

59. *Without knowing the supreme Reality, the study of the śāstras is futile. Having known the supreme Reality, the study of the śāstras is again futile.*

Here is an exquisite example of the use of a deliberate statement of contradiction, to hammer a point into a student while creating in him a sense of wonderment. The verse, even in its tenth reading, leaves a staggering sense of amazement and confusion. Wonder is an emotion in which there is a dizzy pause in thinking and at such a moment of intellectual arrest, the verse filters through. When one realises the meaning fully, it goes straight into the deepest vaults of one's heart cave.

The paradox is resolved when we give a little conscious application of purified intellect on the word 'knowing' in both the lines of the verse – 'without knowing' in the first and 'having known' in the second. In both cases 'knowing' connotes a different meaning, the literal and the indicative. In the first line it means 'intellectually understanding' and in the second line it means 'realising'.

In the light of these interpretations, the verse becomes a clear statement of Truth. As long as we have no right intellectual appreciation of what the Vedānta texts indicate, all study of the scriptures is futile. Again, when we have realised the Truth, study of the scriptures is redundant.

Elsewhere in literature of Vedānta, it is said¹ that the efforts of all the Vedas is, ultimately, to deny the existence of plurality which is a sorrowful dream projected by the individual mind, a delusion superimposed upon the Ātman, the substratum. All arguments that we can marshal to convince a deluded friend that what he perceives is not a ghost but only a harmless post, constitute the 'scriptures' indicating the post. Naturally, therefore, any Man of Realisation, reading even the best of scriptures must laugh indulgently at the colossal inefficiency of Mother Śruti.

¹ all śāstras endeavour to explain that which is not and deny the delusion.

And those, who have no conception of Reality, to them no scriptural study, can give even a trace of thrill. We read in Vedānta that to such immature intellects the Upaniṣads are empty words. Just as children can never understand the physical thrill of married life, so too, poor things, they have not the instruments to understand or the maturity to comprehend the Truth. Then, as they grow, even if it is not taught, they will instinctively learn to feel or to know.



शब्दजालं महारण्यं चित्तभ्रमणकारणम् ।

अतः प्रयत्नाज्ज्ञातव्यं तत्त्वज्ञैस्तत्त्वमात्मनः ॥ ६० ॥

*śabdaajālaṁ mahāraṇyaṁ cittabhramaṇakāraṇaṁ,
ataḥ prayatnājñātavyaṁ tattvajñaiḥstattvamātmanaḥ. (60)*

60. Commentaries on philosophies constitute a thick jungle in which a roaming mind may easily get lost, in its own delusion. Therefore, true seekers of Brahman should, through right efforts, come to experience the real nature of the Self.

In this brilliant metaphor the Ācārya woos both poetry and philosophy with the ardour and fervour of a true and noble lover, handling the philosophy and dandling the poetry, as it were.

Here, he conveys to us the idea that mere philosophical discussion is a dangerous jungle, dark and dreary, with luxuriously growling poisonous weeds and prowling beasts lying in ambush, ready to pounce upon innocent unsuspecting pilgrims. No better description of the dialectics could be given of the endless arguments of the six schools of Indian philosophy each trying to disprove the others to establish its own point of view.

Into this jungle infested with dangerous flora and fauna, if an unprepared or innocent mind, frail in strength, carelessly enters, it might get attacked or destroyed by the lurking dangers. Even an