

ÇRADDHĀ¹

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The Vedas are revelations of *Ēçvara*. In accepting this, there is a certain faith involved. But it is not a blind faith. If anyone tells you that God has sent someone down to save you from damnation, you have to believe this person. Somehow he makes you buy that idea, and then appoints himself as the saviour by saying, "God sent me down to save you." This is all a belief. That is why some of these religions that are fundamentally committed to these kinds of beliefs are called Faiths.

We cannot speak of the 'Hindu Faith'. It is Hindu *dharma*, *vaidika-dharma*. There is a reason for that. Any belief we have has certain supporting arguments, though not proving arguments. This is called *çrutyanukūla-tarka*, a reasoning that is conducive to assimilating what the Vedas reveal. I can cite a few things. For instance, the *jéva*, the individual, survives death. The *jéva* departing from the body is not seen because it is subtle. If the *jéva* departing from the body were seen, you would push the *jéva* back inside. So that the *jéva* survives death is a belief. But it has supporting arguments.

We know that matter conserves itself. No one can destroy matter, much less energy. They are always in one form or the other, and there is not much difference between the two. They are convertible. No one can destroy an ounce of matter and no one can destroy a quantum of energy. We have this much knowledge. My physical body is not a mere matter-energy vesture. I am a conscious being who is conscious of matter and energy. I am the one who is conscious of matter in the form of particles, of atoms, and of energy in the electrons. Therefore, how can it be construed that the conscious being should come to a total decimation? When these two, matter and energy, are not destroyable, the third one, the conscious being, need not be assumed to be destroyed, until otherwise proved. So, if matter and energy cannot be destroyed, the assumption that the conscious being also can survive is an argument to support the *Çruti's* statement that the *jéva* survives the death of the body.

The next belief is that the *jéva* re-incarnates. It need not necessarily be here, on this planet. It can be anywhere in the universe; there are many *lokas*. This also is

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an acceptable belief, one that is not unreasonable.

We all have a certain experience of luck and bad luck. Everything we talk about has a cause and effect relationship. A particular phenomenon exists because there is a cause. We are certain about it. The water in the kettle is hot because it is sitting on a hot plate. You got the bus today, but you missed it yesterday. When your turn came the conductor said 'right'. It was right for the conductor, but not for you. For you everything was wrong; you stood there stranded. Missing the bus is everybody's experience. Now and then getting the bus is also everybody's experience. This luck, being at the right place at the right time, shows that there is something else also working for you, besides your effort. That something else working along with your pursuit is called *karma*. When we introduce *karma*, it means that the past has come. Past *karmas* are *adāñña*, not seen, but have a basis in *çāstra*. That means there is a *jéva* who incarnates.

There are highly documented freak cases where children remember their past lives. In one case, a three-year-old child said to her parents,

"I want to go to my house."

"This is your house."

"No, I want to go to my house, my husband's house."

"What? Husband's house?"

"Yes. I met with an accident; that is the house."

Then, indications like name, location, etc., are all given and then they are checked; they find an eighty-year old man of the name given who did lose his wife in an accident. These kinds of cases are well documented by people who are supposed to do research following all the norms. There are books on this subject. Even western scholars and psychologists have done research in this area, but none of them has conclusive proof; all of the evidence is supportive.

We accept the Vedas as a means of knowledge because it has come from *Éçvara*. The *karma-kāñña*, the first portion of the Veda, talks about *sādhana-sādhyas*. means and ends. It talks about unknown means for known ends. For instance, wealth, progeny, rains are all known ends for which we have unknown means. We do know certain means, but those means are not adequate. The Vedas reveal the unknown means that are in the form of rituals. A rituals is a form of prayer. These rituals will remove all obstacles coming in the way of our efforts. Thus, we have unknown means for known ends. The results of prayers can be checked. For instance, you can do *yaji'as*, fire rituals, like *kāréré* and *japas*, chants, like *Varuëa*

Japa and bring about rains. Rains do come. You cannot conclusively say that the rituals and the rains are unconnected. Again, these are all supporting arguments; you cannot prove it definitively.

