

«The aspirant, undergoing devotional practices, lives under the impression of the manifested *Brahman*. (However, he thinks that) prior to creation, *Brahman* was not born. Therefore, such aspirant cannot but be limited in his vision»¹.

We can meditate upon this *sūtra* to comprehend certain attitudes of dependence that often prevail in the relationship between a disciple and his Master.

Without realizing it, through petty daily worries, *avidyā* (metaphysical ignorance) prevails over our *sādhana*. Often, rather than following the instructions of a Sage that invites us to meditate and wonder: Who are we? Where do we come from? Why and how did we manifest? What is this body? What is our destination? etc., we worry about “what we will eat or wear...” These petty preoccupations, although understandable from a certain perspective, express an attitude of “devotion” toward existence itself.

Isn't it true that to materialize our desires we build “superior” images and entrust them with the task of satisfy what we wish for? To the god of our desires, fruit of our projections, we ask to worry about our life. If He didn't do it, what would it be of the task/role that we entrusted him with, of our sense of guilt? What sort of God would he be if he didn't justify and redeem us?

This is the god of the analytical mind: “My God, you take care of it” represents almost the *mantra* of this attitude.

We give face and personality to what does not exist, generating it, so much that it is unrecognizable to our own consciousness. CONFLICT!

This attitude is somehow the measure of what we think of as “infallible experience” of these worlds and universes to which we give autonomous, real life, acknowledging, by doing this, even if only subconsciously, the possibility of something more substantial that it is substratum to it.

To the convinced materialist, the sensorial ego is what is elected to the role of God. This attitude may temporarily, that is, in a specific time-space, hide a *deeper truth*.

There is no doubt that, on this plane, “existing” is the state all entities share, and that the absolute is *reduced* to the perpetuity of existence as the manifestation of nothingness; this nothingness is what is viewed as the absolute.

But isn't the consequence of this that nothingness can only relate to itself? Such nothingness-void becomes the reality-substratum of our existence, and in a certain way the constant and our own rite.

Somehow, in this existence, we all worship something, being only the target of our worships, the nature of what we desire and imagine, what differentiates us: «A dualist will create a distance between himself and Unity, and then will practice devotional acts, exercises, rites, etc, to obtain from his counterpart-unity, what he calls God-person,

¹ Gauḍapāda, *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*; Ch. III, *sūtra* 1. Aurea Vidya. New York. 2002

salvation, redemption, and the annulment of that very distance he created...»². But any rite, «...to perform its task, needs to be transcended at the right time because, otherwise, the cyclicity of which it has become part cannot be resolved. ...On the other hand, either we achieve rituality or we move toward meditation, as these two things can only co-exist temporarily, being not the objects of scriptural instructions, and belonging to distinct consciencial states»³.

In conclusion, our devotion is mainly, if not uniquely or univocally, directed toward ourselves; if we realized this, we would be in a better position to embrace a deeper meditation on reality and give a new direction to our daily existence. Who are we? Etc.

«Among the means that lead to liberation, devotion (*mokṣakāraṇasāmagryāṁ bhakti*) has a high position. The constant search for one's own real nature is called devotion (*bhakti*)»⁴.

Only by willing to abandon *avidyā*, which is due to fear of knowing oneself, we can redirect our intuition from sensorial to purely intellectual (*buddhi*), and give new sense to our devotion-rituality for this existence, thus entering a new level of conscience, more adherent to our belief of being “unique”. Only then, our *Master*, our God will be life itself, the *ātman* (the Self in ourselves) which, out of necessity, we might also recognize in a compassionate Sage: that who will lead us on the other bank of the river, that who will help us to fly toward our true nature.

To know “who we are” etc., equals to know our true Lord and within Him, through Him, and with Him, focusing on an act of pure abandonment re-conquer one-Self.

«... The great message of the *Upaniṣad* [and of all sacred texts] is an invitation based not on escaping, renouncing, antagonizing this world, but on recognizing Reality in its supreme expression. The great Masters tell their disciples that it is impossible to change oneself if we do not first change our vision of Reality»⁵.

om tat sat om

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² Raphael, note 1 to Śaṅkara's commentary to *kārikā* 1 of the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*. Edizioni Āśram Vidyā 1976. Rome. [Italian Edition].

³ [*Brahmasūtraśaṅkarabhāṣyam*, note 32 to comment to aphorism 41 statement; “respect”; Ch., III, part III]. Edizioni Āśram Vidyā, 2003. Rome. [Italian Edition].

⁴ Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*; *sūtra* 31. Aurea Vidyā, 2005. New York. [Coming soon].

⁵ Raphael, note 1 to Śaṅkara's commentary to *kārikā* 1 of the *Māṇḍūkyakārikā*. Op. Cit.