

Tr̥pti-dīpa-prakarāṇa

Pujya Swamiji conducted a month-long camp on Chapter 7 (Tr̥pti-dīpa-prakarāṇa) of the Pañcadaśī.



Pañcadaśī, as the name implies, is a text containing 15 chapters. It is supposed to have been written jointly by Swāmī Vidyāraṇya and Swāmī Bhārati Tīrtha. Each chapter deals with a separate topic of Vedanta.

The seventh chapter entitled Tr̥pti-dīpa-prakarāṇa, containing 298 verses, throws light on Satisfaction. A mantra of the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad – “ātmānam cet vijāniyāt ayam asmīti pūru°aḥ, kimicchān kasya kāmāya sharīram anusañjvaret” (Br. 4.4.12) is taken and elaborated in the remaining 297 verses. Meaning of this mantra is: “If one were to know the Self as – I am this – desiring what and for whose sake would he trouble the body”. The idea is to throw light on the state of satisfaction reached by a jīvanmukta – a liberated person.

The author starts by talking about the jīva, the individual Self, because it is the jīva who is to become a jīvanmukta. The jīva is actually nothing but the unchanging, unaffected consciousness that has become limited due to the mutual superimposition of the body-mind-sense complex (referred to as the ‘reflected consciousness’ because it does not have a reality of its own) and the ātmā. They become so intertwined with each other that the ordinary person does not distinguish between the two and this becomes the cause of samsāra (bondage). One needs to know this fact clearly without any doubt, to get rid of samsāra. And when known, samsāra vanishes; even if one does not want it to, it is impossible for samsāra to exist anymore!

The getting rid of samsāra is only possible through the knowledge that – I (the jīva) am

That (limitless consciousness). Hence the author gets into what really this knowledge is and classifies it into two kinds – direct and indirect. The story of the tenth man is used to illustrate knowledge and its two kinds. The story goes like this – There are a group of ten boys trying to cross a river while going from one village to another. One of the boys is the leader and is responsible for their safety. When he counts the boys after crossing the river, to make sure everyone is safe, he can count only nine even though he tries to count in different ways. He thinks that one of them has drowned in the river and is shattered. One elderly passer-by enquires about the problem and helps him correct the mistake. First to pacify him, he tells that the tenth man is very much alive and he need not worry anymore. This knowledge is indirect knowledge because even though he trusts the elderly man, he ‘believes’ him but still does not appreciate the fact himself. After thus putting him at ease, the elderly man then makes him understand that the problem is because he has forgotten to count ‘himself’! The knowledge that the passer-by gives him is direct knowledge because the knowledge now is no more a matter for belief and is rather a fact to be understood.

The story also drives home another point. We always forget to look into ourselves, as even the leader of the boys forgot to count him, and are always seeking happiness from everything else in the world. This is the cause of samsāra for all human beings

There are seven stages from ignorance up to knowing that ‘I am the tenth man’. These are the same steps a jīva passes through from ignorance till he knows himself. The stages are

1. Ignorance (Ajñāna) – the jīva does not know himself as the self-effulgent, unchanging Self.
2. Covering up of the true knowledge (Āvaraṇa) – the jīva says that he is neither self-effulgent nor unchanging.
3. False projections due to the covering up (Vikṣepa) – the jīva considers himself to be the doer and enjoyer.
4. Indirect knowledge (Parokṣa jñānam) – the jīva knows by hearsay that the unchanging Self exists.
5. Direct knowledge (Aparokṣa jñānam) – the jīva appreciates himself as the changeless Self.
6. Cessation of sorrow (Śokāpagamaḥ) – the jīva gives up notions like ‘I am the doer, enjoyer etc.’
7. Satisfaction obtained (Trptiḥ) – the jīva gets a sense of fulfillment of having done and obtained what needs to be done and obtained (the state of a jīvanmukta).

The direct knowledge of the Self constitutes the meaning of “If one would know the Self” in the Brhadāraṇyaka line being analyzed.

From the seven steps, it is apparent that knowledge is the key factor. The author

therefore gets into the discussion of the nature of the two kinds of knowledge – indirect and direct. Why do we split knowledge into two parts and why is indirect knowledge alone not sufficient in the case of the Self? The answer is that only when the knowledge becomes direct, in the sense that “I am that Self” and it is not something separate from me, does one become freed from samsāra. Every jīva gets this knowledge only indirectly first (where one knows from the Śruti that I am that limitless consciousness but does not still intimately appreciate that) and later appreciates it intimately (directly). In the Upaniṣads (Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya etc.) also indirect knowledge of Brahman is given and direct knowledge follows through an analysis of the Mahāvākyas.