The Vedas further talk of known means for unknown ends. You do something good for the society. For instance, you help people affected by *tsunami*. These are all altruistic activities, charitable activities and they are the known good things that you do. There is *puëya* for all this. *Puëya* is *adāñña*, unseen, by you. Because of *puëya*, you get into some favourable situations in life. If there is no particular mention in the *çästra* of a specific result for any *karma*, there is a general blanket rule that the result is *svarga*, heaven.

Then the Vedas reveal both means and ends that are unknown. It says that if you perform *jyotiññoma-yaji a*, you will go to *svarga*. I cannot say anything to prove that this is not true. That itself is good enough for the Vedas to be an independent means of knowledge.

Now the same Vedas reveal in the *upanishads*: "You are *Éçvara* who is the cause of this entire *jagat*." In this there are two possibilities. Either what the *çästra* says is wrong, is blasphemous, or what the *çästra* says is not understood. If you say it is blasphemous, you have no *çraddhä*. If you say, "Maybe it is saying something that I do not understand", then it is *çraddhä*. *Çästra* does not simply say, "This five feet seven inch person weighing one hundred and sixty pounds who is the father of two children is *Éçvara*."

Çästra has a certain teaching, a certain methodology of communication. The *guru* tells the disciple, *çiiñya*, "All that is here is only one; there is no second thing."² The disciple says, "You tell me there is no second thing, but you are there, I am here, and so we are two. Minimum two are there already. If two are accepted everything else is accepted." Here, the *çästra* has a vision that includes this division, that includes this subject-object difference.

The fact that the *çästra* says that there is no duality shows it accepts the seeming duality; otherwise it will not say there is no duality. The negation itself shows that the *çästra* sees the duality very clearly. Therefore, in spite of this subject-object difference that exists, the truth is revealed as non-dual. How is one going to negate this? To negate this, one has no arguments, really.

Çästra reveals that there is a reality, knowing which everything is as well known.

² *Neha nāñasti kii cana (Kaöhpaniññad 2.1.11).*

In fact it says, "Everything is known." I am making it "Everything is as well known." If I say, that everything is known, you will immediately ask me, 'Will I know French?' That is why I say "as well known, as good as known".

In the *Chândogya Upaniñad*, *Çvetaketu*, who had just then returned from his stay at the *gurukula*, asked his father about this one thing. He was someone who thought, "I have studied everything." His father called him and asked, "Did you ask your teacher for that knowledge gaining which everything is known?" *Çvetaketu* knew that his father was a *vidvân*, a scholar, and that he was asking a pertinent question. He replied, "My teacher did not know this." The assumption here on the part of *Çvetaketu* was, "Had my teacher known, he would have definitely taught me, for I was the best student. He did not teach me. Therefore, he did not know that." His father must have given him a stern look because, though there is no other mention in the *çâstra*, *Çvetaketu* then asked, "Is there such knowledge?"

Just look at this. Suppose out of clay different types of earthenware, such as pots, jars, lids, cups and so on, are made. You can count them as one, two, three, four, etc. They are many. Now, I am holding two pots in my hand. If you count them as earthenware, then two different things are there. If you count clay, how many clays are there? There is only clay. Now, I am adding one more pot on my hand. I have three pots—three indicates the plural in Sanskrit—still, the clay is one.

You say, "This is a pot." If I ask you just one question, you are in trouble. Now, I will do some magic here. I am holding this pot in my hand. Suppose I ask you, "What is in my hand?" You say, "It is a pot." I say, "It is clay." Since you say 'pot', I ask you, "What is the weight of this pot?" Whatever weight you say, it is the weight of clay. Therefore, you have a pot that has no weight. You have a pot that I cannot touch. The touch of pot is the touch of clay. What I touch is clay, what I hold is clay. Tell me, "Where is your pot?"

