



THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

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HEAT

Subtler principles are always superior to the grosser ones, because they are more pervasive in character. Hence, if water is superior to the earth principle, fire is superior to the water principle.

Tejo vava adbhya bhuyah, tasmad-va etad-vayum agra-hyakasam abhitapati, tad-ahuh, nisocati, nitapati, varsisyati va iti, taja eva tat purvam darsayitva'tha'pah srjate. tat-etad urdhvabhis-ca tirascibhis-ca vidyudhih ahradas-caranti; tasmadahuh vidyotate, stanayati, varsisyati va iti, teja eva tat purvam darsayitvatha'pah srjate, teja upassveti.

Sa yastejo brahmmetyupaste tajasvi vai sa tajasvato lokanbhasvato'pahata tamaskan abhisidhyati yavat tejaso gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati yastejo brahmmetyupaste'sti bhagavah tejaso bhuya iti, tajaso vava bhuyo'iti tanme bhagavan bravitviti.

“O Narada,” says the great master Sanatkumara, “the fire element is superior to the water element which again is superior to all that has been said before, viz., name, speech, mind, will, memory, contemplation, understanding, strength and food.” Therefore it is that heat, which is the function of fire, can dry up air and create such an atmosphere of warmth in the whole space or sky that you will feel that air itself is not present. In the atmosphere fire can intensify its function, so much so that the working of air can appear to cease altogether. Then people say, “Oh, it is very hot, extremely hot, intolerably hot.” They say, “It is going to rain.” When it becomes very hot, we infer that perhaps it is going to rain. So, water comes after heat. First there is an intense burning in the air, and then water comes. So is the case with every other circumstance of intense heat. Whether it is outward or inward, there is the production of the water principle on account of the intensity of the heat principle. Then we will have, in the atmosphere, as a result of this heating up of the space and the air, lightning and thunderbolts from

every direction. We begin to hear rumbling sounds from various quarters of the heavens, indicating that it is about to rain, all of which is the work of the heating function of fire. Then it falls in the form of rain. So prior to the principle of water in all its functions, is fire. In other words, fire, having manifested itself first, it expresses itself as water thereafter. Having recognised the superiority of fire as the cause of water and therefore subtler than water, one must regard the fire principle as the Absolute, for the purpose of meditation.

“So is the case with air and space. Superior to the fire principle is the air principle and higher than that also is space which contains everything within itself. All the elements can finally be reduced to space. During the *pralaya*, the dissolution of the universe at the end, the whole world is supposed to get absorbed into space. Only *akasa* exists. Earth gets dissolved in water, water gets dried up by fire, fire gets extinguished by air, and air is absorbed into space. So, finally, space is the ultimate visible reality, most comprehensive, very expansive, inclusive of everything, almost resembling omnipresence, which one should now take as the object of one’s meditation.”

ETHER

*Akaso vava tejaso bhuyan akase vai surya-candrama-sav-ubhau
vidyun-naksatrany-agnih, akasenahvayati, akasena srnoti,
akasena pratisrnoti, akase ramate, akase na ramate, akase jayate,
akasam abhijayate, akasam upassveti.*

The importance of space cannot be appreciated unless space exists. It is the primary element that is necessary for the existence of anyone. Everything comes from space as an effect. Sun and moon, stars and lightning and whatnot, everything is in the atmosphere on account of the presence of space. We hear things on account of space. Echoes are produced on account of space. Our pleasures and pains also are due to the presence of space. There would be no objects at all, if there were no space. And if there are no objects, there would be no reaction from our side in respect of the objects. Then, there would be no experience at all, either of pleasure or of pain. So, enjoyment of every kind, and pleasure and satisfaction of every kind, are due to the spatial distinction among things. When there is sorrow, or even if there is absence of pleasure, it is due to the presence of space only. The peculiar location of the objects of sense in respect of the experiencing subject is the cause of the pleasure or the pain of the subject which is due to the intervening element, namely space. From space it is that everything comes. Things are born on account of the existence of space. There would be no production of any kind without space being present. An effect cannot be produced from a cause unless there is spatial distinction between the two. Even the trees and plants rise up from the earth and grow on account of the presence of space—*akase jayate, akasam abhijayate*. So we know what *akasa* or space is. The more we speak about it, the less should it be a type of definition of it. It is so important. It is perhaps the last conceivable object available to us in this world. Beyond that nothing is possible for the mind to think. That is the highest physical object available.

