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*Arsha Vidya  
Newsletter*

In fearless voice may  
we proclaim

The Rishi's message  
from all house-tops

And bring the men  
of different claim

To a fold of Love  
where oneness lasts!

## Second Muṇḍaka Section 1

(Mantra 2..... continued)

Why should one say, “This snake is a rope,” and why not say, “This is a rope?” “What is rope?” if a person asks, one can show a rope and say, “This is a rope.” If one sees a snake on a rope, then that person has to be told that ‘this snake is rope.’ If one looks at the *jagat* as something separate from Brahman, then the *śruti* is constrained to use words in *sāmānādhikaraṇya* and say, “*idam sarvaṁ brahma*, all this is Brahman.” If one does not see the *jagat* as separate from Brahman, there is no need for this method of teaching.

There is another version of *bādhāyāṁ sāmānādhikaraṇyam* like in the sentence, ‘this pot is clay.’ Here the intention is to convey the truth of the pot as clay. The pot is understood as nothing but clay. In the wake of this recognition, the pot does not disappear. It continues to be there and recognised, even though it does not have any reality of its own. The sentence, ‘all this is Brahman, is exactly like that. In the wake of knowledge of Brahman, ‘*idam sarvaṁ*’ does not go away; it refers to the *nāma-rūpā*, which is recognised as *mithyā*, since its reality is Brahman.

In a sentence, generally, *sāmānādhikaraṇya* is used only to relate words as adjective and substantive. Definitely the adjectives are used only to qualify a noun. If this is so, then why do we say, “This pot is clay,” even though the clay does not have the attributes of a pot? This is to be said because one takes the pot to be real. What is there is only clay. Here, we give up the adjective-substantive relationship and bring in the *bādhāyāṁ sāmānādhikaraṇyam*. One is looking at oneself as separate from everything, and hence there is confusion. The *vastu* is not recognised. Therefore, in the sentence, ‘*idam sarvaṁ brahma*’ one has to go for *bādhāyāṁ sāmānādhikaraṇyam*.

In the sentence, ‘all this is Brahman’ the word ‘all this’ is not purely a subjective reality, like the snake seen on the rope. One sees the snake on the rope, and therefore it is there. But in the objective reality, ‘the object is, and therefore one sees.’ The object has a reality, has a colour which the eyes pick up. One cannot simply dismiss the eyes, the mind, the perception and the disciplines of knowledge and so on, as subjective. Whether one sees it or not, the object is there available for public appreciation. There are tall mountains, there are vast oceans, there are huge plants, there is an order in everything, there is success, there is failure, there is right, and there is wrong. How can one call all of them *mithyā*? It is what really bothers many people. All these are *mithyā* because they do not exist independent of *satya*.

The *jagat* that is *mithyā* is definitely not similar to rope-snake. It means 'the *jagat* is not independent of its cause and hence it is Brahman.' It is of a different order altogether. The means of knowledge and their operation also belong to the same order of *mithyā*. Even bondage and *mokṣa* belong to the same order. From the *mithyā* bondage alone one is released. But the release is *satya* because after the release what is there is *satya*. There is only one non-dual Brahman.

All the words of this *mantra* reveal the meaning of *mahā-vākya*.<sup>26</sup> It is not that there are only four *mahā-vākyas*. Every *upaniṣad* has *mahā-vākyas*. Four *mahā-vākyas* have been chosen from the four *upaniṣads* belonging to four Vedas to prove that all the Vedas talk about the same thing. If there are only four *mahā-vākyas*, then those who study other *upaniṣads* have to come to these *upaniṣads*.

Those who talk of four *mahā-vākyas* also talk of some gradation in them. They say that *tattvamasī* is the *upadeśa-vākya*. It teaches, 'You are Brahman.' The sentence, 'prajñānaṁ brahma, consciousness is Brahman' is the *lakṣaṇa-vākya*, a definition of Brahman. Then, 'ayam ātmā brahma, this self is Brahman,' is a *nididhyāsana-vākya*, a contemplative sentence. The final one, 'ahaṁ brahmāsmi, I am Brahman' is an *anubhava-vākya*, a sentence of experience. There is no gradation here, all the *vākyas* mean the same thing.

The words in these sentences have a *vācyārtha*, immediate meaning, and a *lakṣyārtha*, an implied meaning. *Prajñāna* means consciousness. That is Brahman means it is the cause of the world. It is Īśvara. How can *ātman*, the consciousness be Īśvara? Because the truth of both are one *caitanyaṁ brahma*. There is non-difference in the *lakṣyārtha*. Similarly, 'ayam ātmā' refers to the knower who is equated with Brahman, the cause of everything. There is difference in the *vācyārtha*, as the *jīva*, the knower, cannot be Īśvara. But the *svarūpa* of both is again one *caitanya*. That alone is the truth. So too, 'I,' the *jīva* am Brahman because both are *satyam*, *jñānam* and *anantam*. In the sentence, 'you are that' the word 'that' refers to Īśvara from whom everything has come. It is the immediate meaning of the word. No one can claim to be Īśvara. But if one knows the truth of Īśvara to be the truth of oneself, which is *saccidānanda*, then there is oneness. There is no difference at all whatsoever.

All the four *vākyas* talk about the same truth. The *tātparya*, purport, of all four Vedas is to reveal the identity of the *vastu* alone. This meaning of *mahā-vākya* is there in every *upaniṣad*. Even the sentence 'akṣarāt parataḥ paraḥ' is talking about the same thing.

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<sup>26</sup> अखण्डार्थभबोधकभवाक्यम् a sentence that reveals the oneness of the *jīva*, the individual, and Īśvara, the Lord.

श्री रुद्रम्  
Śrī Rudram  
Mantra 11

Rṣi - Pulastyaḥ; Chandas - Trṣṭubh; Devatā - Śānbhuḥ

*Dhyāna- śloka*

प्रसन्नवदनं शान्तं चरितोद्वाहमण्डनम् ।  
अम्बया सहितं ध्यायेत् सुरसहृद्वैरधिष्ठितम् ॥

*prasannavadanam śāntam  
caritodvāhamaṇḍanam  
ambayā sahitam dhyāyet  
surasaṅghairabhiṣṭutam.*

May one meditate upon the Lord, who has a serene smile, who is peaceful, who is the divine bridegroom accompanied by Pārvatī, and who is praised by the host of *devas*.

Result (for chanting of the eleventh *mantra*): Absence of quarrel with important people, winning their favours and winning the enemies within and outside oneself. One gains *puraścaraṇa-siddhi* by repeating this mantra ten thousand times for three nights along with observance of a discipline called *caru-bhojana*. Thereafter, one must also circumambulate a *śiva* temple ten thousand times.

विकि॑रि॒द विलो॑हित॒ नमस्ते॑ अस्तु॒ भगवः॑ ।  
यास्ते॑ स॒हस्र॑हे॒तयो॑न्यमस्मन्न॒वपन्तु॑ ताः ॥ ११ ॥  
*vikiridā vilohitā nāmāste astu bhagavaḥ  
yāste sahasraṁ hetayaṇyamaṣmannivapantu tāḥ (11)*

*vikirida* - the vanquisher of all the *pāpas*; *vilohita* - one who is pure;  
*namaḥ* - salutation; *te* - unto you; *astu* - be;  
*bhagavaḥ* - O Lord who is endowed with six forms of wealth!;  
*yāḥ* - which; *te* - your; *sahasraṁ hetayaḥ* - thousands of weapons;  
*anyam* - other people; *asmat* - than us; *nivapantu* - destroy; *tāḥ* - they

O vanquisher (of all *pāpas*)! O the pure one! O Lord endowed with six forms of wealth! Let our salutation be unto you. Let the thousands of

weapons that you have, destroy other people (deserving destruction), not us.

*He vikirida*<sup>135</sup> — O the one who condemns! Those who hurt or destroy us in many ways are *vikirayaḥ*. Things that harm unfold themselves in terms of experiences such as diseases, loss of property and so on. The one who destroys them is *vikirida*, the Lord.

*He vilohita* — O the one who is pure! *Lohita* means red colour and it stands for rajas as a *guṇa*. The one from whom the *lohita* is gone is *vilohita*. He is of the nature of purity. *He bhagavaḥ*, my salutation to you who is endowed with six forms of limitless *aiśvarya* in terms of wealth, overlordship, knowledge, freedom from want, glory and power.