"Swamiji, the pot is on the clay."

"How can it be on the clay? If it is on the clay then I should be able to remove it like this flower that I keep on the pot."

"No Swamiji, it is in the clay."

"No, in the clay is only clay."

So it is not on the clay, it is not in the clay. It cannot be off the clay either. So where is the pot? This is real magic here. In any other magic, the hand is quicker than your eyesight. This is our *ânîs'* magic; hold the pot and dismiss the pot.

Even though there is no object for the word 'pot', still there is some form that

holds water. You cannot dismiss the pot totally. Therefore, you have to say, "The pot exists." But it is not a substantive. It is a *nāma-rūpa*, a name and form. Pot is not an object as such; pot is only a form. That is why you can use the word for a belly too and say 'pot-bellied'.

A form is not a substantive; it is not a *dravya*, an object. Therefore, pot becomes an attribute of clay. Can you say that wherever there is clay there is the pot attribute, potness? No. Therefore, it is an incidental attribute to clay. This is *sāñōi*, creation. *Çvetaketu* was convinced, "If I understand one thing made of clay, I have understood all that is made of clay. Ah, that is true because, what counts is only clay, nothing else counts. Everything made of clay is counted." This is the illustration given in the *Upaniñad*.

In the same way, if there is one thing out of which everything has come, by which everything is sustained, unto which everything goes back, then if that one thing is understood, everything is as well understood. Everything else becomes an attribute to that one thing. This 'everything else' includes your body, mind and senses.

If one understands this even vaguely, that is enough to begin the study; that glow is enough to become a flame. Vedanta talks about what is already there; that is the main thing, knowing which everything is as well known and gaining which everything is as well gained. That means the gain is of the ultimate. What it says, is to be understood.

What is to be gained here in terms of knowledge is something for which the means of knowledge is Vedanta.

"Swamiji, can you prove it gives me knowledge?"

"Yes, I can prove it gives you knowledge."

"What is the proof that it can give me knowledge?"

"You do not require a proof for a means of knowledge. You have to use the means of knowledge to prove that it is a means of knowledge."

Here, I give an example for this. Suppose, there is a person who was born blind and has never been able to see. But his blindness could be corrected by a surgical procedure available in the USA. The Rotary Club and the Lions Club together sponsored him to go to New and undergo the surgical procedure. When everything was over, he was kept blindfolded for two days. Then the doctor came and removed what was covering his eyes and asked him,

"Hello, please open your eyes."

"Doctor, I will not open my eyes."

"Why?"

"You prove that my eyes will see, then I will open them. Suppose they do not see, my heart will stop. Therefore, you have to prove to me that my eyes will see."

How can one prove this? There is no proof. The eyes themselves are the means for visual perception. To see whether a means of knowledge works or not, you have to use that means. There is no other way. You do not require any other means of knowledge, and no other means can prove the validity of a given means either. What the eyes can do, only the eyes have to prove, other means cannot. That is why it is called a *pramāëa*. Therefore, the person has to open the eyes to see whether his eyes see or not. But this patient would not open his eyes. Then, the doctor called a special nurse to pin his hands to the bed, and used his fingers to open the eyelids. When he did so, the patient exclaimed, "Ah, Oh, Oh, I... ." What happened? The patient's eyes see.

That the eyes see, the eyes have to prove; that the ears hear, the ears have to prove. That Vedanta works, Vedanta has to prove. So the pot example is given and the possibility of gaining the limitless is established. Therefore, what the *çruti* says may be true. It has to prove itself, and what you need to do now is to allow the *çruti* to do the job. We cannot force a person to sit in the class. The person has got to decide whether he/she wants to know or not.

