

*Aparokṣa-anubhūti*¹

Introduction

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What 'is', is *Īśvara*. In the *Vedānta-sāstra* this is presented in a particular way. This *jagat*, world, is non-separate from its cause. This is the subject matter. That means this world is an effect, not separate from its cause, and by saying it is an effect, we can provisionally say that it is 'created'.

Creation implies a certain putting together. Any product, which is produced to serve a certain purpose, was conceived first as a possibility, then brought to the planning table, and then elaborately planned and produced. Like a car. It presupposes knowledge. That is what we call creation—something that presupposes knowledge. Here we are talking of all that is here—what is already given, and all the possibilities. Even my mind is given. A scientist is able to figure out a lot of things because his mind is given, and the topics are also given. Nothing new created; it is either manifest or not yet manifest.

A child is born; it is intelligently put together. There are cells, organs, etc., all organized into a highly complex creation, which grows to completion over a period of time. We say that any creation presupposes knowledge; did the mother have this knowledge? Did she know anything about the body? Even if she knew anatomy, did she know how to put this all together? In fact, nothing much is known about the body even now; it is still being studied. The study material, the body, is available, the faculty to know is available; everything is given and it presupposes knowledge. Whose knowledge? The father didn't have the knowledge, nor did the mother. Our stand is that any product that is intelligently put together presupposes knowledge. This has to be upheld. How will we do that? When we are talking of all the possibilities, the whole scheme, including our faculty to know, no one has any knowledge. It is all given. Whether a human being is able to produce something, or an animal is able to produce something, it is already given. The capacity to know, and to do are given, so there is no one

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here to claim authorship of anything. Therefore, the entire scheme of things being so intelligently put together presupposes all knowledge.

Here Vedānta tells us that there is an all-knowing cause of this scheme, this *jagat*. That alone was there before. This entire *jagat* was there before it came into being, and was non-separate from the cause. How? Whatever is here, what we call *jagat*, was there before, not in this form, but in an unmanifest form—like a tree in the seed. It is there in an unmanifest form, and in time it will manifest. This is how we assimilate this fact revealed by the Upaniṣad². Therefore, there is really no creation. It is not that a non-existent *jagat* came into being. An existent *jagat* alone came into being. Something existent in an unmanifest form can become manifest. Like the tree in an undifferentiated form in a seed, becomes differentiated. The undifferentiated gets differentiated, or the unmanifest becomes manifest. Since there is a difference between undifferentiated and differentiated we can use the word ‘creation’, but it is definitely not the creation of the monotheist. People who talk about the Big Bang also talk about the unmanifest becoming manifest; they talk in particular and we talk in general, because we are dealing with realities. The undifferentiated differentiates, and that differentiated form is called a created form. The undifferentiated was not separate from the cause, so the differentiated is not going to be separate from the cause either.

Between the cause and effect there is non-separation. The effect is the cause, but the cause is not the effect. With this, you have an entirely different vision, a vision that does not conform to our usual understanding of cause and effect. Our usual understanding is that the maker cause is different from the material cause. When you say that a given person made a given thing, the person is different from what is made, and from the material with which it is made. If the effect is different from the maker, naturally, the material of which the effect is made will be different from the maker. Why? Because the effect can never be separate from the material from which it is made. Like the pot is the effect, the potter is the maker, and clay, the material, is never separate from the effect, the pot. If the pot is away from the potter, it is clear that the potter made the pot out of clay which is separate from him.

The reality is that a series of names is our so-called reality. You are wearing a shirt. Where is this shirt? Let us look for it. The whole thing is fabric. Where is

² *sadeva saumya idam agra āsit*, ChU 6.