“So, O Narada, now you take this *akasa* as the object of meditation, which is to be meditated upon as the Absolute, beyond which nothing is. The unbounded space, the unlimited expanse of sky, the *akasa* is now the object of your meditation,” says Sanatkumara.

*Sa ya akasam brahmety-upaste, akasavato vai sa lokan
prakasavato'sambadhan urugayavato'bhisidhyati, yavad
akasasya gatam tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, ya akasam
brahmety-upaste, asti, bhagavah, akasad-bhuya iti, akasad-vava
bhuyo'stiti, tanme, bhagavan bravitv-iti.*

If we can expand our mind to the extent of space in meditation, to that extent will be our freedom, success and power in this world. Glorious would be the capacity of that person who can meditate in this manner. Luminosity would be the object of his meditation, as space is luminous due to the presence of the sun. This person who meditates on space will be illumined by the consciousness present therein. Unlimited would be the possession of this person, as space itself is unlimited, which is the object of his meditation. And unlimited would be his achievement who so meditates. As long as there is space, so long is his success. To the extent of the presence of space, to that extent is his freedom. As far is space, so far is his freedom also. So, he will have unlimited freedom on account of this meditation on the unlimited space.

Narada says: “Well, this is a grand thing, of course. I cannot think anything more than space. I wish to know whether space is the ultimate reality. Or, is there anything beyond space and greater than space?” “There is something beyond space. There is something without which even space cannot be conceived. Why, for that matter, it cannot even exist without that. Space would be meaningless if that something which is superior to it does not exist,” replies Sanatkumara. “So there is something higher than space! What is that? Please instruct me, O great master,” says Narada.

MEMORY

*Smaro vava akasad-bhuyah, tasmad-yady-api bahava asiran-
nasmarantah, naiva te kamcana srnuyuh, na manviran, na
vijaniran, yada vava te smareyuh atha srnuyuh atha manviran,
atha vijaniran, smarena vai putran vijanati, smarena pasun,
smaram upasisveti.*

Here, *smara* is a peculiar term which has been interpreted as the power of consciousness which is recognised as self-existence. Our consciousness of our own existence is prior to the operation of our consciousness of the recognition of space outside us. We must exist first, if space is to be there. So our consciousness of self-existence is prior to the determining factor of the consciousness of this vast expanse that we call space. So, *smara* does not merely mean a kind of memory which is the common meaning of the term. It is something superior to it. This self-existence which we feel as identical with our own consciousness, which is what is meant by the word *smara*, is no doubt superior to space. If we ourselves are not there, there is no question of space being there. *Smara* is

therefore surely greater than *akasa—smaro vava akasad-bhuyah*. If any person is there who has lost consciousness of his or her own existence, there is no question of space, no question of hearing or thinking, and no question of understanding. No function of any kind worthwhile will be possible, if there is no self-consciousness. If we are not aware of our own existence, what is the good of thinking about space or fire or anything? So, our self-consciousness, the self-consciousness of everyone, is superior to space, and it is that which determines the character of space. Wherever there is the manifestation of this self-consciousness, the presence of I-hood, there arises every kind of knowledge. There is thinking, there is understanding, there is hearing, and there desire operates in ever so many ways. All our activity in life, whatever be the nature of that activity, is an offshoot of consciousness of our own existence. Minus that, the whole world is naught.