The subject matter of the *çästra* cannot be the subject matter of any other *pramāëa*. Therefore, it cannot come from any given intellect; it can come only from *Éçvara*. If you look at the various means and ends of the *karma-käëòa*, the *karma-käëòa* can come only from *Éçvara*. If you look at the Vedanta *çästra* also, it can come only from *Éçvara*. Whether it comes from *Éçvara* or not, it works for me and for you; that is enough. It works because it comes from *Éçvara*. Otherwise it will not work because the subject matter is not available for other means of knowledge.

One also has to understand the nature of knowledge and *Éçvara* properly. *Éçvara* is all-knowing, he is all knowledge. All knowledge already exists. No new knowledge is ever created by anybody. "If all knowledge is *Éçvara*, then what about the *pramāëas* like the eyes?" one may ask. The eyes are only a means for you to gain knowledge. When the eyes, mind etc. remove the inhibiting factor, then one appreciates the knowledge that is already there. The *pramāëa-pravåtti*, operation of a means of knowledge, such as eyes, etc., is for removing the inhibiting factor called ignorance. Therefore, for a *jéva* other *pramāëas* are

necessary.

All *pramāēas* are only for *aji āna-nivātti*, removal of ignorance. Do not ask me, "Why is *aji āna* there?" You came along with ignorance. "Why did I come with ignorance?" If you did not come along with that, you would have come with all the wisdom. Or, you would not have been born at all. Therefore, one has to have *çraddhā* in the *çāstra* that it is a valid means of knowledge for removing ignorance about oneself. That is why *Brahmajī* tells *Āçvalāyana*, "*çraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avehi*, understand what the *çruti* says, with *çraddhā*, *bhakti* and *dhyāna*." The *çāstra* says you are already that which you want to be. *Çāstra* is the *pramāēa* for this. With the help of the *çāstra* you understand this.

If what the *çāstra* says is valid, but we do not understand or we find it is self-contradictory or other *pramāēas* come in conflict with it, then we need to resolve it. We have to take care of it. Suppose a scientist presents a paper propounding a new theory. His theory should not be self-contradictory and it should also not contradict what others have said in other disciplines of knowledge. Only then it is acceptable; it is accepted for the time being.

Here also it is the same. The *çāstra* should not contradict whatever it says. If one *upaniṣad* says one thing and another one says something else, then which one is valid? Both the statements are from the same *çāstra*. If it is self-contradictory, it is not worth the consideration. What it says should also not contradict what other means of knowledge have to say. If *çāstra* says fire is cold, there is *anya-pramāēa-kopa*, conflict with another means of knowledge, namely *pratyakṣa*, perception. *Çāstra* does not say that. Therefore, there should be neither an external contradiction nor an internal one. That is how you have to understand the *çāstra*. This is how you establish a valid *pramāēa*.

Suppose the *çāstra* contradicts, then what will you do? You will dismiss the *çāstra*, if you do not have *çraddhā*. If you have *çraddhā*, you will examine your understanding and will look at the whole thing again to see whether you have understood it properly. *Çraddhā* is very important in this pursuit. *Kāñēa* says³ in the *Gētā*, "One who has *çraddhā* gains this knowledge".

Çāstra will appear to contradict itself in many places. For instance, in one place in the *Gētā*, *Kāñēa* praises *karma-yoga* saying, "*Karma-yoga* is better than *karma-sannyāsa*"⁴ and asks *Arjuna* to fight. Elsewhere⁵, he praises knowledge saying,

³ *Çraddhāvān labhate ji ānam (Gētā 4.39).*

⁴ *Tayostu karma-sanyasāt karmayogo viçīṇyate (Gētā 5.2).*

"There is no purifier equivalent to knowledge". There appears to be a contradiction here. In another place⁶ *Kāñëa* says, "*Arjuna*, you become a *yogi*." To what *yoga* is *Kāñëa* referring here? Does he mean *karma-yoga* or *dhyāna-yoga*? *Arjuna* is asking questions because he himself is confused. *Kāñëa* seems committed to confusing *Arjuna*. No. Until *Arjuna* understands *Kāñëa* confuses him. If you look at it properly, there is no confusion. How can we look at it properly? Already we go about with a confused mind. How can we look at it properly?

