

# Implications of Speech and Silence In Isāvāsyaopaniṣad

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The Upaniṣadic discourses intend to bring out the culmination of the faculty of knowledge immanent in man through rigorous process of self-purification possible in his lifetime. Discourses, as per Advaita, have two-fold capacity: It can communicate the facts of the empirical world, and it can communicate the super-sensible Truth. Advaitins do not place Reality within the framework of language, but rather for them it is beyond language. Language is only part and parcel of the empirical world. Scriptures do not speak of Brahman as an object; it only removes one's ignorance regarding Brahman. In Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad it is said that "This Brahman indeed shines forth, when one speaks with language"-

“एतद्वै ब्रह्म दीप्यते यद्वाचा वदत्यथैतन्प्रियते यन्न वदति”.

Advaitins posits that the Reality can be primarily known only through the aspect of 'word as knowledge' (शब्दप्रमाण) which is known as the scripture, (श्रुति) or Vedantic testimony. Philosophical discourse doesn't say that Brahman is such and such, 'this' or 'that', despite it tries to reveal that Brahman is not an object of any kind. There is no contradiction in speaking about the unspeakable. This is because the Absolute transcends all empirical categories but does not forbid sayings. The ineffability of Brahman means that It is to be known differentially than the modes of empirical knowledge. Once the distinction of the knower, the known and the resulting knowledge are rooted out, Brahman will be revealed as the ever-existent self-luminous fact.

The word Brahman is etymologically derived from a root signifying

greatness. Greatness implies limitlessness, eternity and purity. By amplifying this train of thought, one comes to know more and more about Brahman - that is, one approaches closer and closer to the Knowledge of Brahman. This approach of further enquiry will lead to the realization of Brahman itself. Finally for conveying Brahman, knowledge reaches to the state of 'Silence'.

'गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानम् । शिष्याः संछिन्नसंशयाः ।।' २

The Reality is not to be attained, for it is already attained. Thus 'Silence' is the best conceivable means to convey this state . Silence is eloquent because it exactly characterizes the Reality. The subject matter of philosophical discourse is indeed ineffable, it leads to the unknown domain of speech extending towards silence.

The Upaniṣad are evident for philosophical understanding which leads to the attainment of true knowledge. The commentaries on them by Sri Sankara bring more specifications in to exposure to accomplish the Self Knowledge to the true aspirant. This work attempts to investigate the detailed glance on speech and silence as presented in Isavasyopaniṣad.

### Speech in Isavasyopaniṣad

१) “ अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो” ३

अनेजत् and एकम् these two words define the nature of Brahman . These words appear in the fourth mantra of Isavasyopaniṣad. The word अनेजत् means 'unmoving'. The root 'एज्' mean shaking. Shaking is motion; deviation from one's own condition . Ātman is devoid of this shaking. It is ever of the same form.

'अनेजत् , न एजत्। 'एज् कम्पने' कम्पनं चलनं । प्रच्युतिः तद्वर्जितम्, सर्वदा एकरूपमित्यर्थः' ४. It is not moving from one place to another. This indicates that Brahman is stable and exists firmly every where in the Universe. So it is said that Brahman is unmoving.

This Brahman is only one. The word 'एकम्' indicates its non-duality. It is One in all beings. It is spoken of as 'unmoving one', in respect of its own unconditioned aspect. And by the reason of Its following the limiting adjunct, the mind, which is the internal organ characterized by volition and doubt, It appears to be subject to modifications. Though the mind is encased in the body in this world, it is able to

reach such distance as the Brahma-loka in a single moment through volition. Hence the mind is well known as the fastest thing in the world. When that speedy mind travels fast to the world of Brahman and the like, the reflection of the Self that is consciousness is perceived to have reached there, as it were, even earlier. So It is said " मनसो जवीयः ", faster than the mind. The senses, the organs of knowledge- eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the skin are called as 'Devas', because of their efficacy to reveal objects. They can not overtake the mind which is faster than these senses. The usage " मनसो जवीयः " is purely indicating the nature of Brahman. Therefore this is the speech of Brahman. But if we go deeper sense, we can understand that, the word " मनसो जवीयः " is pointing to an opposite implication that is the significance of 'silence'. It leads to the silent connotation of Brahman beyond all expressions through language.

२) ' तदेजति तन्नेजति तदूरे तद्वन्तिके । तदन्तस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ।।' <sup>5</sup>

This verse describes the character of the Self. The entity of Self is denoted as 'एजति'. It means that the Self moves. That again by itself 'न एजति', does not move. The meaning is that, though in Itself it is motionless, It seems to move. It moves in Its conditioned form, and It does not move in Its unconditioned form. It is 'तदूरे' -it seems to be far away. Because It is unattainable by the ignorant person, even in hundreds or millions of years. It is very near 'तद्वन्तिके' to the men of knowledge, It being their Self. Hence it is not far off, but very near too. It is inside of all the creatures. Bṛhadāraṇyakaśruti states this as – 'एष त आत्मा सर्वान्तरः' <sup>6</sup>. The self that is within all of this world consists of every name, form and activity. That is also outside of all this. Because It is all-pervasive like space. It is inside, because It is extremely subtle. Besides, It is without interstices. It is continuous.

