

Mandukya Upanishad

Swami Ranganathananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THOSE WHO CAN SEE FAR AHEAD they choose *shreya*. ‘Nachiketa, you have chosen *shreya*. Even though many *preyas* were presented to you by temptation, you didn’t accept it. You are a wonderful boy,’ Yama tells him. ‘Let me have more students like you.’ That is the beautiful language there in the *Katha Upanishad*. In my Upanishad lecture, I have discussed it beautifully with all details and what it means to you, to me, in daily life. I want a play in my heart. That play must be of this nature. Not leading to tragedy, but to joy and success, and fulfilment. And both these are within *maya*. All struggle is within *maya*. The saint prays—that is *maya*. The sinner commits sin—that is *maya*. But there is a difference between the two: one is thin, the other is thick. One is a little cover and the other is a thick cover. That is the difference between the two.

‘Under the influence of *Māyā* which is active from time without beginning’—it has been like this for ages—‘and which has the double characteristics of non-apprehending and misapprehending Reality.’¹⁶ *Avarana*, *vikshepa*. *Avarana*, it covers reality. *Vikshepa*, it projects non-reality as reality. Both it does. Just like Shankara’s example. In winter, a cloud covers the sun. That is called *avarana*, non-apprehension. But immediately, cold winds begin to blow. That is the second product of that phenomenon, troublesome. So, *avarana*, *vikshepa*. A beautiful example he has given in the *Vivekachudamani*. Especially in the Himalayan areas, when the sun goes out, you simply lose the sun. Then I can understand: you get much worse,

cold wind blows, and trouble you get like anything. That is the *vikshepa*-shakti.

‘Experiences such dreams as, “This is my father, this is my son, this is my grandson, this is my property and these are my animals, I am their master, I am happy, I am miserable, I have suffered loss on account of this, I have gained on this account”’ (ibid.). All these various judgements we make—all under the control of these two: projection, due to covering. Just like, you cover the truth of the rope and then you project a snake on it. Without covering the rope, the snake cannot come. This is the example that Vedanta always gives: this is projection; this is veiling power—*avarana*-shakti, *vikshepa*-shakti. This is well illustrated in the *Vivekachudamani*.

‘When the *Jīva* remain asleep experiencing these dreams’—I am this, I am that, in dream also you have all these: I am this, I am that, I am being throttled by somebody, even in dream you get these feelings and then you shout—in the two states of waking and dream. In both the states we have these experiences. What I am not, I experience as this and that. ‘He is then thus awakened’—when he is awakened from these two types of sleep—‘by the gracious teacher who has himself realised the Reality indicated by *Vedānta*: “Thou art not this, of the nature of cause and effect, but That thou art”’ (ibid.), the teacher tells. Then only he awakens: ‘I thought I was only this. Now I come to see I am something else. I am the infinite one.’ That is a wonderful truth. Nothing petty can come even intellectually grasping such a truth. Say, racial pride,

all these kinds of things that afflict humanity can never come close to even intellectually grasping such truth. In the nineteenth century they realised it intellectually. Then, they fought against slavery; abolished slavery. So many humanistic things came from a little intellectual apprehension of these two. When you realise it, it is quite different. ‘He, then, realises his real nature. What is his nature? It (Self) is birthless, because it is beyond cause and effect’ (ibid.). Unborn. Why? Because, it is beyond cause and effect. Within cause and effect, it is always born, constantly changing. Beyond cause and effect, no birth and so, no death. ‘It (Self) is birthless’—ajam—‘because it is beyond cause and effect and because it has none of the characteristics such as birth ... which are (inevitably) associated with all (relative) existence’ (ibid.). Anything in the world of relativity is subject to these: birth, growth, development, decay, and finally death—six changes; six waves of changes from which every thing in the world is suffering.

Jayate—coming to birth; number one. Then, it is able to, say, it exists: *asti*. Only then can you say it exists. Then, it grows, *vardhate*. Then, it transforms, *viparinamate*. Then, it becomes decayed, *apakshiyate*. And, finally, it dies, *vinashyati*. It is *anidram*, sleepless. It does not mean that a *jnani* will not sleep, but he is not sleeping in the sleep of ignorance. Having realised the truth of his true nature he does sleep like anybody. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, we find that Sri Ramakrishna used to sleep. Jesus must have slept. Everybody has slept. But, this *anidra* is different. Non-apprehension of reality never happens once you have realised the truth; you are always in that light.