*Sa yah smaram brahmety-upaste, yavat smarasya gatam,
tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati, yah smaram brahmety-upaste,
asti, bhagavah, smarad-bhuya iti, smarad vava bhuyo'stiti; tan-
me, bhagavan, bravitv-iti.*

This itself is a very superior type of meditation where you regard self-consciousness as the object of meditation. Now, we are slowly turning from the objective to the subjective side. We have to rise further up yet, to still higher levels which are dealt with in the sections that follow in this chapter. A person who meditates in this manner on the supreme self-consciousness prior to the perception of every kind of object, of even space itself, such a person is superior to that extent, and he has freedom to the extent of the realm of self-consciousness.

This is a startling turning point in the process of meditation. Generally, we take all objects of meditation as being outside us and located in space. We never for a moment imagine that objects have something to do with our own self-existence. The relationship between the consciousness of objects and the objects of consciousness escapes the notice of consciousness, so that we always take it for granted that objects are independent, existing outside, as though hanging in space, unconnected with other things, including one's own self. This is not true. That objects are suspended in space independently, independent of even the consciousness of their existence, is not true. They have some connection. A correlativity of being is manifested by all objects, and their nature, their character, their reaction is entirely in relation to the nature, the location and the character of the subject perceiving or experiencing them.

This is a higher knowledge which is not available to the ordinary layman who always mistakes the objects for independent things outside, and depends on them, hangs on them, as if they are his support entirely, not knowing that he himself is the contributory factor to their very existence and operation. So, to come to the inside from the outside, to the subjective from the objective, is a great achievement indeed, which is not easily possible for ordinary people.

Now at this stage, there is sudden shift of emphasis from the external to the internal when Sanatkumara says that self-consciousness is superior to everything

that he has told Narada up to this time, including space itself, which means to say the whole world of externality.

“But is there something superior to this *smara*, self-existence, and if so, may I know about it?” asks Narada. “Yes, there is something more than this also. This self-existence of yours of which you are conscious is not the ultimate reality. It is also an effect of something superior to it,” is the reply of the great master Sanatkumara. “What is that? Kindly condescend to instruct me about it,” prays Narada.

HOPE

*Asa vava smarad-bhuyasi, aseddho vai smaro mantran adhite
karmani kurute, putrams-ca pasums-cecchate, imam ca lokam
amum cecchate, asam upassveti.*

That peculiar thing called *smara*, the self-awareness or self-existence mentioned in the preceding section, is not complete in itself. Its very existence is dependent upon an urge that is present prior to it. We live on account of a kind of hope in our life. We do not live on account of our present experiences, merely. There is something within us which keeps us tied to this self-consciousness. And that is the desire for betterment of our life in the future, here mentioned in this section of the Upanishad as *asa*, hope or aspiration. It is aspiration for self-transcendence.

Our very existence is valuable only on account of the tendency present in self-consciousness to transcend itself into higher modes of being. We are happy in this world merely because of the hope that we will be happy tomorrow, not because we are happy today. This desire is not visible outside. It is not a direct experience, but it is invisibly working within us. Our desire to exist is a peculiar character in us. We cannot logically argue out the reason behind our desire to exist. It is a supra-logical mystery.

The desire or hope to exist, which is actually what Sanatkumara meant by saying *asa*, is not a mere desire to exist as a body. People do not want to die. They want to continue their existence as long as possible. They pray for long life, but they do not understand what is actually meant by long life. It is not a desire to persist in this physical body. We are unconsciously asking for something whose nature is not clear to our own minds. We are asking for a self-transcendent existence. It is not an existence in this limited personality of ours. Who would like to be in this particular body only for a long time? Which part of our life would we like to perpetuate? Is it old age, young age, or childhood? We cannot say that any particular part of our life is to be perpetuated. There is a confusion in the mind when we ask for long life. But, the hidden intention in our mind behind this asking or desiring for long life is that we want to perpetuate the essentiality of our existence. Now this existence is not what we call bodily existence. Though we mistakenly identify our existence with the body, there is a subtle urge within us to exceed or go beyond the limitations of our bodily existence, which is the reason why we ask for more and more things, accumulate more and more objects, and externally expand the magnitude of our being. And that is also why we ask for

