at all! So giving such a meaning for the word prApti, appearing for second time does not seem to be appropriate.

The objection has been answered as follows –

Giving a meaning of attaining the SriVaikunTham for the word “prApti” when it appears the second time, is fully justified. This aspect is being made clear by the mantra itself. Note the phrase – “te brahmaloke tu parAntakAle – parAmRitAh parimuchyanti sarve” in the mantra. It means – after relinquishing the earthly body, the Jiva enjoys the bliss in the world of Brahman. In this Upanishad also there are many instances where it has been made clear that the divine auspicious body of the Brahman is available in the Sri VaikunTha. Further it has been amply made clear that the various Jeevas after being relieved of the earthly body do reach the SriVaikunTham, - the other divine world through the corona of the Sun. The following are the quotes from this Upanishad – “hiraNmaye pare kos’e – virajam brahma nishkalam”, “divye brahmapure hyesha – vyomanyAtmA pratishThitah” and “yatra devAnAm patirekodhivAsah”. The same has been mentioned in kathopanishath by the phrase “sodhvanah pAramApnoti tadvishNoh paramam padam.” In pras’nopanishat, this is mentioned by “yah punaretam trimAtreNaiva OmityetenaivAkshareNa param purushamabhi dhyAyeeta – sa tejasi soorye sampannah… pApmanA vinirmuktah… sa sAmabhirunneeyate brahmalokam … parAtparam puris’ayam purusham eekshate” very elaborately. Hence interpreting the word “prApya” as on reaching this special world – the SriVaikunTham, is fully justified. The saying “anuktam anyato grAhyam” is an established rule. Isn’t it so? Whichever is not covered in this mantra is covered in the previous Mantra and in the next mantra. Both of them are recommended to be the recited here. Now coming to the word “sarvagam” – it shows the all pervading and permeating characteristic of the Parabrahman. The S’ruthi itself says that His extra-ordinary divine body of Him is available in the SriVaikunTham. As such there is no contradiction. All the S’ruti vAkyas which have mentioned his power to permeate and pervade every matter, everybody, and his being present in the extra-ordinarily divine world – SriVaikunTham, are established as authentic – the pramANas only. If we attempt to deny their authenticity, it results in meaninglessness only. This is the synopsis of the brahma sutra – “s’rutestu s’abdamoolatvAt” (br.Su.2-1-27) also.

Thus we come to concluding the explanation of the mantra 5.

***To continue***

Next we shall proceed to study the 6th Mantra.

***DAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***

***Mundakopanishad-89***

Dear RAmAnuja DAsas and Asthikas,

In this posting we shall take up the 6th Mantra.

Mantra

***vedAnta viJn~Ana sunis’chitArthAh***

***sannyAsa yogAt yatayah s’uddhasattvAh |***

***te brahmaloke tu parAntakAle***

***parAmRitatvAt parimuchyanti sarve ||***

***वेदान्त विज्ञान सुनिश्चितार्थाः***

***सन्न्यासयोगात् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।***

***ते ब्रह्मलोके तु परान्तकाले***

***परामृतात् परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ।।***

***Word to word meanings.***

***yatayah ye*** = those with the control on the sensory organs

***sannyAsa yogAt*** = by relinquishing the rituals to get desires fulfilled

***s’uddha sattvah*** = having clean mind,

***vedAnta viJn~Ana*** | = having acquired the capability to differentiate and

***sunis’chitArthAh*** | identify the para tattvam by listening the VedAnta

pravachanams, recitations etc.

***te sarve*** = all such sentient beings

***brahmaloke*** = in the Brahman, the ultimate refuge for everyone

***parAntakAle*** = at the time of leaving the mortal body

***parAmRitaAt*** = because of the Brahman,

***parimuchyanti*** = are relinquishing the bondage of the primordial

matter and are becoming the mukta Jivas.

Synopsis

All those, having the control on the various sensory organs, and relinquishing all the rites for fulfilling the desires, made their minds clean. By doing so, they had acquired capabilities to differentiate and identify the Para tattva, after hearing the various pravachanams, recitations etc of Vedantas. All such mumukshu Jivas, are having the firm practice of the anushThAnam desirous of attaining the Brahman will be relinquishing the primordial body by the grace of Brahman and get released from the bondage of the PrakRiti and become mukta purushas.

The meaning of the second half of this mantra was explained by S’ruthaprakAs’kAchArya at the end of KaryAdhikaraNa of SribhAshyam. In a number of Upanishads, after detailing the particular Brahmavidyas, specifying the fruit of the worship(upAsana), it has been stated that the mukta purusha – the relieved Atma reaches the Paramapadam by travelling on the Road of ArchirAdi, the abode of the Sri Vishnu. This Road of ArchirAdi had been described in many Upanishads like ChAndOgya, Kausheethaki, and bRihadAraNyaka with some minor differences. Sage BAdarAyaNa, the author of Vedanta sutras, has sorted out the differences and gave a final version. In Bhagavad-Gita also, this has been established by the s’loka “agnirjyoti rahas’s’uklah….”. Apart from this there is another way or road, the Atma takes after it leaves the physical body. That is called as “dhoomAdi mArga – Road of smoke etc.. That road for those Atmans other than the MuktAtmas or relieved Atmans. Those who travel on the archirAdi do not come back to the nether worlds for continuing to experience the fruits of deeds. They reach Paramapadam only. Those who move on the road of smoke etc. – the dhoomAdi mArga, return back to the nether worlds. The non-return to the nether worlds has been told for those who travel on archirAdi mArga in many SmRithis and S’ruthis by the sentences like “esha deva patho Brahma pathah etena pratipadyamAnA imam mAnavam Avartam nAvartante”, “ekayA yAtyanAvrittim”. Similarly, the return to the nether worlds for those who travel on the dhoomAdi mArga – the road of smoke etc. by the sentences like “athaitamevAdhvAnam punarnivartante”, “anyayaa vartate punah” etc. Discussion on the Road of smoke etc. is out of the context and irrelevant here. The discussion of the archirAdi and the nature of Mukti – the release from the cycle of births and deaths was done to some extent earlier also.

We shall proceed to examine the nature of Mukti and its interpretations by various philosophical systems.

***To continue*** with the examination as mentioned above***.***

***DAsoham***

***aDiyen***

***Srinivasa RAmAnuja DAsan.***