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## Śankara's interpretation of śrutipratijñā

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### Abstract

Te Dhyānayanogugatā apśyan  
Devātmaśaktim swagunainirgūdhām  
Yah kāranani nikhilāni tāni  
Kālātmayuktānyadhitiṣṭatyekah<sup>[1]</sup>

This verse is a beautiful expression of the divine experience of the Ultimate Reality. Vedic seers through meditation and concentration, realized the Ultimate Reality and for the sake of human welfare, made manifest in divine language i.e. Upanishad literature. The paper deals with the Śruti passages called ādeśa statements in the light of Śankara's commentary on the Brahmaśūtra.

**Keywords:** Śankara's interpretation, śrutipratijñā, Devātmaśaktim swagunainirgūdhām

### Introduction

Upanishads describes the ādeśa followed by different examples as follows;

1. Chandogya Upanishads describe ādeśa in the following Uta tamādeśamapraksyah yenāśrutam śrutam bavatyamatam matmavijñātam vijñātam<sup>[2]</sup>. It Follows by various examples -1. Yathā somyekenā mr̥tpindena sarvām mr̥nmayadini vijñātam syad vācārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikityeva satyam. 2. Yathā Samyaikena lohomaninā sarvaṇ lohamayam vijñātam syāt vachārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam lohamityeva satyam.3 yathā Somya aikena nakhanikṛntanena sarvām kārsnāyasam vijñātam syāt Vācārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam kṛṣṇayamityeva satyam.
2. Mundaka Upanishad conveys the same meaning in the following manner – In the 'kasminu bhagavovijñāte sarvamidam vijñātam bhavati' is an ādeśa statement. It is supported by an illustration as follows- yathā pṛthivyāmosodhayaḥ sambhavanti<sup>[3]</sup>.
3. Accordingly Br̥hadaranyaka Upanishad describes the ādeśa statement as Ātmani khalvare dr̥ṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idam sarvām vijñātam bhavati<sup>[4]</sup>. In the connection Br̥hadaranyaka offers following examples
  - (i) Sa yathā dundubher hanyamānasya na bāhyān śaknuyād grahaṇāya. Dundubhestu grahaṇena dundubherhanyamānasya na bāhyān śabdān saknuyād grahaṇāya. Dundubhestu grahaṇena dundubhyāghātasya vā śabdo gṛhītaḥ
  - (ii) Sa yathā śankhasya dhayamānasya na bāhyān śabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya sankhasya tu grahaṇena sankhadhmasya vā śabdo gṛhītaḥ.
  - (iii) Sa yathā vīnāyai vādayamānāyai na bāhyāśabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya, vīnāyai tu grahaṇena vīnāvādasya vā śabdo gṛhītaḥ.
  - (iv) Sa yathā ardraindhāgneryarhita pṛthag dhūmā viniścarantyevam vā are asya mahoto bhūtasya nihśvasitametadyadrgvedo Yajurvedaḥ Samavedo Atharvānigirasa itihāsaḥ purānam Vidyā Upaniśadāḥ ślokaḥ sūtrānyanu vyākhyānani.

Bādarāyana in his Brahmaśūtra has considered above sruti passages in the Sūtras in the following-

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<sup>1</sup> Sve.U.1.3

<sup>2</sup> Ch.U.6.1.2

<sup>3</sup> Mun.u.1.1.2.,7

<sup>4</sup> Bri.U.4.5

- 1- Pratijñāsiddher liṅgās marathyah<sup>[5]</sup>.
- 2- Prakṛtischa Pratijñādrṣṭānta nuparodhat<sup>[6]</sup>.
- 3- Tadanyatvamārambhana śabdādibhyah<sup>[7]</sup>.
- 4- Pratijñā hāniravyatirekācchabdebhyah<sup>[8]</sup>.

Bādarāyan refers to śruti passages as mentioned above by the term Pratijñā and drṣṭānta or liṅga. He has discussed Pratijñā and drṣṭānta referred to in the śruti regarding the organization of the world. Similarly, Badarayan has made mention of Pratijñā and liṅga regarding the knowledge of individual soul (Vijñānātman) by knowing the Supreme Soul.