the shirt? It is not sitting on the fabric; it is not inside the fabric; it is not outside of the fabric. But then, there is a shirt. I can't say it is fabric. If it is fabric, then 'shirt' and 'fabric' will be synonyms, and wherever there is fabric there should be a shirt. That is not true. What shall we do? "Swamiji, I am wearing the meaning/object of the word shirt." Where is the meaning? There is only fabric. "Swamiji, when I hear the word 'shirt' even though I get the meaning, I can't get the meaning of the word 'shirt' without seeing the meaning of the word 'fabric' also. I have to see the meanings of both words." You are seeing the meaning of the word 'shirt' as an attribute of the meaning of the word 'fabric'. What is the shirt you are wearing? The shirt is a word, the meaning of which is an attribute of the meaning of the word 'fabric'. Every time you see the shirt you see the fabric. You can't even think of a shirt without thinking of some fabric. Therefore the meaning of the word 'shirt' is an attribute of the fabric. Once you say it is an attribute, can you see the shirtness in fabric? Wherever there is fabric can you see shirtness? No, the shirtness is an attribute of a non-shirt. That is the only interesting thing in the world. There is nothing else.

The meaning of the word 'shirt' is an attribute of a non-shirt, whether it is jute or cotton or paper. How can a shirt be an attribute of a non-shirt? That is how it is. Everything is like that. So there is no shirt as such. I can't dismiss it, because when I see a shirt there is meaning transpiring in my head. Along with that comes the meaning of the word fabric also. Therefore, should I take this as two things or one? There is a shirt, and at the same time, there transpires the meaning of fabric also. The shirt and fabric together form one object, which means that one should be an attribute and the other should be the substantive. The substantive is fabric, which is non-shirt. The attribute is 'superimposed', so we call it *mithyā*. Non-shirt is the truth of the shirt, without which there is no shirt. Fabric has no attribute of shirtness; it is free from that attribute. But does it have the attribute of fabric? No, fabric is also a word, the meaning of which is an attribute of a non-fabric called yarn. The yarn is an attribute of non-yarn called fibers. Fibers are attributes of non-fibers, called molecules. Molecules are attributes of non-molecules, called atoms. Atoms are attributes of non-atoms, called particles. When you come to particles, perception becomes useless. It has gone to the level of concepts. All concepts are cognitions. An electron-cognition is non-separate from the electron. The electron is an attribute of a non-electron. Up to that I can go. Consciousness, the observer of the electron-cognition is also

observer-consciousness. So the observer, also, is an attribute of a non-observer. That is what is called *nirguṇa*—free from any attribute.

The whole *jagat* is an attribute of non-*jagat*. Space, time, subject, object—all are attributes of a non-*jagat*. The *mithyātva* of the *jagat* starts with a shirt. If you look at the five elements which comprise our model of the *jagat*, you find that they are attributes of non-*jagat*, which is the 'beingness' of the *jagat*. This is called *sat*, Brahman.

These attributes are all a series of words, which are nothing but knowledge. So a shirt is just knowledge. That is all. It is only a word. There is no substance. 'Fabric' is also a word; there is no substance. The form has a meaning, so you can't dismiss it as non-existent, but you can't accept it as existent either. Only a series of words is there. Your body is also a series of words. And in every word, which is knowledge, the presence is knowledge as such. A word means there is knowledge and where there is knowledge there is the presence of consciousness. There is consciousness all the way. All-knowledge, one consciousness; one all-knowledge, the same consciousness. The entire *jagat* known and unknown is what 'is'—all-knowledge, which is one consciousness. Being consciousness, it is not separate from you. And it is all-knowledge, so we have to understand what it is that makes this consciousness all-knowledge. Then, what consciousness is another unfoldment.

Before its differentiation this *jagat*, which includes your body-mind-sense complex and everything known and unknown, was *sat*. One thing existed, called *sat*, that which exists. All this was there, non-separate from *sat*; that means it was *sat*. Then why not say that there was only *sat*? What is it that was non-separate from *sat*? There is something that we are talking about as non-separate. If it is non-separate it is only one thing. Why should you say this was there before, and from that this came? That means there is something besides *sat*, because something came.

That which exists cannot come because it exists already, and what exists, in reality, doesn't go either. Our orientation is that anything that exists in time may not exist later, but the Upanisad's vision of existence is that it doesn't go. If that is what it is, we need not talk about it. Whatever we are talking about here is neither non-existent nor existent. It was in this form, and from there it came into

being as it is now. You can't say that it is existent and you can't dismiss it as non-existent. It doesn't subject itself for any categorical appreciation, so we can't talk about it in categorical terms. This is *anirvacanīya*. This is what we are dealing with in our day to day life.

