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Śankara's interpretation of śrutipratijñā

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Abstract

Te Dhyānayoganugatā apśyan
Devātmaśaktim swagunainirgūdhām
Yah kārananī nikhilānī tāni
Kālātmayuktānyadhitīṣṭatyekah^[1]

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 Śaṅkarā's commentary on the Brahmasūtra.

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 tamādeśamaprakṣyā yenāśrutam śrutam bavatyamatam matmavijñātam vijñātam* [2]. It Follows by various examples -1. Yathā somyekena mṛtpindena sarvam mṛnmayadini vijñatam syad vācārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikityeva satyam. 2. Yathā Samyaikena lohomaninā sarvaṇi lohamayam vijñātam syāt vachārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam lohamityeva satyam. 3. yathā Somya aikena nakhamikṛntanena sarvam kārsnāyasam vijñātam syāt Vācārambhanam vikaro nāmadheyam kṛṣṇayasamityeva 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 prthivyāmosodhayaḥ sambhavanti [3].
3. Accordingly Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad describes the ādeśa statement as Ātmani khalvare drṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idam sarvam vijñātam bhavati [4]. In the connection Bṛhadaranyaka offers following examples
 - (i) Sa yathā dundubher hanyamānya na bāhyān śaknuyād grahaṇāya. Dundubhestu grahaṇena dundubherhanyamānya na bāhyān śabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya. Dundubhestu grahaṇena dundubhyāghātasya vā śabdo gr̄hītaḥ
 - (ii) Sa yathā śaṅkhasya dhayamānya na bāhyān śabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya sankhasya tu grahaṇena sankhadhamsya vā śabdo gr̄hītaḥ.
 - (iii) Sa yathā vīnāyai vādayamānayai na bāhyāsabdān śaknuyād grahaṇāya, vīnāyai tu grahaṇena vīnāvādasya vā śabdo gr̄hītaḥ.
 - (iv) Sa yathā ardraindhāgnerabryarhita pr̄thag dhūmā viniścarantyevam vā are asya mahoto bhūtasya nihśvasitametadyadrgvedo Yajurvedaḥ Samavedo Atharvānigirasa itihāsaḥ purānam Vidyā Upaniṣadāḥ ślokāḥ śūtrānyanu vyākhyānani.

Bādarāyana in his Brahmasūtra has considered above śruti passages in the Sūtras in the following-

¹ Sve.U 1.3

² Ch.U.6.1.2

³ Mun.u 1.1.2.,7

⁴ Bri.U.4.5

- 1- Pratijñāsiddher liṅgās marathyah^[5].
- 2- Prakrtischa Pratijñādrṣṭānta nuparodhat^[6].
- 3- Tadanyatvamārambhana śabdādibhyah^[7].
- 4- Pratijñā hāniravyatirekācchabdebhyah^[8].

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 (Vijñānatman) by knowing the Supreme Soul.

According to Bādarāyan has stated some important characteristics of drṣṭānta and Pratijñā. i.e. there is anuporodha 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 ‘vrddhihrāsabhāktvamantarbhāvādubhayasāmanjasyādevam’^[9] he justified simili of Śuryaka in the śruti as it is referred to by Bādarāyan to explain Brahmanas as qualified by adjuncts. According to him simile of Śuryaka is proper because some similarity is intended between dārṣṭāntika^[10]. 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 Sankar in his commentary on the sūtra ‘Devādivadapi loke’^[11] 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 sutra 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’^[12] 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^[13].

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 modification s 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 Bādarāyan 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 ansence 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 imphasized 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 there 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 understood 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^[14].

In Muṇḍakopanishad 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 Muṇḍakopanishad intends the non-difference or identify or oneness of two the One and All which are contingently different from each other^[15].

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

⁵ Brahmasutra.1.4.20

⁶ Brahmasutra.1.4.23

⁷ Ibid. 2.1.14

⁸ Ibid.2.3.6

⁹ Ibid 3.2.20

¹⁰ BSBhasya 3.2.20

¹¹ BS 2.1.25

¹² BS 2.3.6

¹³ BSB 2.3.6

¹⁴ Ch.U.

¹⁵ Man.U. bhashya.

The One in Dārśtāntika 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 Śruti. 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 anayatva between the one and all, Which how ever is not invariable related by cause effect relationship.

Having taken into consideration an intention of Dārśtāntika i.e. Pratijñā, Śankar has elaborated in detail by refuting possible objections raised against Bādarayan’s interpretation of Pratijñā. 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 Pratijñā drṣṭānuparodhāt^[16] means Brahman the One is both material cause and instrumental cause is not referred to in the Śruti Pratijñā 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 Pratijñā and drṣṭāna in the Śruti. He says Tatra caikena vijñātena sarvamanyad vijñātam bhavatīti pratiyete.teccopādānakāranyatyarekta kāryasya. Nimittakāranyatyarekstu kāryasya nasti loke takṣṇah prāśadavyatirekadrṣṭāna. drṣṭāntopi- yathā somyaikena mṛtipindena sarvam mṛṇmayam vijñātam syād vacārambhanavikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikityeva satyam ; ityupādānakārana gocara eva manyate. Therefore there contradiction between drṣṭāna and Dārśtāntika in Śruti. Śankar has set aside this difficulty on the basis of doctrine of Brahman in the Śruti. Śruti intend the Brahman the One without second, non dual, free from all differences, therefore in Vedānta system to be consistent with the Śruti viz., Ekamevādvitam brahma’, it is understood that the Brahmn the One is both material and instrumental cause of the world, as the meaning of the term ekena in Pratijñā and drṣṭāna in the Śruti. As the term ‘ekena’ means absence of the nimittakārana 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 tvadhisthātrantarābhāvāda dhigantavyam. Yathā loke mrtsuvarnākarādikamupādānakārānam kulāla.... Dinādhiṣṭhātrapekhyā pravartate, naiva brahmaupadanakaranasya satojano adhiṣṭhātāpekṣy asti,prāguttpatterekameadvitiyamityevavadharanat. Adhiṣṭhārantarabhabavaeapi Pratijñā drṣṭānta nuparodhādevodito veditavyah”^[17].