According to Bādarāyan has stated some important characteristics of drṣṭānta and Pratijñā. i.e. there is anuprodha or ubhayasāmañjasya i.e. non- contradiction between Pratijñā and drṣṭānta. According to him drṣṭānta being consistent to dārṣṭāntika i.e. pratijna, lead to knowledge of dārṣṭāntika. Bādarāyan opined that there should not be violation of Pratijñā i.e. purpose of dārṣṭāntika.

Śankar in his commentary on Brahmasūtra has elaborated Bādarāyan's interpretation of drṣṭānta as regarding the Pratijñā in the śruti. Shankar's views about drṣṭānta in general may throw a light on his interpretation of śruti Pratijñā and drṣṭānta in its context.

Śankar in his commentary on the Brahmasūtra discussed about the interpretation of drṣṭānta used in the śruti. In the commentary, on the sūtra 'vṛddhihrāsabhāktvamantarbhāvādubhayasāmanjasyādevam'<sup>[9]</sup> he justified simili of Śūryaka in the śruti as it is referred to by Bādarāyan to explain Brahmanas as qualified by adjuncts. According to him simile of Śūryaka is proper because some similarity is intended between dārṣṭāntika<sup>[10]</sup>. The similarity between drṣṭānta and dārṣṭāntika is intended by speaker to elaborate the meaning of dārṣṭāntika. Similarity that proves non- contradiction of drṣṭānta and dārṣṭāntika may help to understand the intended meaning of dārṣṭāntika. Therefore it would not be proper however to interpret any drṣṭānta according to one's desire without understanding the intention of speaker. In that case purpose of use of drṣṭānta may not be properly served.

Accordingly Śankar in his commentary on the sūtra 'Devādivadapi loke'<sup>[11]</sup> has interpreted drṣṭāntas of Gods, sees and potter to explain different potencies of creation. According to him these drṣṭāntas referred to the sūtra intended only difference of gods etc. from the potter. As Gods etc., and potter are living beings, but there is dissimilarity of potency of creation. Potter requires external instruments for making of pot, while Gods do not expect external instruments for creating certain effect. Brahman the cause of the world is creator like potter, yet Brahman does not expect external instruments like gods etc. Śankar's interpretation of this sūtra points out that an interpretation of drṣṭānta under consideration requires pre understanding of an intention of dārṣṭāntika. In other words, proper interpretation of dārṣṭāntika led by drṣṭānta is possible only if is is determined by the knowledge of speaker's intention of dārṣṭāntika. In his commentary on 'Pratijñā ahaniravyatirekācchabdādibhyah'<sup>[12]</sup> he refutes opponents' interpretation of pratijna forwarded by giving round drṣṭānta which does not appropriately throw

light on speaker's intention of dārṣṭāntika. He always be such that it would lead to proper understanding of an intention of speaker<sup>[13]</sup>.

Coming to the Pratijñā and drṣṭānta after having understood Śankar's view of interpretation of drṣṭānta- dārṣṭāntika relation. There may arise curiosity about the interpretation of drṣṭāntas in view of Śankar. Some observation about the interpretation of Pratijñā and drṣṭānta can be seen.

1. In Chāndogyopanisad drṣṭāntas are intended to prove oneness of cause and manifoldness of modification of particular cause. For example, clod of earth ; lump of gold, etc. are one while modifications are different from each other, because of having there different names and forms etc. In other words drṣṭāntas are aimed at describing the one –All relationship between One and All which is elaborated by Bādarayan in term of Ananyatva. Ananyatva is interpreted how ever in a wider sense. it means non difference or absence of the other (i.e. modification) in the absence of the one. It can be apprehended not only between cause and effect but also between the other relate different from cause and effect.
2. Accordingly, in case of drṣṭāntas viz., Clod of earth, lump of gold etc, it is emphasized that each one, produces different effect respectively. Therefore, clod of earth etc., is the only material cause of their respective effects. However there is no reference to any instrumental cause of an effect, which is different from material cause and its effect.
3. Accordingly śruti drṣṭāntas as referred to previously point out that effects which are many fold and different from each other are grasped only by the knowledge of their material cause and never be known by anything else.
4. Drṣṭāntas in the Mandukya Upanishad, does not however intend the cause effect relationship between the "One" and the "All". Drṣṭāntas in Mandukya Upanishad gives an emphasis on the merging of "All" in One, which is non different from the One.