That is why, if anyone asks me my views about the President of America, I have nothing categorical to say. It is always *anirvacanīya*. Every individual person is *anirvacanīya*. This is why any concept of good and evil is wrong, and any type of judgment about anyone is wrong because nothing is available for categorical judgment. To be sane is to be objective. To be objective is to give up this categorical division because that is how the *jagat* is.

When we are talking of *jagat*, we must understand that this is true for every *nāma-rūpa*. Look at an electron—you cannot say whether it is a wave or particle. It tells you its non-categorical nature. It has a dual behavior, 'existing' at the border. You can't categorically say anything about it. This is the reality of what we call *jagat*—shirt, wall, floor, ceiling, hall are *jagat*. What is a hall? Minus the ceiling, floor, and walls there is no hall. A floor is a non-hall, a ceiling is a non-hall. All the materials are non-halls, and even if you put all of them in one place, it doesn't make a hall. Hall is *nāma*, only a name.

Everything is an attribute of what it is not. The whole *jagat* is an attribute of non-*jagat*, and this non-*jagat* is *sat*. The attribute doesn't have a being, and therefore it cannot be separate from this being *sat*—like the shirt has no being without fabric. The being of the shirt is the being of the fabric. In fact, the being of the shirt is Brahman, *sat*; that is the reality. Don't look for a hierarchy. Everything is 'non' therefore the being of the shirt is *sat* otherwise called Brahman. Anything that you speak of as 'is', like "space is" that 'is', is *sat*. Space is a value addition, without addition, because it has no being of its own. Being plus being alone is addition. That is the magic.

This being, *sat*, is that which is self-existent, which doesn't require anything else to reveal itself. If that which exists has to be revealed by me, then who is the 'me' revealing me? The revealing me, the revealing self, is *sat*. The *sat* is self-revealing. Understand this very clearly. Whatever reveals anything is revealing. What reveals me for you is self-revealing. What reveals everything is the light of

consciousness and it is self-revealing. This revealing consciousness is *satyam*. Therefore *cit* is *sat*, *sat* is *cit*.

The entire *jagat* is an attribute of non-*jagat*, *sat*, which is consciousness, *cit*. Space, time, galaxies, micro and macro objects—everything here is an attribute to non-*jagat*, which is, therefore, limitless space-wise, time-wise, object-wise. This is what we mean by limitless. Limitless is there in your shirt. The shirt 'is', is limitless consciousness. The fabric 'is', the yarn 'is', is limitless consciousness. The 'is', is limitless consciousness. When you say, "That is, this is," the one who is saying this is included, because we are talking about limitless consciousness. Subject/object is limitless consciousness.

I, you, he, she, it, this, that are all but limitless consciousness. So this value addition is not a real addition. It is not one plus one making two. This is an addition of one plus one amounting to one. One clay plus one million clay pots is equal to one clay. There is no addition or subtraction. This is what we mean by the mantra *pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam*. The cause is *pūrṇam*, limitless; the effect is limitless. From the cause, which is limitless, came the effect, which is limitless, because the effect is non-separate from the limitless. You understand the effect as non-separate from the limitless cause, then what remains is limitless. What 'is', is limitless.

This addition in terms of its reality is understood as *mithyā*. It is very important to have that word, a word that reveals your understanding. Your shirt is understood by you in terms of its reality as *mithyā*. *Satyam* is the being of the shirt. If you say that the shirt 'is', that 'is' is *satyam*. The shirt 'is' means shirt consciousness is. That consciousness 'is', is *satyam*. The shirt is *mithyā*.

The word *mithyā* is not a word for another item in the the *jagat*. Shirt is a name, *nāma*, for which there is a form, *rūpa*; it is a noun which we can talk about by giving it a name. That is the *jagat*—*nāma/rūpa*. *Mithyā* is not *nāma/rūpa*; it is a word revealing your understanding of the reality of the *jagat*. It is a reality word. A shirt you can wear; *mithyā* you cannot do anything with. Water is *mithyā*; you can drink water. A pot is *mithyā*; you can use it. *Mithyā* cannot be used. It is your understanding of what you deal with. This also is not understood. The word *mithyā* is a word that reveals pure understanding. If you don't understand it,

then that word has no meaning. Its meaning is your understanding of the world, *jagat*, in terms of its reality. When we say *jagat*, it means that nothing is left out.