When we say that *çāstra* is the *pramāëa*, what goes along with the *çāstra* is also included in it. It is a package deal. We have to understand the package here. First, for looking at the *çāstra* as a means of knowledge, *çradha* is inevitable. Then, along with the *çāstra* you get a *guru* also. *Guru* and *çāstra* go together. If the *çāstra* has to bless and reveal its meaning to you, you require a *guru*. So *çruti* says elsewhere: "Go to a teacher who is well-versed in the *çāstra*, and who is not committed to anything else except Brahman."⁷ That is why *Āçvalāyana* goes to *Brahmaji* and gets this knowledge right from him. Whatever *Āçvalāyana* got is right from *Éçvara*. So it is valid knowledge. The *ākhyāyikā*, story, is for revealing the validity of the knowledge.

To understand a book, you require the tools for understanding. The primary tool for understanding a book is the intellectual infra structure, which is mainly the language. Unless you have the language you cannot understand what is written in that language. Then, you require a certain aptitude to understand. If it is a book that presupposes certain preparation on your part, you require that also. You require covering a syllabus in order to read that book. Unless you cover the syllabus leading to this point, the book will not make any sense to you. Just as you have to cover a fourth grade book in order to understand the fifth grade book. Therefore, you need to complete the syllabus.

Here one can raise an objection: "The subject matter is simple. It is myself alone. So all that is required is language. If I have the language, why do I have to have a *guru* included in the package? Why should I buy this *guru* idea along with the *çāstra*?"

It looks as though it is some kind of a trick that the *gurus* play. Like a union

⁵ *Nahi ji'ānena sadāçam pavitram iha vidyate (Gētā 4.38).*

⁶ *Tasmāt yogē bhavārjuna (Gētā 6.46).*

⁷ *Gurum evābhigacchet ... çrotriyaà brahma-niñōham (Muëòakopaniñad 1.2.12).*

leader who creates a problem and then appoints himself as the problem solver, the *gurus* say that the *çästra* is the *pramäëa* to know about oneself, and then appoint themselves as the only people who can teach what the *çästra* says. It is not so. I have many arguments for the necessity of a *guru*.

If we look at the *Gëtä*, the first few verses of teaching have nothing much to convey. Then this verse⁸ comes: "*näsato vidyate bhävaù näbhävo vidyate sataù...*" In this, the meanings of the word '*sat*' and the word '*bhäva*' have no difference really speaking. Both have the same meaning, coming from the root *bhü*, *sattäyäm*, in the sense of 'to be'. Both being synonyms, they will naturally confuse someone who reads this verse. The literal meaning of the above verse is: "What is non-existent has no being, what is existent has no non-being." So what exists has no non-existence and what exists not, does not have existence. What exists, exists; what does not exist, does not exist. What can one understand from the above translation? Nothing. Some of the books will read only like this. People's ignorance is the strength for the *Gëtä* teacher.

To understand a given verse in the *Gëtä*, you need to understand the whole *Gëtä*. Unless you have the whole vision of the *Gëtä*, you cannot understand what is said in the individual verses. Even a verse like *açocyän anvaçocastvam...*⁹ you cannot understand properly. Then, unless you go verse by verse and grasp the meaning of each verse, you cannot understand the whole *Gëtä*. Thus, we have here *anyonyäçraya*, mutual dependence: unless you cover the *Gëtä* verse by verse you cannot understand the whole *Gëtä*, and unless you know the whole *Gëtä* you cannot understand any given verse.

This is like a person named Venkatraman, popularly called Venguttu, who has to be married. He was very well known, for he was slightly deranged mentally. The doctor advised that he would be okay if he got married. How to get him married? Unless he is well he cannot marry. Unless he marries he cannot get well. This is called a 'catch 22' situation.