longevity. We want to be perpetuated in time and expanded in space. This is our desire. We have only two desires,—to expand ourselves in space, and to perpetuate ourselves in time. So this is what we are asking for in all our activities. We want to possess more and more things, as much as possible—nay the entire space! We want to expand our personality into spatial domination, and also for as long a time as possible—not tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, but endlessly. So, there is a desire for infinity and eternity that is present in us, of which we are not conscious. We foolishly interpret it as desire to exist in this body. This aspiration is *asa*. Thus, for a betterment in our life, aspiration towards self-transcendence comes even prior to self-existence.

Therefore, Sanatkumara here says to Narada: “*Asa* must be your object of meditation, not merely your limited self-existence. There is something which is implied in your consciousness of self-existence. That implication should become the content of your consciousness, and therefore, the object of your meditation.”

*Sa ya brahmetryupaste asayasya sarve kamah
samrdhyantyamogha hasyasiso bhavanti yavad-asaya gatam
tatrasya yatha kamacaro bhavati ya asam brahmetryupaste'sti
bhagavah asaya bhuya iti asaya vava bhuyo'sti iti tanme
bhagavan bravitviti.*

Our aspirations shall be fulfilled. No desire can go unfulfilled. If our aspiration is for a high thing, that also shall come. So we should leave off our lower aspirations and rise beyond the limits of bodily existence, and reach up to the higher implications of this self-existence which we are. To that extent will be our success and our freedom.

“This is very great and grand. Is there something more than this?” asks Narada. Endlessly Narada goes on asking questions, and limitlessly answers are being given. “There is something greater than this aspiration for self-transcendence, and that is the principle of life,” replies Sanatkumara. “Then kindly instruct me on that principle of life,” says Narada.

LIFE

*Prano vava asaya bhuyan, yatha va ara nabhau samarpitah,
evam asmin prane sarvam samarpitam, pranah pranena yati,
pranah pranam dadati, pranaya dadati, prano ha pita, prano
mata, prano bhrata, pranah svasa, prana acaryah, prano
brahmanah.*

Nobody can understand what life is. We utter the word ‘life’ many times, but we cannot explain what it means. It is not what we do daily that is called life. Though we generally identify life with our activity, it is a mistake that we commit. Life is something inscrutable. Life is really what we are. Here, it is called *prana*. It is not the breathing process, but the life principle itself, without which there would be neither aspiration, nor self-consciousness, nor anything for that matter. The entry of the universal into the particular is the juncture which is called life operating in our personality. It is the borderland of the infinite, where the

individual expands into the expanse of the infinite and the infinite contracts itself into the finite, as it were. This particular junction is what we call life. It has the characteristics of both. Therefore, it is inscrutable. It is neither individual nor universal. We do not know what it is. We are unable to define what life is. But whatever it be, this principle of life is superior to everything else. This is what we call the reality of life. It is not merely the activity of life, the function of life, social life, or personal life or any kind of manifestation of it, but life as such. This is superior to everything. The Upanishad now tells us how inscrutable it is.

“Beyond all things, superior to all that I have told you up to this time, is life,” says Sanatkumara. As spokes are fixed to the nave of a wheel, so is everything fixed to the principle of life. Whatever there is in this world, anything worthwhile, meaningful, that is nothing but *prana*, life. Minus life, everything is meaningless. What do we mean by saying “He is my father”, “She is my mother”, “She is my sister”, “He is my brother”? We do not know. We are not referring to the body as father, mother, sister and brother. There is something else in them and that is the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, and so on. We ourselves do not know what we are when we speak about ourselves. Our importance vanishes when the life principle is withdrawn. We are valuable only so long as we are living. If we have no life, what are we? We are nothing. What we regard ourselves in worldly parlance, viz., the body, is not our real personality.

