

Freedom

Camp by Swami Sadatmanandaji at Anaikatti asram from March 2018

Series of five talks on the topic of freedom continued from May 2018 issue

In the earlier talks we saw that the fundamental bondage is in the form of sense of limitation which is experienced by us more vividly in the form of self non-acceptance or sense of helplessness or dependence on the world to be happy, peaceful and secure.

All three of them are there, but different people will feel each one of these in different degrees. Some people will feel helplessness more and some will experience dependence more. Behind all of them there is a sense of limitation centered on I. This sense of limitation which is the fundamental bondage is a notion, a mistake. A mistake is missing the fact and taking something else to be the fact. That can be corrected only by right knowledge. Right knowledge is attained by appropriate means of knowledge. In the case of self-knowledge, the appropriate means of knowledge is in the form of Vedanta.

This Vedanta is giving the vision of the self in 3 stages -

i) ***tvam padartha vicarah*** - analysis of the individual. That is done with the help drk- drsya viveka (seer-seen discrimination). With the help of this viveka I arrive at the understanding that I am not this BMC (Body Mind Complex), I am consciousness. This is what sastra reveals. This consciousness is not limited by this body, senses and the mind (BMC). This consciousness is one and the same in all. Like space in one body is not different from space in another body. Similarly, there is only one consciousness.

The implication of this understanding - that I am consciousness free from the limitations of the body, mind complex- is that I am free from birth, death, sadness or any emotion. I am the illuminator of all emotions and not subject to any emotions. And the activities that are happening in the BMC are not possible without me consciousness. But I, the consciousness is not the doer. I am free from doer-ship.

Like the sun is blessing all the activities of all people. But does not have doership with regard to the activities of all people. Similarly, I consciousness is blessing the body, blessing the senses and the mind. But I consciousness am not the doer. Also, I am free from bhokrtvam, experiencership. I am not subject to any hurt or any elation. By understanding myself to be consciousness I release myself from doership (kartrtvam) and experiencership (bhoktrtvam) This is a big relief. And when I remain in this understanding, then I am free from any guilt or hurt. As long as kartrtvam is there, there will be guilt because we will always feel I should have done this or should not have done that- *kim aham sadhu na akarvam, kim aham papam akaravam iti*.

Similarly, as long bhoktrtvam is there, there will be hurt. But when I discover this vision, both guilt and hurt are not there, I don't take credit for any action nor do I take discredit for it. Somebody praises me, I don't feel flattered. Somebody criticises me, I don't feel depressed. My upadhi is like that, it invites both praise and criticism. Thro' this upadhi the papam or punyam of listener is exhausted. But our problem is when right thing happens, I want to take the credit. But when wrong thing happens, I don't want to take the blame.

There is double standard. (As one swamiji said - *mitta mitta gup gup, kadva kadva thu thu*. Sweet I swallow, but bitter I spit it out.) Hence you are not able to abide in the wisdom. With reference to both praise and criticism you are objective. This is how the upadhi is. Like some gadgets, they work sometimes and sometimes they don't. Similarly upadhis have limitation not me. Thus there is no kartrtvam and bhoktrtvam.

The problem is:- somebody shouts at you. You feel I have been shouted at for no reason. The person has his reasons to shout which you don't see. The benefit of Vedanta is you become objective about everything including the condition of your body and your mind. If something does not occur to your mind, you say alright today it did not come. No guilt. This is the implication of understanding I am consciousness. There is no irresponsibility. Whatever needs to be done, whatever needs to be corrected, it will be done. Infact, it will be done better because earlier your subjectivity inhibited corrections and now those inhibiting factors are not there. So the person becomes free from guilt and hurt even while interacting with the world.. This is the first topic- *tvam padartha vicarah*.

ii) ***Tat padartha vicarah*** – it is the analysis of the meaning of the word 'tat' in the great sentence '*tat tvam asi*'. In this topic, we discuss creation. Vedanta says the world is a creation and its material and efficient cause is brahman or Isvara. Since it is the material cause, Isvara pervades the world. There is nothing else apart from it.

