

## Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati's Talk

*Transcription of the same given to Long Term Vedanta Course students at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam at Coimbatore on 28th April 2016*

*...continued from previous issue*

Thus अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि is अपरोक्षज्ञानम् अपरोक्षज्ञानम् is received at the time of महावाक्यविचारः itself. But that अपरोक्षज्ञानम् is सप्रतिबन्धक अपरोक्षज्ञानम् . It is अपरोक्षज्ञानम् but it is obstructed अपरोक्षज्ञानम् and therefore, incapable of delivering the goods.

Now the question is what are the obstacles? This also you know. I am only thinking aloud in front of you. The प्रतिबन्धकाः are two-fold. I am just presenting in a simpler manner. It is presented as three-fold also or two-fold also. I will give you the two-fold version. They are called संशयः – doubt in the message of the शास्त्र – “I am not convinced”. शास्त्र says अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि, poor गुरु shouts अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि and therefore, I will say “अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि” but always put it in inverted commas - disclaimer. “अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि”, so says the Guru. “अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि”, so says the शास्त्र. That means what? I am not sure about it. This संशयः is obstacle number 1. A doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Therefore, ignorance keeps me in संसारा. Doubtful knowledge also preserves the संसारा. It is a preservative – of what? – not ज्ञानम्, but संसारा.

Therefore, “I may be ब्रह्मन्” will not work. And this संशयः itself, they divide into interpretational doubt or logical doubt. Doubt with regard to the interpretation of the शास्त्र. Because the same उपनिषद्, विशिष्टाद्वैतिन्स also interpret and after दश उपनिषद् विचार, Ramanujacharya says you are never ब्रह्मन्. You would have heard Murari joke from Swamiji. I don't want to waste your time. They say it is a sacrilege to say ‘सोऽहं ब्रह्मन्’ you have to always say ‘दासोऽहं’. They also study प्रस्थानत्रय, गीता, उपनिषद् and the same ब्रह्म सूत्र and they also use तर्क, मीमांसा, व्याकरण - all of them and they come to this conclusion. Madhvacharya also does the same analysis. They say 12 different commentaries are there for the same ब्रह्म सूत्र arriving at 12 different conclusions. And therefore, an intellectual may wonder, “if different interpretations are possible, how can I be sure whether this one is the right one? Perhaps this is one of the views. How can I say this is THE teaching”. This is called interpretational doubt – प्रमाण असंभावना, it is called.

Or I might not have interpretational doubt – that will come more when you study Sanskrit grammar. Otherwise we are safe. It seems - just one example - they say नित्य सर्वगतस्थाणुः – do you know how विशिष्टाद्वैतं interprets? – नित्यः सर्वगतस्थः अणुः - कर्मधारय . सर्वगतश्च असौ अणुश्च सर्वगतस्थाणुः. Therefore, who is जीव? अणुः and how many जीवाः are there? Infinite जीवाः are there. Each jIv is a prma[u. And who is God? All pervading. And who are us? inTy> svRgtSw> – we are atoms lodged in all pervading परमात्मा. Who says? भगवान् कृष्ण tells in गीता. Therefore, they study the same गीता, split the words differently and if we begin to wonder, then our knowledge may come to a question mark. So this is called मीमांसा विषयक । तात्पर्य निश्चय विषयक संशयः.

And the next doubt is logical doubt. Because we have a बुद्धि - I suppose - and we have a functioning बुद्धि and the बुद्धिहृत्'s job is always to come up with questions. "How can I accept that the world is in me when all the time my experience is that I am in the world? How Vedanta reverses?"

