

Swami Paramarthanandaji's Talk

during Sankara Jayanti Celebrations, 2017



I feel happy to be here at the *Gurukulam* on the auspicious occasion of *Śaṅkara Jayanti*. And I would like to share some general thoughts with you. All of you are aware that our primary scriptures are the *Vedās* and we look upon the *Vedās* as something given by the Lord himself for the benefit of the entire humanity. And with the help of these *Vedās*, a human being can fulfil all his legitimate desires, both worldly as well as the ultimate spiritual desire. And all this can be done, while living in harmony with the creation. This teaching of the *Vedās* has been made available to us because of the contribution of several *Rṣīs* as well as several *Ācāryās*, whom we remember regularly through the well-known *Śloka*:

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपरशरं च ।
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ॥

nārāyaṇam padmabhuvam vasiṣṭham śaktim ca tatputraparaśaram ca |
vyāsam śukam gauḍapadam mahāntam govindayogīन्द्रamathāsya śiṣyam ||

श्री शङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम् ।
तं तोटकं वार्त्तिककारमन्यान् अस्मद्गुरून् सन्ततमान्तोस्मि ॥

śrī śaṅkarācāryamathāsya padmapādam ca hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam |
taṁ toṭakam vārttikakāramanyān asmadgurūn santatamāntosmi ||

So, starting from *Nārāyana* up to our *Guru*, the time duration will go to Millennia, we don't know even when the origin of the *Vedās* is. And therefore, if we are able to get the benefit of the Vedic teaching, the *Vaidika Dharma*, it is because of all these *Rṣīs* and *Ācāryās*, and therefore, in our tradition we regularly express our gratitude to all these *Rṣīs* and *Ācāryās*. And even though, every *Rṣi* and every *Ācārya* is great, we choose two of them for regular worship. One is *Vyāsācārya* and the other is *Śaṅkarācārya*. *Vyāsācārya's* contribution to our culture in general and spiritual wisdom in particular is well known and therefore, every *gṛhasthā* in his daily *brahmayajña* ritual remembers *Vyāsācārya*. In *brahmayajña ṛṣi tarpaṇam*, those who do may remember,

कृष्णद्वैपायनादयो ये ऋषयस्तान् ऋषींस्तर्पयामि ।

kṛṣṇadvaipāyanādayo ye ṛṣayastān ṛṣīstarpayāmi ।

First *Rṣi tarpaṇam* is for *Vyāsācārya*. And not only *gṛhastās* remember *Vyāsācārya*, *Sanyāsīs* also do remember *Vyāsācārya* on the special occasion while starting the *Cāturmāsya* ritual, during *Vyāsapūrṇima*. Therefore *Vyāsācārya's* contributions are great. Next to that is the contribution of *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* also and we remember his contribution both for our culture in general as well as the spiritual wisdom in particular, we remember during *Śaṅkara Jayanti* day. We look upon both of them as the very *Avatāra* of Lord *Viṣṇu* and Lord *Śiva*.

Śaṅkaram Śaṅkarācāryam, Śaṅkarācārya who is none other than *Śaṅkara*, Lord *Śiva* himself. *Keṣavam Bādarāyaṇam*”, and Lord *Viṣṇu* himself has come in the form of *Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsācārya, sūtrabhāṣyakṛtau vande bhagavantau punaḥ punaḥ* - We worship both of them again and again.

And *Śaṅkarācārya's* contribution especially in the field of spiritual wisdom is well known in the form of his *prasthanatraya bhāṣyam* as well as the *prakaraṇa granthās*. And we are beneficiaries, and therefore we can fully appreciate *Śaṅkarācārya's* contribution in this field. And today, I would like to remember a few of the fundamental principles, the foundational principles that *Śaṅkarācārya* has given in this spiritual tradition. I am only remembering aloud to appreciate the glory of *Śaṅkarācārya*, how they are still relevant and valid. And to understand this fundamental principle, we have to remember one point, based on that only I am going to present this. All the goals that we hope to accomplish whether they are worldly goals or spiritual goals we broadly categorise into two. Those goals which can be attained through several methods or several means, like a particular place which can be reached through several roads. Many roads are there and through any one of them we can reach the destination. I will call it, *aneka sādhana sādhyam. Anekaiḥ Sādhanaḥ Sādhyam*. Goals accomplishable through many methods. In English, multi path goal/many path Goal (MPG). Multi path- *Bahuvrīhi*, Multi path *yasya tat* multi path, then *Karma Dhārya*, Multi Path Goal, Multi Path Goal.

