

Śaṅkara Bhāṣya

II.1 – II.3

CHAPTER II

SECTION I

In the first chapter it has been proved that all the Vedānta texts deal with Brahman as the first Cause, yet the arguments based on reasoning against this doctrine remain to be refuted. With this object in view this section is begun. In section IV of Chapter I it was shown that the Pradhāna of the Sāṅkhyas, as also the atoms of the Vaiśeṣikas, are not based on scriptural authority. In this section arguments, claiming their authoritativeness from the Smṛtis, to establish the Pradhāna and the atoms etc. are refuted.

Topic 1: Refutation of Smṛtis that are not based on the Śrutis.

स्मृत्यनवकाशदोषप्रसङ्ग इति चेत्, न,
अन्यस्मृत्यनवकाशदोषप्रसङ्गात् ॥ १ ॥

स्मृति-अनवकाश-दोषप्रसङ्गः There would result the defect of leaving no scope for certain Smṛtis इति चेत्, if it be said न no अन्यस्मृति-अनवकाश-दोषप्रसङ्गात् because there would result the defect of leaving no scope to some other Smṛtis.

1. If it be said that (from the doctrine of Brahman being the cause of the world) there

would result the defect of leaving no scope for certain Smṛitis, (we say) no; because (by the rejection of that doctrine) there would result the defect of leaving no scope for some other Smṛitis.

In the last chapter it has been shown that the Sâmkhyan view is not based on scriptural authority. Now its authority even as a Smṛti is denied and refuted.

If the doctrine of the Pradhâna is rejected, then the Sâmkhya Smṛti, propounded by a great seer like Kapila and acknowledged by other great thinkers, would cease to be authoritative; hence it is but reasonable that the Vedânta texts be so interpreted as to preserve the authoritativeness of this Smṛti and not contradict it *in toto*. So says the opponent. The Sûtra answers this by saying that if the doctrine of Brahman being the cause of the world be rejected to accommodate the Sâmkhya Smṛti, which goes counter to the Śrutis, then by that rejection many other Smṛtis like the Manu Smṛti, which are based on the Śrutis and therefore more authoritative, and, which also propound the doctrine of Brahman, an intelligent principle, being the cause of the world, would find no scope. So between the two it is desirable that the Smṛtis which go counter to the Vedas be rejected.

इतरेषां चानुपलब्धेः ॥ २ ॥

इतरेषां Of the others च and अनुपलब्धेः there being no mention.

2. And there being no mention (in the scriptures) of the other entities, (*i.e.* the categories

beside the Pradhâna), (the Sâmkhya system cannot be authoritative).

Even accepting the Pradhâna of the Sâmkhyas for argument's sake—for the Vedântins also recognize Mâyâ as the cause of the world, the difference between the two being that the Pradhâna according to the Sâmkhyas is an independent entity, whereas Mâyâ is a dependent entity, being a power of Brahman—yet there is no mention of the other categories of the Sâmkhyas anywhere in the Vedas. Hence the Sâmkhya philosophy cannot be authoritative.

Topic 2: Refutation of the Yoga philosophy.

एतेन योगः प्रत्युक्तः ॥ ३ ॥

एतेन By this योगः the Yoga philosophy प्रत्युक्तः is (also) refuted.

3. By this the Yoga philosophy is (also) refuted.

After the refutation of the Sâmkhyas, who recognize an independent entity called the Pradhâna as the cause of the world, this Sûtra refutes the Yoga Smṛti, which also recognizes a separate entity called the Pradhâna as the first Cause, though unlike the Sâmkhyas they recognize an Īśvara who directs this inert Pradhâna in its creative evolution. The Yoga system is spoken of in Upaniṣads like the Śvetâśvatara. It helps concentration of the mind, which is necessary for the full comprehension of Brahman, and as such it is a means to Knowledge. So this Smṛti, being based on the Śrutis

is authoritative. But it also recognizes the Pradhâna, which therefore is the first Cause—so says the opponent. This Sûtra says that the arguments given in the last Sûtra refute also the Yoga Smṛti, for it also speaks of a Pradhâna and its products which are not to be found in the Śrutis. Though the Smṛti is partly authoritative, yet it cannot be so with respect to that part which contradicts the Śrutis. There is room only for those portions of the Smṛti as do not contradict the Śrutis.

Rāmānuja Bhāṣya

II.1 – II.3

CHAPTER II

SECTION I

In the last chapter it was shown that the Vedānta texts teach only Brahman which is different from the insentient world of matter experienced by direct perception, as also from the sentient world of intelligent souls, whether in the state of bondage connected with matter or in the state of freedom dissociated from matter,—Brahman which is the repository of infinite good qualities, free from all imperfections, the one cause of this sentient and insentient world, and the inner Self of everything. The second chapter is begun to strengthen this view by refuting all possible arguments that may be brought against it. To start with, the author takes up the objection that this view would contradict the Sāṃkhya Smṛti of sage Kapila who is recognized on all hands as a trustworthy authority on matters supra-sensuous.