How do you define *mithyā*? The Upaniṣad tells us that it is that which doesn't have a being other than its *adhiṣṭhāna*, its content. The shirt has no being without the fabric, so here the fabric is the *adhiṣṭhāna* and shirt is the *nāma/rūpa*. Shirt is a name that has its own meaning, called *rūpa*. This includes function, and everything else. This *nāma/rūpa* has no being except the being of its *adhiṣṭhāna*, which for the shirt is the fabric. What is *mithyā* is a seeming attribute of something else. So the shirt is a seeming attribute of fabric, because the fabric is not a shirt. It has the seeming attribute of shirt, because I can take it as fabric. It is like saying, "Touch wood."

I understand when I say "Touch wood" that the table I touch is a seeming attribute of wood. That is why I leave the table completely out of my vision and touch the wood. I don't search for the wood in the table. The table is wood; any part of the table is wood. I want you to see how the change takes place in your head. When you touch wood you touch the table, but you leave the table alone. The shift in your vision doesn't take time. That is knowledge. Your shirt is *Brahman*. When you say, "The shirt 'is'," the 'is' is *Brahman*. 'Is' first, and then shirt. Shirt consciousness is; consciousness is; add the shirt, that is called *mithyā*, non-separate from consciousness, *adhiṣṭhāna-ananyat*.

There is another type of *mithyā*. When you mistake an object for another object, like a sea shell for a silver coin, the coin perception makes you go after the object. But it turns out that what you went after doesn't deserve your pursuit. You wouldn't have done it if you had seen it as a shell. This pursuit on your part was evoked by a perception which proved to be false. You are disappointed. It is like mirage water—you are walking in the desert, you see an oasis, and you are inspired. You run towards it and discover that it is not an oasis, but a mirage. This is also a misperception that causes you to pursue. Then there are causes for you to run away, like seeing a shadow as a person, or taking a wooden elephant for a real elephant, and our usual rope-snake. The objects that evoked your pursuit or retreat are both false. They are *mithyā*, false.

Here also, there is *adhiṣṭhāna-ananyat*; the coin is the shell; it does not exist without the shell. But the moment I see the shell, the coin goes. The moment I see

the rope the snake resolves. So the coin and the snake are *mithyā*. But the moment I see the fabric, the shirt doesn't go. I can buy a readymade shirt and wear it. In fact when I bought the shirt I bought it as a cotton shirt. Not only do I know the *adhiṣṭhāna* as fabric, I go a little further and know that it is cotton. Therefore with knowledge of its *adhiṣṭhāna*, I am wearing the shirt. This is a different type of *mithyā*. Why is this different? I know that water is H₂O, but it doesn't disappear into atoms in my hand. I drink it knowing that it is H₂O. This *mithyā* is different because it is understandable *mithyā*. This is an intriguing *mithyā*, an enigmatic *mithyā*. You don't know what it is about.

If you go by the definition of *adhiṣṭhāna-ananyat*, both the shirt and the coin are *mithyā*. Without the *adhiṣṭhāna*, neither have being. Without fabric, the *adhiṣṭhāna*, there is no shirt. The shirt is not based on fabric, nor is it is not located on fabric; the shirt is fabric. Therefore, it is better that we use the technical word, *adhiṣṭhāna*, without translating it. There is no equivalent to certain words. Without *adhiṣṭhāna* the shirt doesn't exist and the coin doesn't exist. Where you see the coin, there is the shell. The whole coin is shell; the whole shirt is fabric. But when I see the truth of the coin, and recognize the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the shell, the *mithyā* coin resolves. It goes into the *adhiṣṭhāna*. In the wake of knowledge of the *adhiṣṭhāna* the *mithyā* coin is gone. That is not the case with the shirt. I took the fabric to the tailor with the knowledge that it is fabric and had a shirt made. The knowledge of the fabric, the *adhiṣṭhāna* of the shirt, does not in any way displace or resolve the shirt.