And other possibility, you can guess, is certain goals, which can be reached only by one method, one means or one path, *eka sādhana sādhyam* (SPG), Single path goal. Single path- *Bahuvrīhi*, then *Karma Dhārya*, Single Path Goal. To reach *Anaikatti*, I had only one road, (I think so) so this is Single Path Goal. But there are many destinations to which I can reach through Multipath. Now, *Śaṅkarācārya* through his *Bhāṣyams* makes very clear, what are all MPG and what are all SPGs. This must be very clear otherwise we will be out of the traditional teaching. I will talk about three things and we will see which one is MPG and which one is SPG. This is going to be my simple discussion.

The first one is *mokṣaḥ*, *Śaṅkarācārya* in all his *prasthanatraya bhāṣyam* makes it very clear that *mokṣa* will come under MPG or SPG, you all know the answer. *Mokṣa* comes under *eka sādhana sādhyam* (Single path Goal). *Śaṅkarācārya* establishes this through *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. He clearly establishes.

तम् एवं विद्वान् अमृत इह भवति नान्यः पन्था अयनाय विद्यते।

Tam evaṁ vidvān amṛta iha bhavati nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate.

In *puruṣasuktam* it occurs twice. Initially, *nānyaḥ panthā*, down.

Vedā is worried, because it doubts some people might not have heard it. Hence second time, *nānyaḥ panthā*, up, so that everybody even the one hard of hearing also will hear it clearly that *mokṣa* comes under *eka sadhāna sādhyam*. It is very important because during *Śaṅkarācārya*'s time there were many people claiming that *mokṣa* can be claimed through *karma*, i.e., *purvamīmāṃsakā*, *Mokṣa* can be claimed through *upāsanās*, i.e., *viśiṣṭādvaitins*, all those people equivalent to *viśiṣṭādvaitins* were claiming that *upāsanā* gives *mokṣa*. Wherever the word *brahmavit* comes, *Brahmavid āpnoti param*, they interpret *vit* as *upāsanā*. *Brahma upāsakah param āpnoti*. Only through meditation or *upāsanā* one can get *mokṣa*. *Śaṅkarācārya* dismissed all of them and established *jñāna mātrena mokṣaḥ*. Between *jñānam* and *mokṣa* there is not even a time gap, instantaneously *mokṣa* is gained. The most surprising thing is in spite of the *Ācārya* establishing so clearly even now there are so many counter opinions. Especially after varieties of *āgama śāstrās* proliferating, now Hinduism is dominated by more *āgamas* rather than *vedās*. Therefore they all declare that may be *jñānam* was method in those times, but now the times have changed and people don't have time for attending *gurukulams* and therefore we should have shorter cuts and therefore in all the *upanyāsās* we hear whether in TVs or public discourses, all of them keeping *Śaṅkarācārya*'s photo on one side, that is more akramam. They all say that in *Kali yuga*, *bhakti* alone gives *mokṣa* and *Jñānam* is not accessible for majority. The best method of practising *bhakti* is *nāma saṅkīrtanam*. Go on chanting *hare rāma, hare rāma* you can get *mokṣa*. And some people go further, you need not even work for *mokṣa*, you surrender, *Bhagavān* will give do door delivery of *mokṣa*, like couriers. Very unfortunate, only when you go for teaching out, you will know that you have to confront this question and by the time you erase all these misconceptions, you will have to take 3 courses for erasing. Then only there is a chance of communicating *Śaṅkarācārya*'s message, very big problem. *Jñānam* is blacked out or suppressed and *bhakti* and *nāma saṅkīrtanam* are glorified. If they say it is for *citta śuddhi*, wonderful. They never say that, *nāma saṅkīrtanam* will do everything. And therefore it is very important for all of us to remember *Śaṅkarācārya*'s reasoning to establish this. *Śaṅkarācārya* convinces if people are available, unfortunately people are not available. If people are available, *Śaṅkarācārya* convinces us very clearly. And it is nice to remember his argument. *Śaṅkarācārya* says nobody can get *mokṣa*, putting a bomb shell. And nobody can give *mokṣa*. What about *Bhagavān*? Even *Bhagavān*. Even though *Bhagavān* is omniscient, even though *Bhagavān* is omnipotent, *Bhagavān* can do many things, but as far as giving *mokṣa* is concerned, even *Bhagavān* cannot give *mokṣa*. Then we will all wonder what the audacity of *Śaṅkarācārya* is, what is the reason. You all know the reason. I am just enjoying remembering *Śaṅkarācārya*'s vision, conviction. Nobody can get or give *mokṣa* because *mokṣa* happens to be our very nature and therefore it is with us all the time. And whatever is already with us we cannot get. And whatever is already with us *Bhagavān* cannot give, because it is already with us. And *Pūjya Swāmiji* gives a humorous example also, he only can think of these examples to convey profound truths jocularly. Suppose some devotee goes to *Bhagavān* and asks, Oh! Lord, please give me a head over my shoulders, if a *Bhakta* asks *Bhagavān*, What will *Bhagavān* say, even though I am omnipotent, I cannot give head over your shoulders, because you already have a head. Then, *Swāmiji* adds, I can put something within your head, because that is absent. From your question it is very clear. I can give something inside your head, but I cannot give head over the shoulders, because it is already there. Therefore we all should remember fundamental traditional principle is *mokṣa* cannot be got by us and *Bhagavān* cannot give us *mokṣa*. This must be very deeply registered.