Topic 1 : Refutation of Smṛtis that are not based on the Śrutis

स्मृत्यनवकाशदोषप्रसङ्ग इति चेत्, न ;

अन्यस्मृत्यनवकाशदोषप्रसङ्गात् ॥ १ ॥

1. If it be said that (from the doctrine of Brahman being the cause of the world) there would result the defect of leaving no scope for certain Smṛtis (we say) no ; (because by the rejection of that doctrine) there would result the defect of leaving no scope for some other Smṛtis

The question is whether the view expressed in the last chapter, viz that Brahman is the cause of the world, can be rejected as it contradicts the Kapila Smṛti, or not. The opponent holds that it should be set aside. Smṛtis only elucidate what is taught in the Śrutis, and one has to take their help to understand the true purport of Śruti texts. No doubt it is an accepted maxim that Smṛtis which contradict Śrutis are not to be accepted as authoritative. But this maxim applies only with respect to matters where the meaning of the Śruti texts is quite obvious and requires no reasoning to arrive at their meaning. But with respect to the ultimate truth, which is difficult for the dull-witted to grasp, the true purport of the texts has to be elucidated by Smṛtis written by great sages whose testimony is trustworthy. So one cannot set aside Smṛtis so very easily because they contradict a superficial view of the Vedānta texts. Sage Kapila, the promulgator of the Sāṅkhya Smṛti, is a seer of truth ; and as his Smṛti deals only with the ultimate truth, one has to take its help for a true understanding of the Vedānta texts. Otherwise the Smṛti becomes absolutely meaningless. We have to conclude, therefore, that the doctrine taught by the Vedānta texts cannot be different from that taught by sage Kapila and that the Vedānta texts are to be interpreted consistent with the Sāṅkhya Smṛti.

This view is refuted by the second half of the *Sūtra*. It says that if the doctrine of Brahman being the cause of the world be rejected to accommodate the Sāṅkhya Smṛti, then many other Smṛtis like that of Manu and others which uphold this doctrine and are based on Śrutis will have no scope. If help is to be taken to understand the Śruti texts, one should resort to Smṛtis which do not contradict the Śrutis.

It may, however, be said : Sāṅkhya Smṛti deals only

with the ultimate truth, and so if, on this point, it be rejected it will mean its total rejection. But this is not the case with respect to Manu and other Smṛtis which also deal with ritualistic worship. So if they are rejected with respect to the ultimate truth, yet with respect to ritualistic worship, they will retain their authority. So it will not be their total rejection, as in the case of the Sāṃkhya Smṛti.

This view is not correct. For ritualistic worship is meant to propitiate Brahman, the ultimate truth. If there be indefiniteness with respect to this ultimate reality, ritualistic worship meant to propitiate it will be meaningless. So it is not correct to say that Manu and other Smṛtis will be at least partly authoritative if their view of the ultimate truth is rejected. Between the two, therefore, we have to accept those Smṛtis only which are based on the Śrutis and teach the doctrine of Brahman, an intelligent principle, being the cause of the world and reject Smṛtis like the Sāṃkhya Smṛti which go counter to the Śrutis.

इतरेषां च अनुपलब्धेः ॥ २ ॥

2. And on account of the non-perception (of the truth as taught by Kapila) by others.

An objection is raised that Kapila who had the power, through deep meditation, to realize the truth which is beyond sense-perception, did not experience that the Vedānta texts refer to Brahman, and so we have to accept that they refer to the Pradhāna as taught by Kapila. This *Sūtra* refutes this argument as it equally applies the other way also. Manu and others who were foremost amongst the knowers of the Vedas and who also were able to realize the truth beyond the ken of the senses, did not perceive that the Vedānta

texts referred to the Pradhāna but to Brahman. Therefore we have to accept their view and conclude that the realization of Kapila which goes counter to the teachings of the Vedas is based on error.

Topic 2 : Refutation of the Yoga philosophy

एतेन योगः प्रत्युक्तः ॥ ३ ॥

3. By this the Yoga philosophy is (also) rejected.

A fresh objection is raised. Granting that the Sāṅkhya Smṛti is not authoritative, the Yoga Smṛti at least is so, for it recognizes an Īśvara who directs the Pradhāna and also because it is propounded by Brahmā or Hiraṇyagarbha who is the promulgator of the Vedas. There cannot be any sage superior or equal to him, whose Smṛti could be more authoritative as against the Yoga Smṛti. Therefore we have to interpret the Vedānta texts according to this Smṛti and accept that Īśvara is the efficient cause and the Pradhāna the material cause of the world.

This view is refuted by this *Sūtra*. Even Hiraṇyagarbha is an embodied being and as such liable to error. This Smṛti also, like the Sāṅkhya Smṛti, is based on error. If Īśvara is merely the efficient cause, then by the knowledge of one everything will not be known. For the knowledge of the Pradhāna will not give us the knowledge of the sentient souls which are not its products. Nor can the knowledge of Īśvara result in the knowledge of the souls as they are not products of Īśvara who, according to the Yoga philosophy, is merely the efficient cause and not the material cause also. So we have to conclude that Brahman alone is both the efficient and material cause of the world and its knowledge will result in the knowledge of everything. Therefore, only

those Smṛtis are authoritative which teach Brahman as the cause of the world. It may be said that the Yoga Smṛti teaches many things which are also taught by the Vedas. It is true, and to that extent only is it acceptable, and its other teachings have to be rejected.