Similarly, unless you know the whole *çästra* you cannot understand a given verse. You should know the whole thing. It is not possible to know the whole thing unless you go through it verse by verse. Therefore, you go to somebody who has the vision of the whole *çästra*. But how did that person get the whole vision? That person got it from another person. How did that person get it? He

⁸ *Gëtä* 2.16

⁹ *Gëtä* 2.11

got from another person. Who is the first person?

The first person is the grammatical third person. In English the first person is 'I' but in Sanskrit the first person is *Bhagavān*. So you have to go to *Bhagavān*. There is no other way. Here too, in the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* *Brahmajī* is the teacher. *Brahmajī* at least got it from *Ēçvara*. You cannot ask, "From where did *Ēçvara* get it?" *Ēçvara* is *sarvajī a*, all-knowing. *Ēçvara* is the source of all knowledge. The first *guru* is, therefore, the one who does not have a *guru*. He is *Ēçvara* alone.

There is another reason for the need of a *guru* to study Vedanta. It is because Vedanta is a *pramāṇa* in the form of *çabda* -words. You have to go sentence by sentence to understand a given passage and to understand a sentence you have to go word by word. What are the words?

We have words that are verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, particles and articles. Words have only this much range in any language. When these words fall in syntax, they give rise to a sense and that is called the meaning of a sentence. It is really a miracle how a meaning of a sentence takes place.

The Veda says, "You are Brahman." I do not know what Brahman is. Now, I have a new word, 'Brahman'. It is an unknown word. I come to know that Brahman is *ātmā*. Nothing is conveyed by these words. The teaching is meant to make you understand what Brahman is. Then one person will say:

"Brahman is eternal."

"What is eternal?"

"Eternal is immortal."

"What is immortal?"

"It is limitless."

"What is limitless?"

"Limitless is existence."

"What is existence?"

"It is reality."

"What is this reality?"

"It is divine consciousness."

"What is this divine consciousness?"

"It is supreme consciousness."

"What is supreme consciousness?"

"It is bliss."

"Which bliss?"

"It is B capital bliss. This is spiritual BLISS, not ordinary bliss."

So, words are simply piled up here. It is similar to the following words:¹⁰

"What is Brahman?"

"Brahman is *thatha-botha*."

"What is *thatha-botha*?"

"*Thatha-botha* is *gagabuga*."

"What is *gagabuga*?"

"*Gagabuga* is *chacha-bucha*."

"What is *chacha-bucha*?"

"*Chachabucha* is *lodaloda*."

I can go on and on. If somebody talks like this we dismiss him. But when someone teaches Brahman as 'supreme, divine, immortal, consciousness which is all auspiciousness and purity and is BLISS', we say, "He talks big, he talks on a high level." These people also say, "Brahman is ever liberated and you have to realise it." What is realisation? The first thing you should realise is you went to the wrong person.

You require a teacher who knows the *çästra* because it is not *çabda-väcyä*, the direct meaning of any word. If it is *çabda-väcyä*, then it is easy for you to understand the words; you require only *çabda-j'i äna*, knowledge of the meaning of words. If you have the language you will be able to understand, because the subject matter is something available for you to understand through words. But here it is not *çabda-väcyä*.

Words like 'eternal', 'immortal', 'divine', 'supreme' etc., even though they belong to language, are not common; they are not something we understand. What is eternal is not something to be realised, but is to be understood. It is *j'i äna*. But how does one understand? You do not understand what is eternal by hearing the word 'eternal' or repeating it eternally.

The meanings of these words have to be unfolded. Therefore, you require a teacher to handle these words, not merely state the words. A teacher, coming in the tradition, handles the words in such a way that the words really help you appreciate 'what is'. What is being conveyed is limitless and that is not available as the meaning of common words, known words. Still words have to be used to

¹⁰ The words that appear in the dialogue are mere jugglery of letters.

convey, and therefore, words are employed to deliver.