Then will be next question. If *mokṣa* is already my *svarūpam*, then how do you say *mokṣa* is *eka sādhanā sādhyam*? *Mokṣa* is attained by *jñānam*, you say. If *mokṣa* is already attained then how can we get *mokṣa* through *jñānam*. Because *jñānam* also cannot give *mokṣa*. For that our answer is, initially we say that *mokṣa* is *jñānena sādhyam*, but once a person comes to *jñānam* we teach that *mokṣa* is not gained through *jñānam* also, through *jñānam* we come to know that *mokṣa* need not be gained. So through *jñānam* we get *mokṣa* and what do you mean by that, through *jñānam* we come to know that *mokṣa* need not be gained, because *mokṣa* is our *svarūpam* only. Therefore, the job done by *jñānam* is not *mokṣa prāptiḥ*, but *adhyasta samsāra nivṛttiḥ*. We will have to land into *adhyāsa bhāṣyam*. So the whole effort is not the attainment of *mokṣa*, but only dropping ignorance and the notion that I am a samsari. *Jñānena ajñānasya mokṣa*, that means the word *mokṣa* means what, *mokṣa* itself is a significant word. The word *Mokṣa* means dropping, *mokṣ dhātu* not *muñc dhātu*. It is to release or drop. Getting *mokṣa* means dropping. Dropping two important things. Dropping ignorance and dropping the notion that I am a *samsārī*. This dropping the *samsāra* notion is figuratively called attainment of *mokṣa*. *Jñānena adhyasta samsāra nivṛttiḥ eva mokṣaprāptiḥ iti upacaryate*. Through knowledge dropping the misconception than I am bound, that dropping alone is figuratively called attainment of *mokṣa*, we don't get anything, we drop something. That is indicated by *sanyāsa. tyāgenaike amrutatvamaṇaśuḥ*. What *tyāga*? Not Clothes. *ajñānasya tyāgaḥ, adhyāsasya tyāgaḥ, adhyastabandhasya tyāgaḥ*. *Adhyāsa*, ignorance and the notion can be removed by only *jñānam*. Therefore, we say *jñānāt eva mokṣaḥ. Nāma saṅkīrtanam* etc., cannot do this job. Therefore, what is the only path, which is not a path. That is what *Pūjya Swāmiji* says. *Jñānam* is the only path which is not a path. Path *iva* path. This we should remember, otherwise you will find so many discourses which are confusing. If we go on listening we also may get doubts. Therefore we have to regularly remind us. *Sampradāya* means dropping misconception is *mokṣa*. This is the great glory of *Śaṅkarācārya* in *tattusamanvaya bhāṣyam*. In *tattusamanvaya bhāṣyam, tat tu*, he has a commentary on the word “*tu*”. *Śaṅkarācārya* dismisses all these misconceptions. *Mokṣaḥ eka sādhanā sādhyāḥ* is one fundamental principle of traditional teaching. A traditional guru has, as *Swāmiji* repeatedly says, should bring this point in all his discourses. And a teacher who does not bring this point is slipping away from tradition. Even if we talk about *bhakti* a lot, at the end we have to enlighten the audience, by saying that all these are wonderful, but you should all know that this itself is not enough. Finally, one has to gain *jñānam*. That means there is a stamp of *Śaṅkarācārya* or stamp of our *Pūjya Swāmiji*. If we want stamp of *Pūjya Swāmiji* we have to clearly say, *mokṣaḥ eka sādhanā sādhyāḥ*.

