

Satasloki

Sloka 36

स्वप्नस्त्रीसङ्गसौख्यादपि भृशमसतो या च रेतश्च्युतिः स्या-
त्सा दृश्या तद्वदेतत्स्फुरति जगदसत्कारणं सत्यकल्पम् ।
स्वप्ने सत्यः पुमान् स्याद्युवतिरिह मृषैवानयोः संयुतिश्च
प्रातः शुक्लेण वस्त्रोपहतिरिति यतः कल्पनामूलमेतत् ॥३६

36. A man dreams that he is enjoying the pleasure of union with a woman. Though this union is unreal, it is seen that there is discharge of the generative fluid because of the dream. Similarly, this universe which arises from unreal nescience, is seen as real. In the dream the man is real, but the woman as well as the union of the two are both unreal, but this unreal cause produces the real effect of staining of the garment. Similarly the unreal nescience (or Maya which cannot be experienced by us) produces this universe which we actually experience and look upon as real. (The reality of the universe is, however, only empirical or vyaavahaarika and not absolute or paaramaarthika).

The use of such an illustration here may shock our sensibility, but the explanation seems to be that sages never shied away from looking at the facts of life in the face and they did not hesitate to use such telling examples if thereby they could bring home their teachings effectively to the ordinary man. This illustration appears also in verses 101 and 102 (ch.8) of Prabodhasudhaakara, another work of Sri Sankara.

The next verse is based on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4.3.14.

Sloka 37

पश्यन्त्याराममस्य प्रतिदिवसममी जन्तवः स्वापकाले
पश्यत्येनं न कश्चित्करणगणमृते मायया क्रीडमानम् ।
जाग्रत्यर्थव्रजानामथ च तनुभृतां भासकं चालकं वा
नो जानीते सुषुप्तौ परमसुखमयं कश्चिदाश्चर्यमेतत् ॥३७

37. Everyone sees the play of this Self everyday in dream (everything projected by the mind in dream is illumined by the Self). But no one sees the Self who plays by the power of Maya and without any organs whatever. So also, no one sees the Self who illumines all objects and all embodied beings and makes them capable of functioning in the waking state. Nor does any one see the Self in the state of deep sleep even though the

supreme bliss of the Self is experienced then. This is most surprising.

In the waking state all living beings function only because of the Self which imparts consciousness to them. In dream the sense organs are dormant, but the mind creates objects by the power of the latent vasanas and these objects are experienced only because of the light of consciousness of the Self. In deep sleep the mind also becomes dormant. Then the bliss of the Self is experienced. Thus in all the three states the Self is present. Yet no one realizes the presence of the Self in any of these states.

Sloka 38

स्वप्ने मन्त्रोपदेशः श्रवणपरिचितः सत्य एष प्रबोधे
स्वाप्नादेव प्रसादादभिलषितफलं सत्यतां प्रातरेति ।
सत्यप्राप्तिस्त्वसत्यादपि भवति तथा किं च तत्स्वप्रकाशं
येनेदं भाति सर्वं चरमचरमथोच्चावचं दृश्यजातम् ॥३८

38. If a man dreams that a mantra has been imparted to him by a Guru and that he has repeated it a number of times in the dream, then, on waking up he will find that the mantra has borne fruit. If a person dreams that God has appeared before him and conferred His grace on him, he will find the next morning that what he wished for has been achieved. Thus, even though the dream is not real, it gives rise to a real result in the waking state. Similarly, though the Upanishads have only empirical and not absolute reality, they give rise to the knowledge of Brahman which is absolutely real. It is by the light of consciousness of Brahman that human beings, animals, birds, and all other living beings which are capable of motion, as well as stationary beings such as plants and trees (which are also jivas) have consciousness. All objects in this universe, whether superior or inferior, owe their existence only to Brahman on whom they are superimposed.

The doubt answered in this verse is- since everything in this universe, including the Upanishads, is the creation of Maya and is therefore not real in the absolute sense, Brahman, who is known from the Upanishads, cannot have absolute reality. This doubt is answered by giving instances where a dream, which is not even empirically real, gives rise to results in the waking state which have empirical reality.

Sloka 39

मध्यप्राणं सुषुप्तौ स्वजनिमनुविशन्त्यग्निसूर्यादयोऽमी
वागाद्याः प्राणवायुं तदिह निगदिता ग्लानिरेषां न वायोः ।

तेभ्यो दृश्यावभासो भ्रम इति विदितः शौक्तिकारौप्यकल्पः

प्राणायामव्रतं तच्छ्रुतिशिरसि मतं स्वात्मलब्धौ न चान्यत् ३९

39. In dreamless sleep the organs such as speech, etc, merge in the vital air (Prana), which is the source of their manifestation in the waking state. Similarly, when fire is extinguished, it merges in air. When the sun sets, it also merges in air. The same is the case with the moon. (See Chandogya Upanishad, IV.3). In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.5.21, it is said that the organs began to compete with one another, each one saying that it would go on working without any rest, but after a while all of them became tired. Only Prana, the vital air, did not feel any fatigue at all. Similarly, fire, the sun, the moon and other deities tried to work without respite, but they also became tired. Air alone did not become tired at all. Air or Vayu among the deities is the same as Prana or vital air among the organs. The knowledge obtained through the sense organs can be erroneous like the silver seen on nacre. Therefore the Upanishad says that for realization of the Self one should meditate on Prana and not on the organs.

Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on Br. Upanishad, I.3.7 that by identification with Prana one becomes his true self as Prajapati. Thus meditation on Prana, which is the means to identification with Prana, is recommended in this verse. Pranayamavrata may also be taken as the practice of Pranayama by which the breath is controlled. Control of the breath results in control of the mind also, since both are aspects of the same entity, Prana being Kriyasakti and the mind Jnanasakti.

Sloka 40

नोऽकस्मादार्द्रमेधः स्पृशति च दहनः किन्तु शुष्कं निदाघा-

दार्द्रं चेतोऽनुबन्धैः कृतसुकृतमपि स्वोक्तकर्मप्रजार्थैः ।

तद्वज्जानाग्निरेतत्स्पृशति न सहसा किन्तु वैराग्यशुष्कं

तस्माच्छुद्धो विरागः प्रथममभिहितस्तेन विज्ञानसिद्धिः ॥४०

40. Fire does not burn wet firewood, but if the firewood has been dried by the heat in the atmosphere in summer, then fire will burn it. Similarly, the fire of Self-knowledge cannot enter the mind of a person who is deeply attached to his family, wealth and possessions, even if he has acquired considerable religious merit (punya) by the performance of Vedic rituals, by begetting a virtuous son and by using his wealth for noble purposes. Only if he has developed strong detachment can

Self-knowledge dawn in his mind. Therefore the scriptures declare that the acquisition of pure detachment is essential for a person who seeks Self-realization.