How are they employed? You create a situation in which the words can no longer have the commonly accepted meanings, and at the same time, they have their own content. Suppose, I use the word '*satya*'. *Satya* means *asti*, is. By the word 'is', you know it to be that which exists. Generally, our concept of existence is in terms of time. Existence, as we understand it, is bound by time. "He exists but he is not here" means he is elsewhere, in another place. If he is not in another place either, it means that he has passed away, he has gone to heaven. Heaven is a *loka*, a place, so existence is also bound by place. Therefore, our concept of existence is always in terms of time and place.

Now, we want to convey that Brahman exists, but this existence is unlike our understanding of the word 'exists'. It is not bound by time and place. Everything else is bound by time and place. It is all *çabda-vācya*. Brahman is not *çabda-vācya*. Brahman is *çabda-lakṣya*, the implied meaning of the word. Hence, we retain the root meaning of the word '*satya*, exists' and remove all the conditioning factors, like time and place, by using another word '*ananta*, limitless' in apposition. Thus, the reality is conveyed by the word *satya*, and at the same time, it is not the direct meaning of any word. So this is a thing to be conveyed by a teacher, creating the proper context.

The teacher creates this context and then makes the words convey only the root meaning of '*asti*, exists' without the concepts of time and place that we normally attach to the word '*asti*'. This is the special handling of words. How does the teacher come to know about this? He knows because he had exposed himself to the teaching. He is called a *çrotriya*. If anyone says, "I am a self-taught teacher", tell him to keep the knowledge with himself. We should keep away from such teachers. This is not a matter for self-learning.

One may ask, "What about Mirabai?" Mirabai had her own *guru*. She had understood the truth. Her songs do indicate her understanding. She talks about her own *guru*. Some people do not need a regular *gurukula* stay because of their head start, a certain understanding with which they come. They require only brief teaching to get easily connected to whatever they had started with. Lord *Kāñēa* says that such people get connected to what they understood in their previous birth¹¹. One does not quote an exception such as Mirabai. "If Mirabai gained knowledge by herself, why not I?" Never quote an exception.

¹¹ *Tatra taà buddhi samyogaà labhate paurva-dehikam (Gētā 6.43).*

Now you understand that *çraddhā* implies a conviction¹² that the sentences of the *çāstra* are valid, whether one understands them or not. If one does not understand, one looks into the *çāstra* again and reconciles all the differences. Therefore, one uses *anukūla-tarka*, conducive reasoning, to help one understand the *çāstra*. One does not use reason to dismiss the *çāstra*. This is *çraddhā*. If *çraddhā* is there, then your knowledge of grammar, knowledge of language, knowledge of other disciplines will all help you understand the *çāstra*. If *çraddhā* is not there, then all these will only distract you and keep you away from the *çāstra*. Whenever an occasion arises, *Çai kara* says in his commentaries, "*çāstra-ācārya-upadeçam anu*, following a teacher's teaching of the *çāstra*." *Çai kara* always refers to both *çāstra* and *ācārya* together. So *çāstra* is taught by an *ācārya*. At one place¹³ *Çai kara* says, "Even if a person is a great scholar in the *çāstra*, he should not inquire into Brahman without the help of a *guru*." Therefore, *Brahmajī* said to *Āçvalāyana*, "*çraddhayā avehi*, know through *çraddhā*".

¹² *Çāstrasya guruvākyasya satya-buddhyavadhāraëä sä çraddhā...* (*Viveka Cudāmaëi* 26) - The conviction that the *çāstra* and the words of the *guru* are true (is said to be *çraddhā*).

¹³ *Çāstrajī opi svātantryeëa brahmānveñaëaà na kuryāt* (*Muëðaka Bhāñya* 1.2.12).