

Satasloki

Slokas 86 to 90

यः प्रैत्यात्मानभिज्ञः श्रुतिविदपि तथा कर्मकृत्कर्मणोऽस्य
नाशः स्यादल्पभोगात्पुनरवतरणे दुःखभोगो महीयान् ।
आत्माभिज्ञस्य लिप्सोरपि भवति महाञ्जाश्रितः सिद्धिभोगो
ह्यात्मा तस्मादुपास्यः खलु तदधिगमे सर्वसौख्यान्यलिप्सोः ॥८६

86. A person who has acquired considerable punya (religious merit) by studying the Vedas and performing the rites laid down, but dies without knowing the Self (even mediately), will have all his merit exhausted after a brief period of enjoyment in heaven. He will then be born again on the earth and will become subject to suffering. But a person who has acquired mediate (paroksha) knowledge of the Self and is striving for realization will enjoy great happiness in the higher worlds for a long time even if he has not become free from desires and dies before actual direct realization of the Self. And a person who has become totally free from desires attains supreme bliss on actually realizing the Self. One should therefore meditate on the Self alone and strive for direct realization.

This verse is based on Br. Up. 1.4.15--If one departs from this world without realizing the Self, the Self will not protect him, just as the Vedas, if not studied, or any other work, not performed, do not help. Even if such a person has acquired plenty of merit in the world, that merit will certainly be exhausted. One should therefore meditate only on the Self. The merit earned by good deeds by one who meditates on the Self is never exhausted.

Gita, ch.6.40 to 45 say that a person who strives to realize the Self, but dies before actual realization will enjoy for long years in higher worlds and will ultimately get liberation after being born on the earth again.

सूर्याद्वैरर्थभानं न हि भवति पुनः केवलैर्नात्र चित्रं
सूर्यात्सूर्यप्रतीतिर्न भवति सहसा नापि चन्द्रस्य चन्द्रात् ।
अग्नेरगनेश्च किंतु स्फुरति रविमुखं चक्षुषश्चित्प्रयुक्तात्
आत्मज्योतिस्ततोऽयं पुरुष इह महो देवतानां च चित्रम् ॥८७

87. It is not by the light of the sun or moon or fire alone that objects become visible to us. The light of the sun, moon or fire cannot by itself make even the sun, moon or fire perceptible to us. These luminaries are seen by us only when the Self or Consciousness functions through the eyes. (We cannot see the sun even in daytime if we close our eyes. We do not see the moon or fire when we are asleep). It therefore follows that it is only by the light of the Self that even the sun, moon and fire are seen. The eyes, ears and other sense organs are able to see, hear, etc, only by the light of the Self. Thus the Self is the only light for all.

This is based on Br. Up. 4.3.6 which says-- 'When the sun and moon have both set, the fire has gone out and speech has stopped, it is through the light of the Self (Atma) that a person sits, goes out, works and returns'.

Even the sun, moon and fire shine only because of the Atma which is in them as the Internal Ruler. Br. Up. 3.7.9 says--'He who inhabits the sun, who is within it, whom the sun does not know, whose body is the sun and who controls the sun from within, is the Internal Ruler, your immortal Self'. There are similar statements about the moon, fire, etc.

प्राणेनाम्भांसि भूयः पिबति पुनरसावन्नमश्नाति तत्र
तत्पाकं जाठरोऽग्निस्तदुपहितबलो द्राक्शनैर्वा करोति ।
व्यानस्सर्वाङ्गनाडीष्वथ नयति रसं प्राणसन्तर्पणार्थं
निस्सारं पूतिगन्धं त्यजति बहिरयं देहतोऽपानसंज्ञः ॥८८

88. The Jiva (individual) drinks water and eats food with the help of the Prana or vital force. This Prana has five different names according to the five functions performed by it. These are, Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana. The digestive fire in the stomach, known as Vaisvanara, strengthened by Prana (in its aspect known as Samana) digests the food slowly or quickly. Vyana distributes the essence of the digested food to all the organs. The foul-smelling waste matter is thrown out of the body by Apana.