The second point is, (totally three) *jñānena mokṣaḥ* we have established. *Jñānena mokṣaḥ* not *jñāna mātrena mokṣaḥ*. Now the question is, is *Jñānam* SPG or MPG? First question is *mokṣa* SPG or MPG? Answer is SPG. Otherwise write imposition. *mokṣaḥ* is SPG, *jñāna mātrena*. Second question, *jñānam* is attained through how many *mārgās*? Here also problem, many people say that *mokṣa* can be attained through various paths. They don't include *jñānam*, or they say *jñānam* is one of the paths. And there are some people, who concede that *jñānena mokṣa* and they say *jñānam* can be gained through several methods. *śāstra vicāra* they consider as one of the methods for those who have got the time to do. For others, *jñānam* can be gained through other methods. Therefore, they are MPG people. And some people say that you can go on asking “Who am I?” And what is the source of *ahaṅkāra*, you enquire and you will get the answer, the *jñānam* will come. “Who am I?” enquiry path is one alternative path suggested. And there are some people who say, by meditation or *Samādhi* you can get, *Samādhi mārgaḥ* or *yoga mārgaḥ*.

Yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ. Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'avasthānam. You remove all the thoughts, you will abide in *ātma*. *Tatra ṛtam bharā prajñā, ṛtam bharā*- it holds the truth, knowledge of the truth. Thus, there are some people who quote the *yoga sūtra* and they say that by entering *Samādhi*, we can get *jñānam*.

Our topic is right now not *mokṣa*, our topic is *jñānam*. Therefore, “who am I” enquiry method, *samādhi* method and there are some other people who say off course, *bhakti* (*Āgamā* people) method. You have got *Bhakti* wonderful. *Śaṅkarācārya* has incorporated all the *āgamās*, for *citta śuddhi* but nowadays people are presenting *āgamās* as a means of *mokṣa* or *jñānam*. That is non-vedic. *Āgamā* for puja is okay, *Āgamā* for *mokṣa* or *jñānam* is non-vedic approach. That is why in *brahmasūtras* there are *khaṇḍanams* of so many *siddhantās*, *bhāgavatamata khaṇḍanam*, and *pāsupatamata khaṇḍanam*. Presenting those methods as a means of *jñānam* and *mokṣa*, they are all *veda vāhya siddhantā*.

yā veda bāhyāḥ smṛtayaḥ yāśca kāśca kudṛṣṭayaḥ sarvāstā niṣphalāḥ pretya tamo niṣṭhā hi tāḥ smṛtāḥ.

We should be very careful, *śaivāgamās*, *vaiṣṇava āgamās*, *śākta āgamās* are beautiful, but are often misleading. They say *Bhagavān* will give *jñānam* at the right time. You needn’t do anything at all. As though, *Bhagavān* will make a drill and make a hole and they quote, “*dadāmi buddhi yogam tam yena mām upayānti te*”. You keep on practicing *bhakti*, *Bhagavān* will give knowledge at the right time. This is another *mahā* misconception. *Śaṅkarācārya* is very clear in all his *bhāṣyams*. *Jñānam*, any *jñānam* can only be gained by only one method. And that method is, *pramāṇa janyam pramā*. Any knowledge can come only by using a relevant instrument of knowledge. *Pūja* is not a *pramāṇam*, *yoga* is not a *pramāṇam*, *Samādhi* is not a *pramāṇam*, and “Who am I” is not a *pramāṇam*, *nāma saṅkīrtanam* is not a *pramāṇam*. None of them will come under *pramāṇam*. So, we have to use a *pramāṇam* and then we talk about varieties of *pramāṇam*. I am not going into the details, I am talking in this language because all of you all already students. Because, nowadays we are supposed to be inclusive. Inclusive means you should say everything is right. And you know what is *Pūjya Swāmiji*’s answer? I better be a fanatic, rather than a lunatic. Because, where there is only one method, we should assert that it is the declaration of a fact, there you cannot be inclusive. With regard to facts we cannot be inclusive, we should assert that *pramāṇam* alone will produce knowledge and the *pramāṇam* has to be a relevant *pramāṇam* also. And here, in knowing the nature of myself as *mokṣaḥ*, I require only one *pramāṇam*. And what is that *pramāṇam*, *tantu aupaniṣadam puruṣam pṛchāmi*. *Upaniṣad pramāṇa mātra samadigamyam* because all other instruments of knowledge are turned extrovert. *parānci khāni naiṣā tarkaṇa matirāpaneya*. All of them make it very clear, that *pramāṇam* is required and *pramāṇam* is *upaniṣad śāstra pramāṇam*. And this is in the form of words and sentences, *pramāṇa vicāra* alone is the *pramāṇa* operation, which we call *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsanena eva ātmāvā are draṣṭavyaḥ*, *śrotavyaḥ*, *mantavyaḥ*. Therefore the second very important message that *Śaṅkarācārya* establishes is *jñānam* is SPG. And what is the only path for *jñānam* “*tad vijñānārtham sa gurumeva abhigacchet tad viddhi praṇipātena pariprasnena sevayā*”. Therefore what is traditional foundation number one, *mokṣaḥ jñāna mātra sādhyāḥ* and what is the traditional principle number two, *jñānam śāstra vicāra mātra sadhyam*. This is the second point.