*Sa yadi pitaram va mataram va bhrataram va svasaram va
acaryam va brahmanam va kimcid-bhrsam iva pratyaha, dhik
tvastvity-evainam ahuh, pitrha vai tvam asi, matraha vai tvam
asi, bhratrha vai tvam asi, svasrha vai tvam asi, acaryaha vai
tvam asi, brahmanaha vai tvam asiti.*

Why do we say that life is superior to everything, and minus life everything is valueless? The Upanishad says that if one speaks irreverently to one’s father, for instance, people would say, “How stupid this person is; he talks irreverently to his own father.” Similarly, if a person speaks something harsh to his mother, to his relatives, and to revered persons, good people censure him. We revere great people, we value humanity and we respect life in this world. This is something well-known to us. “Fie upon you,” say people when we talk irreverently to elderly ones or behave in a stupid manner which would not be becoming of one in a human society. And if we behave in such a way in respect of elders, they say that it is like slaying them, or injuring them. We say, “Do not hurt people.” What do we mean by this? Hurting whom? Hurting people. But what is ‘people’? Surely not the body. The Upanishad here implies that we are enjoined not to hurt the life in them. The life principle in a person is affected by our reaction to that person. The manifestation of life principle in the embodiment of a particular person is what is referred to as ‘a person’. A person is nothing but the life in that person, not the mere shape of that person in the form of a body. So, when we say that one has behaved in such and such a way with one’s father or mother, with one’s sister or brother, with this person or that person, we mean to say that one has behaved in that way with the life principle present in them, not merely with the body. But suppose the life principle has gone from the father, that revered one whom we have been worshipping. Then what happens? We simply set fire to that ‘father’,

we throw him, we prick him with pokes in the funeral pyre. Then people do not say, "Oh, this man is burning his father." Nobody says anything like that. What happens to that father, the very same father whom we revered just a few hours before, who is just before our eyes and whom we are now setting fire to in the funeral pyre? It may be our sister, it may be our Guru, it may be anybody, it makes no difference to us. It may be an emperor whom we have been respecting so much and regarding so much, and now we throw him into the pitch and bury him in the ground, or float him in the water, or set fire to him. And everybody then says, "Very nice", "Well done". You set fire to the emperor and then say, "It is very nice"! How is it possible? Yes, it is possible, because it is a great ritual that we are performing. But when he is alive, if we do that, it is murder. It is a heinous crime. So, what is our definition of mankind or humanity or any worthwhile thing in this world? Not the body certainly. If the body was our father, we would not set fire to him in the funeral pyre, and we would not prick him with pokes as if he means nothing. Even the dearest and the nearest ones are cast aside if the life principle withdraws itself from them. So, what we love as our relatives and our dear and near ones is the life, and not the body. But we never understand this point. We say, "Oh, my father is no more." Where has he gone? He is there in the way in which he was, but we mistook him for something else. It is the principle of life that is valuable in this world, and not anything that is manifest as name and form.

*Atha yady-apy-enan utkranta-pranan sulena samasam
vyatisandahet naivainam bruyuh pitrhasiti, na matrhasiti, na
bhratrhasiti, na svasrhasiti, na acaryahcasiti, na brahmanahasiti.*

The whole of life is nothing but this inscrutable thing which we call *prana*. This is the great reality manifesting itself in various names and forms. We mistake the names and forms for this supreme Being which is masquerading here as the objects of sense, as human beings and everything else that we see with our eyes. The supreme reality of every form of visible existence is life. It is manifested in some degree in plants, in greater degree in animals, and in still greater degree in human beings, and it has to manifest itself in still more greater degrees higher up. We have come to a point where it is very difficult to understand where exactly we are. We are in an inscrutable realm. We cannot understand still as to what we are speaking about. We think we have understood what life is, but we have not understood what it really is. It is a mystery that is operating in all names and forms. Whoever understands this mystery as the all-comprehensive Reality which is superior to all names and forms, which is infused into all names and forms, which is the Reality of even the so-called names and forms, including the name and form of our own self, is a master of Knowledge. He is called in this Upanishad as *ativadi*, a specific term here indicating one who possesses surpassing knowledge and whose utterances are surpassingly true.