‘It is *Anidram* (sleepless), because there does not exist in it *Nidra* (sleep), the cause, of the nature of the darkness of *Avidyā*, which produces the changes called birth, etc’ (ibid.). That is called *nidra*. Because of *nidra*, non-apprehension, all these evils flow. In the case of

an illumined person, the *nidra* has ended. Sri Ramakrishna’s song in the *Gospel* is beautiful: ‘I have realised the mother and then in that state of yoga, I have put sleep to sleep.’¹⁷ This is the language that has been used. What a beautiful expression! ‘*Ghumere ghum padayechi*, I have put sleep to sleep for ever.’ That is the language. In one of the songs in the *Gospel* you will find this.

‘*Turiyā* is free from *Svapna* (dream) because it is free from *Nidra* (sleep)’ (ibid.). Why it is free from dream? Because it is free from sleep. Without sleep, there is no dream. Without sleep, there is no waking. From sleep, dream and waking have come. From non-apprehension, misapprehension of reality has come. The attitude that objects are real is what you get in both dream and waking: objects are real. The idea that the subject alone is real is Vedanta. Objects are real is what non-apprehension you get as misapprehension in waking and dream.

‘It is because the Self is free from sleep and dream therefore the *Jīvā*, then realises himself as the *Turiyā Ātman*, birthless and non-dual’ (64–5). That is the *Turiyā* realisation: in samadhi we realise this truth.

‘*Māyā* is said to be *Anādi* or beginningless’ (65) in the sense of time. Time has no beginning. You go back farther, farther, farther, farther, and at last stop. Then why don’t you go beyond it, farther? In time you can go on in this series. This series is endless, but eternity is different.

‘*Prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samshayah, mayamatramidam dvaitam advaitam paramarthata.*’¹⁸ This is also an oft-quoted verse. If the perceived manifold universe were real then it certainly would disappear. If the world is real it would disappear. How do you speak of reality then? *Prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta*. It comes to be, it ceases to be. That is its nature. This duality that is cognised is mere illusion, *maya*, *mayamatram*, it is mere *maya*. Swamiji’s lecture on

maya—two, three lectures in *Jnana Yoga* will explain this. Maya doesn't mean something in the sense of non-existence. It is; but if you question it, it cannot stand. The world is maya. It means if you question, it cannot stand and it changes to something else. Just like the clouds. Look at the clouds: you find like a city there. Then you change it, within five minutes you find another thing and then another thing. So many changes take place. The world is like that. That is Shankara's famous definition: like the cloud formation—all sorts of forms it takes as you are looking on. Non-duality alone is the supreme reality. *Prapancha* is the word. What you see in front of you, manifestation—that is relative, that is duality, multiplicity; it is unreal. The Atman, the non-dual alone is real. Non-duality alone is the supreme reality.

'If the knowledge of non-duality ... be possible', Shankara says, 'after the disappearance of the perceived manifold'—these waking and dream completely disappear and you realise the *Turiya*—'how could non-duality be said to exist (always) while the perpetual manifold remains?'¹⁹ Perpetual manifold is there and you see the Atman. How can these two go on? If you see the Atman, you cannot see the world. How is it then that it exists, when this exists? That is an important question. The jnani realises the Atman and still he sees the world. He takes food. I am sure he doesn't take the table or the chair. He takes only food, like you and me. So, manifold he sees and yet he has seen the Atman. How is it possible?

'This is explained thus: This would have been true if the manifold *really* existed' (ibid.). That is the mantra you recite during food time: '*Brahmarpanam brahma havih brahmagnau brahmanahutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarma samadhina.*'²⁰ Everything is Brahman: food, eater, eating, satisfaction—everything is Brahman. 'This manifold being only a false imagination, like the snake in the rope, does

not *really* exist.'²¹ The particle and the field—the particle does not exist as something separate and independent. So long as the field is there, the particle will be there. If the field is not there, where will be the particle? That is the language.