*Yāḥ sahasraṁ hetayaḥ tāḥ asmāt anyam nivapantu* — You have thousands of weapons; let them not destroy us, but the wrong doers. Their weapons of the Lord are all over in different forms; some of them are in our own body and mind in the form of ulcer, terminal cancer and so on and there are other causes for affliction, *pāpa*. Therefore *anyam nivapantu* means *pāpaṁ nivapantu*, let your arms destroy the *pāpas*.

### Mantra 12

Rṣi - Nārada; Chandas - Anuṣṭubh; Devatā - Śānbhuḥ

*Dhyāna- śloka*

सर्वपापहरं देवं सर्वाश्रयणशूषितम् ।  
सर्वायुधधरं देवं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ॥

*sarvapāpaharam devam*  
*sarvābharaṇabhūṣitam*  
*sarvāyudhadharam devam*  
*sarvalokamaheśvaram.*

May one meditate upon the Lord who destroys all the causes of suffering, who is adorned with all ornaments, who holds all weapons and who is the Lord of all the worlds.

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<sup>135</sup> *vividhaṁ kiranti hiṁsanti iti vikirayaḥ tān dyati khaṇḍayati iti vikiridaḥ* — those who harm in different ways are called *vikirayaḥ*, the one who condemns them is called *vikiridaḥ*.

Result for chanting of the twelfth *mantra*: Removes all minor obstacles in one's pursuits. One gains *mantra-siddhi* by first observing the discipline called *kṛcchra* for a month and thus having gained the eligibility to chant, one chants this *mantra* one thousand times.

सहस्राणि सहस्रधा बाहुवोस्तव हेतयः ।  
तासामीशानो भगवः पराचीना मुखा कृधि ॥१२॥

*sahasrāṇi sahasradhā bāhuvostava hetayaḥ*  
*tāsāmīśāno bhagavaḥ parācīnā mukhā kṛdhi* (12)

*sahasrāṇi* - (there are) thousands; *sahasradhā* - of countless varieties;  
*bāhuvoh* - in both hands; *tava* - of you; *hetayaḥ* - weapons;  
*tāsām* - of them; *īśānaḥ* - the wielder; *bhagavaḥ* - O Lord!;  
*parācīnā* - away from us; *mukhā* (*mukhāni*) - faces; *kṛdhi* - make  
(turn)

O Lord! There are thousands of weapons of countless varieties in your two hands. May you, the wielder of those weapons, turn them away from us.

The Lord who wields countless varieties of weapons is requested to withdraw all of them. The weapons are of different types. Every affliction is weapon. There are many ways to fall down and there are hundreds of ways to get hurt. These weapons are in the form of people who hurt while talking to you. The whole life is full of *upadravas*, afflictions, and hence the weapons are looked upon as manifold, *sahasradhā*. May you make them turn away from us. Make them *sukha-pradāna*, giver of happiness.

*Bhagavaḥ hetīnām īśānaḥ mukhā parācīnā kṛdhi* —You are the Lord of all weapons. Even if you have used them, you can take them back. Let their face not be directed towards me. Withdraw all of them as you are *īśāna*, the Lord of them.

# Understanding the Unconscious

**Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

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To be objective is what I call intelligent living. I need to be objective in many areas. And it is not enough that I understand this in general, vaguely. I must look deeply into certain areas that need to be understood, ventilated, in order to live a life of objectivity. There is a world available for public appreciation, but I live in my own world of fears, anxieties and projections. Everybody is living in a bubble. We have to prick this bubble and breathe fresh air. Let us understand first the reason for this subjectivity; then we will look into what it takes to be objective.

Ignorance can be one factor involved in subjectivity. Generally, that is the factor we address when we teach Vedanta. We teach 'what is' so that you get clear knowledge with reference to certain realities. This is one thing. There is another factor, which is psychological and cannot be dismissed. Anyone who does not wish to address his or her psychological issues because they are very painful, dismisses the psychological factor as merely psychological. Therefore, we are going to address it.

## *Addressing the psychological factor*

When one is born, there is total helplessness. A human child is not as simple as a calf. A calf is born, it struggles and stands on its four legs. A human baby, perhaps, was very safe and secure only when it was not yet born. The baby's body, connected to the mother, having its own

heart, happily moving and floating inside, was totally secure, perhaps for the only period of time in its entire life. It is born to start an independent life. What a start to an independent life! To live independently one must have everything that is necessary. At least one must be able to beg. The newborn baby cannot even beg, but it is starting an independent life. The baby was safe a minute before. It is unsafe now, helpless, totally, since the cord is already snapped. It has to start its journey, an independent journey. Nothing is known. The eyes are still closed, not yet open. It starts its life with absolute trust in the person whose hands pick it up. It is one's hundred percent trust. Maybe, vaguely, while prenatal, the baby had heard the voice of the mother. It hears the same voice now. Perhaps there is a small disturbance inside if the voice is different, because the baby is given to somebody else. Only a small disturbance, for it cannot afford to question the person who nourishes it. It has to completely deliver itself to this person because it does not have the wherewithal to survive. As an organism it is programmed to survive; it has got that instinct. It is the only goal in the beginning. There is no other goal. If you were to ask the baby, "What is the goal of life?" and if it could answer, it would say, "I want to survive." It has no other goal. It is not going to say, "I want to become the president of this country." Survival is the organism's untold story. It is the story of every organism.

### ***A child's total trust***

The baby is helpless. It cannot even turn, much less does it have any resources to survive. It delivers itself to what I call trust. Do you know what kind of trust? It is total

trust. You can have total trust only in someone who is all-knowing. You cannot place absolute trust in a person who is fallible, bound by time, bound by ageing, bound by disease and death. You cannot totally trust that person who can create, but can create only small things, and who also says he cannot do anything else; much less can you trust a person who can create but cannot maintain what he creates. Perhaps a person can create, can keep it going, but cannot withdraw, cannot stop like some people who do not know when to stop talking. Well, that person you cannot trust. One hundred percent trust in such a person is not possible. You can only trust that person who does not have any limitation whatsoever, in terms of knowledge and in terms of *sakti*, power. Whichever way you look at that person, he or she has to have total capacity; that person alone you can totally trust.

However, innocence on the part of the child makes total trust possible. Total trust is necessary for that baby. It cannot afford to distrust; it has got to trust and trust totally. Total trust means trust that the trusted person will nourish, will take care. That person becomes *Ishwara*, God, for that child and on the lap of that person, it relaxes; it goes to sleep. To the voice of the person who rocks the cradle, or on the moving lap, the child goes to sleep because it is safe. In its awareness there is safety because of total trust. Safety comes from trust.

#### ***Gradual erosion of the child's total trust***

A mother is trustworthy until her mobile rings. Once upon a time the door was knocked upon. Once upon a time the telephone rang. That was all 'once upon a time'. Now the mobile rings and you are

away from the child. The child feels deprived because there is inconsistency. You are not around all the time. I want you to understand this thoroughly. We cannot afford to be ignorant of a few things. We need to know. Inconsistency causes disturbance to the child. In its awareness, the mother has to be around. As the baby grows, it also recognises the other familiar voice of a different frequency that was heard while it was pre-natal, sometimes in the morning and evening. Sometimes it is heard after ten days. Even that is a soothing experience and gives a sense of security. Well, this consistency on the part of a mother makes the child feel secure. She may not be a working mother. This 'working mother' is a new expression, as though the other mothers do not work. They work in the kitchen, go to the market; they work at home. As long as the mother is not away in the child's awareness, the child feels secure. As long as the mother does not fall ill, the child is secure. As long as the mother does not share the attention with another baby, the child is secure. As long as the mother does not raise her voice, the child is secure. As long as the mother does not argue with the other frequency-voiced person, the child is secure.

You can understand now that as the child grows, the insecurity also grows. It begins to see the fallibility, the inconsistency. Where is the total trust? The total trust gets violated, gets eroded all the time.

In a joint family the child always had a lap, an empty lap. It sat on the empty lap of a

grandmother or of an aunt. Now there are no empty laps; even if a lap is empty, there is a laptop on it. Where is there an empty lap? There is no empty lap available, so the child grows insecure, and remains insecure, constantly seeking the same safety, the same security that it had experienced before it was born.



This particular experience of the child, which remains throughout its life, is what is called the unconscious. Every adult has the responsibility to process this insecurity with which one cannot live. To live intelligently, to live objectively, one has to understand this unconscious very thoroughly. The unconscious interprets everything. It vitiates every experience. It distorts everything. Nothing is seen as it is. We need to become conscious of this unconscious. We will.