Therefore, *mokṣaḥ* is SPG, *jñānam* is SPG.

Then comes the last one, for receiving the message of the *śāstras* my mind must be fit, receptacle; *pātram*. So *jñāna yogyata* is important and if the mind doesn’t have *jñāna yogyata*, then *pramāṇam* cannot work. So *yogyata* is required, *adhikāritvam* is required. Even to desire for *vicāra*. In fact, first *yogyata* is desire for *mokṣa*. The second *yogyata* is desire for *jñānam*. Third *yogyata* is desire for *śravaṇam*. These three, themselves are very rare.

śravaṇāyāpi bahubhiḥ yonalabhyāḥ śrṅvantopi bahavo eṁ na vidyuh.

So *mumukṣā*, *jijñāsā*, *śuśrūṣā*. *Mumukṣā* - desire for moksha is first *yogyata*. Desire for *jñānam* is the second *yogyata*, as *Pūjya Swāmiji* says I am going for *vipaścanā*. If you have not heard, you are lucky. So desire for *jñānam* is *jijñāsā*. And, that *jñānam* is only possible by *śravaṇam* from a *Guru*, *śuśrūṣā*. All these three words are there in the *śāstras*. *mukṣurvai śaraṇam aham prapadye, ārto jijñāsurarthārthi*. And in the *Gita* Krishna says, *Gita* must be given to qualified persons. There he says,

इदम् ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूशवे वाच्यम् न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥

idam te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana |

na cāśuśrūśave vācyam na ca mām yo'bhyaśūyati ||

One who is desirous of studying the scriptures.

tametam vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiśanti.

Three desires are important, desire for *mokṣa*, desire for *jñānam*, desire for *śravaṇam*. Then only our stay in *gurukulam* will fructify properly. And this is *jñāna yogyata*, if *yogyata* is not there then *śravaṇam* will not function. For that in tradition, they give a nice example. I want to look at my face, I have told this here before but I would remind; I like this concept very much; I want to look at my face. Assume some people said you have a beautiful face. I have a beautiful, charming, attractive, lovely face and the tragedy is I cannot see my face. And therefore, there is only one method, I have to bring a mirror. Suppose I have got a mirror and my eyes are not all right. The mirror will not be of any use. Eyes are there, mirror is not there. Then also you suffer. Eye also is important. Mirror also is important. When they join together, there is *ātma darśanam*, *mukha darśanam*. Similarly, *Guru's* words are *śabda darpaṇaḥ*. So *Guru* is continuously showing the mirror to his students, see your glory. And when the *Guru* is showing the *śāstra darpaṇa*, the *śiśya* must have the eyes, not the local eyes, a *yogya antaḥ karaṇam* is required. If that is not there, *Guru's* effort will be like the *virocana* of *chandogya aṣṭamādhyāyaḥ*. Therefore it is said, *yasya nāsti swayam prajña, śāstram tasya karoti kim, Locanābhyām vihīnasya darpaṇaḥ kim kariṣyati*. You can understand. *yasya nāsti swayam prajña*, that student who doesn't have the thinking and assimilating power, *śāstram tasya karoti kim*, what can *śāstra pramāṇa* do. Like what. *Locanābhyām vihīnasya*, if the eyes are not there, what is the use of the mirror. Therefore *śāstra pramāṇam* will function only when there is *yogya antaḥ karaṇa*. For that the entire *veda pūrva bhāga* is useful. Thus the whole *veda*, *Veda pūrva* gives me *yogyata*. *Veda anta* shows me the *darpaṇam*. So the entire *Veda* has got only two functions. Prepare and show the mirror. And when we go through the preparation and look at the mirror. Then the knowledge is

अहमन्न महमन्न महमन्नम् ।

अहमन्नादो ऽहमन्नादो ऽहमन्नादः ।

अहग्ग् श्लोककृ दहग्ग् श्लोककृ दहग्ग् श्लोककृत् ।

ahamannamahamannamahamannam |

ahamannādo ahamannādo ahamannādaḥ|

aham ślokakṛdaham ślokakṛdaham ślokakṛt |

aham vṛkṣasya rerivā, kīrtiḥ priṣṭham gire riva...