'The snake imagined in the rope, through false conception, does not *really* exist and therefore does not disappear' (ibid.). Because it does not exist, it does not disappear. Where does the world disappear? The world is not there, therefore there is no question of appearing, disappearing. It is all the Atman at that state. In this state, it constantly disappears and new worlds come—changing, changing, changing. 'Does not disappear through correct understanding. Nor, similarly, does the illusion of the vision conjured up by the magician exist and then disappear as though a veil thrown over the eyes of the spectators (by the magician) were removed' (ibid.). Rama produces one bottle and out of that, twenty bottles in one second. So many bottles are on the table. Where from has he brought it? Even now he came, took a red handkerchief put it on the hand and then he held out his hand for all to see his empty hand. Then he pushed it through the red handkerchief completely so that even the end of the handkerchief was pushed. Then he recited a mantra and then pushed it out from the other side. A blue handkerchief came out, beautiful, blue handkerchief. 'The magician alone is real and his magic unreal', Sri Ramakrishna said.²² Politicians are the best magicians—juggling figures and all that.

'Similar is the duality of the cognized universe called the Phenomenal or manifold, *maya-matram dvaitam*',²³ which is a mere maya. That you and I have a separate consciousness is maya. Schrödinger said that there is only one consciousness; consciousness has no plural. I am glad that these acute minds of nuclear scientists can appreciate Vedanta—extremely acute minds. 'Non-duality *Turiya* like the rope and the

magician ... is alone the Supreme Reality. Therefore the fact is that there is no such thing as the manifold about which appearance or disappearance can be predicated' (ibid.).

With respect to the Atman, there is no such thing. But by itself, it is so much a manifold, constantly coming into birth, changing, dying—all that is there. 'People say that duality disappears only because they first believe in its reality' (67) of the duality. Then there is a disappearance. Don't believe in the reality of the duality.

'Supreme reality—That is, it is never absent' (ibid.). That is the meaning of the supreme reality. Particles come and go, the field remains. 'If one contends that *Turiya* does not exist when the manifold is seen'—when I see the manifold, there is no *Turiya*; *Turiya* has become the manifold; that is not correct—we reply that manifold is nothing but Brahman' (ibid.). Particle is nothing but the field. 'Only the illusion which manifests the manifold as separate from Brahman comes and goes' (ibid.); illusion comes and goes. World is always Brahman. I see it as non-Brahman. Even then it is Brahman. Suppose I say I am a jiva—full of grief, I am this, I am that; *even* then you are only Brahman. We find this sentence in Shankara's commentary on the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: 'Even before the knowledge of Brahman every being is Brahman and one with all.' That is the truth about you. In spite of its crying and shouting: 'bah, bah', the sheep cries; you are really a lion. You don't know your real nature. You may go on bleating. Your real nature is lion. That is the truth Vedanta wants to convey.

'This *Kārikā* deals with the crux of the *Vedānta* Philosophy. Vedanta says that non-duality (*Turiya*) alone is real and ever-existent' (ibid.). That means God alone *is*. Everything else comes and goes. 'But the opponent points out to him the fact of the existence of the universe which incontestably proves duality. If this universe be real, then non-duality

(*Turiya*) cannot be a fact' (ibid.). That is correct. 'If non-duality is realised only after the disappearance of the objective universe, then non-duality cannot certainly exist so long as the universe exists' (ibid.). That is the contention. Therefore, the Vedantin will say: 'No. Now I am weak, I am a jiva, I am limited—all these are on the truth that I am essentially the Atman. The truth is hidden and all these things are projected.' That is all.

Vedanta 'shows its boldest genius in answering this question. It at once states that non-dual Brahman alone exists' (ibid.). The word *sat*, existence, being, can be applied only to this. 'Whatever is, is nothing but Brahman' (ibid.). Table, chair, you, and I—are all Brahman. It is this, against which Narendra, the pre-monastic name of Swami Vivekananda, protested to Sri Ramakrishna when he taught this: 'What kind of nonsense philosophy are you teaching me? This talk—table is Brahman, pot is Brahman—hopeless. He went out of the room. Then Sri Ramakrishna smiled: 'He will understand it later on.' Then Narendra joined with Hazra, who was smoking there. Hazra was a proud philosopher sitting outside and both of them talked. Then they were in a jolly mood: 'See, what kind of nonsense the master is teaching: "This table is Brahman, pot is Brahman, hopeless." Like that they were making fun of the master. And the master came out and said: 'Naren, do you not still understand?' He just touched him and the whole thing changed. Everything changed. Narendra said: 'Now, I understand.' It is just a change in understanding; that is all.²⁴

