

Brahmasutra 1.1. 3-- शास्त्रयोनित्वात् ।

Translation of the lectures of Dr. Mani Dravid Sastri

In the previous *adhikarana* it was established that this universe has its origin in Brahman, is sustained by Brahman and dissolves into Brahman. It was implied thereby that Brahman is omniscient. The purpose of the present sutra is to confirm this conclusion. It is only if the omniscience of Brahman is confirmed that the accidental definition (*tatasthalakṣaṇa*) of Brahman given in the previous sutra will be saved from the defect of over-applicability to Pradhana which is the cause of the universe according to the Sankhyas. This has no doubt been already brought out in the Bhashya on the previous sutra, but the previous sutra does not, by itself, cover this point. This is done by the present sutra which says that Brahman is the cause of the Sastras. Here Sastra means the entire collection of Vedas. The Vedas are themselves almost omniscient because they are the repository of all kinds of knowledge and reveal all things like a lamp. The Vedas could not have emerged from any source other than Brahman who is omniscient. It is a matter of common knowledge that the person who is the author of any work on any subject must know much more than what finds place in that work. It is stated in the Upanishad that the Vedas are the exhalation of Brahman (Br. Up. 2. 4. 10). They were produced without any effort as though it was a mere sport. They could not have been produced by Pradhana which is insentient. Thus over-applicability of the definition to Pradhana is ruled out.

An objection is raised here. The Vedas are said to be 'apaurusheya', i.e., not created by any one. So how can Brahman be the cause of the Vedas? To answer this objection the correct meaning of the term 'apaurusheya' has to be understood. A sentence is a group of words uttered in a particular sequence. A word is composed of letters uttered in a certain sequence. If the sequence is changed the word also changes, as for example, *rasa* and *sara*. According to the theory of eternality of letters (or sounds), the letters are eternal

and all-pervasive. There can therefore be no relationship of before and after for letters either in space or in time. Sequence is a property of the manifestation of the sounds and not of the letters themselves. The hearer also gets the knowledge of the letters of the word in the same sequence as that in which they are uttered by the speaker. Thus sequence is a quality of the manifestation of the words, but it is superimposed on the letters. Manifestation is non-eternal and so words, which are the result of manifestation of letters in a certain sequence are also non-eternal. Sentences, which are groups of words, are also therefore non-eternal. When a person creates a new work he arranges the letters which are eternal to form words which are non-eternal and then arranges the words in a particular sequence to make the sentences he wants. In making such a sentence he has liberty to choose the words. It can therefore be said that the sentence was created by him, i.e., it is 'paurusheya'. The same sentence is subsequently repeated by others, but they are not creators of the sentence. When a pupil recites sentences in the Vedas he follows the same sequence as his teacher, but the manifestation of the letters by the pupil is different from the manifestation of the letters by the teacher. But neither the teacher nor the pupil is a creator of the sentences. The Vedas are given out by the Supreme Being at the beginning of each cycle of creation without effort as in breathing out. But even He does not have liberty in creating the Vedas. He creates them exactly in the same way as they were in the previous kalpa. That in turn is in the same form as in the kalpa previous to it. Thus the same Vedas are given out again and again in each kalpa. Creation is beginningless and so there is no such thing as the first creation of the Vedas. Though the Supreme Being gives out the Vedas in every kalpa, he has no liberty in creating them. It is because of this lack of absolute freedom in creating that the Vedas are called 'apaurusheya'¹.

¹ Bhamati on Br.su. 1.1.3- पुरुषास्वातन्त्र्यं चापौरुषेयत्वं रोचयन्ते जैमिनीया अपि । तच्चास्माकमपि समानं, अन्यत्राभिनिवेशात् ।

Thus the Vedas do not cease to be apaurusheya even though they are said to be created by Brahman. The Vedas derive their power of illumination from Brahman, just as a lamp illumines because of the flame. Therefore Brahman is omniscient.

The second meaning of this sutra is that the Sastra is the cause or valid means of knowledge (pramana) for knowing Brahman. Here Sastra means only Vedanta. It is only from the Sastra that Brahman is known to be the cause of the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. This sutra brings out explicitly that the conclusion that Brahman is the cause of the universe is based on the Vedic statement “That from which these beings originate, etc.,” and not on mere inference.

Since the Vedas are said to have been created by Brahman, they are an ‘effect’. The Vedas are said to be eternal. Brahmasutra 2.1.35 says that creation is beginningless. Being an effect, how can the Vedas be eternal as claimed? The answer to this is that the Vedas are ‘pravaahanityam’, like the seed and the sprout. We cannot say when the first seed or sprout came into being. But the seed and the sprout were always there, though they are not the same seed and sprout. This is what is called ‘pravaahanityam’. Similarly the Vedas have always been in existence, though they are remanifested at the beginning of each new cycle of creation. Even during pralaya the Vedas exist in subtle form. So the Vedas are pravaahanityam.

The Naiyayikas also say that the Vedas are created by Isvara. But they postulate the existence and omniscience of Isvara by inference alone and so the Vedas become valid because they are created by Isvara who is a reliable person. This involves the defect of mutual dependence because the existence of Isvara is inferred from the existence of the Vedas and the Vedas get validity because they were created by Isvara. According to Vedanta the Vedas are ‘svatah-pramana’; they have validity by themselves. Their creator, Isvara, must therefore be omniscient.