I am not a speck in the creation, the whole table is turned, but the whole creation is a speck in me. *viṣṭabhya aham idam kṛtsnamekāmśena sthito jagat*. If I should receive this wisdom and it should become a fact for me, I require a *yogya antaḥ karaṇa*.

Now the last point is, this *yogyata* is SPG or MPG. Here alone, *Śaṅkarācārya* relaxes. Until then he is very tight. For purifying the mind you have got infinite methods. You use any method, *Veda* itself gives, *pañcamahāyajñāḥ*, *īśvara ārādhana* we can do and get the *citta śuddhi*, *pitṛ yajña*, even doing the house hold, many people, many household ladies ask this question. We cannot do anything, we are at home, and taking care of that also is called *pitṛ yajña*. *Pitṛ yajña* can purify the mind. *Manuṣya yajña*, all kinds of reaching out actions can purify the mind. To use *Swāmiji*'s expression, *Swāmiji* says, I invented or introduced AIM for Seva itself only for this purpose. Because, *Swāmiji* found many of his disciples, had a problem. And therefore, *manuṣya yajñāḥ*, *bhūta yajñāḥ*, contribution to animals and plants, or *Brahma yajñāḥ* teaching. Teaching also is a method of purification. Therefore, use one method or the other, you can do *yogābhyāsa*, *prānāyāma*, anything. Thus, use any method or combination of a few also, may you gain *jñāna yogyata* by any one of these methods. Because *jñāna yogyata* is MPG. By using MPG, *jñāna yogyata prāpti*, SPG *jñāna prāpti*, SPG *mokṣa prāptiḥ*. This is the traditional teaching. And when I went to Chennai and I was giving talks, once in a while, I used to write letters to *Pūjya Swāmiji* just updating what is happening and all, and in one of the letters *Pūjya Swāmiji* said only one thing. He said, never compromise with the tradition of the teaching, for satisfying the type of students. Just because the students love *bhakti*, they are *bhaktās*, therefore I say *bhaktiyā mokṣaḥ*. And, I give a talk in a yoga institute, therefore I say *yogena mokṣa*. Never compromise with the basic, that we should never be untrue to the tradition. That is disservice to *Vedas*, disservice to *Vyāsa*, disservice to *Śaṅkarācārya*, disservice to our *Pūjya Swāmiji*. We can teach *bhajan*, *nāma saṅkīrtanam*, all of them, but we never make a statement we get *mokṣa*. So even if we say, we say that this will gradually lead to the next step and next step. But everyone should be very clear, that our ultimate aim is *jñānam*.

*annapūrṇe sadāpūrṇe śaṅkara prāṇa vallabhe
jñāna vairāgya siddhyartham bhikṣām dehi ca pārvati*

Therefore, *jñānam* alone can give “*mokṣa*”. If anybody asks whether *bhakti* can give *mokṣa*, we say, *bhakti* can give *mokṣa*, if *bhakti* means *jñānam*; no problem.

svassvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate.

If the word, *bhakti* means anything else, we should say it gives *citta śuddhi*. For that, this wonderful tradition of *jñānena mokṣaḥ*, *pramāṇa vicareṇa jñānam* and *yogena cittasya śuddhiḥ*. This is our tradition which *Vyāsācārya* established through *brahmasūtrās* and which *Śaṅkarācārya* established through his *bhāṣyam*, and which our *Pūjya Swāmiji* made available to all of us in a way that we will understand. Therefore, I think on this auspicious occasion of *Śaṅkarā jayanti*, we should be grateful to *Vyāsa* and particularly *Śaṅkarācārya* that we are able to get this particular tradition. And that is till now confusing, is very clear. If you listen to any number of discourses, very rarely it is said that this is SPG and this is MPG. Very rarely people mention. We should make it very clear, wherever we are sharing this knowledge. With these few words, I would like to conclude my talk.

Transcribed by Rajalakshmi Nandakumar and edited by Murali