We have an equivalent word '*Kashaya*' in Sanskrit for the term unconscious. '*Kashaya*'

controls one's life; one has no control over it. The nature of '*kashaya*', the unconscious, is such that you cannot have any say over it, inasmuch as it is something that you are not conscious of. Really speaking, our mechanical behavior comes from this unconscious. Scriptures, such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*, also address the problems caused by the unconscious. The word '*atmavan*' of the scriptures, means the one who has *atma*. Everybody has an *atma*. *Atma* here is the whole *karya-karana-sanghata*, our body-mind-sense complex. *Atmavanis* the one who has a say over the ways of one's mind. It reveals our *Sastra's* recognition that one needs to address one's *kashaya*. In fact the whole Hindu *sanskrit* culture recognises this as an issue to be addressed.

Let us understand this *kashaya*, the unconscious. The human child, the survivor, wants to have its gods always on its side. Obviously it does not want to lose them or their grace. The child expects the parents to be totally free from any form of limitation. Where is the possibility? Knowledge-wise, power-wise, health-wise, longevity-wise, consistency-wise, the mother has to be free from limitation, but the fact is that the mother has limitations. As for the father, he has many more, not fewer. Therefore, as the child grows, the total trust that the child

enjoyed gets violated. The helplessness of the child continues. The two-year-old is helpless. It has discovered its own ego, but begins to

discover more and more limitations in the parents without verbalising them. The nonverbal recognition of the limitations that violate trust is deadly. This is the pain that

forms the unconscious. The child cannot afford to have this pain. It will die of pain.

Therefore, in nature, let us call it 'nature' for the time being, there is a provision for the child to put this pain under the carpet, the carpet of the conscious mind. It is the flip side of the ego, the shadow part of oneself, which we call the unconscious.

### *Impact of nursery school on the child*

In these days of competition, we send the children to school even before they are two years old. I saw in a nursery school, in Bhavnagar (Gujarat), a child of just eighteen months old. I asked for its mother but the mother was not there. The person who runs this school, and who happened to be my host, was very happy, joyous, that in her school there was a child of one and one half years. She said, "You know, Swamiji, this child is only eighteen months old." It was a complete and deadly violation of the child's trust. It was blatant. Already, there are some violations that a parent cannot avoid. The mother has to go here and there; in between there are some quarrels, there is some headache, there is some shouting and so on. This is a mortal's lot, which itself causes enough problems for the child. These are the normal problems of people. If a one and a half year old, a two-year old or a three-year old is sent to a school, separating it from the mother, it is the cause for neurosis.

In the awareness of the child there is no presence of the mother. In fact, the child feels banished when it is sent to the school;

the mother has vanished from its awareness. The child feels that the all-knowing, almighty mother, the trusted one, cannot commit a mistake. So, it concludes, "Something is wrong with me; that is why I am being sent away." People say that this neurosis is a contribution of the society. The sociologists talk about this. It is all ignorance, nothing but sheer ignorance. This contribution is only made by the parents. They have banished the child to the school.

The parents question, "How will they learn social etiquette, social skills?" What social skills? Do we not have social skills? Everybody has social skills. You can teach all about social skills in just two days; it does not take time. What we need are stable people. The parents also argue, "How will my child later compete in this competitive world if it does not go to nursery school? Further, these elementary schools will not give admission unless I have a nursery school certificate." That is another problem. We need to change this.

These nursery schools destroy the stability, the sanity of the future generation. The current generation itself comes out of that. Later on, we push these children to score ninety-seven percent, ninety-eight percent, ninety-nine percent and so on. The father scored just seventy percent; the mother scored seventy two percent. If we go by the genetic average, this child should score only seventy one percent. How will he or she score that ninety-nine? Genetically it is illogical. Therefore you constantly push the children until they have a break down. If they do not have a break down, you will not know what they will do later on.

Do not send the children to nursery school. You send the children to school from class one when the child is five year old. That is the correct thing to do.

#### *A need for a re-look at nursery schools*

If one sends the child to a nursery school, then someone must accompany the child

from home. Therefore, I say, let us have nursery schools where the mother also comes to the school.

"Swamiji, every mother cannot come."

"Then, why should she become a mother?"

"What Swamiji, she wants to be a mother."

"But then let her be a mother."

"No, she is a mother in the morning, a mother in the evening."

"What is she in between?"

"She is a working woman."

Even at the work place the feeling of a mother is always there. You cannot be a mother

in the morning, a mother in the evening, and smother the mother in between. It is impossible. You are a mother always, even without the child. However, if the child is without the mother, it is not right.

We have started two schools now in Chennai where mothers accompany the children. In fact, we should start such a school in every locality. Ask the children to come with their mothers and start one school. Do away with all the nursery schools once and for all or make them do what they ought to do. It is important that they do this because nobody has the right to destroy a life. All evidence says that it is not good for the child, for the whole society, for our culture, for our country. When someone goes against the evidence, then that person has not really understood.

I appeal now to the sanity of the people. We need to be very gentle to our children, sensitive to their needs and never be responsible for separating a child from its mother, from its gods. Never come in between a child and its gods in the name of schooling. In our culture, you cannot come between a husband and his wife. You cannot even walk in between them when they are talking to each other. You cannot walk in between a mother and a child. You cannot walk in between a teacher and his student. You should never come in between

the child and its gods. This is very important.

### *Vedic system of education*

In ancient times, we did not have this kind of a situation. When we read the *Chandogya Upanishad* we find that *Uddalaka*, the father of *Svetaketu*, sent *Svetaketu* to a *gurukulam* when he was twelve years old. We have to learn from the Veda; a child is sent to a *gurukulam* only after it is twelve years old. Until then the child has to learn at home. It means that the teenage years are spent in the *gurukulam*. It is a wonderful arrangement for the parents because they are free from the children's teenage problems. The teachers at the *gurukulam* will deal with the teenage problems. Until he or she is twelve years old, the child has to remain with the parents and study. It is a very sane arrangement. After all, Madam Montessori's system came within the last few years. We can change it again within a few years. Ms. Montessori was a good woman. She thought she was contributing something to the growth of the child. She never knew that she was causing neurosis. This neurosis makes the child feel, "I am no good, that is why my mother sent me away." The worst thing is the mother telling me, "Swamiji, my child is different; she loves school. She comes back and tells me all about school and how she enjoyed it." The more the child loves school, the more is the pain underneath. The child seems to be happy because she wants to win her mother back. The more the child expresses its great admiration for the parents, the greater is the pain underneath. The unconscious gets loaded day after day. By the age of four and a half the unconscious build-up is over, and then there is a conscious build-up. The conscious build-up confirms the unconscious anyway. So, during one's entire life there is this feeling that 'nobody likes me, nobody wants me' and a sense of loneliness. In this crowded

*jagat*, there is loneliness. Think this over. When you look up, there are stars. When you look around, there are people and people. If there are no people, you have enough bugs at least. You do not lack company at any time. How can anybody be lonely? It is only a sense.

Besides this, the child also has an intrinsic sense of its own worth, its own goodness. So the child also feels that it is not understood. It thinks "I have not done anything wrong. Why should I be sent away? Why should I be banished, punished like this? It is not my mistake. And yet, because the parents are gods, "Maybe there is a mistake because I am banished. My parents cannot be wrong, but at the same time, I have not done anything wrong." Thus, the innocent child is really confused. The confusion remains during the entire lifetime of the person; it makes his or her reaction to every situation subjective instead of objective.

One projects things that are not there. Simple things are converted into problems. For instance, somebody, who is very dear to you was trying to sneeze, and that was exactly the time you asked the person, "Do you still like me?" The person was trying to sneeze and was making such contortions that his face looked as though he was frowning. Since his face was 'frowning', it was taken to be an answer, a negative answer. Even body language becomes a very big problem.

### **Need for communication at home**

When there is no communication at home, people walk on eggshells. Parents tell me, "Swamiji, we never quarrel in the presence of our children." Do they really believe that the children do not know that they quarrel? Well, the children always sense that something has happened. Later, when the parents return laughing, the child sees

something wrong in that extra laughter and walks on eggshells in the house. In the West, such a home is called dysfunctional. You can understand what a dysfunctional home is. Between the parents there is no understanding, no amity and there is no joy; so the child is always in a panic. This is before the child is four and a half years old and even after that the panic continues.

