

Satasloki

The scheme of the Vedas is described in the following verse. The first part of the Vedas, known as Karma Kanda, lays down various sacrificial acts to be performed for attaining specific ends such as wealth, progeny and heaven. While wealth and progeny are desired in the present life itself, heaven can be attained only after the end of the present life. A person who performs a sacrifice intended to take him to heaven knows that he cannot go there in his physical body. So who is it that will enjoy the fruit of his sacrifice? It is the self or Atma. But this is not the pure self spoken of in the Upanishads, but the self associated with the subtle body, which is known as the Jivatma. This subtle body does not perish along with the physical body, but goes to other worlds in accordance with the punya or papa accumulated by the person. When the sojourn in other worlds comes to an end this Jivatma or the self associated with the subtle body takes birth again in this world by taking another physical body. The subtle body which consists of the mind and the subtle organs of sense and action goes on from one body to another until it is also destroyed on the dawn of self-knowledge. This Jivatma is the performer of actions such as sacrifices and the enjoyer of the results thereof. It is only a person possessed of the knowledge that there is such a self or Jivatma different from the physical body, which does not perish with the physical body, but enjoys the fruits of sacrifices, who performs sacrifices. The Karma Kanda of the Vedas is based on the view that the Jivatma is the performer of actions and the enjoyer of the results thereof. Even the practice of *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, hearing, reflection and meditation, which are the means to be adopted by one who seeks liberation is possible only if the person looks upon himself as the Jivatma who is a doer and enjoyer. The first point to be understood by every one, whether he seeks wealth, progeny or heaven through the performance of sacrifices or seeks liberation through the attainment of Self-knowledge, is that there is a Jivatma distinct from the physical body. This is what is spoken of in the first line of this verse. The subsequent three lines speak about the pure Self which is devoid of any association with the subtle and gross bodies, which is neither a doer of actions nor an enjoyer of the fruits thereof and which is to be realized as his own self, as also the self of all beings, by the person who seeks liberation. This pure Self forms the subject matter of the second part or Jnana Kanda of the Vedas.

आत्मानात्मप्रतीतिः प्रथममभिहिता सत्यमिथ्यात्मयोगात्

द्वेधा ब्रह्मप्रतीतिः निगमनिगदिता स्वानुभूत्योपपत्त्या।

आद्या देहानुबन्धाद् भवति तदपरा सा च सर्वात्मकत्वात्

आदौ ब्रह्माहमस्मीत्यनुभव उदिते खल्विदं ब्रह्म पश्चात्॥३

3. Brahman is spoken of in two ways in the Vedas. In the first part of the Vedas, known as Karma kanda, which describes the rituals to be performed by persons seeking various ends such as wealth, progeny and heaven, Brahman is considered as associated with the limiting adjunct (upadhi) in the form of the subtle body. This is the transmigrating soul, known as Jivatma. In the second part of the Vedas, known as Jnana kanda, which consists of the Upanishads, the pure Brahman, devoid of all limiting adjuncts, is spoken of. From the Upanishads a seeker who has acquired the necessary fitness first attains the realization that he is not the body-mind complex, but the pure Brahman. Thereafter he realizes that the whole universe is in reality nothing but Brahman.