'As Brahman, it always exists and never undergoes any change. If a man realises the universe as Brahman, then he is never subject to any illusion regarding its reality. The difference between a *Jñānī* and an *Ajñānī*'—a knowing man and an ignorant man—is that a wise man sees the universe as Brahman and therefore never sees in it any appearance or any disappearance. But the ignorant

person believes in the reality of the universe as apart from Brahman and therefore talks about its disappearance' (ibid.). Sri Ramakrishna calls these three stages as: *ajnani*, *jnani*, *vijnani*. *Ajnani* is the ignorant man, who says that the world I see, touch, and feel is alone real; there is nothing else. The *jnani* says that this is all a mere appearance, illusion, and Brahman alone is real. The *vijnani* says that Brahman alone has become all this. Whatever you see is all Brahman only—that is *vijnana*. *Ajnana*, *jnana*, *vijnana*. *Vijnana* is the standard, from which you can conduct your life most efficiently.

'The universe as Brahman does not appear and disappear. It always is. The meaning of the disappearance of the universe really is the disappearance of one's notion of illusion (*i.e.*, the existence of the universe as something other than Brahman)' (ibid.). The illusion changes, not the universe.

Now, this is an important subject. We see that only nuclear physicists are putting this idea in this form. There is a study on the theory of the nature of an electron by Sir James Jeans titled *The New Background of Science*. He says: 'As this is one of the most difficult parts of the new quantum theory, let us try to illustrate it by a very prosaic illustration.'²⁵ This is the language he uses in that section. What is the prosaic illustration? One John Smith went to the London office of a travelling agent and went away somewhere. Now, what is the knowledge of John Smith at present? Absolutely indeterminate: where he is, we do not know. Let us put a thick fog on the whole part of the world about John Smith. That is a fog. Then, you start with the travelling agent's office, in search of John Smith. There you get a little information. Well, a passenger by name John Smith has left by steamer three days ago to London. Then what happens? Your knowledge of John Smith becomes a fog, which disappears from everywhere else and thickens on the three-day journey to the Atlantic—somewhere there. It is called the probability

of finding John Smith; you find there. Then, where shall we find him? Alright, you are going to send a telegram, a cable, which goes at express speed to the three-day journey from London to that Atlantic Ocean. You send that cable to determine where is John Smith and then, as you come out, you run into John Smith himself; just in front. What has happened now? All that fog filling the three-day journey to the Atlantic disappears in an instant. And then John Smith is here—that knowledge comes. Now what is the nature of the disappearance? This fog will take time to disappear. But this does not take time, it is instantaneous. What is the nature of that? It is only the probability of John Smith and probabilities can travel like that. It is not the real John Smith. Very interesting illustration; almost like this language you find there. It is a fog. This fog is not the fog that delays shipping but the fog of ignorance, James says there. They have studied Shankara also. This fog is not the thick fog that delays shipping. It is the fog of ignorance, non-understanding, which quickly goes. As you see John Smith here just now, you run into him—he says; it is the language there.

The last sentence is simply marvellous. He says that when you take a final look at the universe in the light of twentieth-century physics what has happened is not that something non-material has been added to the picture, but nothing non-material has survived the picture. 'Mind reigning supreme and alone' (296). Mind alone is. Mind creates this universe. That kind of language came in physics at that time.

Disappearance of the universe means disappearance of the notion—your notion that the universe is something apart from Brahman—that goes away. 'It is like the illusion conjured up by the magician.'²⁶ It just goes. 'When the real nature of the rope is pointed out, what disappears is only the illusion which presented the rope as other than it is. The on-looker, after his error is

pointed out, realises that what he considered as snake is really the rope' (68). How quickly, when he sees the rope, snake disappears. So quickly it disappears. Ignorance disappears; the snake has not disappeared. The snake will take some time to slither away, but here, it goes immediately, because it is ignorance only. Ignorance can go. 'Knowledge removes this illusion. This illusion is unsubstantial and unreal, hence its appearance and disappearance cannot affect the nature of Reality' (ibid.). That is the great utterance.