Though the various aspects of Prana are said to be performing these functions, it is really the Atma which gives them the power to do so. See Gita, ch.15.14-- "Taking the form of Vaisvanara and dwelling in the bodies of all creatures, I, in association with Prana and Apana, digest the four kinds of food (those masticated, those swallowed, those sucked and those licked)".

The functions of the five divisions of Prana are explained in Prasnopanishad, III.

व्यापारं देहसंस्थः प्रतिवपुरखिलं पञ्चवृत्त्यात्मकोऽसौ
प्राणः सर्वेन्द्रियाणामधिपतिरनिशं सत्तया निर्विवादम् ।
यस्येत्थं चिद्घनस्य स्फुटमिह कुरुते सोऽस्मि सर्वस्य साक्षी
प्राणस्य प्राण एषोऽप्यखिलतनुभृतां चक्षुषश्चक्षुरेषः ॥८९

89. Prana, the vital force, which is the ruler of all the organs and gives them the power to perform their activities, has five different names, namely, Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana, according to the five different activities performed. This Prana, which is well established in each body is able to perform all these activities only because of the presence of Brahman or the Self who is pure consciousness. This Brahman is therefore called the Prana of Prana, in the sense that it is what enables the Prana to perform its activities. It is also the eye of the eye, because it is only because of the presence of the Self that the eye is able to see. Similarly all the other organs of sense and action get the power to perform their respective activities only because of the presence of the Self. At the same time, the Self is a mere

witness of the activities of all the organs. It does not itself either act or make the organs act, because it is actionless. I am this Self (and not the mind, organs or physical body).

Though Prana is the 'kriyasakti' or the activating power, it is by itself insentient and gets sentiency only from the Self. Kathopanishad, 2.2.5 says-- No mortal being lives by Prana or Apana; but all live by something else on which these two depend. (This something else is the Self).

Kenopanishad, 1.2 says-- He (the Self) is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the Prana of Prana, the eye of the eye; therefore wise men, after giving up identification with the senses and renouncing the notions of 'I' and 'mine', become immortal.

यं भान्तं चिद्घनैकं क्षितिजलपवनादित्यचन्द्रादयो ये
भासा तस्यैव चानु प्रविरलगतयो भान्ति तस्मिन्वसन्ति ।
विद्युत्पुञ्जोऽग्निसंघोऽप्युडुगणविततिर्भासयेत्किं परेशं
ज्योतिः शान्तं ह्यनन्तं कविमजममरं शाश्वतं जन्मशून्यम् ॥९०

90. It is by the light of that one and only pure consciousness (Brahman) that the earth, water, air, sun, moon and everything else, each of which has its own form, ways and characteristics, shines. They all owe their existence to that Brahman. Can even innumerable flashes of lightning, fires or clusters of stars illumine that supreme ruler of all, who is not born when bodies are born during creation or even at the beginning of a new cycle of creation, who is immortal, is eternal, is calm because of being untouched by any attachments, aversions and the like, is beyond the limitations of time, space and objects, is omniscient and self-effulgent?

This is based on Mundakopanishad, 2.2.10-- The sun does not illumine it, nor the moon, or the stars; nor do flashes of lightning illumine it, what to say of fire? Everything shines in consequence of that alone.

Both the words जन्मशून्यं and अजं mean only 'birthless'. The use of both these words in the same verse is to bring out the conclusions arrived at in Brahmasutra 2.3.16 and 2.3.17. In Br. su. 2.3.16 it is held--"The mention of both birth and death of the Jiva applies in the primary sense only to the bodies (of the embodied beings who are born and die during the existence of the universe)". In 2.3.17 it is held that even at the beginning of a new cycle of creation after a Pralaya, when the elements such as space, air, etc are born from Brahman, the Jiva is not born, because the Jiva, being the same as Brahman, is eternal.