

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: Q. 277, WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE?

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session welcomes you.

**Q. 277:**

Today's question deals with Knowledge:

***Knowledge does not come only in one form. There are different forms of knowledge. Although the word 'knowledge' is used for all kinds of information which is collected or gathered, on further analysis we will learn that there are different forms of knowledge. What are they?***

Let me speak on this topic from the Vedantic point of view, or in other words, from a philosophical perspective.

The first type of knowledge is worldly knowledge or common sense. The second form of knowledge is scientific knowledge or scientific sense. The third one is aesthetic or artistic knowledge, and the fourth type of knowledge is called ritualistic or mystical or spiritual knowledge.

These are the four usual forms of knowledge with which we are familiar. I repeat, the four most common types of knowledge are worldly knowledge, scientific knowledge, artistic knowledge and mystical or religious knowledge.

There is also a fifth type of knowledge, which is called knowledge of the Self or Supreme Knowledge or *Brahma Jnana*, which is the ultimate knowledge.

We can say with certainty that all forms of knowledge from the Vedic times, beginning with the *Rigveda* right up to the times of the modern computer sciences, are Dvaitic or dualistic in their content and in their approach.

These four types of knowledge can also be called relative sciences, because each one of them is not ultimate or final. This includes general or worldly knowledge, scientific knowledge, aesthetic knowledge and religious knowledge. Each one of them is still growing. Each one has something more to investigate, to explore and to experiment. So, all these four forms of knowledge are not ultimate or complete. Therefore they are only relative sciences.



There is only one type of knowledge which is *Advaita*, meaning 'non-dualistic'. This knowledge is called *Brahma Jnana* or Supreme knowledge or ultimate knowledge. *Brahma Jnana*, which is non-dualistic, is the ultimate or complete knowledge because there is nothing beyond it, nothing more to investigate, nothing to explore further.

Adi Sankara used only two words to describe knowledge. One is *Drushtam*, D R U S H T A M, meaning 'known', and the second word is *Adrushtam*, A D R U S H T A M, which means 'unknown'. So, according to Adi Sankara, there are two forms of knowledge, the known and the unknown, *Drushtam* and *Adrushtam*.

I would also like to bring to your attention that these relative sciences have been given a technical term, which is *Sapeksha*, S A P E K S H A, meaning 'relativity'.

Moreover, there is a Trinity or *Thriputi*, T H R I P U T I, in all these relative sciences. The Trinity consists of the following: One is the *Jeeva*, J E E V A, meaning the individual life. The second is *Jagath*, J A G A T H, meaning the world, and the third is *Eswara*, E S W A R A, which means God. Therefore, *Jeeva*, *Jagath* and *Eswara*, all these three are contained in each one of these four forms of knowledge.

Also, because of their *Sapeksha* or relativity, we can clearly conclude that these sciences are interdependent. For example, *jeeva*, the individual, cannot exist without *jagath*, the world. Also, *jagath* and *jeeva*, the world and the individual, have no existence at all without *Eswara*, the Divine. One depends on the other. So we can conclude that these relative sciences are interdependent.

In addition, they also contain the basic quality of *thriputi* or trinity. We can also call this trinity as the known, the knower and the beyond, or the unknown.

At the same time, although the known, the knower and the unknown exist in all the relative sciences, each one of them is also considered as an individual reality or existence. The knower, the known and the unknown are real and they are factual. They are authentic and they are also different from each other.

For example, I am different from the world. The world is different from me, and both of us are different from the spirit or the divine. Therefore, although they are interdependent, they are also independent, like water-tight compartments.



So, the qualities of these relative sciences are that they are based on *dvaita* or duality, and they contain the *thriputi* or trinity, and they are interdependent.

On the other hand, *Brahma Jnana*, which we also call Divine knowledge, or knowledge of the Self or Ultimate knowledge, has nothing to do with *thriputi* or trinity. In other words, the *jeeva*, the individual, jagath, the world and *Eswara*, the unknown are no longer separate. They become one and the same. In *Brahma Jnana*, which is non-dualistic, all three merge into one.

This is the main difference between the relative sciences and *Brahma Jnana*, the absolute science. We can call it *Brahma Jnana* or Divine knowledge or the Absolute science, as opposed to the relative sciences.

Now let me bring to your attention a few more examples on this subject. If we look at scientific knowledge, we find three things which are the scientist, the science and the experimentation or observation. This is a trinity. If we take art, we have the singer, the song and the listener, again the *thriputi* or trinity. In literature, we have the writer, the script and the one who reads through it, once again, *thriputi*. So Trinity exists in every branch of these four forms of knowledge, the relative sciences.