Having understood the meaning of drṣṭāntas in the śrutis in view of Śankar it would be proper to understand the meaning of Pratijñā, i.e. dārṣṭāntika to which drṣṭāntas are employed, in the śrutis.

Dārṣṭāntika i.e. Pratijñā has some similarities and dissimilarities with drṣṭāntas. It can be known in the following way:-

Pratijñā and drṣṭāntas in Chāndogya Upanishad elaborated the one specifically the cause of 'All'. All being the nature of an effect is false, while One alone is truth. All is full of differences because of its association with name, form and action<sup>[14]</sup>.

In Muṇḍakopanisad drṣṭāntas in context of Pratijñā gives stress on the characteristics of All (i.e. effect) merging of All which is manifold. Here, it is not necessarily meant that the One is the cause of All which merge into it. On the other hand Muṇḍakopanisad intends the non-difference or identify or oneness of two the One and All which are contingently different from each other<sup>[15]</sup>.

According to Brihadāranyaka upanisad, Pratijñā i.e. Dārṣṭāntika and drṣṭāntas intend Knowledge of 'All by Knowing the "One" only. In Other words after knowing the one, query into the nature of "All" becomes redundant for the knower of the One.

<sup>5</sup> Brahmasutra.1.4.20

<sup>6</sup> Brahmasutra.1.4.23

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 2.1.14

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.2.3.6

<sup>9</sup> Ibid 3.2.20

<sup>10</sup> BSbhāsyā 3.2.20

<sup>11</sup> BS 2.1.25

<sup>12</sup> BS 2.3.6

<sup>13</sup> BSB 2.3.6

<sup>14</sup> Ch.U.

<sup>15</sup> Man.U. bhāsyā.

The One in Dārṣṭāntika is real One, non-dual, indivisible. It is referred to by the term Tat or Sah i.e. the Supreme Soul- the Brahman, in other passage in the Śrutis. While the All is referred to by the word 'Idam' or 'Tvam' in other Śruti passages. All the manifold, full of differences of name forms and actions. There is non-differences of ananyatva between the one and all, Which how ever is not invariable related by cause effect relationship.

Having taken into consideration an intention of Dārṣṭāntika i.e. Pratiñā, Śankar has elaborated in detail by refuting possible objections raised against Bādarayan's interpretation of Pratiñā. According to Bādarayan the Brahman the One is both material cause and instrumental cause of the world i.e. All. Practical 'ca' in the sūtra Prakritisca Pratiñā drṣṭānuparodhāt<sup>[16]</sup> means Brahman the One is both material cause and instrumental cause is not referred to in the Śruti Pratiñā and drṣṭāna. In that case, therefore there would be no modification of 'All' from the one or there would not be apprehension of All by apprehending the one. Besides, an instrumental cause is different from material cause and its effects. Accordingly modification of All is not possible only by material cause.