### **Structured society was a blessing**

Long ago, the Indian mind was considered to be solid and secure because people lived in a highly structured and predictable society. If the father were a priest, the son also would be a priest. Therefore, there were no worries about what one would do in life. The son would be a priest. He may be a better priest, more informed, highly educated and a scholar. Thus, in the very profession itself excellence was accomplished. Because it was secure and structured, there was some sanity in the society. I do not want that kind of a social system to come back. I do not care for that, but I care for sanity and we cannot barter it away for anything. Why are we sacrificing emotional stability?

### **Happiness is accepting oneself totally as a person**

A part of Indian society is the person who is happy just sitting under a tree. He does not have anything. This is something to tell the whole world. A person with a mere loin-cloth is blessed when he is happy and contented, *kaupīnavantahkhalubhāgyavantaḥ*. It is not that all loin-clothed people are blessed, but there are people who are happy being what they are, even if they do not

have anything. After all, what is it that one wants to accomplish? You need to accept yourself as a person totally. If you have total acceptance inside and outside, you have made it. Until then, you seek the approval of others, approval of the society. You want to prove yourself to be somebody. It is a constant struggle.

### **Stability in a structured society and home**

We say this is a progressive society. Honestly speaking, India had a sanity that everyone admired. Even today, there is a reality that we better recognise. I do not say it as a credit to us. What is that reality? Every one of the post-war independent countries, countries that became independent from the colonising countries, has had coups. Even in our neighbouring country, which was a part of this country, a country carved out of our country, there have been coups, one after another. Then, how come there has not been a single coup in India? Is there something wrong with us? Did not India have situations where there should have been a revolution? Were there no occasions for a coup? There were occasions, but then, a coup never took place. It is our culture; there is sanity and there is stability. I do not want to think that it is a left over of our past culture. It has not completely disappeared; it is still alive. In a structured society there is stability. In a structured home there is stability. When the home is not structured, when what happens today and what will happen tomorrow are not very clear, the home becomes dysfunctional. The children are always in a panic.

.... To be continued

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## How to Teach the Value of the Values Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati's talk to teachers

at Pūrṇa Vidyā Teacher's Training Camp, August 2014  
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Pennsylvania USA

(... continuation of 4th and final part)

I may have performed an act of dishonesty such as stealing, because there is some material advantage in that. But as a result, it creates in me a sense of guilt because it is quite contrary to what I expect from myself, meaning that I was not able to live up to my own expectation of myself and when I cannot live up to my expectation of myself, I feel unhappy with myself. I feel dissatisfied with myself. I feel I am not good enough. I'm not worthy. This is the main problem. My own dissatisfaction with myself, the judging of myself as not worthy, is the cause of my sadness.

Why am I saying it? Because the time may come when I may not expect it from myself. Because you can make an argument: "Swamiji, what about a cold-blooded murderer who doesn't feel any guilt? There is no rule that you feel guilty. The thief doesn't feel guilty. He is deliberate. He plans his action very well and then commits the theft and feels very happy about it. Is it not so?" So, there is no rule that you feel guilty when you violate the values. There are people who do not feel guilty at all. Many people just tell lies right and left and feel nothing at all because that is the way to do things. It's convenient. Is it not so? There are people who kill hundreds of people, just blowing them off and they feel they have done something right. So someone can argue that there is no guilt feeling always.

Is it good to have no guilt? Someone says, "I think it is against the *purushartha* of

*dharma*." It is against dharma, that is true, and that it comes under the law of karma also is true, but for the person, if our argument is that following a value is required because otherwise we feel guilty, there are people who do not feel guilty at all in violating right. So there are exceptions to the rule. If there is an exception, then the rule is broken. The thing is that if you keep on abusing your freewill, if you keep on deliberately doing something that is wrong, the time comes when you stop feeling. You have lost the sensitivity. The idea is that by repeatedly abusing your freewill, you lose the sensitivity. Therefore, to feel guilty there must be sensitivity. One has to be sensitive to know that what I have done is wrong. If the sensitivity is not there, like a cat doesn't have that sensitivity, doesn't feel that there is anything wrong in killing a mouse, so when I don't feel wrong in killing somebody, what does it mean? It means that I have deteriorated to the level of being a cat. I am no more a human being.

Is it good? No it's not good, because sensitivity is what enables you to enjoy things. If you place a nice flower before a cow, what will it do? What a beautiful flower! What a color! No. At the most it will eat it. Can I call it enjoying a flower? No. For a cow the flower is perhaps a kind of food. For you, a flower generates lots of emotions. Why? Because you are a sensitive person. When there is sensitivity, it gives us the capacity to enjoy things, to contact something at a subtler level. A flower of

course is food at one level, but it has color, it has fragrance, it has beauty. To reach another level requires a greater sensitivity. Thus, by abusing freewill we keep losing sensitivity and are sacrificing our capacity to enjoy things. Then for the same level of enjoyment people who abuse the freewill require many hard things like alcohol. If you look at the private lives of these people, they are bound to be addicts; they are bound to be pursuing only hard kinds of pleasures, because they have no capacity to enjoy anything that calls for sensitivity. Therefore, it is a great damage that one does by abusing freewill. In some way you have to communicate this to your children by giving examples. As they say in Gujurathi, reading Bhāgavatam to someone without sensitivity is like reading Bhāgavatam before a buffalo. What does the buffalo understand? Nothing. So if I allow myself to be convinced into thinking like a buffalo, I will sacrifice millions and millions of years of evolution. From the level of a buffalo we have evolved to the level of human beings, which has taken I don't know how many million years. All that is compromised, therefore, next time when I am born, I will be born a buffalo. I will be born as an insensitive creature because I have already become that. Even though I am in a human form, I have already become a buffalo inside, meaning insensitive. Therefore, my next birth will be like that.

People sometimes ask a question, "Swamiji, if you were born a human being does it mean that you will be born as a human being?" Not at all; it depends on how I conduct myself. We create our own destiny. We don't need a third agent, God etc. to do this, we do it ourselves. So by using this freewill, or abusing the freewill, a human being is creating his or her own future. This has to be communicated in order to create a value for sensitivity. With this sensitivity you can enjoy music, and there are so many categories of music. When it comes to classical music I dose off because I don't

have that sensitivity. If you present a Picasso before me, I wonder "what is this?" I look for shapes and order and harmony and I don't find that. You need a different kind of sensitivity to appreciate what that is.

Therefore, sensitivity is the name of the game. One has to be sensitive to be able to follow the values. I should be sensitive to your feelings. If I am not sensitive, without any intension I will wind up doing something that hurts your feelings. "Oh, I did not mean that!" You did not mean it, but you did it anyway. How did you do it? It's because you are not sensitive. So therefore, following values like non-violence requires us to be sensitive people. The sensitivity is about the feelings of others. They have a right to live, a right to be free, a right to be respected. Just as I want to be respected, everyone has a right to be respected. Therefore, everybody should be respected. A child should be respected. We see in our upanishads also that the great teachers respected their students. Not only the students respect the teacher, the teacher also respects the students.

In Kathopanishad we saw how the great teacher Dharmaraja, the Lord Death, praises his disciple Naciketas: "How great you are!" "You are even greater than me," at one point he says. "I wish I had students like you." So, respect for everybody, whoever it is, is a basic value. PujyaSwamiji says that you should respect your audience. Don't think that they don't understand. Sometimes the speaker says, "These fellows don't understand anyway." Don't say that. Everybody understands. Not only that, but it is the duty of the teacher to see that the listeners understand and not to dismiss them because you think that they don't live up to some intellectual expectation. The teacher should be able to communicate to the student at the level where the student is. When children are growing, you have to be particularly sensitive to their feelings. How will they interpret what I am saying? How will they feel?

Thus, non-violence, the basic value, requires us to be sensitive people, sensitive to the feelings and the emotions of others. But still, we find ourselves violating the value of non-violence. You can hurt somebody by a physical action; you can hit somebody. That's the very crude violence that is well known. You can hurt the plants by plucking leaves. Sometimes people do that; just absent mindedly they keep plucking leaves. If you are not careful when walking on the road, you might be crushing some creatures particularly in the monsoon season. That's why in India, you see that the sādhus are always parivrajaka, meaning that they are wandering monks. He is aniketa, he has no house. He has no kitchen, therefore a bhikshu. But the sadhus during the months of monsoon will not travel. During the caturmasya, the four months (they call it caturmasya, but actually it is two months), they camp in one place because travelling in those days along the road there would be creatures coming out because the water goes into the houses and they all come out, poor fellows. And quite possibly you might injure them. This is physical injury. You should be careful.