If we analyse the status of effect and cause, we find that the effect does not have existence apart from cause. For example, pot the effect depends upon clay to exist. In this particular paradigm, clay is independent and pot is dependent upon clay for existence. Therefore, clay is satyam (real) and pot is mithya (unreal). Chandogya upanishad says- *mrthika ityeva satyam*. Similarly, the world is a product and therefore the world is mithya and brahman, the cause is satyam. Therefore we have the popular statement- *brahma satyam, jagat mithya*. But many people have some wrong ideas about mithya. They have allergy to the word mithya.

They say- How can this beautiful world be mithya?

Our answer is – Even beautiful things can be mithya. Like not only a horrible movie is mithya, but a beautiful movie is also equally mithya. So something to be mithya, it need not be ugly. So mithya is an ontological term which is revealing the status in terms of reality and not in terms of goodness or badness. It is not a value judgement. Mithya does not mean it is beautiful or disgusting or ugly. Mithya only means that it does not have an independent existence. Whether beautiful or not, if it is an effect it is mithya. Sometimes people feel that if it is mithya, it should not come to our experience. That is not correct. For that we have another world- *tuccham*- that which does not come to our experience or totally non-existent - like rabbits horn, flowers grown in the sky, barren women's child – all these never come to our experience. But mithya is that which comes to our experience. Infact, sastra goes one step further. Whatever comes to your experience is mithya. Availability for experience and being mithya are not opposite. Something can be mithya, still it can come to our experience. Many people ask- "Swamiji, if something is mithya, how come we are able to use it?"

We must know that utility does not decide reality. Like the currency in your pocket is mithya because it does not have intrinsic value. Govt. can decide tomorrow that the Rs 2000 note has no value. We can easily understand it is mithya. Better example is share index. It has no reality. But people get an heartache, when the stocks crash. Really share index is useful to indicate economy, but it is not real. So unreality and utility are not contradictory. So the world is mithya and brahman is satyam.

Question can be asked- swamiji what is the use of knowing that the world is mithya?

Earlier I was eating roti which I thought was real. Now I am eating the same roti which I understand to be mithya in a mithya plate. So knowing something is mithya seems to be only an academic information.

Answer is- Vedanta does not reveal anything which is not useful. Vedanta is going to reveal that brahman which is satyam as yourself. Brahman is satyam means I am satyam and everything is mithya. This is an important understanding because when I understand and abide in it, this mithya jagat cannot effect satya atma. Like mithya mirage water does not affect desert land. Mithya people, situations cannot effect me who is sadatma. This is the implication. Whatever happens does not affect my purnatvam. That is the importance of knowing the world is mithya. When we say mithya, we don't create a disconnect between mithya jagat and satya atma. Because when we analyse the two we find that where mithya is, satyam is very much there. Like clay is where pot is. Similarly, satyam is available where mithya is. So when we say - jagat is mithya, brahman is satyam what we mean is - brahman alone is appearing in the form of this jagat. Many people not understanding vedanta properly say that Vedanta is making people impractical, unrealistic. That is not so. Infact vedanti's are the most practical people. They don't get carried away by superfluous things. They always stay focussed on what is valuable at that level. Thus Vedanta reveals this important understanding that jagat is mithya and brahman is satyam. So the second teaching is that jagat is not separate from brahman. And what is this brahman? Brahma is existence- *sad brahma*.

iii) The third part of the teaching is – aikyam between tat and tvam.

sad brahman is chit atma- existence brahman is the self which is consciousness. *Sad eva chit chit eva sat* - Existence is consciousness and consciousness is existence. There is only one existence, consciousness and that I am. Sad brahman is chit atma. The two are equated. There is aikyam between tat and tvam. The final teaching is :- there is only one reality which is appearing as individual jivatma and the same consciousness is available as parmatma Isvarah. But in consciousness there is no division of jivatma or parmatma. There is only eka atma. *"I am that consciousness which is the truth behind the individual jiva and the total called Isvara"*. In Vedanta, jiva does not merge into Isvara. The vision is :- there is one non-dual reality which is called consciousness and that is what I am. In me there is no jivatvam or Isvaratvam. I am the truth of both. I am divisionless whole, I am limitless atma. When I have this vision, the sense of limitation is dismissed. The sense of limitation is there because you have limited yourself to be as good as the body is, as good as the mind is. Therefore, you felt limited. Like a rich king who identifies with a beggar in his dream and therefore feels helpless. Similarly, I am limitless brahman but because of ignorance I thought myself to be this limited jiva and therefore there was sense of limitation. But in reality I am free from all limitation. This vision makes me completely free. This is called absolute freedom.