*Prano hy-evaitani sarvani bhavati, sa va esa evam pasyan, evam
manvanah, evam vijanan atvadi bhavati, tam ced bruyuh
ativadyasiti, ativady-asmiti bruyat, napahnuvita.*

The greatest knowledge is the knowledge of life, not merely the knowledge of objects of sense. Whoever sees this Reality as it is in itself, whoever can think in this manner, whoever can understand in this way, transcends all, because here the knowledge has gone beyond all objects of sense. It has comprehended them in its own Being. And, therefore, it has become one with Truth. It is not merely a pursuit of truth that we are referring to here as knowledge, but Truth itself that has become one with knowledge. A person who has such a knowledge has really comprehended Truth, and what he speaks in such a stage of knowledge is called *ativada*. This term *ativada* means transcended speech, speech which is pregnant with truth, speech which is to materialise in life as truthfulness. Whatever a person with this knowledge speaks will get materialised in life, because the truth or the reality of all things is contained in the knowledge which this person has. Therefore, speech being an expression of one's thought and knowledge, whatever one utters becomes true in this stage of experience. And if people cannot understand him and they say to him, "You are speaking something which we cannot understand." Then he must say, "Yes, I speak something which you cannot understand, because this is a matter which is not supposed to be understood by your mind." Here, we are not in the realm of understanding of objects of sense, but we are in the realm of Being with things. So, one who is capable of attuning himself with the Being of the objects, alone can understand what the truth of this exposition is. It is true when the Upanishad speaks like this; it speaks what one cannot understand. Neither is it intended to be understood by the layman whose mind has not been adequately transformed, because here we are being led gradually from mere sensation and perception, from mentation and understanding, to the intuition of objects, wherein the objects become one with the knowing perceiver, knowing reality—the Subject.

At this stage, Narada is unable to speak. His breath is held up, as it were. He does not know what he is hearing from this great master. This master observes the silence of the disciple who now does not say as on previous occasions, "Please let me know if something more is there." He keeps quiet, his mouth is hushed and his mind has stopped thinking. He does not know what to speak. Seeing this, the master himself starts pursuing the subject further without being accosted by the disciple.

TRUTH

*Esa tu va ativadati yah satyenativadati; so'ham, bhagavah,
satyenativadaniti, satyam tv-eva vijijnasitavyam iti, satyam,
bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

Transcendent speech is an expression of transcendent knowledge. And transcendent knowledge is that knowledge which is identical with transcendent truth. This is the peak of experience, the peak of wisdom. Our speech should be based on the reality of Being. Only then it manifests itself as reality. Truth and knowledge are identical. Our speech becomes true, because our speech is based on the knowledge of the true. This is what Sanatkumara means when he says,—*esha tu va ativadati yah satyenativadati*. "Well, my master, then I wish I would

be like that—*so'ham bhagavah satyenati vadan-iti*,” says Narada. “Please initiate me into this mystery of acquiring that knowledge which is tuned up to Reality, which is one with Being. Is it possible for me to have this knowledge?” “*Satyam tv-eva vijijnasitavyam*—my dear Narada,” says Sanatkumara. “You want a knowledge which is tuned up with reality, but you must know what reality or truth is. Unless you know what truth is, how can you try to identify your knowledge with truth, or truth with knowledge? You must have a clear conception of what I mean by ‘truth’. Only then can you have an aspiration for identifying your knowledge with truth, knowing truth and speaking truth.” “Then Master, I would like to know what truth is—*satyam, bhagavah vijijnasa iti*. Please tell me what is truth.”