Then, in our culture vegetarian food is respected because its basic value is non-violence. Eating meat requires killing living beings, animals and other creatures, and that is a great deal of violence. When you teach like this, the importance of vegetarian food from non-violence and health points of view etc., you should equip yourself with all this understanding before you go to the class. In order to teach the topic, there must be statistical data, some stories, some other research information should be there. But then, they will ask you a question. "Swamiji, you say that eating meat is violence, but then you say that the plants and vegetables also are life. Whether you are a vegetarian eating plants and vegetables, what is the difference between eating egg and eggplant? Egg is life, eggplant also is life. Pumpkin is life and a

chicken also is life. What is the difference? You are eating a live organism anyway."

There are a couple of ways of answering that question. One way of answering the question is, look at the process of evolution. How does the evolution take place? It starts from a unicellular organism and has completed its process by becoming a human being, the most evolved organism. In between there are millions of organisms and different levels of evolution. How you determine that a given creature is more evolved as a creature depends upon the consciousness and sensitivity. The human being is the most evolved because a human being is a self-conscious and sensitive being. A cat is less evolved, having less consciousness and less sensitivity. A mosquito is even less evolved. A plant is even less evolved. So now you have a choice between a plant, like eggplant, and fish. Which is more evolved eggplant or fish? How many million years does it take for an organism to evolve from being an eggplant to being a fish? Is it not so? So when you consume an eggplant, you are consuming a certain amount of nature's resources, when you consume a fish you are consuming much more work on the part of nature, because it has taken so many million years to evolve and therefore, killing a fish is much more violent than consuming an eggplant. Both involve violence, but consuming vegetarian food involves the minimum violence. Consuming fish would involve more. Consuming chicken would involve more. A goat involves more. A cow involves even more, because they are of a greater category of evolution. Among animals, a cow is the most evolved animal as compared to the wild carnivorous animals. Herbivores are more evolved than carnivores like tigers, lions and so on. So killing a lion may be less violent than killing a cow. And a lion is more evolved than perhaps lower forms of animals.

Thus, when consuming vegetables, we are consuming the minimum resources of nature. That's why it is true that when we eat vegetarian food we are involved to a certain extent in violence. That is the nature, you can't help it. Even if you want, you can't eat rocks. Can you eat pebbles? If you could eat pebbles it would be no violence at all. But anyway, the rule is *jivojivasyajivanam*, one life form supports another life form. One life form requires another life form to survive. Every life form requires live food. That is why we eat live food. So plants, fruits and vegetables, are alive, otherwise we can't eat them. That's why they say to eat them when they are alive. The way Indians cook, by the time you are finished with cooking most of the life is gone, because of frying, spicing, and so on. Live food is raw food. That's why naturopathy prescribes that you should eat only raw food.

Another argument is that vegetables and fruits do not have the feeling to protect themselves. They don't move away when you pluck them or eat them, whereas even a small insect will move away when it sees somebody coming. A vegetable has much less consciousness than an insect has. The less consciousness you have, the less the reaction is. The more the consciousness is, the more the reaction is. But somebody will say that just because it doesn't have much consciousness, doesn't mean you can kill it. Therefore, *jivojivasyajivanam*, every life form requires live food.

Also, protection of the environment is much greater when people eat vegetarian food, than when people eat animals. More resources of nature are involved in sustaining the animals. Even though the cow is considered sacred in India and most people do not kill the cows, the cows contribute to the greenhouse gases effect. There are more cows in India than in USA, but at least they are not bred for food. So,

we have to keep open minded and keep learning and be willing to change.

The more sensitive a person you are, the more likely you are to get hurt because more faults come to your notice. So, the next value is *kshama*, acceptance. You can be a non-violent person if you are also an accepting and forgiving person. You have a two-step response. When a person hurts me, my immediate response is to hurt back. That is called a one-step response. A two-step response is that I step back and then I see my feeling. In a one-step response, no feeling is involved. So, in stepping back I recognize that this person hurt me and ask myself, why did this person hurt me? Have I done something? Then I have time to think and I can respond to the person rather than to the behavior. So, this person has done something by which I am hurt, but that person is in pain and does not know how to manage the pain. I happen to be here, and therefore, he is unloading his pain on me. Thus, seeing that a person is in pain may arouse your sympathy and it may be possible for you to accept that person's behavior and not react to it.

**Question:** What about the dialog that Arjuna had with Lord Krishna about killing the respected people in his own clan?

Often this basic question is asked, in the *Bhagavadgita* isn't Lord Krishna telling Arjuna to fight? So, one common interpretation of *Gita* is that Lord Krishna is teaching violence to Arjuna. He was asking him to kill. But no, Lord Krishna is not asking Arjuna to kill. Lord Krishna is asking Arjuna to perform his *dharma*, his duty. Arjuna is a *kshatriya* and the duty of a *kshatriya* is to protect *dharma*. So ideally Arjuna and the Pandavas represent *dharma* and the Kauravas represent *adharma*. This is a conflict between *dharma* and *adharma*. So, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, "Your



duty is to protect dharma; why don't you do that?"

So, perhaps we have to interpret this as the active resistance against evil. Duryodhana represents evil. If you do not resist that, it will spread throughout the whole society. If one limb is rotting, someone has to remove the limb and it is violence. But that is to protect the rest of the body. Similarly, all those Kauravas in the battlefield of the Mahabharata, called Kurukshetra, are supposed to represent the evil that had accumulated on earth. Therefore, the whole thing was designed to bring an end to them, to eliminate that evil. So Arjuna who asked not to fight, has to perform his duty. And most important now, for your information, in the second chapter Lord Krishna says, *t a s m a d u t t i s h t o k a u n t e y a y u d d h a y a k r t a n i s h c a y a* (ii). Therefore, hey Kaunteya, *uttishto*, arise, and return to fight. But before you fight, what state of mind should you have? *Sukha-dukhe same k r i t v a l a b h a - a l a b h h a u j a y a - a j a y a u t a t o y u d d h a y a y u j y a s v a n a i v a p a m a v a p s y a s i* (iii). Then afterwards, Arjuna engages in the battle. Before that, create the state of mind. What is it? *Sukha-*

*dukhe same kritva*, be even-minded towards pleasure and pain. *Labhalabhau*, be even minded towards gain and loss. *Jayajayau*, be even-minded towards victory and defeat, meaning that you are fighting this battle, not for victory, but for protecting dharma. If escaping is your goal, you will perhaps compromise dharma. Therefore, being even-minded means being non-violent. But how can you even fight a battle being non-violent? If you have the right attitude, you can. So violence is an attitude and non-violence also is an attitude. Non-violence is not to give up action. No, it is an attitude. Sometimes outwardly, it may involve a violent action. But inwardly the intension is to bring about the good of a larger number of people. Just as a surgeon amputates a limb, it is for the wellbeing of the body. Therefore, Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to perform his duty on the basis of non-violence. In the 18th chapter he says, *hatvapisaimanllokannahantinani badhyateiv. Yasyanahaikatobhavo buddhiryasyanalipyate*, It is free from *ahankara*, that I am doing it. And one will have no attachment to the outcome. You are destroying all these people and are not incurring any sin, because the attitude is non-violence.

*Concluded*

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- i Bhagavadgita, Ch 3, 21. Whatsoever an important person does, that alone the other people do.
  - ii Bhagavadgītā, Ch 2, 37. Therefore, Kaunteya (Arjuna)! get up, having resolved to fight.
  - iii Bhagavadgītā, Ch 2, 38. Taking pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat to be the same, prepare for battle.
  - iv Bhagavadgītā, Ch 18, 17. The one who has no doership, the one whose mind is not affected, he, even killing these people, does not kill, nor is he bound.

## Satsang with Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

### Prayer, Japa and Spiritual Progress

*Question: If God is within us, why should we go to the temples? Should we not pray to ourselves? Please explain the importance of worship at the temple. Are all the rituals necessary?*

*Answer :* When we worship Ganesa or Lakshmi or other deities, we are in fact, worshipping *saccidananda* in a given a form. If you recite the hundred names of Ganesa or Lakshmi, any of these will refer to *satyamjnanamanantam brahma*. If God is manifest as the whole universe, then let all the actions performed be in the spirit of worship. To facilitate that worship, we have the temples. We have the same *saccidananda* God who is given a form to which we can relate to. This is a very beautiful thing we have in our Vedic culture: that God is given a form, which enables us to establish a personal relationship with the Lord. That is how temples provide us an excellent opportunity to be able to directly worship God. Worshipping the Lord through everyday actions is easier said than done. When you interact with the world, *ragadvesas* or likes and dislikes are involved. Ganesa does not push these buttons. He does not mind anything. He is always predictable and always smiling. When you come to a temple, therefore, you feel safe and secure, and accepted easily because you can always relate to the Lord. Coming to temples and worshipping becomes an excellent training ground for our own feelings and our own hearts. Eventually you become mature enough to worship Ganesa as *saccidananda*. Before that, you worships that same *saccidananda*, but in a particular form with which you can relate. Therefore, the temples and the altars in our homes are very

important, because they allow us to invoke the devotee from within us; that is the process of purification of our hearts, and we become more and more mature. So worshipping and participating in festivals is extremely useful; I should say extremely needed in invoking the devotee within us and making us mature, so that some day we stop making contracts with God and become less and less demanding and more and more offering. Then you will be ready to worship God beyond these forms.