"*Vikalpo vinivarteta kalpito yadi kenachit, upadeshadayam vado jnate dvaitam na vidyate.*"²⁷ This is also an oft-quoted verse with many commentaries. 'If anyone has ever imagined the manifold ideas (such for instance as the teacher, the taught, and the scripture), they might disappear.'²⁸ These differences are there. There is the teacher, there is the teaching, there is the taught. How can you allow this to disappear, when he is already teaching there? If you think so, they might disappear, because there is distinction, they may disappear. 'This explanation is for the purpose of teaching' (ibid.). '*Upadeshat ayam vado.*' There is such a thing as teaching, communication of ideas—taking it for granted you make a distinction: teacher, teaching, taught. Otherwise, there is no such thing. 'Duality (implied in explanation) ceases to exist when the Highest Truth is known' (ibid.). That is why in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* you read when Janaka told Yajnavalkya: 'You have promised to teach me, you teach me.' He said, 'First give me my offering, *dakshina*, then I will teach you.' But generally people take this *dakshina*, offering, after the teaching. That may be with other subjects, not this, because at the end of the teaching there will be neither the teacher nor the student. 'Give it to me now', in humour, he said.²⁹ That is the meaning of that. Where is the teacher, where is the teaching in that state? Everything is one.



Sir James Jeans (1877–1946)

'How could (duality implied in) ideas such as the teacher, the taught, and the scripture disappear?' Shankara explains: 'If such ideas had ever been imagined by someone then they might be supposed to disappear. As the manifold is like the illusion (conjured up by the magician or) of the snake in the rope, so also are the ideas of the teacher'—teaching and the taught—'These ideas, namely, the ideas of the teacher, taught, and scripture are for the purpose of teaching which are (therefore appear) true till one realises the highest truth. But duality does not exist when one, as a result of the teaching, attains knowledge ... realises the Highest Reality.'³⁰ There is no duality there. Shastra, *shasta*, and *shishya*—all are the same. The student, teacher, and the shastra—the book or science—the same truth is there for all the three. Shastra means the scripture or the science, *shishya* is the student, *shasta* is the teacher.

'Such ideas as teacher, student and scripture have their applicability till one realises the Highest Truth of non-duality (*Turiya*). Such ideas, possible only from the standpoint of ignorance, cannot contradict *Turiya* because they are unreal and negatable by knowledge' (69). What can be negated by knowledge is not real. In classical

physics, you will see a picture of the world: separate time, separate space. Nuclear physics, relativity, abolishes these things. What happened? Is it real? Yes, it is real from that standpoint of nineteenth-century physics; of an observer, separate from observed data. Then it is all right. It is not unreal. It is not false. It is real within the limitations of that world of physics. That is the language they use today. In classical physics, it is not real. In relativity physics, quantum physics, it is real. But classical physics is a limiting notion of relativity physics. That is the language they use. That is the language Vedanta always uses. 'Brahman cannot be logically inferred from the world like the fire from the smoke' (ibid.). Where there is smoke there is fire. You can infer fire by a particular indication called smoke. Here, you cannot infer Brahman. Brahman is uninferable. 'Fire and smoke are objective realities of the same order'—of *drishyam*. 'That is not so with the Brahman and the world. But the seeing of an object implies the seer. So Brahman may only be indicated' (ibid.). Brahman can only be indicated, you cannot infer. 'It has been seen in the previous *Kārikā* that the manifold is Brahman. As the wave is non-different from water, so also the world is non-different from Brahman. The idea that what we see is not Brahman has got such attributes as birth, changeability, destruction, etc., is illusion which being negated enables one to realise the Highest Truth. Similarly the various ideas one has with regard to the manifold, are non-different from Brahman' (ibid.).

In dream you see difference. In dream you cannot escape from seeing the difference. Suppose in dream you are able to see that everything is mind: 'Whatever I see in this dream, everything is mind'. Then you wake up. You cannot be in dream anymore. The misapprehension in dream cannot exist when this awakening will come to you. Mind alone is real. None of these is real and they go away in a trice. As soon as you know it is

the mind, whole dream goes away. It is an illusory knowledge. 'The Highest Truth is that the manifold as well as various thoughts associated with it are identical with *Brahman*. The non-duality (*Turiya*) alone is' (69–70). That is the truth.