Thus, there are two types of *mithyā*. One is there only because I see it. The other is there whether I see it or not.

If you don't see a planet, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. One doesn't see the cancerous growth in the early stages, but it does exist. The whole life is full of "I wish I had known." All failures are because of what you don't see. Every accident is because of what you don't see. In fact, the whole future you don't see, but whether you see it or don't see it, it exists. All discoveries are of what existed already. Therefore, things exist whether I know them or don't know them. A lot of people in the world don't know much about anatomy, but all the organs exist—and function also.

This *mithyā* is a different type of *mithyā*. Each one is *nāma/rūpa*, because it exists depending upon something else. All are just names all the way. When I see a

shell as a coin, I can say I am responsible for the coin in as much as my perception was of a coin, so there was a coin. When my perception was of a shell, the coin disappeared. Here, seeing was creating. There was nothing more than seeing.

In a dream I do the same thing. I create a world. Before the dream I slept, and in that sleep there was no encounter with the world. Then there was thought of the sun and I saw the sun. The thought of the sun and the sight of the sun were simultaneous. There, thinking is seeing and seeing is thinking. Also, when I saw the sun, time/space came along with it, because they are inseparable. This is called *sr̥ṣṭi*. I think of varieties of things and everything I think of is the dream creation, *sr̥ṣṭi*. I think, therefore I see. I can understand this *mithyā*. The sun is, space is, time is—and the 'is', is consciousness. Sun consciousness is, with the sun being an addition without addition. There was nothing more than my thought of the sun. My thought was the creation—my personal thought; it had nothing to do with anybody else.

I created a lot of people in the dream, and each one had a contention about the world I created. It is all me, my dream world. One limitless consciousness is. I wake up, and there is no sun. It is midnight. All the people are gone. Where did they go? They collapsed into me; collapsed into the limitless consciousness in the form of this world, the waking consciousness, the waker's consciousness. This also is *mithyā*. One *mithyā* resolves into another *mithyā*, like the shirt resolves into fabric and the fabric into something else. The coin resolves into a shell and the shell into something else.

But the shell *mithyā* is different from the coin *mithyā*. The dream *mithyā* is different from the objects that I come to know through valid means of knowledge. They are all objects of knowledge. Whether I know them or not, they exist. I have to know to appreciate their existence.

That I can project a world in the dream is because I am endowed with a *śakti*, a power. That *sat cit ānanda*, consciousness is—is limitless. Whatever you think of is *sat cit ānanda*. The entire dream is *sat cit ānanda*. But I have a power which is also that *sat cit ānanda*. There is some power that functions without disturbing *sat cit ānanda*, and without being independent of *sat cit ānanda*.

The entire waking world is not separate from *sat cit ānanda*. A power to project that world is not going to be different from *sat cit ānanda*. It seems to have a causal power to become the world—time, space everything. In fact it is that order that obtains in the waker's world, imprinted as memories, along with some *śakti*, which becomes responsible for the entire dream world. There is an order in the *jagat* and that order was perceived by me as a waker. Therefore this *jagat* which I experience through valid means of knowledge gives rise to knowledge and memory which are again responsible for the dream world or for errors in the waking world. There is no knowledge without error, and correction of the error is also possible. Therefore the very faculty to project the *jagat* is given. The possibility of a dream is given; the faculty to know is given; memory is given; the power to create is given. Therefore there is *sr̥ṣṭi*.

I see one thing, one limitless consciousness which is *satyam* and the *jagat* is non-separate from this limitless consciousness. It can be in a causal form or it can be in a manifest form. In the causal form it is undifferentiated, and what we call creation, the *jagat*, is only the differentiation. Whether it is undifferentiated or differentiated it is *sat cit ānanda brahman* limitless.

