

## श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि

(Based on a class by PujyaSwamiji at Anaikatti on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2014)

This is a वाक्य from the कैवल्योपनिषद्. This उपनिषद् is not commented upon by भगवान् भाष्यकार, but it is very popular. There are महात्माs who do पारायणम् of this उपनिषद् daily - some of the mantras in this उपनिषद् are breathtaking, amazing mantras. There is a story - Ashvalaayana goes to ब्रह्माजी and asks him to teach ब्रह्मविद्या. ब्रह्माजी begins his teaching by saying “श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि” meaning - May you understand this ब्रह्मविद्या which I am going to teach, with the help of श्रद्धा, भक्ति and ध्यानम्.

The first thing the उपनिषद् refers to here is श्रद्धा. When प्रमाण is there, श्रवणं is possible. You should look upon शास्त्र as a प्रमाण, a means of knowing. It is important that शास्त्र is looked upon as a प्रमाण. That is श्रद्धा. Generally you do not go beyond the five means of knowledge for knowing anything. The five means of knowledge you have - प्रत्यक्ष, अनुमान, अर्थापत्ति, उपमान and अनुपलब्धि are useless here since they have no access to ब्रह्मन् which you want to know. You do not accept any means of knowledge beyond these five. This is where you require श्रद्धा - that the वेद is a means of knowledge. वेदान्त is a part of it. Veda is a means of knowledge for अपूर्वम् - that is anything beyond the five means of knowledge we have. Anything to which these five means have no access (enjoying अपूर्वता, प्रमाणान्तरम् अनधिगतत्वम् ).

Vedas being a deliberate प्रमाणं, it must also enjoy प्रयोजनवतत्वम्, it must serve a पुरुषार्थं,

a useful purpose. The Veda talks of certain means and ends - साधन and साध्य - “You do this you get this”, “To get there you do this”. The Veda enjoys प्रामाण्यम्, when it reveals a knowledge which enjoys अपूर्वता. Typically it reveals an otherwise unknown - साधन, साध्य, or both.

In some situations, the end is known but the means are not known - Like पुत्रकामेष्टि - a ritual to remove obstacles to beget progeny. Another example is rains, which is a known end, but the means, a ritual called करीरि, is unknown. Rains come when the ritual is done. Similarly, for wealth - the end is known, I have some known means, but there are some other unknown means that remove obstacles - which is the subject matter of the Veda.

In other situations the Means are known, the end is unknown - like पूर्तकर्म - which involves fulfilling some need of the community, whatever is required you fulfil. The unknown end is - you get पुण्य, अदृष्ट. Here an unknown end, पुण्य, using known means is pointed out by Veda.

In yet other situations, both the means and the end are not known. I am told - there is a place called स्वर्ग, Heaven, and that to go there is very interesting. You do not age there (no जरा). It is a nice place to go, no childhood problems also, because there is no childhood - you go there ready to enjoy, as an adult. Therefore there are no core

(childhood) issues. Who tells you all this? The Veda. To go there, there are known means like पूर्वकर्म and there are unknown means like इष्टकर्म - revealed by the veda through sentences like ज्योतोष्टोमेन स्वर्गकामो यजेत

This (अपूर्व) unknown साधन-साध्य is the topic of the Veda. But how will you do anything told by the Veda unless you are endowed with श्रद्धा? It is by श्रद्धा – purely श्रद्धा. It is not faith, but it is accepting veda as प्रमाण, as a means of knowledge. शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यबुद्धयवधारणम् , One looks upon the शास्त्र and the teachings of a गुरु as प्रमाण. Here सत्यबुद्धि is प्रमाणबुद्धि.

Veda is a प्रमाण for knowledge which is not available for other means of knowledge. In the context of मोक्ष, which is a complete freedom (from a sense of lack ), sought by all human beings, there is no साधन or साध्य. This is because we are talking of the limitless, which has to be something सिद्ध, something already existent, already accomplished. Therefore there is nothing new to be achieved. There is no साध्य, it is सिद्ध. But owing to अविद्या this सिद्धवस्तु appears to be a साध्य, appears to be something to be accomplished. The problem being one of अविद्या (Ignorance), the only possible solution is विद्या, knowledge. So मुमुक्षा, a desire to be free, has to first get converted into जिज्ञासा, a desire to know. People in some form of spiritual pursuit usually call themselves साधकs, seekers. But when they recognize the solution lies in knowing a सिद्धवस्तु, it is better they call themselves जिज्ञासु s! I want to know what is already existent but not known to me properly – partially it is known. When I say 'I am' , "I" is partly known, but not fully