When we look at the Absolute science, *Brahma Jnana*, there are not three factors or *thriputi* here. They have merged into one. What does it mean when the knower, the known and the unknown, merge into one? It means this is *Brahman*, the Ultimate. Where is *Brahman*? It is in you because you are the Self. You are *Brahman*. You are divine. That's what Baba says. "You are God. *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am *Brahman*." That's who you are. Let's understand this!

The relative sciences are fragmented. They have no completion or fulfilment. On the contrary, Absolute science is sufficient unto itself and there's no question of what comes next.

In the field of science, the scientists go on investigating because they want to know what happens next. This thought of 'what comes next' is called *Akanksha*, A K A N K S H A, which means, 'What next?'

Investigation is the main feature of relative sciences which are based on dualism, and that is why the relative sciences can never give you any kind of solution. They cannot offer any solution to life in general and its problems. It is only *Brahma Jnana* or *Advaita Jnana* which can give you the solution and the fulfilment in your life.



*Brahma Jnana* clearly says that only one entity exists, not three, because the knower, the known and the beyond have merged into one. We can call this phenomenon Subjective Oneness or monism. Subjective oneness or monism is the absolute science.

The relative sciences, as I pointed out earlier, are interdependent, but this absolute science is independent. It exists on its own and it is called *Nirapaksha*, N I R A P A K S H A. Relative sciences are *Sapeksha*. Absolute science is *Nirapaksha*, meaning self-dependent, not depending on anyone else.

At the same time we should know that *Brahma Jnana*, the Ultimate, is not created by anyone. That which is created is bound to vanish in the course of time. But this is *Advaita* and *Advaita* is not created. It has been there since the beginning. It is not an achievement. It is *Siddham*, S I D D H A M, meaning 'ready-made'. It is already accomplished. It already exists.

I think it was a gentleman by the name of Copenhaver, who said that there are two wonders in this world. One is the starry heavens above and the second is the Upanishadic literature on earth. In his opinion, these are the two wonders of the world.

I can also tell you that in this *Advaita Jnana*, the non-dualistic, absolute science, there is a fourth dimension, whereas In the relative sciences we have only a three dimensional world. So, in absolute science, there is also a fourth dimension.

What are the three dimensions with which we are familiar? One is Space, the second is Time and the third dimension is Substance. Supreme knowledge or *Brahma Jnana* is the fourth dimension.

These three dimensions can be applied to the three states of consciousness which are the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state. The waking state and the dreaming state are expressive and they are manifested, whereas the third state, *sushupti*, which is deep sleep, is not manifested.

All three dimensions manifest only in two states of consciousness, the waking and the dreaming, while all three dimensions are unmanifest in *sushupti* or deep sleep. However, existence continues in deep sleep.

It was Goudapada, G O U D A P A D A, the first Guru of Adi Shankara, who composed *Karikas*, K A R I K A S (lyrical verses). Goudapada says



in his *karikas* that Advaitam or non-dualism is the only reality. All the rest are only, *abhasa*, A B H A S A, meaning 'false appearances' because they contain *thriputi*, the trinity.

What did Adi Sankara do? He gifted a magnificent work to humanity. The *Advaitic* concepts which have been mentioned in various scriptures were all put together like the flowers which are strung into a garland. All these *Advaitic* concepts have been collected in one place and are contained in His writings, his *bhashyas*, B H A S H Y A S, meaning 'interpretations'.

Adi Shankara experienced Supreme knowledge, so he is called complete. He is looked at as embodiment of Divinity or Divinity personified, which in Sanskrit is *Bhagawath Pada*, B H A G A W A T H P A D A. *Bhagawath Pada* means that he has experienced the Supreme knowledge.

However, Adi Shankara did not keep this knowledge to Himself. He kept sharing it with the rest of humanity. So he a *Jagadguru*, J A G A D G U R U. *Jagadguru* means a world teacher.

This is the main feature of a preceptor as mentioned in the sacred composition which is called *Dakshinamurthy*. In this *Dakshinamurthy shloka*, the features of a world teacher are mentioned towards the end.

To conclude, I would say that the *Geeta*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Brahmasutras* are all sciences, unlike mythology, unlike epics, and unlike other forms of knowledge.

The *Geeta*, the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutras* are *Rajavidya*, R A J A V I D Y A, meaning 'the science of all sciences'. In Latin it is called *scientia scientiarum*, the science of scientists.

The final statement in this question and answer session is this: When this Supreme science is applied to life, it turns into an art and that is called the art of life, *Divya Jnana*. Divine knowledge, gets transformed into *Divya Jeewana*, *JEEWANA*, which means 'Divine life'.

Therefore, Supreme science liberates the relative sciences. *Tharakan*, T H A R A K A N means liberation.

In this talk I wanted to explain the different forms of knowledge in detail.

Thank you for your time. We will meet again.



Sai Ram.