This *anirvacanīya mithyā* I can neither take as *satyam* nor dismiss it as non-existent. It includes my physical body, the physical world and its constituents, forces, various laws and orders. There is a biological order, a physiological order, and a psychological order. All the orders implicate in the causal level manifest. The Upaniṣad tells, this is *karma kārya*, the effect is non-separate from the cause. The cause being what it is, this *satyam, sadvastu* must have all the software and hardware—if there is any hardware. If you look at each word—shirt, fabric, yarn—there is nothing tangible. This is what you are wearing. This is magic. What magic! If someone wants magic, he requires to be educated in simple physics. In fact any discipline of knowledge is enough. You see only magic. Magic means *māyā*. *Māyā* does not mean delusion or illusion—it is magic.

The *śakti*, the power, is also *mithyā*. Like the word '*śakti*' itself is *mithyā*. If you take the word apart there is no word. It is *mithyā*. *Śa* is not *śakti*, *ka* is not *śakti*, *ti* is not *śakti*. They are all non-*śakti*. Then there is no *śakti*. The word itself is like that. It is all *mithyā*. And what produces the sound is another *mithyā*. If you analyze all this, any inner tightness will get loosened. We have some categorical understanding which leads to the conclusion that the world is too much for me.

When you look into it, 'me' falls apart, the world falls apart; it is all spinning particles and yet there is an order, an intricate order. This is just magic.

I say the order is magic because it is available for some understanding, some provisional understanding until you look into the reality. With some understanding, you contain it and deal with it. There is some predictability. This is the magic. The cause has this knowledge; it is magic. As I told you, *sat cit ānanda* is non-*jagat*. You must remember this very well. This is called transcendental, like 'touch wood.' When you say "Touch wood," you transcend the table. This *sat cit ānanda* which is non-*jagat* has the knowledge of *jagat* before creation. 'Creation' is yet to come. It is all software. With this knowledge alone we say *sat* is *Īśvara*. *Īśvara* means all-knowledge, all-*śakti*.

The dream is our model for this. Your knowledge alone is the dream world. There is nothing more than your knowledge. That 'is', is consciousness. It is whole, *ananta* subject/object all. That is possible because there is a given body-mind-sense complex. That is why you are endowed with that power. If your shirt is silken, it is because the cause is silk. As you have the power to create the dream and that power reveals the power of the cause, so too for the entire *jagat*, the power itself reveals the power of the cause. All-knowledge *sat cit ānanda* — plus, without 'plus' it is all-knowledge. This 'plus' is a *śakti*; let us call that *śakti māyā*. It is plus without plus.

We are not proposing anything to believe here. We are seeing a world, and what we are seeing alone we are talking about. Not anything beyond that. What we see reveals a *śakti*. *Īśvara* with his *śakti* of *māyā* manifests in the form of all that is here³. He is not sitting anywhere. Who is to sit where? It is all *sat cit ānanda*. Everything, the whole *jagat* is 'sitting' on *sat cit ānanda*. Every speck is *sat cit ānanda*. Therefore, what we call *Īśvara* is all-knowledge. You can call it anything—*nimitta-kāraṇa*, efficient cause; *upādāna-kāraṇa*, material cause; secondary causes, auxiliary causes. Whatever you add, there is only one cause, *sat cit ānanda*, plus whatever accounts for the *jagat*. Thus what we call *Īśvara* is nothing but all-knowledge with the power to manifest itself in the form of the *jagat*.

³ *indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate*

What is here is only knowledge. As in a dream all that is there is your knowledge, Īśvara's knowledge is all that is here. Pure knowledge. That is the reason why you find, upon inquiry, that you have only the word and its meaning. There is nothing more, nothing tangible. 'Shirt' is a word depending upon fabric and its meaning; itself depending upon yarn and its meaning, and that itself depending upon molecules and their meaning. Word and its meaning—that is all.

You can have few more words—biological, physiological, anatomical, psychological, *dharma*, *karma*, forces—and their meaning. That is what Bhagavān is, words and their meaning. This is Īśvara. All that is here is Īśvara, who is, in terms of truth, *sat cit ānanda*. Being you—there is no other *sat cit ānanda* available—we can say *tattvamasi*, you are that *sat cit ānanda*. This is Vedānta.