known due to अविद्या. So my attempt is now to gain knowledge of the "to be achieved" ब्रह्मन्-अधीहि भगवो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मन् - to be achieved is ब्रह्मन् . ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मन् अधीहि. If someone says "Teach ब्रह्मन्" – one can define ब्रह्मन् as सत्यम्-ज्ञानम्-अनन्तम् ब्रह्म and say 'it is over'. But when one says ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मन् "अधीहि", यया विद्ब्रह्मन् तदक्षरम् ब्रह्म अधिगम्यते - Please teach me that विद्या by which I will know अक्षरम् ब्रह्म – this person will stay for the class. ब्रह्माजी is the Guru and begins by saying "श्रद्धा-भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि".

First you must have श्रद्धा – not श्रद्धा for साधन-साध्य, but for a सिद्धवस्तु. प्रमाण works differently in the context of a सिद्धवस्तु. It converts परोक्ष into अपरोक्ष. What is not known properly is made into day light – that is the विद्या, the teaching. So श्रवणम् possible only because of श्रद्धा. मननम् and निदिध्यासनम् will go along with श्रवणम् because शास्त्र says आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः.

आत्माद्रष्टव्यः should be understood (clearly), for that - आत्माद्रष्टव्यः- it should be listened to. Therefore teacher comes along too. श्रुति comes along with the teacher – because आत्मा should be listened to.

मन्तव्यः – Doubts have to be removed – doubts raised by other intellects or your own intellect. Someone's doubt becomes your doubt if you are not able to answer. Means your knowledge, your clarity, is lacking. Anyone's question not answered by you satisfactorily, is your doubt, your question now. The process of removing those doubts is called मननम्. If there is a doubt in understanding the श्रुति, it comes under श्रवणम् .

निदिध्यासितव्यः- When there are no more doubts about what is said, but "I" am the

doubt. In the sense, a person begins to doubt “whether I know or I do not know”, this is called विपरीतभावना. My mind, my behaviour are not in-keeping with what I know. This is विपरीतभावना- a distortion, which means some kind of clearance is needed in my understanding. It is not that the understanding is in trouble. What is already known, understood thru श्रवणमननम्, is made real by निदिध्यासनम्. The problems arising out of habitual thinking and distortions coming from core issues are addressed. This has to be done - it is a process and is included with श्रवणमनन for ज्ञानम्. One has to contemplate daily in the light of what one knows – that is निदिध्यासनम्. श्रद्धा will cover all the three श्रवणमनन and निदिध्यासनम्.

भक्ति-ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि

The word भक्ति is from भज् धातु – भजनम् = ईश्वर-भजनम्. श्रवण will bring in ईश्वर in the beginning itself, else we wouldn't have known ईश्वर. The ईश्वरज्ञानम्, knowledge of ईश्वर, is परोक्ष = indirect to start with, in the form – ‘अस्ति जगतः मूलकारणम्’ meaning ‘there is a cause for the जगत्’ – otherwise जगत् cannot be what it is. For my body, for the whole जगत् there must be a cause and it must be an intelligent being. When we are talking of the ‘cause of everything’ that intelligent being must be an all knowing being and should also be almighty, all power. The maker for this entire जगत्, known and unknown, is all power, all शक्ति. This much understanding is enough for the time being to have भक्ति, to enable one to pray - पालय माम्, तारय माम् – Please protect me, take me across. If one prays to him, then what happens? There is grace. Prayer is a कर्म and the फलम् of prayer is called grace. I do not think the English word grace means कर्मफल. It is कर्मफलभक्त्या (by

bhakti) earn grace. How much grace must I earn? Until you no longer need grace, until you are the very grace. You will never have enough of grace.

Even if you are a ज्ञानि, you need grace for good students. At the end of केनोपनिषद्, when the teacher has taught the whole उपनिषद्, one student asks “उपनिषदम् भो ब्रूहि” Sir, please teach the उपनिषद्, These kind of students can be there.