The three steps involved in gaining the knowledge of Self are Śravaṇa (listening to the shastra from a teacher), Manana (analyzing what has been listened to and resolving misconceptions) and Nididhyāsana (removing obstacles in the way of perceiving the knowledge directly).

One then gets the academic doubt as to what a person should/will do after he gets the knowledge? Because at that stage he has done all that needs to be accomplished and nothing else needs to be accomplished! One has to anyway continue living until one’s prārabdha gets exhausted! The author says that one should engage in activities that are conducive to staying with the knowledge that “I am Brahman”. This can be in the form of listening/reading to itihāsas (Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata) etc because

they all deal with the knowledge of the Self and unreality of the world. But, on the contrary, when one is engaged in purely worldly activities like cultivation, business etc there is a lot of scope for distraction and one may move away from the knowledge.

So the author now gets into the analysis of the second half of the Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad – “kimicchān kasya kāmāya śarīram anusañjvaret” meaning – “Desiring what and for whose sake he would trouble the body”. All actions imply desire on one’s part. But with knowledge (of the unreality of the world), the desirer and desired are both negated. One realizes that there is sorrow in accumulating objects, protecting them, their decay and losing them. So why would one want to drown in sorrow? One would only want to give up all desire oriented actions with a smiling face. What if desire arises due to the force of prārabdha karma? Even then one would only enjoy them reluctantly like one caught up in bonded labor i.e. unable to escape.

Can desires subside by enjoying them i.e. by saturation? The answer is NO and dispassion, due to knowledge, is the only way (for cessation of desire). And a dispassionate one more than not having desires centered on his body-mind-sense complex, even feels sorry while enjoying the desires thrown up at him by the force of his prārabdha. “A king released from bondage is satisfied with just a village. But for the king who is neither bound nor invaded even a whole kingdom is not enough!” Such is the state of dispassion for a knower – that he is satisfied with the barest minimum.

And what about the desires brought about by *prārabdha*? They are akin to a roasted seed which is a seed nevertheless but incapable of sprouting. Desires brought about by *prārabdha* may be there but they don't grow and immerse one in *samsāra*. One goes through the desires and enjoyments but the mistaken conception of their being absolutely real is not there. It is like how one views a dream after waking. Desires and enjoyments are absolutely real only in the stage of ignorance. The similarity of the waking and dream states with the state of a *jīva* before and after knowledge respectively has to be contemplated for long. On the rise of knowledge (akin to waking up), there is no problem in perceiving the unreality.

How is this contemplation done? This is done in keeping with the Śāstra. The contemplation is of the nature of analyzing the nature of the desirer because that really is the problem. Every human being (the desirer) essentially is in one of the three states viz. waking, dream and deep sleep at any given point in time. Enquiry into these states makes one understand that he (confused with the desirer) is different from all of them and is really the witness of them all. The desirer belongs to the reflected Self that has no existence apart from the witness (pure Self). Knowing this one would even be ashamed to call himself a desirer. On knowing, he will enjoy his *prārabdha* like a man lives on in shame after his nose is cut off.

The author also explains the various 'fevers' in the body because that is the word

(*anusañjvaret*), in the *Brhadāranyaka* quotation, that is likened to worries. The body itself is of three kinds: the gross, subtle and causal. The fevers are bad smell, ugliness, burns etc in the gross body; desire, anger, control of the mind and sense organs etc in the subtle body and ignorance in the subtle body. But when one understands that these fevers are unreal, (from the absolute stand point) then there is no cause for worry whatsoever. Considering the fevers as 'real' has been the source of the problem until now just like a snake is seen on a rope until the snake-ness goes away with knowledge.

After knowing this truth, assimilating it may take some time and it is just natural. This is just like the shivering a person gets on seeing (imagining) a snake on a rope takes some time to subside after the knowledge of the rope-ness. So the notion of being an 'enjoyer' also subsides slowly and it cannot be stopped by force suddenly. It is alright to give it some time.

The author then dwells with the nature of *Tr̥pti*— Satisfaction, as that is the title of this chapter. *Tr̥pti* from objects is limited while that from the knowledge of one's true nature is unimpeded. After knowledge there is the firm conviction that nothing else needs to be done for me to be happy other than being myself and this is the ultimate satisfaction. The knower then revels by thinking about how fortunate he is for having got this knowledge and having been freed from ignorance and *samsāra*. There is no limit to his wonderment of the Śāstra, Guru, the knowledge and the satisfaction itself.

'Report by Br. Sivatma Chaitanya'