Śankar has taken into consideration this difficulty about Pratiñā and drṣṭānta in the Śruti. He says Tatra caikena vijñātena sarvamanyad vijñātam bhavati pratyete. teccopādānakāranavyatirekta kāryasya. Nimittakāranavyatirekastu kāryasya nasti loke takṣṇaḥ prāsādavyatirekadṣṭāna. drṣṭāntopi- yathā somyaikena mṛtipindena sarvam mṛnmayam vijñātam syād vacārambhanavikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikityeva satyam ; ityupādānakāranagocara eva manyate. Therefore there contradiction between drṣṭāna and Dārṣṭāntika in Śruti. Śankar has set aside this difficulty on the basis of doctrine of Brahman in the Śruti. Śrutis intend the Brahman the One without second, non dual, free from all differences, therefore in Vedānta system to be consistent with the Śruti viz., Ekamevadvitam brahma', it is understood that the Brahman the One is both material and instrumental cause of the world, as the meaning of the term ekena in Pratiñā and drṣṭāna in the Śruti. As the term 'ekena' means absence of the nimittakāra other than the Brahman, it would be necessary to accept the Brahman as an instrumental cause of the world. Śankar says in this regard as follows "nimittatvam tvadhishṭāntarābhāvāda dhigantavyam. Yathā loke mṛtsuvarnākarādīkamupādānakāranam kulāla.... Dinādhishṭāntarapekhyā pravartate, naiva brahmanaupadanakāranasya satojano adhiṣṭhātāpekṣyasti, prāgutpatterekamevadvityamityevavadharanat. Adhiṣṭhāntarābhavaepi Pratiñā drṣṭānta nuparodhādevodito veditavyah"<sup>[17]</sup>.

Further more Śankar has interpreted ananyatva as abheda (non difference) or avyatireka of an effect viz., "All" from its cause viz.; the One i.e. the Brahman. However the Pratiñā statements in Brihadāranyaka Upanishad and in the Mundakopaniṣad have described the relation of the 'One' and the 'All'. There is ananyatva of One and the All. Yet it is described regarding living being that are also understood by the term 'sarva'. Therefore there can be a doubt as, is there similar relation of the one to jīva? In other Word is jīva creation like viyad etc? If the term 'All' were understood in the sense of the words and living beings, then there would be no different between them. Living beings would be also

understood as a creation. In addition to that Śruti Pratiñā would be inconsistent as jīva, being a part of all would have to be accepted as a modification like a world. In this regard, Bādarayan takes into consideration Aśmarthyā's view, in the sūtra pratiñāsidder lingamāsmarthyā<sup>[18]</sup>. According to him for the sake of an establishment of pratiñā in the Śrutis it should be accepted that Jīva is also a modification of the One. Śankar regarding Aśmarthyā's view says Aśmarthyāsyā yadyapi Jīvasya parasmādananyatvamabhipretam, tathāpi pratiñāsidderīti sāpekṣatvābhidhānāt kāryakāranābhāvah kiyānapyabhipreta iti gamyate<sup>[19]</sup>.

While according to Brahmasūtra, "Avasthiteriti kāśakṛṣṇaḥ"<sup>[20]</sup> opines that jīva is Not different from paramātma as jīva is nothing Kāśakṛṣṇa but unmodified paramatma. Therefore according to Kāśakṛṣṇa's view, there is ananyatva of Jīva and Brahman without having their relationship. Śankar remarks on Kāśakṛṣṇa's view in the following – Tatra Kāśakṛṣṇaīyam matam Śrutyānusarīti gamyate. 'Tattvamasi' ityādiŚrutibhyah<sup>[21]</sup>.

Śankar in this regard opined that all vedantins should accepted a hypothesis that difference between soul and vijñānātman is caused by adjuncts viz, body etc., constructed by an effect of avidyā. Further more, in this regard it would be necessary to pay attention to Śankar's remarks in his commentary on the sūtra 'Nātma asrūterananyatvācca tābhyah'<sup>[22]</sup>. There in he says Nātma Jīva Utpadyata iti kasmāt? Asruteh. Na hyasyotpattiprakarane sravanamasti bhūyassu pradeśeṣu<sup>[23]</sup>. Jīva is eternal and unborn being not different from paramātman. Śankar further says that there is no creation of jīva is nothing but unmodified Brahman. The difference of them is due to adjuncts. That is why it is consistent with the Pratiñā.

