

12. Brahman is the Universal Teaching

Sarvathra-prasiddhopadesaath

In all statements in the *Vedantic* texts, the *Upanishads*, the familiar and easily recognisable expression “*Brahman*” is the one that is mentioned and elaborated. In the direction “One should meditate by becoming serene”, the object of meditation is therefore the entity indicated by “All this is verily *Brahman*” and not the individualized I. Commentators also upheld this interpretation.

“All this is verily *Brahman* (*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*)” is the axiom with which the *Upanishadic* exhortation to meditate starts. The *Vedic* revelation is that the cosmos or creation is *Brahman*, for it originates in, is sustained by, and merges into *Brahman*. It is not distinct or separable from *Brahman*.

Non-dual vision reveals Brahman

When viewed without the twin distortions of like and dislike, love and hate, all forms, all effects, all causes are experienced as *Brahman* only. But when the vision is affected by love or hate, each form, each effect and cause, appears different from the rest. Hence the advice to meditate after attaining serenity. When feelings are calm and balanced, the many are experienced as the one. An agitated mind can never have a single vision. It runs along contrary lines, so it experiences the world, nature, and the cosmos as separate from *Brahman*. Such vision creates division. Serene vision reveals unity. As the vision, so the impression, the view of the world.

The head of the family is only one person, but each member of the family views him from a different point of view. So he is addressed differently, as “father” by the son, “husband” by the wife, “father-in-law” by the daughter-in-law, “grandfather” by the grandson, and “elder brother” by his younger brother. The One is thought of in many forms, because of the variety of relationships assumed.

So too, seekers and thinkers who are in various levels of awareness and attainment express and experience the One in different forms and ways. The attitudes of approach and adoration also cause differences in the experience of the One. Some identify and posit the individualized *Atma* (*jivi*); some adore the active, all-knowing almighty God (*Iswara*); some concretize the all-pervasive energy (*sakthi*); and others have as their goal the cosmic Person (*Purusha*). But the individual or embodied *Atma* cannot claim omniscience and omnipotence. As long as it is bound by its self-imposed ignorance and egotism, it cannot know and experience the all-pervasive, all-comprehensive *Brahman*.