

«... *The solid heart of the round Truth;*
... Like a mass of round sphere»

Parmenides

Is it possible to comment or to give form to this Truth to which the great Parmenides refers us? If we could say something about the Truth, it would be only in the form of negation or subtraction. The VII *sūtra* of the *Maṇḍūkya Up.*, illuminates the vision of what cannot be seen through the eyes, nor heard with the ears; of *That* one and at the same time *This* inner Truth.

«The Sages believe that the Fourth – which has knowledge neither of the internal (subjective) nor of the external (objective) world, nor simultaneously of the former and the latter, and which, ultimately, is not (even) a unity of integral consciousness, as it is neither conscious nor unconscious – is *adr̥ṣtam*: invisible, ***avyavahārya*: non agent**, *agrāhyam*: incomprehensible, *alakṣanam*: indefinable, *acintyam*: unthinkable, *avyapadeśyam*: indescribable; it is the only *pratyayasāraṁ*: essence of *ātman* knowledge, **without any trace of manifestation**, fullness of peace and bliss devoid of duality: it is the *ātman* and as such it must be known.

[The supreme Śaṅkara comments:]

By the phrase *nāntaḥprajñam*: not conscious of the internal world, is eliminated *taijasa*. By *na bahiṣprajñam*: not conscious of the external world, is eliminated *viśva*. By *na ubhayataḥ prajñam*: not conscious of either, the intermediate state between dream and waking is abolished. By *na prajñānaghanam*: not a unity of consciousness, is negated the state of deep sleep, for this consists of a state of latency in which every thing becomes undistinguishable. By *na prajñam*: not simple consciousness, is negated the distinctive consciousness of separate things. With *nāprajñam*: not unconscious, insentience is negated.

...The Consciousness-witness is immutable in all the states, thus it follows that only *That* is real.

...*Turīya* is *adr̥ṣtam*, invisible (unperceived), and, because it is invisible, is out of any sensorial contact *avyavahāryam* (not agent) and *agrāhyam*, elusive to the grasp of the organs of action; it cannot be inferred, *alakṣanam*, because it doesn't have logical content of inference, thus it is *acintyam*, unthinkable and, therefore, is *avyapadeśam*, undescribable.

To discover *Turīya* that consciousness, always identical to itself, must be isolated from the three states of waking, dream, and deep sleep; consciousness whose nature is homogeneity. Or, the words of the *Śruti* may also signify that discovering the *ātman* without second is the only way to realize *Turīya* and that, consequently, *Turīya* represents the consciential essence of the *ātman*. In fact, the *Śruti* states: "We should meditate on It (*Turīya*) as *ātman*" (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka up.*: I, IV, 7).

... Now, by describing *Turīya* as: «*prapañciopaśamaṁ*, the extinction of every phenomenon, etc.» all possible attributes inherent to the three states are negated. *Turīya* is, thus, *śāntam*, eternal peace, that is, without change, and, equally, *śivam*, eternal bliss.

Because it is *advaitam*: non-dual, that is, devoid of illusory ideas about differentiation; *manyante*: it is called *caturtham*: the *Fourth* because it is completely

beyond the three states, which are nothing else but mere appearances. «*Saḥ ātmā*, That, in actuality, is the *ātman* that *saḥ vjñeyah*, must be realized»¹.

Since the homogenous nature of the Truth-*ātman* has been referred to as Quarter, it could be thought that it is possible to attribute It positive qualifications. A positive attribution, however, could be made only if the *jīva* or living soul is established in *That* as *Turīya*; but under such circumstances, having reconquered the One and therefore Real *unity*, the conscience would stop doubting. In other words, there would not be reason for such question. An *ens* or positive conscience does not exist but in terms of projection, of duality, and given that it is "not inferibile, because it does not have a logical content of inference" it is nonexistent as "the horns attributed to the hare"...

Further; «The following objection can be raised: “If *Brahman* as non-dual cannot have two aspects, that does not demonstrate that It lacks form. It can have the resemblance of many forms.”

As Vyāsa states (*BS*: III, ii, 14), the conclusions of the Scriptures are that *Brahman* is without forms. It is so because the Scriptures, describing the lack of forms in *Brahman*, reveal its aspect.

Here are citations from the Scriptures:

«It [*Brahman*] is neither gross nor subtle, nor short nor long...» (*Br. Up.*: III, viii, 8).

«It lacks sound, shape and it is immutable» (*Ka. Up.*: I, III, 15).

«Only the *ākāśa* manifests names and forms; what is the foundation of all is *Brahman*, is the *ātman*» (*Chā. Up.*: VIII, xiv, 1).

«*That* [*Brahman*] is not touched from cause and effect, it is without internal and external. *That ātman*, the all-perceiving, is *Brahman*. Such is the teaching [of the *Veda*]» (*Br. Up.*: II, v, 19)»².

The Truth as such is Vision in Itself, with Itself and for Itself. No language can express It other than in terms of analogy or symbol; the names, sacralized from the sacred *Ṛīṣī* and Masters and from all those Saint souls devoted to the Lord are just references to illuminate without making real that abyss which we have created within Unity.

Is it just a case that the symbol never lends itself to absolutization?

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¹ Gauḍapāda, Maṇḍūkya Up.; isūtra VII with Śāṅkara commentary. Edizioni Āśram Vidyā. Rome 1976. [Italian Edition].

² Śāṅkara, Preface to the *Śvetāśvatara Up.*