The Ocean Within the Ocean

A REFLECTION



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A REFLECTION

You are in the Ocean, of the Ocean, always.

This truth is as clear as water before your eyes. So clear it is easy not to see. This moment is a mirror of that clarity. From heart to mind. When the heart shines its light, your mind sees. When it diminishes in the darkness of your own ignorance, the mind loses its light to see clearly.

— *Hosshin*



PART ONE

Vedanta (Advaita)

Ocean of the Ocean

Brahman is the one reality. The wave is only a name and a form. Its substance is the ocean, always. Vedanta asks: what is real and what only appears?

As clear as water before your eyes

The classic story is the tenth man. Ten travellers cross a river and the leader counts nine, forgetting to count himself. He grieves for the missing one, who is the counter. The Self is never absent. It is the one who sees. So Vedanta calls it self luminous: it needs no other light to be known.

So clear it is easy not to see

What is nearest is overlooked. The Self is closer than the eyes that look for it, so the mind searches elsewhere and misses it.

This moment is a mirror of that clarity

The mind (buddhi) is the mirror. The light of consciousness is reflected in it. A clear mind reflects well; a restless or clouded one reflects poorly. The Self is not improved by the mirror. Only the reflection changes.

From heart to mind

The Upanishads place the Self in the heart, the inner cave. Mind is where it is reflected and known. Purifying the mind (sattva, steadiness, clarity) is how the reflection becomes clear.

When the heart shines its light, your mind sees

The Self is the light by which everything else is known. The mind sees only by borrowed light. Seeing is the Self's nature, not an achievement.

When it diminishes in the darkness of your own ignorance, the mind loses its light to see clearly

This is avidya, ignorance. It has two functions: veiling (the Self is not seen) and projecting (something else is seen in its place). The rope seen as a snake is the example. The rope was never harmed. Knowledge does not create the Self. It removes the mistake. Strictly, the light does not truly diminish. Only the mind's access to it is clouded.

PART TWO

Kashmiri Shaivism

Ocean of the Ocean

Here the one reality is Shiva, who is consciousness, free and creative. The wave is not a mistake about the ocean. It is the ocean's own movement and play. The world is real, as the expression of consciousness. The focus is freedom (svatantrya), not discrimination.

As clear as water before your eyes

Water is transparent, and so is consciousness. It is the very clarity in which everything appears. This is why it is overlooked: it is the medium of all seeing.

So clear it is easy not to see

This is pratyabhijna, recognition. You do not discover anything new. You know again what you already are, like recognising a face you have always known. The path is recognition, not removal.

This moment is a mirror of that clarity

Abhinavagupta uses the mirror for consciousness itself. The whole universe appears in it like a reflection, and the mirror is not changed by what appears. The mirror is not the mind here. It is the one consciousness, holding everything inside itself.

From heart to mind

Heart (hridaya) is the core of consciousness, where light and self awareness meet. Mind (chitta) is that same consciousness contracted. When it expands back, mind is simply consciousness again.

When the heart shines its light, your mind sees

Light (prakasha) alone is not enough. Consciousness also knows itself (vimarsha). Shining and self awareness are one. And the moment (spanda) is the living pulse where this is felt. Many of the 112 methods of the Vijnana Bhairava work through such moments: the gap between breaths, the instant before a thought.

When it diminishes in the darkness of your own ignorance, the mind loses its light to see clearly

Here the darkness is not an outside cause. Shiva freely contracts and conceals himself. The five acts are creation, maintenance, dissolution, concealment and grace. Concealment is one of Shiva's own acts. The limits are called malas (impurities, sense of smallness) and the kanchukas (cloaks). Grace is the turn back to recognition.

PART THREE

The Difference in Focus

Vedanta. The problem is ignorance. The remedy is knowledge that removes the false. The world is superimposed on the real.

Kashmiri Shaivism. The problem is forgetting, which is part of consciousness's own play. The remedy is recognition and grace. The world is real and divine.

Both point at the one. Vedanta emphasises what to let go of. Kashmiri Shaivism emphasises what to recognise.



With love,

Hosshin

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