How is it absolute? Because when I own up this freedom, I don't have to work for any other freedom like freedom from relationship, freedom from household things, etc. You don't have to run away from anything. The house is brahman, the householders are brahman. I alone am appearing in the form of all house members and activities. Nothing is away from me. So you don't have to seek for any freedom once you own up this freedom. Somebody shouts. Then one who is shouting and one who is shouted at, both are my manifestation only. I am playing a double role.

Once I have owned up this freedom, I can manifest in this body because the limitations of the body, of the mind of the senses do not bother me. It is something like – when I know I am rich, I don't mind playing the role of a beggar. My playing the role of a beggar does make me a beggar. Thus, having owned up this freedom, I don't get bothered by the limitation of the body or the mind. The so-called binding factors do not bind me anymore. Like Pujya Swamiji said- *“When you are free inside, even if you are put in a jail, you remain free”*. He gave this example- some Haridwar mahatmas who did an agitation against cow slaughter were put in the jail. Afterwards they were released and when they came back to Haridwar, the mahatmas said- *“Inside the jail, there is a good arrangement of food. We don't have to go out for bhiksha.”* When you are free at the spiritual level, the bondage is no longer there centred on you, nothing can bind you. That is why it is called absolute freedom having gained which you don't have to seek any other freedom.

Another reason why it is absolute is - Until I discover this freedom, any other freedom will not make me completely free. However much political freedom, social, financial freedom I have.... still I will continue to feel bound. When I own up this freedom, when it is no more a statement for me, but it is a fact for me, then nothing can bind me. This is absolute freedom. This absolute freedom is by the vision revealed by Vedanta. This vision can be attained by listening to Vedanta from a competent teacher. Listening to vedanta from a competent teacher for attaining this vision about myself is called the sadhana of sravanam. When listening you should allow the teacher to unfold the vision. You remain like a canvas the painter is painting on. Sometimes because of the impact of teacher's conviction, doubts don't come while listening to the teacher. But after listening to the teacher when you are free of the impact of the teacher's conviction, there may be some doubts of your own. Then these doubts are resolved by using reasoning by the sadhana called mananam (deliberation). After sravanam and mananam, I have the conviction which is not shaken by any logic. Even guru cannot shake you - *gurunA api na vicAlyte*.

Sometimes people give this majority-argument. Since many more people are convinced about dvaita and fewer people are convinced about advaita (even among them, at heart many are dvaitis because when everything is okay, they are advaitin and when something goes wrong, they are dvaitin.),so most of the people seem to be convinced of following dvaita buddhi. In every class, very few people will confidently say- *“I am non-dual brahman. I am the truth of every jiva and Isvara as well”*.

What we feel is- *“How can I be the truth of jagat karta Isvara? Bhagavan will punish me.”* Therefore, very few people have conviction about advaita. How can you say advaita is the reality?

If sravanam and mananam have been done well, then you will not be shaken. It gives you this conviction.

But even if one is well convinced that I am limitless brahman, the truth of everything, one problem continues to remain - that of habitual error. This is there because before coming to Vedanta I was thinking myself to be a small person good for nothing. Now you tell me that I am brahman. But the old habit does not go away so easily. Like for example, the light switch in your room was on the left side. You yourself shift it to the right side. You have no doubt about it. But still when you enter into that dark room, your hand will automatically go to the left side. Here the problem is not of ignorance or doubt, but of habitual errors. I came to Vedanta just recently, but before coming to Vedanta I have been thinking myself to be a karta, bhokta, a small person, a victim. This conclusion has been there from time beginningless. There is no beginning since when I thought myself to be this limited jiva. So for anaadi-kala I have taken myself to be this limited jiva. Now this new knowledge has come which is right knowledge, but because of habit ,this type of error may continue for some time. That is called habitual error.

