

ATMAN AND BRAHMAN

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

The Brahman and Atman are two most basic and fundamental concepts of everything known or unknown. The relation between them is more interesting. The Mahavakyas tend to explain the relation.

But what is Atman?

The very existence of anything which has its own sense of existence is Atman. Which is sthitaprajna in itself. Purna (absolute) in itself. In Bhagwat Gita, Shri Krishna describes 'Atma's' properties as which neither burns nor gets drowned, has no birth no death. Atma can be considered as an entity that drives the "Purush".

Now the question arises what is Brahman?

Describing it is like, explaining the explainable. But I will try what best I am able to understand with my small intellect.

Brahman is the creator; It is the origin of everything which exists or which doesn't. Whatever is, is Brahman, that is not is also Brahman. It has properties also it doesn't have. i.e. It is 'Sagun' and also 'Nirgun' at the same time. Hence, it is 'Prajnanam Brahma (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म)' which means it is the epitome of Knowledge. Brahman is the absolute Truth (Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya). What has to be revered is 'Brahma'.

After a basic understanding of Ataman and Brahman, the first thought arises how can two absolutes exist at the same time?

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So, Mahavakyas says,

Tat Tvam Asi (तत् त्वम् असि)

Ayam Atma Brahma (अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म)

Aham Brahmāsmi (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि)

'Thou art that'. The Chandogya Upanishad, explains whatever is discussed, that is you. In reference to Brahma and Atman where Atman is tat tvam asi .

The Mandukya Upanishad which is sufficient enough for moksha i.e. Independence from Karma Bandhana, it makes absolutely clear that self is Brahman, where 'self' refers to Atman so Atman is Brahman. And last but not least, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and predominantly Adi Shankaracharya's Bhashyas refer, Aham Brahmasmi - I am Brahma. Which means I that is my Aham is Brahman itself. Aham is the property of Atman. Which is slightly different from the 'ego' of Sigmund Freud's theory.

At last Atman is Brahman. But Brahman is not Atman. Because Sea has the waves but Sea is not the wave. Where Brahma is sea(samudra) and Atman is tide(taranga).

Also the 'ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं ...' shloka implies the same that Both Atma and Brahma is purna. Whether added or subtracted result is Purna and that is Brahman.

It also has a natural science point of view,

It is worldwide excepted that everything in the universe is energy and mass which is also a form of energy ($E = mc^2$). Energy is consciousness(चैतन्य). Brahman is pure(absolute) consciousness and Atman is individual consciousness and Individual is part of the Absolute hence, Atman is Brahman.

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Though Atman and Brahman are one, the true realization of unification is not common and It has to be the ultimate goal of every individual to understand it and become of or Brahman itself.

ॐ सह नावतु । ह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवाहै । तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

References:

[1]Shrimad Bhagwat Gita.

[2] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mah%C4%81v%C4%81kyas>.

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