

BRAHMA SUTRAS

TEXT, WORD-TO-WORD MEANING, TRASLATION
AND COMMENTARY BY

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Answer to the enquiry of Brahman is briefly given in this Sutra. It is stated that Brahman who is eternally pure, wise and free (Nitya, Buddha, Mukta Svabhava) is the only cause, stay and final resort of this world. Brahman who is the originator, preserver and absorber of this vast world must have unlimited powers and characteristics. Hence He is Omnipotent and Omniscient. Who but the Omnipotent and Omniscient Brahman could create, rule and destroy it? Certainly mere atoms or chance cannot do this work. Existence cannot come out of non-existence (*Ex nihilo nihil fit*). The origin of the world cannot proceed from a non-intelligent Pradhana or Prakriti. It cannot proceed from its own nature or Svabhava spontaneously without a cause, because special places, times and causes are needed for the production of effects.

Brahman must have some characteristics. You can attain knowledge of Brahman through reflection on its attributes. Otherwise it is not possible to have such knowledge. Inference or reasoning is an instrument of right knowledge if it does not contradict the Vedanta texts.

In the ascertainment of Truth or the Ultimate Reality or the first cause the scriptures alone are authoritative because they are infallible, they contain the direct intuitive experiences of Rishis or Seers who attained Brahma Sakshatkara or Self-realisation. You cannot depend on intellect or reason because a man of strong intellect can overthrow a man of weak intellect. Brahman is not an object of the senses. It is beyond the reach of the senses and the intellect.

The second Sutra does not propound here that inference serves as the means of knowing Brahman. It points to a Vedantic text which gives a description of the characteristics of Brahman. What then, is that Vedanta text? It is the passage of Taittiriya Upanishad III-i: Bhriгу Varuni went to his father Varuna saying—“Sir, teach me Brahman.” Varuna said यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति यत्प्रयन्यभिर्सेवशन्ति । तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्ब्रह्मेति ॥

“That from whence these beings are born, that by which, when born they live, that into which they enter at their death, try to know That. That is Brahman.”

You will attain Self-realisation through meditation on Brahman or the truths declared by Vedantic texts and not through mere reasoning. Pure reason (Suddha Buddhi) is a help in Self-realisation. It investigates and reveals the truths of the Scriptures. It has a place also in the means of Self-realisation. But perverted intellect (Viparita Buddhi) is a great hindrance. It keeps one far away from the Truth.

That which is the cause of the world is Brahman. This is Tatastha Lakshana. The origin, sustenance and dissolution of the world are characteristics of the world. They do not pertain to the eter-

nal unchanging Brahman. Yet these indicate Brahman which is the cause for this universe. **Srutis give another definition of Brahman. This is a description of its true, essential nature “*Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma*—Truth, Knowledge, Infinity is Brahman.” This is Svarupa Lakshana.**

The knowledge of the real nature of a thing does not depend on the notions of man but only on the thing itself. The knowledge of Brahman also depends altogether on the thing, i.e., Brahman itself. Action depends entirely on your will but perception is not an effect of volition. It depends on the object perceived. You cannot convert a tree into a man by an act of will. A tree will remain a tree always. Similarly Realisation of Brahman is Vastu Tantra. It depends on the reality of the object. It is not Purusha Tantra. It does not depend on volition. It is not something to be accomplished by action. Brahman is not an object of the senses. It has no connection with other means of knowledge. The senses are finite and dependent. They have only external things for their objects, not Brahman. They are characterised by outgoing tendencies on account of the force of Rajas. They are in their nature so constituted that they run towards external objects. They cannot cognise Brahman.

Knowledge of Brahman cannot come through mere reasoning. You can attain this knowledge through intuition or revelation. Intuition is the final result of the enquiry into Brahman. The object of enquiry is an existing substance. You will have to know this only through intuition or direct cognition (Aparakosha-anubhuti or Anubhava—experience). Sravana (hearing of the Srutis), Manana (reflection on what you have heard), Nididhyasana (profound meditation) on Brahman leads to intuition. The Brahmakara Vritti is generated from the Sattvic Antahkarana which is equipped with the four means of salvation, and the instructions of the Guru, who has understood the real significance of ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ Mahavakya. This Brahmakara Vritti destroys the Mula-Avidya or primitive ignorance, the root cause of all bondage, births and deaths. **When the ignorance or veil is removed, Brahman which is self-effulgent reveals Itself or shines by Itself in Its pristine glory and ineffable splendour.** In ordinary perception of objects the mind assumes the form of the object. The Vritti or ray of the mind removes the veil (Avarana-bhanga) that envelops the object and Vritti-sahita-chaitanya or intelligence reflected in the modification of the mind reveals the object. Then only you cognise the object. There is Vritti-vyapti and there is Phala-vyapti also in the perception of an object. You want a Vritti and intelligence (Chaitanya) associated with the Vritti. But in the case of cognition of Brahman there is no Phala-vyapti. There is only Vritti-vyapti as Brahman is self-luminous. If there is a cup in a pot, you want a lamp and the eyes to see the cup

in the dark, when the pot is broken; but if there is a lamp within the pot, you want the eyes only to see the lamp when the pot is broken. You do not want a lamp.

Sastrayonitvadhikaranam: Topic 3

Brahman is realisable only through the scriptures

शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ।

Sastrayonitvat

I.1.3 (3)

The scripture being the source of right knowledge.

Sastra: the scripture; **Yonitvat:** being the source of or the means of the right knowledge.

The Omniscience of Brahman follows from His being the source of scripture. The aphorism clearly points out that the Srutis alone are proof about Brahman.

As Brahman is the cause of the world we have to infer that Brahman or the Absolute is Omniscient. As the scripture alone is the means of right knowledge with reference to Brahman the proposition laid in Sutra 2 becomes confirmed. Brahman is not merely the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of the world, He is the source or womb of scriptures and is revealed by scriptures. As Brahman is beyond the reach of the senses and the intellect, He can be apprehended only on the authority of the Srutis which are infallible and contain the spiritual experiences of realised seers or sages. The Srutis declare that Brahman Himself breathed forth the Vedas. Therefore He who has brought forth the Srutis or the Vedas which contain such wonderful divine knowledge must be all-knowledge and all-powerful.

The scriptures illumine all things like a search light. Scripture is the source or the means of right knowledge through which you have a comprehensive understanding of the nature of Brahman. Srutis furnish information about what is not known from other sources. It cannot be known by other means of knowledge independently of the Srutis. Brahman is formless, colourless, attributeless. Hence it cannot be grasped by the senses by direct perception. You can infer the existence of fire by its accompanying smoke but Brahman cannot be established by inference or analogy, because it is attributeless and there cannot be a second thing which is similar to Brahman. Brahman is Infinite and secondless. He who is ignorant of the Srutis cannot know that Supreme Being. There are other means of knowledge also which have got a place but they are not independent. They supplement after Brahman is established by the Srutis.