Besides, it seems that Śrutipratiñā drṣṭāntas do not intend creation of jīva or Jagat. On the other hand Śruties want to give an emphasis on the relation i.e. 'ananyatva' between sarva (All) and Eka (one). While interpreting drṣṭāntas, Śankar has refuted opponent's view in his commentary on the Sūtra Pratiñā 'ahāniravyatirekacchabdādibhyah'<sup>[24]</sup>. He describes his opponent's interpretation of Avyatireka of "One" and "All" by the use of an illustration of milk and water. it leads to an apprehension of sky, as non different from Brhman. Śankar however denied his interpretation of avyatireka between the One and All i.e. viyadādi and asserted that sarva vijñānaŚruti should be understood with the help of an illustration of cold of earth etc. or by an illustration of cause-effect relation. Otherwise in that case, according to illustration of milk and water there would not be a proper apprehension of water by an apprehension of milk. Similarly the determinate knowledge of oneness of the Brahman in the Śrutis could not be properly known by the illustration of water and milk.

In addition to that Śankar has critically examined his predecessor's interpretation of drṣṭāntas which are given to explain the meaning of pratiñā statements in his commentary on the sūtra 'Tadanyatvamārambhāna Śābdādibhyah'<sup>[25]</sup>. He has explained his predecessor's view in the following way. - "Nanvanekātmakam Brahma, yathā vrkso anekasakha evamanekasaktiprabrittuyuktam Brahma. Ata ekatvam

<sup>16</sup> BS. 1.4.23

<sup>17</sup> B.S.B

<sup>18</sup> B.s.1.4.20

<sup>19</sup> BS-

<sup>20</sup> BS- 1.4.20

<sup>21</sup> Bsb-1.4.20

<sup>22</sup> BS-2.3.17

<sup>23</sup> Bsb-2.3.17

<sup>24</sup> BS-2.3.6

<sup>25</sup> BS.-2.1.14

nanatvam cobhayamapi satyameva. Yatha vṛkso ityekatvam Śākhā iti nānātvam. Yathā ca samudratmanaikatvam phenatarangādyātmanā nānātvam. Yathā ca mṛḍātmanaikatvam ghatŚarāvādyatmanā nānātvam. Evamca mṛḍadidṛṣṭāntānurūpa bhaviṣyatīti <sup>[26]</sup>. According to this view both the 'ONE' and 'ALL' are true and it is the intention of Śrūtis. While Śankar denies the reality of both the 'One' and 'All'. According to Śankar, Pratijñā and dṛṣṭāntas have an interpretation of trueness of the One only, while the 'All' i.e. world and jīva are false in nature, Śankar says- Mṛittikityeva satyam iti prakṛitimātrasya dṛṣṭānte satyatvāvadhānāt. VācārambhanaŚabdena ca vikārajatasyaṅrutatvābhidhānāt. Darśāntike api Aitadātmamidam sarvam tat satyam iti ca paramakāranasyaivaikasya satyatvāvadhāranāt <sup>[27]</sup>.

Conclusion-

Having discussed so far Śrutipratijñā and dṛṣṭāntas from Śankar's view point followed by Bādarāyana, it can be said that pratijñā and dṛṣṭāntas in the Śrūtis intend to determine that the 'One' alone is real, while 'All' means, world and individual souls are false.

Avyatireka ananyatva or adbheda of them is intended for the sake of realizations of the 'One' the Brahman that is Non-dual and non-different one, the ultimate reality 'All' is not different from Brahman. Knowledge of 'All' is possible only by the knowledge of Brahman. All is full of differences, full of pain and pleasure and false. Therefore knowledge of 'All' may lead to disaster while Śruti pratijñā and dārśāntika claims that knowledge of the one alone leads to immortality. It is most desired by maitre Yajnavalkya's wife, who realized that there is no hope for immortality by getting a desire of obtaining of 'All'. Therefore, an intention of ādeśa statements in the śruti can be interpreted in the light of Māitri's words as follows:- Amṛtatvasya tu nāśāsti vittena—yenāham nāmṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām. Yedeva Bhagavān tadebva me brūhi <sup>[28]</sup>. It is Explained in the ādeśa iti sam.

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<sup>26</sup> BSB.- 2.1.14

<sup>27</sup> BSB.-2.1.14

<sup>28</sup> Br.U.4