TRUTH AND UNDERSTANDING

*Yada vai vijanati, atha satyam vadati, navijanan satyam vadati,
vijananneva satyam vadati, vijnanam tveva vijijnasitavyam iti,
vijnanam, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

Again we are in a vicious circle of argument, as it were. You want to know what is truth. Truth has to be known as it is, and not as it appears. There are various types of truth before us: One says, “This is true,” “That is true,” and “Everything is true.” But is everything ultimately true? We must have a clear conception what ultimate truth is. “O Narada,” says Sanatkumara, “you can speak truth only when you know what truth is; otherwise, how can you speak truth? But do you know what truth is? Truth is not what you perceive as true in this empirical world. The whole world is not true. It is not the ultimate truth. So, how can you say that anything in the world is true? Whatever you speak is not true. You must know what is really true. When one knows what truth is, then one speaks truth.” Narada is instructed in this manner.

An ignoramus cannot speak truth. Knowledge of truth is, therefore, very important. We have to know knowledge itself, because it is knowledge that comprehends truth. What is knowledge and what is truth? We are here entering into the difficult subject of the ultimate principle of our very life, knowledge and truth, *jnana* and *satya*. What is truth and what is knowledge—this must be known. Without that no one can proceed further.

THOUGHT AND UNDERSTANDING

*Yada vai manute, atha vijanati, namatva vijanati, mataiva
vijanati, matistveva vijijnasitavyeti, matim, bhagavah vijijnasa
iti.*

The word *mati* and similar other words used in these passages of the Upanishad carry a meaning much more deep than what appears on the surface, because we are treading upon forbidden land where the mind cannot easily reach, where things go almost beyond and above our heads. We do not know what we are speaking and what we are hearing. Such is the condition that is being explained

here. Such is the state into which Narada is being initiated by Sanatkumara, the great master.

There is something higher than this knowledge or aspiration for truth. What is that? It is the tendency of one's being to move towards Reality. It is the very reason behind our aspiring for Reality. How do we know that Reality is to be known? Who put this idea into our head? We say, "I must know God," "I must search for Reality," "I must aspire for the Absolute." How did this idea arise in our mind? There is a tendency in us to move towards the Reality. This tendency is prior to our consciousness of Reality. We cannot be conscious of this urge itself, because it is prior to everything else, even becoming conscious of anything. Nobody knows what this urge is and from where it comes. "*Isvaranugrahad-eva pumsam advaita vasana*," says the great master Dattatreya. We do not know how aspiration arises in our mind. It has not come due to our efforts, because effort cannot be there without knowledge. But the question is, "How has this knowledge arisen?" So Bhagavan Dattatreya says that perhaps it is God's grace, or we may call it the grace of the Absolute, or the mysterious outcome of the very process of evolution which is egged on by some principle of which we have no idea and the purpose of which is far, far beyond our understanding.

"So, Narada," says Sanatkumara, "beyond and prior to all that is in you including your knowledge of reality, including your aspiration for it, behind everything, is a tendency in you to move towards it. The mind will stop thinking completely, for it does not know what to think at all if this tendency were not there. Only when this tendency, this inclination of your total being towards the Reality is there, only then can you have an aspiration for Reality, not otherwise. This is the object of your meditation now." "This is what I want. How is this possible? I want to have knowledge of this mystery that you are speaking of," says Narada.

FAITH

*Yada vai sraddadhati, atha manute, nasraddadhan manute,
sraddadhad-eva manute, sraddha tveva vijijnasitavyeti,
sraddham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

Sraddha, faith in the existence of Reality, and the working of this tendency of movement of one's being towards Reality are almost simultaneous. How do we know that Reality exists? That is a faith that is in our mind, introduced into us by the very tendency of Reality urging itself forward towards its own Self-realisation. This faith is superior to thought and understanding. It is not what we call blind faith, but an irrepressible feeling in us that Reality is. It must be there. We do not have any doubt about Its being. *Mati* and *sraddha* go together. So, Narada is told here, "This *sraddha*, faith in the very existence of Reality, is somehow to be taken as prior to *mati*, the consciousness of the tendency towards Reality working through your being, when this faith is present in you. You have to differentiate ordinary faith from this superior faith that I am speaking of. It is almost a kind of realisation. Without this faith in you which is born of tremendous experience of a higher calibre, nothing else is possible." Narada says: "I want this faith to be implanted in me, O great master."