३) 'सपर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्नावीरं शुद्धमपापविद्धम् । कविर्मनीषी परिभूः स्वयम्भूर्याथातथ्यतोऽर्थान् । व्यदधाच्छाश्वतीभ्यः समाभ्यः ।।' <sup>7</sup>

This verse also describes the characteristics of Brahman in many words. The Self is all-pervasive like space. The word 'पर्यगात्' 'परि' means on all sides, and अगात् means went. So this word is indicating the all-pervasiveness of Self. He is pure bright or resplendent. He is bodiless. It means he is without even a subtle body.

He is without wound or otherwise learned scathless. He is devoid of sinews. He has no sin. By the two expressions, 'without wound' and 'without sine' the gross body is negated. He is 'शुद्धम्' taintless. It hints that He is devoid of the devil of ignorance. Thereby the causal body is also negated. He is untouched by sin in the form of merit and demerit. The idea is that the Self transcends morality, though a man of knowledge never acts immorally. He is called ऋविः- Omniscient. It means He is the seer of past and the seer of all. Sruti declares that "नान्यदतोऽस्ति द्रष्टृ" <sup>8</sup> there is no other seer but this. So He is the omniscient God. He is one who exists above all. So He is considered as transcendent. He exists by himself. In this sense, He is self-existent. He is ever-free and all-powerful Lord, because of His Omniscience.

4) 'हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् । तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥' <sup>9</sup>

Here Brahman is termed as 'satya'. This verse denotes that the face of truth is concealed by golden vessel. O Sun, open it so as to be seen by me who is by nature truthful. Here the word 'सत्यस्य' means 'of Truth'. Brahman is Truth. The thing which is determined as of a fixed form and never deviates from that form is considered as Truth. Truth is impervious by three times like past, present and future. Brahman never deviates from Its nature. It is changeless. Always it remains in one and the same nature. So Brahman is Truth.

#### Silence in Isāvāsyaopaniṣad

1. " मनसो जवीयो नैनदेवाः आप्नुवन् ॥" <sup>10</sup>

In this verse we can see two silent complication of Brahman. One is ' मनसो जवीयः ' and the another is " न एनत् देवाः आप्नुवन् ॥". First one means Brahman is farther than the mind. Mind is the internal organ which is characterized by volition and hesitation. With a single movement of volition, mind can reach even at Brahmalo-ka. Therefore mind is famed for its rapidity in the world. When that speedy mind enters to the world of Brahman, the reflection of the Self is already reached there. A thing which is experienced with senses can be referred to by its length, breadth, height, weight, colour and the like. All definitions are limitations by stating that a thing is of such and such quality, we imply also that it is not of such and such other quality. So an unlimited entity cannot be defined at all because we cannot

say where it ends and thus becomes demarcated from other things. This is the nature of Infinite Reality. But in the absence of definition it is difficult for comprehension. So sruti delineates it "न एनत् देवाः आप्नुवन् ।" It means Brahman is beyond the reach of the sense organs. Here the word देवाः means the organ of knowledge such as eyes and ears. The mind is faster than sense organs because without the interposition of the activity of the mind between the self and the senses, even a semblance of the self does not become an object of perception to the senses. These sense organs fail to overtake It. ātman is faster than the mind, and yet It is motionless, steady. The sense organs move fast and nevertheless they cannot reach It. The sense organs move in terms of nerve impulses. But thought, being is a force subtler than a nerve impulse, is subtler than even light and faster than both. But the ātman travels faster than the sense organs, faster than light, and faster than even the mind. The self is the all pervasive and Infinite background of all the streams of energies in the universe of the universe. As pure being and pure awareness, the ātman is even the forerunner of the affirming and negating tendencies of the mind. Sri Sankara asserts this in his commentary on this part :

‘तस्मिन् मनसि ब्रह्मलोतादित् द्रुतं गच्छति सति, प्रथमप्राप्त इव आत्मचैतन्याभासो गृह्यते। अतः मनसो जवीयः इत्याह। नैनद्देवाः द्योतनाद्देवाः चक्षुरादीनीन्द्रियाणि एतत्प्रकृतमात्मतत्त्वं नाप्नुवन् न प्राप्तवन्तः । तेभ्यो मनो जवीयः । मनोव्यापारव्यवहितत्वादाभासमात्रमप्यात्मनो नैव देवानां विषयीभवति ।’<sup>11</sup>

From this it can be firmly said that Brahman is indescribable. The languages and thought fail when they reach or try to define Brahman. But this silence - the absence of words, really is a positive entity, the positive entity of Brahman, the all pervaded Truth.

2) “ तद्भावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठन् ॥ ”<sup>12</sup>

This part is also indicating the same meaning which is discussed in the previous portion. The above mentioned passage means that the ātman outruns all other moving ones, like the mind speech, the senses and the like which are distinct from the Self. The all-pervasive entity of the Self in Its real unconditioned state is devoid of all worldly attributes and is subject to no mutation. But by reason of following the limiting adjunct, the mind, It appears to be experiencing all empirical mod-

ifications brought about by the limiting adjunct, and It also appears to be diverse in relation to the individual bodies. The word तिष्ठत् means remaining static, which implies, 'Itself remaining unchanged'. So the current passage implies that the Self in Its ever-steadiness, outstrips all other runners like senses and the mind. Neither the senses nor the mind can catch up with the ātman, Itself being faster than both. From this it can be understood that Brahman is beyond the speech and even thought. While It is above the language and thought, It is ineffable and concludes in a significance of silence. That significance of silence is the implication the real nature of Brahman or Brahman Itself.

## REFERENCES

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