

# Mandukya Upanishad, Class 4

Shloka # 1:

Om, the word, is all this. A clear explanation of it is (the following)- all that is past, present and future, verily, is OM. That which is beyond the three periods of time is also indeed, OM.

Swamiji said, in last class I pointed out that the first mantra is introducing two types of analysis: Omkara Vichara in mantra #1 and Atma Vichara in mantra # 2.

We saw mantra # 1 where it said Omkara is everything. What is everything? Everything includes all that falls within time and falls outside of time. Thereafter the Upanishad explained what is within time? Everything belonging to past state, present state and future states are within time. What is beyond time? Brahman, Maya etc that are outside of time are also included in Sarvam. We can present this in an equation that says: Omkara =All.

Thus, by analyzing Omkara, you are also analyzing everything. It is also known as Sarva Vichara. Thus, again, when you arrive at the reality through Omkara Vichara you are also arriving at the reality of the Universe. This is the advantage of Omkara Vichara.

Citing a story supporting this, Lord Subramania and Lord Ganesha had a contest as to who could do a sarva pradakhsanam of the world fastest. Lord Subramanya jumped on his Peacock and started travelling. Lord Ganesha whose vehicle was the mouse and who was also fat could not travel as fast; but being wiser, he just decided to perform a pradakshanam of Shiva and Parvathy, who jointly represent the universe or sarva prapancha. Just like Lord Ganesha, we are also taking a short cut through Omkara Vichara to know about everything.

Explaining the meaning of words in mantra, swamiji said, Tasya means Omkara and Upakhyanam means exposition.

For Omkara Vichara, first is introduction and analysis in mantra # 1, but its implementation is described in mantras #8-# 12. Upto this we saw in last class.

## **Mantra # 2:**

**All this is verily Brahman. This Atman is Brahman. This Atman has four quarters.**

This mantra deals with Atma Vichara or Atma Mimamsa. Here the second enquiry is introduced. The entire Universe is Brahman; this Universe includes things in time and things outside of time.

First mantra can be stated in an equation as:  
Omkara=Everything or Sarva Vichara.

The second Mantra can also be stated in an equation as:

Everything=Brahman.

Therefore, Brahma Vichara is same as Everything Vichara or Sarva Vichara. Vichara means enquiry or analysis.

What is the blessed Brahman? Brahman is Atma; or Self; or myself, or I. This "I", is the one who is intimately available all the time. This I, the ever-evident Atma, equals Brahman.

Thus: Everything =Brahman

Brahman=Atma

Therefore, Everything =Atma.

If Everything = Atma, the self; then enquiry into everything can be accomplished by enquiry into Atma or Atma Vichara. Enquiry into myself will reveal "Everything" in Creation. You just have to know the truth about yourself. So, we have Atma

Vichara.

Thus, both Omkara vichara and Atma vichara have same destination although they are different. They are just two methods to arrive at knowledge of everything. Thus, the second enquiry has been introduced.

In mantra # 2 the **statement “ Ayam Atma Brahma”** is considered a mahavakyam. The other maha vakyam's are:

Tat Tavam Asi: occurring in Sama Veda's Chandogya Upanishad.

Pragyam Brahma: Occurring in Rg Veda's Aithreya Upanishad.

Aham Brahma Asmi is from Yajur Veda's Briharadanyaka Upanishad.

Ayam Atma Brahma: Occurring in Atharvana Veda's Mandukya Upanishad.

Having introduced the two methods the Upanishad now elaborates on them but not necessarily in the same order. The Upanishad takes up Atma Vichara first. This begins in mantra #2 in “ Soyamatma Chatuspat” and continues until mantra # 7. It is all about Atma Vichara. Atma is introduced as Chatuspada Atma. It means Atma has four padas. Pada has many meanings including: legs, aspects, expressions, and facets. In context of our discussion the meaning facet is probably the best to use.

What is the four aspected Atma?

I will give a birds eye view of these four aspects. It is a unique presentation not found elsewhere in any Upanishad. This also makes Mandukya Upanishad famous but also makes it a difficult one to comprehend.

As per Vedanta if anything in creation has to be proven as existent it has to fulfill one condition; it should become an object of knowledge. If a thing is not an object of knowledge

we can't talk of its existence or its Prameyatvam. Prameyatvam means being an object of knowledge, to prove it exists.

First of all, when a thing is an object of knowledge it means it must be an object of anyone of the following six pramanas: pratyaksha, anumana, upamana arthapatti, anupalabdhi and Shabda.

Secondly even if anything is not an object of knowledge now, the present, even if it was in the past or if it will be in the future, it should be an object of pramanam.

Even if the object does not become a part of my knowledge, if it should be an object of somebody's knowledge or an object of something's (living beings), knowledge, even then it exists.

Prameyatvam: can be based upon one of the pramanam's or knowledge of an identified object.

Prameyatvam can be based upon pramanam or knowledge of an object from a past, present or future state.

Prameyatvam can also be based upon Pramanam or knowledge of an object by a living being.

Only based on the three above can we talk of existence of that thing.

Imagine that there is such a thing but it does not have status of prameyatvam (not part of any pramana); it is not an object of past, present or future; and it is not known by any being. If so, how can we talk of existence of such a thing? If there is such a thing, an object without Pramanam, not known by any living being, at any time including past present and future, we have to conclude such a thing as non-existent.