How can we neutralise this error?

By repeatedly bringing to my mind this vision I have received through sravanam and mananam that I am limitless brahman ever free, immortal, unborn. I keep on seeing this again and again. Whenever some reaction happens I catch myself. Reaction was because I considered myself to be someone who was shouted at. That is a mistake, smile at it. Learn to smile at your own mistake and spend time to keep bringing this teaching back to your mind. It is not brain washing because you are repeating that teaching of which you are convinced now. If not convinced and simply repeating then it is called ahangrah upasana. But when you have conviction, free of doubt, but there is only habitual error which you are neutralising by creating right new habits as it were. So old habit is neutralised by right new habit . When conviction is there and habitual error is not there, then there is abidance in the wisdom spontaneously.

This abidance is called jnana nishta – abidance in wisdom Or *nishta sahita jnanam* - wisdom with abidance. Once this is there, no bondage is there. Earlier also it was not there. But now you know it is not there. The whole world is a non-stop celebration. *nandati nandati nandateva....* Everything is a manifestation of my glory. If somebody sleeps well, you think how well I am sleeping. You don't have jealousy. Everything is your own glory. And all potential which are there in this body, mind complex is expressed without inhibition and is available for all.

Therefore, jnana nishta will be expressed in the form of spontaneous compassion, spontaneous love. Real love is possible when you don't have any axe to grind. Generally, in the name of love, there is tendency to control. Here love is without control, without agenda. Why do I control? Because I am feeling insecure. I am imposing some security on them and I think if I don't control this person or situation, it will go out of my circle of influence, then my security will go away. When insecurity is not there, you don't have the need to control. (Like a man thinks I don't deserve her, but I am lucky to have her as my wife. So there is need to control for fear that she may leave him. But if insecurity is not there, then man thinks I deserve her, she will not leave me because we are both fortunate to have each other. Then no insecurity, no tendency to control. This is in relative sense). Whereas if this wisdom is there, nothing can make me insecure.

All are my manifestation so I know all. This is freedom which is expressed in the form of effortless, compassion, love. But this freedom can be obtained only when I have received the vision effectively. Receiving the wisdom effectively will be possible only if the sadhana of sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam are done effectively. These three sadhanas together are called jnana yoga. Effective jnana yoga leads to vision with abidance which gives me freedom. Jnana yoga can be effectively pursued only when I have some relative freedom. To attain absolute freedom through the vision, I need to have relative freedom. And relative freedom is required at four levels. To pursue jnana yoga effectively, I require relative freedom at physical level, mental level, intellectual level and even at spiritual level.

i) Freedom at **physical level** means the body should be relatively free from disease.

There should be no health issue which stops me from doing sravanam, mananam and nidhidyasanam. Health issues should not make me immobile or there is so much pain that concentration is not possible. Sravanam, etc is possible only in a sound mind. Sound mind is possible in a sound body. So body should be relatively free from sickness.

How to get the fitness of the body? Bhagavad Gita tells us how to make our body fit for yoga.

**yuktAhAra vihArasya yuktaceshtasya karmasu /
yuktasvapnAvabodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahA | BG ch 6sl 17**

Four things are talked about-

i) Food discipline in terms of quality, quantity and frequency. Food should be such that it is conducive to spiritual pursuit. Very spicy food which creates tamo guna (lethargy), food which makes me restless should be regulated. And also we follow certain religious disciplines regarding eating. One should not eat while studying scriptures. Purity should be maintained while studying sastra.

- To be continued



15 Days Residential Vedanta Course

Ācārya - Swamini Nigamānandā Saraswati
Date - 2018-09-06 to 2018-09-21
Subjects - * First chapter of Kathopaniṣad
*** Selected verses of Bhagavad Gītā**
*** Basic Sanskrit**
*** Daily Puja**
*** Meditation**
*** Chanting**
*** Question-Answer Session**

Pilgrimage – Dwārikādhiṣ Darṣanam
Place - “Ārsha Sanskrutī Tīrtha”, āsrama
Kuchhadi, Porbandar, Gujarat, India
Contact - Cell Number-09879455754, 09427734364
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