Further more Śankar has interpreted anayatva as abheda (non difference) or avyatireka of an effect viz., “All” from its cause viz.; the One i.e. the Brahman. However the Pratijñā statements in Brihadāranyaka Upanishad and in the Mundakopanishad have described the relation of the ‘One’ and the ‘All’. There is anayatva 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 Pratijñā would be inconsistent as jīva, being a part of all would have to be accepted as a modification like a world. In this regard, Bādarayana takes into consideration Aśmarathyā’s view, in the sūtra pratijñāsiddher lingamāśmarathyā^[18]. According to him for the sake of an establishment of pratijñā in the Śruti it should be accepted that Jīva is also a modification of the One. Śankar regarding Aśmarathyas view says Aśmarathyasya yadyapi Jīvasya parasmādananyatvamabhīpretam, tathāpi pratijñāsiddherīti sāpekṣatvābhidhānāt kāryakāranahbhāvah kiyānāpyabhipreta iti gamyate^[19].

While according to Brahmasūtra, “Avasthiteriti kāśakṛṣṇah”^[20] opines that jīva is Not different from paramātma as jīva is nothing Kāśakṛṣṇa but unmodified paramatma. Therefore accoeding to Kāśakṛṣṇa’s view, there is anayatva of Jīva and Brahman without having their relationship. Śankar remarks on Kāśakṛṣṇa’s view in the following – Tatra Kāśakṛṣṇātyam matam Śrutyānusarīti gamyate. ‘Tattvamasi’ ityādiŚrutiḥyah^[21].

Śankar in this regard opined that all vedantins should accepted a hypothesis that difference between soul and vijnānatman 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 asrūteranityatvācca tābhayah’^[22]. There in he says Nātma Jīva Utpadyata iti kasmāt? Asruteh. Na hyasyotpatti prakarane sravanamasti bhūyassu pradeśe^[23]. 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 Pratijñā.

Besides, it seems that Śruti pratijñā drṣṭāntas do not intend creation of jīva or Jagat. On the other hand Śrūties want to give an emphasis on the relation i.e. ‘anayatva’ between sarva (All) and Eka (one). While interpreting drṣṭāntas, Śankar has refuted opponent’s view in his commentary on the Sūtra Pratijñā ‘ahāniravyatirekācchabdādibhyah’^[24]. 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 Brhaman. Śankar however denied his interpretation of avyatireka between the One and All i.e. viyadādi and asserted that sarva vijnānaŚruti 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 Śruti 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 pratijñā statements in his commentary on the sūtra ‘Tadanyatvamārambhana Śabdādibhyah^[25]. He has explained his predecessor’s view in the fallowing way.- “ Nanvanekātmakam Brahma, yathā vrksa anekasakha evamanekasaktiprabrittiyuktam Brahma. Ata ekatvam

¹⁸ B.s.1.4.20

¹⁹ BS-

²⁰ BS- 1.4.20

²¹ Bsb-1.4.20

²² BS-2.3.17

²³ Bsb-2.3.17

²⁴ BS-2.3.6

²⁵ BS-.2.1.14

¹⁶ BS. 1.4.23

¹⁷ B.S.B

nanatvam cobhayamapi satyameva. Yatha vṛkṣo ityekatvam Śākhā iti nānātvam. Yathā ca samudratmanaikatvam phenatarangādyātmanā nānātvam. Yathā ca mṛidātmanaikatvam ghatŚarāvādyatmanā nānātvam. E�amca mṛdadidṛṣṭāntānurūpa bhavisyatīti^[26]. According to this view both the ‘ONE’ and ‘ALL’ are true and it is the intention of Śrutis. 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. Vācārambhāśabdena ca vikārajatasyanṛutatvābhidhānāt. Darśāntike api Aitadātmamidam sarvam tat satyam iti ca paramakāranasyaivaikasya satyatvāvadhāranāt^[27].

Conclusion-

Having discussed so far Śruti pratijñā and dṛṣṭānts from Śankars view point followed by Bādarāyana, it can be said that pratijñā and dṛṣṭāntas in the Śrutis 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 maître 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 Maitri’s words are follows:- Amṛtatvasya tu nāśāsti vittena—yenāham nāmṛtā syām kimaham tena kuryām. Yedeva Bhagavān tadebva me brūhi^[28]. It is Explained in the ādeśa iti sam.

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²⁶ BSB.-2.1.14

²⁷ BSB.-2.1.14

²⁸ Br.U.4