

Satasloki

Satasloki 51 to 55

तज्ज्ञाः पश्यन्ति बुद्ध्या परमबलवतो माययाक्तं पतङ्गं
बुद्ध्वावन्तः समुद्रे प्रतिफलितमरीच्यास्पदं वेधसस्तम्।
यादृग्यावानुपाधिः प्रतिफलति तथा ब्रह्म तस्मिन्यथास्यं
प्राप्तादर्शानुरूपं प्रतिफलति यथावस्थितं सत्सदैव ॥५१

51. The men of realization perceive that the Jiva, who is a reflection of Brahman in the subtle intellect, is in the grip of the Maya of the supremely powerful Lord. The nature of the reflection of Brahman, that is to say, the nature of a particular Jiva, depends on the nature of his intellect (or mind), just as the reflection of a face in a mirror varies according as the mirror is convex or concave, clean or covered with dirt, fixed or moving. But, just as the face itself is not in the least affected by the nature of the mirror, so also, Brahman is not at all affected by the nature of the reflecting medium, the mind, and ever remains the same and immutable.

This verse is based on a mantra of the Rigveda. The words 'samudra' and 'patanga' are interpreted as in that mantra. The mantra is the following, as given in the commentary 'Gurupriya' in Tamil by Brahmasri Atmavidyabhushanam V.S.V.Guruswamy Sastrigal:-

एको भानुस्तटस्थः प्रतिफलनवशाद्यस्त्वनेकोदकान्तः
नानात्वं यात्युपाधिस्थितिगतिसमतां चापि तद्वत्परात्मा।
भूतेषूच्चावचेषु प्रतिफलित इवाभाति तावत्स्वभावा-
वच्छिन्नो यः परंतु स्फुटमनुपहतो भाति तावत्स्वभावैः॥५२

52. The one sun in the sky, when reflected in different receptacles of water, appears as many and as still or moving according as the reflecting medium is still or moving. Similarly, the one supreme Being, Brahman, reflected in the intellects of different creatures, higher and lower, appears to have taken on the characteristics of those creatures, but, in reality, Brahman is not at all affected by them and is realized as only one and changeless by the enlightened.

This verse may be compared to Kathopanishad, 2.2.11:--

"Just as the sun, the eye of the whole world, is not tainted by the defects of the creatures on earth or by the defects in the external world, so also, the one Self, the indweller of all beings, is not affected by the sorrows of the world, because the Self is transcendental".

यद्वत्पीयूषरश्मौ दिनकरकिरणैर्बिम्बितैरेति सान्द्रं
नाशं नैशं तमिस्रं गृहगतमथवा मूर्छितैः कांस्यपात्रे।

तद्वद्बुद्धौ परात्मद्युतिभिरनुपदं बिम्बिताभिः समन्तात्
भासन्ते हीन्द्रियास्यप्रसृतिभिरनिशं रूपमुख्याः पदार्थाः॥५३

53. The moon, (which is opaque) is made luminous by the rays of the sun which fall on it and removes the dense darkness of the night. A bright bell metal vessel, on which the rays of the sun coming in through a chink in the roof fall, removes the darkness inside the house. Similarly, the intellect on which the rays of consciousness from the Self fall illumines all objects through the sense organs and enables the sense organs to experience them.

The moon and the bell metal vessel are non-luminous, but they are made to shine by the reflected light of the sun. Similarly, the intellect and the sense organs are insentient, but acquire sentiency because of the reflection of the Self on the intellect.

Sri Sankara says in his Bhashya on Br. Up. 4.3.7:--"The intellect, being pure and close to the Self, reflects the consciousness of the Self; the mind then catches the reflection from the intellect and, from the mind, the sense organs receive the reflection of consciousness. Thus the Self successively imparts sentiency to the entire aggregate of the body and organs". The same idea is contained in the present verse.

पूर्णात्मानात्मभेदान्त्रिविधमिह परं बुद्ध्यवच्छिन्नमन्यत्
तत्रैवाभासमात्रं गगनमिव जले त्रिप्रकारं विभाति।
अम्भोवच्छिन्नमस्मिन्प्रतिफलितमतः पाथसोऽन्तर्बहिश्च
पूर्णावच्छिन्नयोगे व्रजति लयमविद्या स्वकार्यैः सहैव ॥५४

54. The sky, when reflected in a reservoir of water, appears as threefold, namely, as the sky limited by the water, as the sky reflected in the water, and as the all-pervading sky. Similarly, Brahman appears as threefold, as the all-pervading Brahman, as its reflection in the intellect and as limited by the intellect. When Brahman limited by the intellect, who is the Jiva, and the all-pervading Brahman are realized as one and the same, nescience, which made the Jiva and Brahman appear different from each other, is destroyed along with its effects, Samsara and the consequent sufferings.

दृश्यन्ते दारुनार्यो युगपदगणिताः स्तम्भसूत्रप्रयुक्ताः
सङ्गीतं दर्शयन्त्यो व्यवहृतिमपरां लोकसिद्धां च सर्वाम्।
सर्वत्रानुप्रविष्टादभिनवविभवाद्यावदर्थानुबन्धात्
तद्वत्सूत्रात्मसंज्ञाद् व्यवहरति जगद्भूवःस्वर्महोन्तम्॥५५

55. A number of puppets are simultaneously manipulated by means of threads attached to them and made to perform various activities such as singing, dancing, walking, speaking, etc. The person who manipulates them remains behind the scene and cannot be seen by the people who

watch the puppet show. Similarly, this universe consisting of the worlds named Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah and Mahah, which is known as Virat, is activated by Hiranyagarbha, also known as Sutratma, possessed of inscrutable glory, who pervades the Virat. This Sutratma makes all creatures in the universe experience the consequences of their past karma.

This verse is based on Br. Up. 3.6.1. In the Bhashya on this section of the upanishad Sri Sankara points out that whatever is an effect, limited and gross, is pervaded by its cause, which is subtler than the effect. Thus the element earth is pervaded by its cause, water, water is pervaded by its cause, fire and so on. The four worlds mentioned above, along with their inhabitants, form Virat, which is the totality of all gross bodies. The gross bodies are pervaded by their cause, the subtle bodies. The totality of subtle bodies is known as Hiranyagarbha or Sutratma, because it runs like a thread (sutra) through all the gross bodies. It is this subtle body that transmigrates and goes from one gross body to another, taking along with it the impressions of the past karma of the particular Jiva, as stated in Br. Up. 4.4.2. These impressions lead to the initiation of fresh actions and also bring actions to fruition in the next life. This is why it is stated in this verse that the Sutratma (total subtle body) makes all creatures experience the consequences of their past karma.