*Question : Should prayer be performed in a specific or formal way?*

*Answer :* It is not necessary for prayer to be performed in a certain language or in a certain structured form. The point is if you want a specific result or outcome, a structure has been given and then you may have to perform a specific prayer in a specific way. If I desire the heavens, progeny, health, fame etc., then I should perform specific prayers that can bring about these specific ends. However, if your prayer is not meant for a specific outcome but for the purification of your mind or just for God's grace, prayer can be informal also. It is the same in the matters of the world also. If I have a specific goal, then I must function in a specific way. If I want a specific dish, I have to prepare it in a specific way. You can pray in an informal way in any language or in any form. You can also pray to any God. Specific rituals are prescribed to bring about a certain kind of outcome. But you do not have to do only those rituals to get those outcomes. It is not the only way. You can also keep repeating Lord's name and ask for a certain result. It will work.

**Question :** *How is japato be done?*

**Answer :** Doing *japais* repeating the same name of the Lord in your mind. If it is done for a certain length of time, it becomes part of your being. At that stage it is called a *japa*, meaning that the name gets repeated in your mind, without any effort on your part. That is what happens, if *japa* is done in the depths of the mind. If you do it at a superficial level of your mind, then you need to put in effort to repeat that name. In course of time, if you are able to reach that depth of the mind where the *japa* takes place, it will keep on taking place without you having to do that. How do we get to this stage? There is no other way than by doing *japa* and developing more and more concentration till that depth of the mind is reached. Thus it is by practice only that it can happen. Devotion is helpful in enabling me to acquire that tranquility of mind.

**Question :** *What is bhava?*

**Answer :** *Bhava* is devotion. In presence of God, the devotee is invoked in me, and this spirit of devotion which gets invoked is called *bhava*.

**Question :** *How can one make progress in spirituality?*

**Answer :** One cannot become better spiritually, unless an attempt is made. There is a scheme in the creation, such that you will be given enough lessons in life and enough opportunities to learn from these lessons. The capacity to learn is given. Therefore the potential of recognizing the need for spiritual growth is there; and the means for the spiritual growth are also given. It is not that everyone will grow spiritually. But with the help of freewill one has to recognize it and initiate it.

**Question :** *How do you convince a non-believer of the journey within God?*

**Answer :** There is no question of not believing. Can you not believe in your own existence? God is the harmony, the order and the unity in life. We must understand this,

not believe it. When we give thought to our life, we understand our purpose. As long as a nonbeliever is a thinking person, he will understand it; unless he has decided not to believe for some reason of his own. If the mind is open, the thinking person will understand this. If the whole universe is centered on this harmony and this universal principle, then why should my life be not centered on this? It is easy to make a person see this. It is right here and evident. If we are talking about a God in the heavens, then you need to be convinced; then it is a matter of faith. But the God we are talking about is not a matter of faith, and any open-minded person can understand it.

**Question :** *How do we know when we are getting into a commercial activity with God? How do we avoid trying to please God in order to get what we want?*

**Answer :** Our worship evolves, as Lord Krishna explains in the *Bhagavad Gita*. In the beginning, a person remembers God in distress; it's all right—he still is a devotee. Later, the person approaches God where there is a need, when he wants something. It is like a contract or a business transaction. Then it evolves to the third level — the person wants to know God. Now the only agenda is knowledge, and you know God in His true nature. So in the beginning it is a commercial relationship, but it is all right. If you stretch your hand out seeking somebody's favor, it may as well be for the favor of the Lord. The relationship will mature in the course of time and the person will be enlightened.

**Question :** *What is the Vedanta view of apocalypse?*

**Answer :** In Hinduism, we have the concept of *avatars*. The creator responds to situations when there is a difficulty. The universe was created such that it can run smoothly. When there are some digressions, *avatars* are created to correct the problem.

*Transcribed and edited by Anjali Bhat, Aparna Modi, Jayshree Ramakrishnan and KK Davey*

# Meditation

Meditation is one of the spiritual disciplines which occupies an important position in most of the spiritual traditions. Therefore, a proper understanding of its role is necessary for every spiritual seeker. Now-a-days, Meditation is recommended for physical and mental health, personality development and better performance also. Hence, a clear understanding of meditation is useful for all, whether one seeks spiritual enlightenment or not.

The Upanisadsvedanta point out that Self-Knowledge is the only means of liberation and that Self-enquiry guided by the Vedantic teachings is the only means of Self-Knowledge. So, Self-enquiry occupies primary position for a spiritual seeker.

Meditation is prescribed neither for Self-knowledge nor for liberation. It is meant for preparing the mind to receive and assimilate the vedantic teachings. Accordingly, Meditation can be broadly classified into two types, VIZ., Preparatory meditation, which is to be practised before one exposes oneself to vedantic teaching and Assimilatory meditation which is to be practised after one exposes oneself to systematic vedantic teaching consistently for a length of time.

One has to develop different mental faculties to receive the Self knowledge. Accordingly, Preparatory meditation can be subdivided into four types. This is based on the faculty to be developed.

## Preparatory Meditations

### (1) Relaxation - meditation

In this, you learn to relax at all levels. In any posture consciously relax every part of the body from head to toe. When the body is totally relaxed, you feel bodiless. Then, observe the breathing. This will help in making the breathing-process smooth and even. Next, relax the mind. The following methods can be used to relax the mind:

- Imagine you are seated in a natural setup like beach, garden, mountain, riverbank or Asram.
- Consciously unload all your mental burden at the feet of the Lord(in the form of your favorite deity) (Ista-devata).
- Repeat to yourself: "I am confident of facing any situation in life, now that the Lord is there to share my burden. I have no worries now. I am relaxed. Use any key word like "Santih" to invoke and enjoy the relaxation, ignoring all other thoughts.

### (2) Concentration - Meditation

While the previous meditation is for simple, deep relaxation, this meditation is to develop the faculty of focussing.

The following methods can be used to develop this faculty:

- Perform a Puja to the Lord mentally. It can be a simple one offering a few flowers or an elaborate one involving ritualistic steps. Alternatively, you can visualise a Puja done by another person in a temple, Asram etc.
- Mentally chant the prayers you know in any language. Be conscious of you chanting.
- Mentally repeat any one name of the Lord or the words "Om Santih". Be conscious of every letter.

### (3) Expansion - Meditation

All the time, being obsessed with personal or family life, one develops a narrow, frog-in-the-well mind. To break this, one has to meditate on the totality which expands the mind and makes the individual and family problems insignificant. Try the following:

- Mentally see the sky, stars, moon, earth, oceans, mountains, etc.
- Appreciate the cosmic processes of sunrise, sunset, planetary movements, flow of rivers, flight of birds, etc.
- In short, tune yourself to the natural rhythm, the cosmic orchestra. Learn to enjoy the cosmic dance of the cosmic Lord.

### (4) Value - Meditation

This meditation is very important. This will help in internalising the values. This will bring about a transform in transactional life.

- Take up any value like confidence, patience, compassion, etc. Mentally see

how important they are for a life of peace and progress. Bring to your mind any person who enjoys that particular value and appreciate him/her.

- Take the opposite trait like diffidence, irritation, rudeness, etc. Mentally see how they spoil the peace of yourself and others around.
- Look at yourself as one endowed with that particular value.
- The above four types of meditation can be practised by anyone. One need not be a seeker of spiritual enlightenment for practising these. These meditations will bring about a deep transformation in one's personality which will give inner peace. Peace does not depend on what one has but on what one is.