STEADFASTNESS

*Yada vai nististhati, atha sraddadhati, na'nististhan sraddadhati
nististhanneva sraddadhati, nistha taveva vijijnasitavyeti,
nistham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

When one has steadfastness in Reality, then this superior faith also comes. A person who has steadfastness becomes one with the Reality, as it were, in his psychological being. This is called *nishtha* in this section. Sanatkumara says that when there is *nishtha*, there is *sraddha*, and when there is *sraddha* there is *mati*, the tendency in one to move towards Reality.

What exactly is this steadfastness referred to in this section? It is an incapacity of the mind to contemplate anything except Reality. If we think, we think only that; otherwise, nothing. The very function of the mind is set in tune with the nature of Reality so profoundly that we have virtually become that. This is the cause of the faith in us, and the working of the tendency in us towards Reality which we have mentioned already.

“I want to know what this *nishtha* is. O great master, kindly instruct me further,” says Narada.

ACTIVITY

*Yada vai karotyatha nististhati, nakrtva nikstisthati krtvaiva
nististhati, krtis-tveva vijijnasitavyeti, krtim bhagavo vijijnasa iti.*

All this is the effect of another important factor, *kriti*, self-control, that has either been exercised by the aspirant or arisen in him automatically, whatever be the reason behind it. In other words, it is a withdrawal of consciousness from every kind of external perception. This is a superior activity that he is performing. His attunement with the nature of Reality in contemplation is due to the self-control that he has exercised in his being, which means to say that his senses have weaned themselves from their contacts with things outside, and he no longer regards the objects of sense as being outside the knowledge that he is aspiring for. So, self-control does not mean a pressure exerted upon the senses by force of will, but a spontaneous withdrawal of consciousness from its desire to externalise itself in respect of outward things on account of the superior faith, on account of this aspiration, on account of this knowledge. The individuality in us, the *jivatva* in us, the personality in us, the subjectness that has been responsible for our perception of the objects of sense, has become null and void automatically on account of consciousness ceasing to work in terms of objects of sense. When the outside objects of sense cease to be, the subject also ceases to be. When one thing goes, its counterpart also goes. So when the world has gone, the ‘you’ or the ‘I’ also is gone. There is nothing on either side, neither on the object side nor on the subject side. This great achievement is prior to everything, transcendent to everything.

“What is this great achievement of the human personality in respect of the ultimate Absolute? Can I be enlightened a little further about this supreme

achievement? How can I achieve this at all? What is this action of self-control that you are enjoining upon me as preceding to every other activity conceivable?" asks Narada.

HAPPINESS

*Yada vai sukham labhate'tha karoti, nasukham labdhva karoli,
sukham eva labdhva karoti, sukham tveva vijijnasitavyam, iti,
sukham, bhagavah, vijijnasa iti.*

"Well, O Narada, I tell you, nothing can be done unless it is propelled by happiness. Everywhere you will find happiness is the object of every kind of aspiration, activity, desire or enterprise. You will find, prior to everything conceivable, there is the presence of happiness. Everyone, irrespective of the character of one's individuality, tries to be, to act and to conduct oneself in different ways, because of this happiness. You must know what happiness is. It is this that is the propelling force behind everything in creation," says Sanatkumara.

The whole process of creation, manifestation and dissolution, evolution and involution, the entire activity of the cosmos is an urge of happiness. It is happiness that is trying to recover its own consciousness and establish itself in its own pristine all-comprehensiveness. It is this that is called activity. It is this that is called enterprise and aspiration. It is this that is also called cosmic evolution. Happiness is at the back of everything. Happiness alone is.