

Srī Svāmi Paramārthānandā talks on Svarūpānusandhāna Aṣṭakam

The following is a summary of talks by Śrī Svāmi Paramārthānandā on 'Svarūpānusandhāna Aṣṭakam' at Coimbatore between April 28, 2014 and May 3, 2014.

Upāsan is meditation on a particular deity, an Iṣṭadevatā or on samaṣṭi īsvarā. Nidhidyāsanam is the meditation on one's own svarūpa, the dwelling upon the teaching that has been clearly understood from the Śāstra and Guru. Upāsana is having bheda-darśanam between the meditator and meditated, whereas nididyāsanam is having abhedadarśanam, where there is no difference between the meditator and meditated, the understanding of the mahāvakyam aham brahma āsmi as a fact.

A goal in general is called a sādhyam. Some of the goals are reached by many means and they are called Aneka-sādhana-sādhyam. Some goals are reached by only a single means and it is called as Eka-sadhana-sādhyam. The gain of this ātmajñānam is in its initially stages aneka-sadhana-sādhyam and later it becomes a eka-sādhana-sādhyam. The initial stage includes the ātmajñānam preparatory steps of gaining viveka, vairagya, samadhi-ṣaṭka-sampatti, and

having an intense desire for mokṣa. These include a karma-yoga lifestyle, which is living a life of yajña dhānam and tapas, along with the worship of devatā and ācarya.

The second stage is the gain of ātmajñānam through the śāstrapramāṇam and Guru, which is said as śravaṇam mananam and nidhidyāsanam. This Pramāṇam is like the mirror, which helps us to see what our eyes cannot see directly. Pramāṇam also when unfolded by a competent teacher reveals one's own nature and with one's buddhi alone this knowledge is grasped.

In the first two ślokās, the successful journey of a spiritual seeker is said, the gain of jñānayogyatā and the gain of Jñānam. Even after the gain of Jñānam, 'Aham Brahma Asmi', the old habits do not go away, that I am insignificant and helpless. These orientations are removed by nidhidhyāsanam. From the feeling I am in the world, one should understand that the world is in me, and I am not affected by anything in the world. This shift of understanding that I am the kāraṇam of the whole Jagat and I don't depend on anything external is only by Power of Knowledge or

nidhidhyāsanam. The following verses talk about the process of nidhidhyāsanam.

The upaniṣad gives the definition of Brahman, through two means, that is, by giving a taṣṭhalakṣaṇam (jagat kāraṇam brahma) and svarūpa lakṣaṇam. By the analysis of Brahman as the kāraṇam and the Jagat as kāryam, we come to understand that Brahman, the kāraṇam is ekam sāram nityam and satyam. This Brahman is my svarūpam and I come to know this by giving up all changing parts in me the annamaya, prāṇmaya, manomaya, vijñānamaya and ānandamaya and by claiming that I am the changeless witness of all the changes and my description becomes the nature of Brahman.

Moreover that Brahman which is described by śruti as ānandasvarūpam, unto which the prapancam resolves, which is different from the jāgrat svapna and suṣupti, which cannot be known through any

pratyakṣādipramāṇam, always of pure nature – this Brahman is ME . This is understood through śravaṇam, mananam and and assimilated through nididhyāsanam.

That Brahman which is different from everything that is objectified, which is evident for a person of discerning mind, by whose ānanda the whole Jagat rejoices, and by knowing which the whole Jagat is known, that which is without any division, which presents itself as all the forms here, whose auspicious nature is known by the meditation of oṅkāra, and which never ceases to exist, is my svarūpa alone .

When a wise person gets immersed in this ocean of ānandam he has niṣṭā, and the entire universe is known as an appearance. A Seeker who studies this aṣṭakam with reverential attitude, with involvement and commitment, transforms himself from a devotee to a deity.

Report by Lalitha Ramachandran

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