Even if you can imagine the existence of such a thing in your wild imaginations, the existence has no relevance or purpose because it is not known to anyone or thing. Because, if such a thing is not known to anyone, at any time, it does not matter,

if it exists. Since there is no limit to such a thing hence it is considered non-existent. Thus:

1. A thing exists only when it is an object of knowledge or Prameya. Prameyatvam is the only condition for existence.
2. If a thing has to be a Prameyam, an object of knowledge that is known to exist, such a status is possible only when there is a Pramata or a Knower.

**An object of knowledge can't be there unless there is a knower.** So, existence of anything depends upon the Pramata. Without Pramata nothing can be Prameyam, meaning they can't exist. Therefore, existence depends on Pramata.

### **Mantra # 3:**

**The first quarter (pada) is "Vaisvanara" whose sphere is the waking state, who is conscious of the external world of objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who enjoys the gross objects of the world.**

A pramata, a Knower, is possible, only when "I" as consciousness principle, chooses to know something. By employing some pramanam; and only when I choose to know using the pramanam; the Knower comes into existence.

Thus, in jagrat avasta I choose to know things, hence I am a Knower (Pramata). In swapna avastha, I use pramanam and choose to know swapna objects; hence I am a Knower in swapna avastha.

In sushupti, I don't choose to know anything; so I am not a knower. Thus the knower is not an independent entity. The knower comes into existence only when "I" the consciousness wants to know.

Thus, the Pramata, Knower, is also a dependent entity on the "I" the consciousness principle. Now, "I" by himself, is not a

knower. The Knower (Pramata) is also a dependent entity. It enjoys a dependent existence on Me, the conscious principle.

So, consolidating these ideas we have three points:

1. Prameyam, to be known, is dependent existence.
2. Pramata, Knower, is also dependent existence.
3. Thus Knower, Pramata, and Knowable, Prameyam, are both dependent existence.

Prameya depends on Pramata.

Pramata depends on I the atma.

Thus both, Pramata and Prameya, depend upon Me. Prameyam depends indirectly on Me. Pramata depends on Me directly. Ultimately both, directly and indirectly, depend on Me.

Knower and knowable both depend on the Atma, the consciousness principle or Me. Once I say both have dependent existence we have to remember previous five Upanishads that we have studied. Thus, in Taittiriya Upanishad it says, whatever has a dependent existence, with no substantiality of its own, is considered Mithya.

The Upanishad's Pancha Kosha Viveka also brought this point out.

Pramata and Prameya are both Mithya, as they don't have an independent existence. Mithya is only a name and form without substance of its own.

Mithya nama rupa depends on the Satya Vastu, the atma, the consciousness principle or I.

Another way of saying it is: **I, satya atma, alone appear as pramata(knower) and prameyam (known) with mithya nama and rupa. I put on a vesham of Pramata and Prameyam.** This entire mithya nama rupa's fall in three categories:

1. Mithya nama rupa in jagrat avastha. This is known as Sthula nama rupa or gross names and forms.
2. Mithya nama rupa in svapna avastha is known as sukshma nama rupa.
3. All nama rupa are in potential form in sushupti avastha and it is called karana nama rupa.

In jagrit avastha, the "I", puts on sthula nama rupa and appears as jagrit pramatha and jagrit prameyam. Hence, I am now sthula atma.

In svapna avastha, I put on sukshma nama and rupa and appear as svapna pramatha and svapna prameya. I am now called sukshma atma.

In sushupti avastha I put on karana nama rupa and appear as sushupti pramata and sushupti prameya. I am now called karana atma.

Sthula Atma: In Jagrat Avastha, with Jagrat nama rupa, the Jagrat Pramata (knower) with jagrat Prameya (known), I take on a new name and I am called Sthula Atma.

Sukshma Atma: In Svapna Avastha, with Svapna nama rupa, the Svapna Pramata (knower) with Svapna Prameya (known), I take on a new name and I am called Sukshma Atma.

Karana Atma: In Sushupti Avastha, with karana nama rupa, wherein Sushupti Pramata (knower) with Sushupti Prameya (known) are in a resolved condition, I take on a new name and I am called Karana Atma.

Thus, I have three appearances; three nama rupa's or three roles; but who am I really?

When I look at myself from my own standpoint; that I, from my own standpoint am called Turiya atma. It is not an "I" from sukshma, sthula and karana atma's respective standpoints of view.

Therefore, when I am not a Pramata from jagrat, svapna or sushupti standpoint; when I am not a Prameya from jagrat, svapna or sushupti standpoint, now I am called by the name Turiya atma.

So, I have four facets. They are: Sthula atma pada, Sukshma atma pada, Karana atma pada and Turiya atma pada, hence I am called chatushpada atma.

Of the four padas, which is satyam and which is mithya?

First, second and third are mithya as they have mithya nama rupas. Fourth is satyam. Thus "I" has three mithya padams and one Satya padam.

Now Upanishad will talk of first pada related to Sthula atma in mantra # 3; fourth mantra will discuss the second pada of Sukshma atma; fifth and sixth mantras will take up third pada related to Karana atma and seventh mantra will talk about Turiya atma or the fourth pada.

Since we talk of three avastha's they are brought into discussion. This avastha traya chatushpada vichara has now begun.

### **Take Away:**

I, satya atma, alone appear as pramata(knower) and prameyam (known) with mithya nama and rupa. I put on a vesham of Pramata and Prameyam.

An object of knowledge can't be there unless there is a knower.

When I am not a Pramata from jagrat, svapna or sushupti avastha standpoint; when I am not a Prameya from jagrat, svapna or sushupti avastha standpoint, now I am called by the name Turiya atma.

**With Best Wishes,**



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