Now the text of the Upanishad begins. The eighth mantra: *So'yamatma*, this Atman. I am this Atman. *Ayam* means 'this'. *Adyaksharam*—let us study it in terms of the syllable Om. *Omkarō'dhimatram pada matra, matrashcha pada akara ukaro makara iti*. 'The same *Ātman* (which has been described above as having four quarters) is, again, *Aum*, from the point of view of the syllables, *aksharam*. The *Aum* with parts is viewed from the standpoint of sounds (letters, *matrah*). The quarters are the letters (parts) and the letters are the quarters. The letters are *A*, *U* and *M* (70)—these three. 'In the word *Aum* prominence is given to that which is indicated by several names. The word *Aum* which has been explained before as *Ātman* having four quarters is again the same *Ātman* described here from the standpoint of syllable where prominence is given to the name. What, again, is that syllable? It is thus replied: *Aum*. It is that word *Aum* which being divided into parts, is viewed from the standpoint of letters. How? Those which constitute the quarters of the atman are the letters of *Aum*. What are they? The three letters are *A*, *U* and *M* (ibid.).

Then, one by one is taken.

Jagaritasthano vaishvanaro'karah prathama matra'pteradimattvat, va'pnoti ha vai sarvan-kamanadishcha bhavati ya evam veda. He who is *Vaiśvānara*'—the self of the waking state—'having for its sphere of activity the waking state, is *A*'—*Vaiśvānara* is *A*'—the first letter (of *Aum*) on account of its all-pervasiveness'—all letters are contained in Om; the rest are only projections of Om, from *A*'—'on account of being the first' (71). The first letter is *A*. In Sanskrit, *A* is the first letter. In English also it is: a, b, c, d, and so on. This is the

common feature. ‘One who knows this attains to the fulfilment of all desires and becomes the first (of all)’ (ibid.). This is the first one.

The second one: ‘*Svapna-sthanas-taijasa ukaro dvitiya matrotkarshad-ubhayatvad-otkarshati ha vai jnanasantatim samanashcha bhavati nasyabrahmavitkule bhavati ya evam veda.* Taijasa, whose sphere of activity is the dream state, is *U*, the second letter (of *Aum*) on account of superiority or on account of being in between the two. [Between *A* and *M* is *U*, in between.] He who knows this attains to a superior knowledge’ (72).

Then finally: ‘*Sushupta-sthanah prajno makaras-tritiya matra miterapiterva minoti ha va idam sarvamapitishcha bhavati ya evam veda.* *Prājña* whose sphere is deep sleep is *M*, the third dart (letter) of *Aum*, because it is both the measure and that wherein all become one’ (73). Waking, dream—all become one in *A*. All letters become one in *M*. Because, beyond *M*, there is no further letters. Once you close the lips, you cannot produce any further sound. *A*, you begin; *M*, you end. That is called last.

‘*Prājña* associated with deep sleep is *M* ... What is the common feature? It is thus explained. ... Here appear the following śloka: ‘*Vishvasyatva-vivakshayam-adisamanyam-utkatam, matra-sampratipattau syadapti-samanyameva cha.* ... When the identity of *Viśva* and the sound (letter) *A* is intended to be described, the conspicuous ground is the circumstance of each being the first’ (75). Waking is the first state and *A* is the first sound. ‘Another reason for this identity is also the fact of the all-pervasiveness of each’ (ibid.). Waking pervades all the rest of the states. So also, the letter *A*.

‘*Taijasasyotva-vijnana utkarsho drishyate sphutam, matra-sampratipattau syad-ubhayatvam tathavidham.* ... The clear ground of realising *Taijasa* as of the same nature as *U* is the common feature of “Superiority”. Similarly another plain reason of such identity is being in

“the middle” (ibid.)— between the two.

‘*Makarabhava prajnasya mana-samanyam-utkatam, matra-sampratipattau tu laya-samanyameva cha.* Of the identity of the *Prājña* and *M* the clear reason is the common feature, ... they both are the “measure”. The other reason for such identity is another common feature, namely, all become one in both *Prājña* and *M* (76). All sounds merge in *M*.