### (5) Assimilatory (Vedantic) Meditation

The seeker of spiritual enlightenment should not stop with the practise of the above mentioned meditations. Self-enquiry with the help of a Guru and the scriptures is a must. Consistent and systematic study of scriptures for a length of time under the guidance of a traditional master will lead to Self-discovery. To assimilate and own up this wisdom, one has to practise Vedantic meditation as follows:

- Mentally dwell on the Truth of yourself as revealed by the scriptural teachings.
- Mentally dwell on the Truth of the lord as revealed in the scriptures.
- Mentally dwell upon the nature of the world to which your own body and mind belong.

## Obstacles and Remedies

### (1) Sleep

This is the most common obstacle. One need not feel guilty about it. The solution to this will vary from individual to individual. Some general methods can be tried by all:

- Meditate after a bath or atleast after washing the hands, feet and face with cold water.
- Meditate when the stomach is neither too full nor too empty.
- Choose any part of the day when you are alert.
- Give a strong autosuggestion, "I will be alert".
- Don't meditate after tiring activity.
- Don't meditate when there is a backlog of sleep.
- Have short sessions of 15 to 20 minutes only initially.

### (2) Distraction

This is the second common obstacle. One need not feel guilty about it. The following methods can be adopted to avoid this.

- Learn more and more and more about meditation and its value. Mind enjoys doing what it values.
- Reduce your likes and dislikes which are the root cause of disturbance and distractions
- Give up all anxieties by taking Lord as your partner in life.

- Give a strong autosuggestion, "I-have an appointment with myself. Let me die to all my wordly roles".

### (3) Dullness

Sometimes the mind becomes dull. It is neither asleep nor restless. It this happens, nothing can be done. One has to hope and wait for clearance. However, one can try to avoid this situation by the following methods:

- Don't have suppressed feelings (which will create a loaded unconscious). Share your feelings with someone.
- Write your feelings (and tear-off the paper if you don't want to keep it).
- Express your feelings openly to the Lord, your Istadevata.

### (4) Tasting the Tranquility

The withdrawal and quietitude in meditation create a sense of wellbeing. Many mistake this temporary experience of well-being as spiritual fulfillment and tend to enjoy it more and more. This is the subtlest form of obstacles. This can be solved only by applying Vedantic discrimination properly.

## Conclusion

Everyone can practise the first four forms of meditation. It will be very useful whatever be one's field of activity. If one is a spiritual seeker, they become all the more important. One does not require any special initiation to practise these four forms of meditation.

**Om Tat Sat**

*Transcribed talk of  
Swami Paramrthananda*

## Maha Sivaratri Puja at AVG



**Acarya rendering Japa**



**AkandanamaBajan by Swamiji and Swaminis**

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati blessed the *MahaSivaratri Puja* at AVG, Anaikatti on Feb 17, 2015 by his presence and blessings.

**NITYA PUJA:** Regular puja at Lord MedhaDaksinamurthy shrine and Lord Narmadesvara shrine begun early in the morning.

### **AKHANDA NAMA JAPA:**

*AkhandhaNamaJapa* of *pancaksarimantra* "Om NamahShivaya" was performed from 7 AM to 3 PM at the *satsangh* hall. PujyaSwamiji led the *japa* for some time. Swami Atmatriptananda, Swamis, Swaminis, students and guests led the non-stop relay *japa*. The holy chant vibrated in the atmosphere and in the minds of the participants later for many more days.

### **EKADASA RUDRA ABISEKA:**

*Ekadasarudrabiseka* was done at the shrines of Lord MedhaDaksinamurthy and Lord Narmadesvara from 4 PM to 8 PM. The 11 *rudraabhiseka* done at both the shrines.

### **PUJYA SWAMIJI'S ANUGRAHA BHASANAM:**

PujyaSwamiji in his *anugrahabhasanam* explained the meaning of the popular *vedamantra* " *Triyambakamyajamahe..*" from Sri Rudram. On *Sivaratri*, the day of spiritual commitments, vows and disciplines, PujyaSwamiji prayed for invoking the Lord's grace for everyone.

### **RATRI JAPA&PUJA:**

The Swamis, Swaminis, students and guests took part in the *bhajans* and chants with lot of enthusiasm. The participants remained awake for the whole night with chant of the Lord's name.

*Ratri puja* was done at 12 midnight at the shrine of Lord Narmadesvara. Later *ardhajama puja* was done at 3 AM. The last *kala puja* was done at 6 AM of the following day, concluding the *Sivaratri puja*.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*



**Lord Dakshinamurthi**



**Lord Narmadeshwara**



**Ekeadasa Rudra Japam**



**Pujya Swamiji's Anugraha Bhashanam**



**Swaminis, Students and other participants**



## Long Term Course at AVG during February - March 2015

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during February - March 2015 is presented below:

### CLASSES ON GENERAL TOPICS BY PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

*Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati* gave insightful talks on various topics requested by the students:

**SANNYASA:** *Sannyasa* is total renunciation of this world, other worlds and everything in between. Total renunciation implies just being under the sky with no crutches. Such a person may not have an address, keeps moving and is happy with what comes his way. Teaching is a *sadhana* as one gains *nistha* by teaching. Internal renunciation by change of attitude is important. Bhagavan Sankaracharya emphasizes on *sarva-karma-sannyasa* for moksha. A *Sarva karma sannyasi* understands that he is *atma* and as *atma*, there is no doer-ship. He is uninvolved with anybody or anything.

**ANGER:** Anger is born of some pain already existing in the person. People and situations only play as trigger points. Each one has erroneous zones, like inability to handle criticism in some areas like being looked down regarding one's ability, understanding, etc. Each one has different trigger points. When that point is touched, the potential anger becomes manifest.

*Pujya Swamiji* explained the verses from Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12 describing a *Jnani*:

**JNANI:** *Jnani* is pleased just by being himself and does not depend on persons and things. He doesn't look for security or pleasure, knowing that he is of the nature of security. He is free from hold of likes and dislikes. His happiness is not denied by an unhappy situation. Everything is acceptable in his vision as *Isvara's* order. All his emotions are sublimated. Grief does not affect him. He treats everyone including friends and foes in the same manner. He is not affected by praise or criticism. He accepts the pairs of opposites with equanimity. He has a say over his words. He does not go looking for things, is just happy with whatever comes his way. His daily life is just pure unfoldment of *prarabdha*. His fullness is manifest as happiness, love and compassion.

The words used to present a *Jnani* become a *sadhana* for a *mumukshu*.

**VEDANTA SADHANA:** *Sravana, Manana* and *Nididhyasana* are the *sadhanas*. There is no mysticism involved. It is knowledge all the way. *Sravana* involves the study of Vedanta. It is *pramanavicara*. Study of *bhasya* is for clarity. Study of Sanskrit grammar helps in the understanding. Grammar helps to know from which root and how the word has been derived. In

*manana*, all doubts are cleared. Even if one does not have doubts, *bhasya* raises the doubt and clarifies. *Nididhyasana* is contemplation and is for understanding fully that “I am the *asanga sat chit anandapurna*atma”.

**SVAKARMA:** All that is here is *Isvara*. My *svakarma* is my offering to *Isvara*. Whenever I do, what is to be done, I feel good. It helps me become qualified for gaining *atmajnana*. Afterwards, there is no delay in getting *atmajnana*.

**MODERN VEDANTA – COMMON ERRORS:** The vision is not there in many areas due to non-understanding. A few popular mis-understandings are:

- Self inquiry on “**Who am I?**” is the way to know the *atma*. (*Guru* and *Sastra* as *pramana* are not understood)
- How to **become Brahman?** (You are already Brahman is not understood)
- I know I’m *satchitananda*atma. Now, I **need to experience** it. (*Atma* is self-evident and only knowledge is required is not understood)
- The self can be known through **any one of the four yogas** - *bakthi yoga*, *karma yoga*, *jnana yoga* or *hatha yoga*. (Knowledge is possible only through *jnana yoga* is not understood)
- One should **exhaust all *vasanas*** to know the self. (*Karma* is *mithya* is not understood, only *jnana* can destroy the *karma* accounts).
- Neo Vedanta **dismisses *Isvara***; without appreciation of *jiva-Isvara* connection, the vision is not complete.

**EMOTIONS:** One cannot master emotions. One can only neutralise emotions by bringing in *Isvara*. One accepts all emotions as *Isvara*’s order. One contemplates that I am in *Isvara*’s order, whenever emotions arise.

**TEACHING TRADITION:** *Atma Jnana* is through *Vedas* or *sabdapramana* by understanding *lakshya*artha of the words. It has to be handled by a *shrotriya* and *brahma-nisthta* Teacher. This knowledge can be handed over to another person without entropy. It is a privilege to be part of the tradition.