There used to be a पण्डित्जी, a कथाकार (one giving discourses through stories). पण्डित्जी was very happy with a person. This person used to come and sit in front of him everyday when he told रामायण-कथा, like हनुमान्. At the end of the series of talks, on the last day, everyone had left and this person was still there. पण्डित्जी said – you are so devoted like हनुमान्. I was so happy you were coming regularly. The person asked – पण्डित्जी, I have a doubt I want to ask you, can I ask? पण्डित्जी said - sure, what is your question?

The person asked, Sir in your कथा-discourse you mentioned three words often - one is राम, second is रावण and the third is राक्षस. I have understood राक्षस is a very bad fellow. But I have to ask you, whether राम is a राक्षस or रावण is a राक्षस? पण्डित्जी said Neither राम nor रावण, I am the राक्षस!, having told Ramayana to you. This kind of students can be there. Let me not get such students, good students should come – I need grace. So there is no redundancy of grace. You need grace, you need ईश्वर. You have to understand ईश्वर in terms of order – because ईश्वर is both maker and material cause. How do you recognise the efficient cause? Only through Isvara's order.

ध्यानयोग-ध्यानम् एव योगः—Dhyana is the means. You require a mind that stays with the topic all the way. सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः A flow of thoughts whose object is the same or is connected to the same object. Need a mind that stays with the topic, stays with the present and for that you have to train yourself with ध्यानम् – meditation. सगुण-ब्रह्म-विषय-मानस-व्यापारः is ध्यानम् . The वृत्ति, thought, is centered on सगुण-ब्रह्म – Isvara with attributes. The object for ध्यानम् can be a form I relate with - like गणेश or just a name, a नाम – like “रामरामराम”. The मन्त्र is just the नाम, You stay with that मन्त्र, there is सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः - A flow of thoughts, whose object is the same. When you do पूजा, all activities are not the same, but it is सजातीय, because they all connect with the same altar of worship. In mental पूजा, anything you do is पूजा – when you do आरति it is पूजा, when you offer incense it is पूजा, when you offer flowers it is पूजा, when you offer sandal paste it is पूजा – Different objects – but all this is पूजा. Therefore there is सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः. Mental पूजा is ध्यानम् . Mentally if you offer पूजा it is called ध्यानम्-त्र (मानसपूजायाम् )सजातीय-वृत्ति-प्रवाहः:- There in a mental worship, there is flow of वृत्तिस belonging to the same activity, which is a complex activity. मानस-पूजा is a very good practise for maintaining सजातीय-वृत्ति, because the mind has a scope to move about, but at the same time it does not move away. So ध्यान-योगाद् अवेहि.

भक्ति and ज्ञानम् support श्रद्धा. श्रवणम् (with श्रद्धा) is the primary साधनम् , श्रुति being a प्रमाण. That is why we say - श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम् . Why is श्रद्धा necessary? because it

is outside the five प्रमाणs we wield – प्रत्यक्ष अनुमान अर्थापत्ति उपमान अनुपलब्धि. When one goes for a प्रमाण outside these five प्रमाणs one requires श्रद्धा. It is called शब्दप्रमाण (शास्त्र). You need श्रद्धा in this प्रमाण. श्रद्धा is a special word – it is not faith. When you go for a sixth प्रमाण, outside the five प्रमाणs, maintain श्रद्धा until you are blessed by the प्रमाण.

I was saved by श्रद्धा – when I was studying वेदान्त I came to a point where I thought that वेदान्त does not really solve the problem. It is all intellection, you figure it out yourself, because in my understanding of वेदान्त, there was no प्रमाण, no discussion of प्रमाण. Without discussion of प्रमाण, वेदान्त will not serve, if you think properly. So I came to recognize the limitation of these words. How they are going to deliver the goods? I almost left the pursuit. I had burnt all my boats. I had nothing else to do. So there was a big conflict in me. I distributed my books – asked people to come and take them away. But being brought up in a vedic family, I had श्रद्धा, श्रद्धा in the शास्त्र. I said I might not have understood properly. Due to श्रद्धा I did not dismiss शास्त्र. All English books I dismissed, शास्त्र I did not dismiss. That was श्रद्धा. Then I discovered शास्त्र is a प्रमाण – and then I never looked back. “श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्” – I am the proof for it. The one who has श्रद्धा gains knowledge. श्रवण, मनन, निदिध्यासन, ईश्वरभक्ति, ध्यानयोग, daily जप – all these are necessary to support श्रद्धा.

Understand ब्रह्मन् thru श्रद्धा supported by भक्ति and ध्यानम्.