‘*Trishu dhamasu yattulyam samanyam vetti nishchitah, sa pujiyah sarvabhutanam vandyashchaiva mahamunih.* ... He who knows without doubt, what the “common features” are in the three states, is worshipped and adored by all beings and he is also the greatest sage’ (76). That is the *Turiya*. The common feature of the all the three states, the common reality is the *Turiya*. *Turiya* as the waking self, *Turiya* as the dream self, *Turiya* as the pure consciousness of *sushupti*—that knowledge. He ‘who knows positively ... without a shadow of doubt, the common features that are found in the three states, is worshipped and adored in the world. He is a knower of Brahman’ (ibid.).

‘*Akaro nayate vishvam-ukarashchapi taijasam, makarashcha punah prajnam namatre vidyate gatih.* ... The sound (letter) *A* helps its worshipper to attain to *Viśva*, *U* to *Taijasa*, and *M* to *Prājña*. In the “Soundless” there is no attainment’ (77). You are that, soundless, *amatra*. That is the dot of Om. There is no going or coming there; no attainment there. Here only, all the things—attainments, non-attainments are there.

‘Having identified the quarters of the *Ātman* with the sounds (letters) of *Aum*, on account of the common features ... he who realises the nature of the sound *Aum* ... and meditates upon it, attains to *Viśva* through the help of *A* (ibid.). Attains to *Taijasa* with the help of *U*, and similarly, *Prajna* with *M*. But, *M* too disappears. Causality itself is negated in the highest state. ‘Therefore about such *Aum*, which thus becomes soundless,

no attainment can be predicated' (ibid.). This is a very subtle observation. 'It is the idea of causality that makes a man think that he realises the same world after *Susupti* which he had seen before going to sleep' (78). After *Turiya*, you never realise the same world. Everything is Atman. But from *sushupti* you come back. You see: 'The same world I left yesterday. Same relationship, the same things continue.'

Then the last verse of the Upanishad comes: '*Amatrashchaturtho.*' That is about the last dot, point, soundless. '*avyavaharyah prapan-chopashamah shivo'dvaita evamomkara atmaiva samvishatyatmanatmanam ya evam veda.* That which has no parts (soundless), incomprehensible (with the aid of the senses), the cessation of all phenomena, all bliss and non-dual *Aum*, is the fourth and verily same as the *Ātman*' (ibid.). *Turiya* is the same as this *amatra*, soundless, Om. 'He who knows this merges his self in the Self' (ibid.).

That is the last text of the Upanishad. Shankara says: 'The *amatrah* (soundless) is that which has no parts' (ibid.). It has no separate sounds and letters. Om, at least, you can divide—*A*, *U*, *M*. Last one, no separate sounds.

This partless *Aum* which is the fourth is nothing but Pure *Ātman*. It is incomprehensible, because both speech and mind which correspond to the name and the object disappear or cease; the name and the object (that is indicated by the name) which are only the forms of speech and mind cease or disappear (in the partless *Aum*). It is the cessation of all the (illusion of) phenomena and all bliss and is identical with non-duality. *Aum*, as thus understood, has three sounds which are the same as the three quarters and therefore *Aum* is identical with *Ātman*. He who knows this merges his self in the Self which is the Highest Reality. Those who know Brahman, i.e., those who realise the Highest Reality merge into Self, because in their case the notion of the cause which

corresponds to the third quarter (of *Ātman*) is destroyed (burnt) (78–9).

The causality, which was embedded in the *Prajna*, in the sleep state, that is burnt. Then everything is the Atman only. Otherwise you say that from that causality the world has come. Then it goes back again for another sleep. This causality coming and going continues. But when that causality is burnt, *Prajna* alone is the Atman. *Prajna* alone is realised as the *Turiya*. 'They are not born again, because *Turiya* is not a cause' (79).

(To be continued)

Notes and References

16. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), 64.
17. This is Swami Ranganathananda's own translation from the Bengali original. The translation by Swami Nikhilananda is: 'O Divine Mother, made one with Thee in yoga-sleep at last, My slumber I have lulled asleep for evermore.' (M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 698).
18. Gauḍapada, *Mandukya Karika*, 1.18.
19. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
20. Bhagavadgita, 4.24.
21. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
22. *Gospel*, 787.
23. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
24. See His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 1.95–7.
25. Sir James Jeans, *The New Background of Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 241.
26. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 67–8.
27. *Mandukya Karika*, 1.18.
28. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 68.
29. See *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 3.1.1–3.
30. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 68.