**ATTITUDE OF HINDUS:** For a Hindu every square inch of his mother land is sacred. All places like Himalayas, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Ayodhya, Madura, Kasi, Kanchipuram, Rameswaram, Kanyakumari, Puri and Dwaraka are considered very sacred. Ganga, Yamuna, Narmada, Sindhu, Cauveri and all rivers are sacred. It is a vedic country. Land, trees, animals and people are worshipped as manifestation of *Isvara*. People walk along the river as *Ganga parikrama*. Every 12 years there is a *kumbhamela* where millions converge. There are temple chariot festivals where people assemble together. India is the only place where Hindus can claim that it is their own country. Unfortunately the media is biased against the Hindus. India is a religious country. Any change is welcome, retaining the religiosity and sense of belonging and not destroying this culture.

**VALUE OF VALUE:** No one is ignorant of values. Preaching is not required. Value is gained by education. Loss of telling a lie is, one creates a split person within oneself. When the core person is disturbed, even

with all external comforts, the person is not available to enjoy.

## CLASSES ON GITABHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

**CHAPTER 2:** *Bhagavan* Sankaracharya begins his commentary on the verses starting from Verse 11 of Chapter 2, because the teaching begins from that verse. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord Krishna and requested him to teach him what is *Sreyas-moksha*.

**The Lord tells Arjuna that Wise people grieve neither for the departed nor the un-departed. Whereas, Arjuna was grieving after those who are not to be grieved after, like a confused person even while speaking words of wisdom. (BG 2-11)**

Bhasyakara explains further that: From the body standpoint, once born, its death is imperative. From the stand point of Bhisma and others being *jivas*, they are of noble conduct and hence will go only to higher *lokas*. **From the absolute level of *atma*, they are timeless and exist in all the three periods of time. (BG 2-12).** Therefore, from all standpoints, Bhisma and others need not be grieved after.

*Atma* does not undergo any change when the body undergoes change from childhood to youth to old age. Similarly **there is no change for the *atma* even during the attainment of another body. (BG 2-13)**

Contact of the sense organs with sense objects produce experience of cold and heat, **pleasure and pain which are all temporary. One should understand and accept them as *Isvara's* order. (BG 2-14).**

**One who is not agitated by pain or disturbed by pleasure is fit for gaining *moksha*. (BG 2-15).**

Pairs of opposites like cold and heat together with their cause do not have real existence. Only *atma* has real existence. This truth is understood by wise people.

**There is no being for *asat* (*mithya*) and there is no non-being for *sat*. (BG 2-16)**

That which has independent existence is *sat* and that which has dependent existence is *asat*.

This is established by *Bhasyakara* by taking the example of a clay pot. **A pot does not exist apart from its cause, clay.** Pot does not exist before its origin and also does not exist after it is destroyed. Even clay does not have existence apart from its cause.

By extension, on account of every object being non-separate from its cause and the cause itself being an effect of its cause, **the whole world of cause-effects is *asat*.**

**Objection:** If all effects are negated, it will lead to *sunyavada* or absence of everything i.e. Nihilism.

**Reply:** In every existent object cognition, there are two cognitions: Pot cognition and existence ('is') cognition. When we say "pot is", we cognize *asat* which is the object called 'pot' and we also cognize *sat* by the word 'is'. The cognition of pot, which is *asat* is subject to change whereas **the cognition of 'is', which is *sat* remain changeless even when the pot is destroyed.**

**Objection:** When pot is destroyed, along with pot cognition, **existence cognition also goes.**

**Reply:** No. Even if a given pot cognition goes, **there is "Is-cognition" with reference to other things like cloth and surviving pots.**

**Objection:** Real and unreal things cannot exist in a common ground.

**Reply:** No. Unreal water and the real sand which appears as 'idam' are in a common ground.

**Brahman is the only existing reality. Pairs of opposites like cold and heat are mithya. Hence the seeker should endure the pairs of opposites.**

**May you know this indestructible reality by which everything is pervaded. No one is capable of bringing about the destruction of this indestructible reality. (BG 2-17)**

Brahman pervades everything like space pervading pot. It cannot disintegrate because it is partless. It cannot be destroyed by external factors as nothing is connected to it. Even the Lord cannot destroy Brahman, as the same entity cannot be the subject and object.

**These bodies belonging to everlasting, indestructible, unobjectifiable, embodied self are said to be subject to end. Therefore Arjuna, fight. (BG 2-18)**

Bodies in dream and magic have their end. There are two types of destruction like the body reduced to ashes and the body transformed due to disease. Brahman is not having these two types of destruction. Self

is not unknown to anyone. But the qualities that do not belong to the self, super imposed on the self are removed by the Scriptures. Brhadaranyaka Upanisad 3.4.1 declare that *Brahman* is that which is direct and immediate, which is the innermost self. As the self is timeless and changeless, **Arjuna was advised not to withdraw from the battle, which was his duty.**

**Gita teaching is for removing grief and delusion which are the cause of samsara. It is not to induce action.**

**CLASSES ON KATHOPANISAD  
BHASYAM BY SWAMI  
SADATMANANDA**

**CHAPTER I VALLI I**

**Naciketas story** is for glorification of self-knowledge.

**Vajasravas** having a desire for svarga, performed *Visva jityajna*, where he gave away all his wealth as *daksina*. At the end of the *yajna*, **old and unproductive cows were given as daksina**. When his son **Naciketas**, a young boy, saw this, he felt that his father would go to the undesirable worlds by offering such cows to the priests. He felt that instead of the unproductive cows, he could be given as *daksina*. **Naciketas asked his father to whom he would be given as daksina**. He nagged his father by asking this second and third time. The irritated father told him that **he would offer him to Lord Yama**.

*Report by N. Avinashilingam*

# Horns of a Dilemma

## By Ganesh Krishnamurthy

### The Book

The story deals with a problem that many of us commonly face. At a decision point in life, both (indeed, all) paths available lead to undesirable results. The main protagonist is a simple lady, Visalam, from a lower middle class family in Kumbakonam, who also faces such a dilemma. It leads her to a search for understanding why these happen to us and for ways to handle them. She learns many things from her guru, Swami Atmananda.

She herself eventually becomes a source of strength to many people, including three other characters in the book – an Englishman, an American and a Middle Easterner – each of who also faces his own dilemma.

Most of us will be able to easily identify with the characters and situations, either through our own experiences or through those of others close to us.

### The Author

Ganesh has met all success, as defined by the world (IIT, Delhi, MBA from a Harvard



**Pujya Swamiji releasing the book**

Associated school, both as topper, recognition, financial success etc.)

However, he has been seeking answers to some fundamental questions all of us have asked of ourselves some time or the other in our lives. In pursuance of his quest, he joined the last 3-year course at Anaikatti under PoojyaSwamiji, discarding a successfully running consulting business.

Today, he continues to study and to teach, in addition to being an author.



**Sri Ganeshan**

## Shri Gurubhyo Namah



In line with Poojya Swamiji's *aajna* of conducting Home Study course of Bhagavad Gita, every Saturday, *Satsang* is being conducted under the guidance and presence of Swamini Svatmabodhananda Saraswati and Swamini Bharatyananda Saraswati between 6 PM and 7 PM since February 2013, at Malleswaram, Bangalore. Sri Vishnu Sahasranama is chanted in full, followed by Gita chanting and other selected *slokas* chanting. Recently, the hundredth week of *Satsang* was celebrated in the holy presence of both the Swaminis.



## Pearls of Wisdom



*One who wants to change the world to fulfill his own needs and desires is an egoist. If all that is needed is a change, change yourself. That has to be initiated by you alone, because the love for change is in you.*

*If the problem of seeing myself as a wanting person is centered on me, then the solution also must be centered on me. If the solution is within the problem, then looking outside of myself will not work, nor will any amount of effort produce the solution. Knowledge alone will reveal it.*



*Whether gaining self-knowledge is seen as a religious pursuit, a spiritual pursuit, or just a pursuit, it is an all-consuming pursuit. Self-knowledge is not a part-time effort, nor is it a speculative effort. It is an all-consuming effort with the knowledge of the self as its end. Therein lies the solution.*



*Knowledge is the only means to liberation or freedom. If bondage were real, there would be no release from it. If it were unreal, it would not be a problem at all. But if it is something in between – neither real nor unreal – it must be purely due to ignorance and error, and so knowledge is required to dispel it.*

*A knowledge gaining which all forms of knowledge gain meaning, and without which all of them are subject to perpetual correction and sublation is indeed pramana, which we gain through Vedanta.*



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