So the fundamental question is whether "I am in the world or the world is in me". Only one doubt. No other doubt. Only one question. As Swamiji says after 9 days नवाह, he says I have only one doubt. Three words I heard. राम, रावण and राक्षस. Three रास. Only small doubt is whether राम is राक्षस or रावण is राक्षस, only that I have a doubt. No other doubt. Then what did the उपन्यासक say? Neither of them is रास. I chose you as my disciple and therefore, I am रास, he said. So similarly here also Vedanta makes an un-followable statement, you are not stuck in the world but the world is stuck in you. How can I assimilate that? Thus we have a logical question. All these are consequential questions, which will affect the basic message. They must be answered. There are so many other questions, which may not affect the fundamental teaching. In a particular mantra, there may be a compound, the word ज्ञानम् or any other word. A particular word how Shankaracharya derived, I may not know it. So that particular thing may not affect the fundamental teaching. But whatever is a consequential doubt, that will have to be addressed. Otherwise my knowledge will be shaky like they use the word स्थाणुनिखनन न्याय. You would have seen this. When you fix two poles for the clothes' line and you fix the pole and make sure the pole itself is firm because otherwise you know the consequence. If the pole is not firm, you wash all your clothes taking so many hours and all bright white also and you just put for drying and one small wind, the whole thing fall down. So you want to make sure whether the pole will be shaken or not. Similarly whether my ज्ञानम् will be shaken by any doubt or not, I have to ask and answer. This is called संशयप्रतिबन्ध निवृत्तिः. Both श्रवणं and मननं are meant for the removal of these doubts only. And in all advanced Vedantik works they raise this question as put forth by other दर्शनम्s also. साङ्ख्य पूर्वपक्ष, नैयायिक पूर्वपक्ष, मीमांसा पूर्वपक्ष, all of them are answered, all for संशयनिवृत्तिः.

And then the second obstacle is called विपर्ययः or विपरीत भावना. विपर्ययः means habitual thought pattern. The habitual thought is "I am an individual जीव" which I called जीवभावः. And this जीवभावः is entrenched so much because we have been entertaining this for several जन्माs and not just in this जन्मा. Therefore, it is so deeply entrenched that when the Vedantik ब्रह्म भावः is revealed, it will not be allowed to settle in. And, therefore, I have to reinforce this ब्रह्म भावः by dwelling upon the teaching. All the descriptions of ब्रह्मन् given in the शास्त्र, I have to bring into the mind. Giving exclusive time, I have to dwell upon the ब्रह्मन् description and see that not as the descriptions of ब्रह्मन् but that they are descriptions of me.

So what is सत्यम् ज्ञानम् अनन्तम्? Immediately we will blurt out that is ब्रह्मन्. That is not ज्ञानम्. What is सत्यम् ज्ञानमनन्तम्? The answer should be 'it is me'. Similarly all descriptions, as even I read or I hear, I should feel that they are descriptions of me, myself. Wherever the word आत्मा and descriptions come, wherever the word ब्रह्मन् and descriptions come, I should feel they are all talking about me. I should look upon Vedanta as my autobiography.

In fact when you say a Guru is a श्रोत्रिय ब्रह्मनिष्ठा गुरुः, what we mean is a गुरु who teaches Vedanta as his own biography. अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अणीयान्- ह्यतर्क्यमनुप्रमाणात्. This will not come just by निवृत्ति alone or just by मननं alone. Our intellect always imagines that descriptions belong to some आत्मा or some ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, convert the word ब्रह्मन् and आत्मा into 'अहम्'. That is why Pujya Swamiji says that 'निधिध्यासनम्' is meditation on the meditator. Meditation on the meditator is निधिध्यासनम् in which I don't think of महावाक्य but the conclusion already arrived at, in which I have no doubt. निधिध्यासनम् will work only when I am free from doubts. Otherwise in निधिध्यासनम् I will say चिदानन्दरूपं शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं. Then another corner of brain says 'who knows?'. चिदानन्दरूपं शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहं - Who knows?. So, therefore, निधिध्यासनम् can never work if the knowledge is संशय प्रतिबन्धक ज्ञानम्. No संशय should be there when you practice inixXyasnm!.

Then what is purpose of निधिध्यासनम्? The new perspective of myself must become well entrenched not only in the conscious mind but also in the sub-conscious mind. And therefore, अभ्यसेत् निधिध्यासनम् also, which requires exclusive time as Krishna tells in the Bhagawad Gita शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य etc. They are, exclusively finding time for looking upon myself as āūn! with the help of शास्त्रचक्षुः. Like watching certain movies with a special 3-D goggles. निधिध्यासनम् is, I look at myself with the goggle of शास्त्र. शास्त्रचक्षुर्निरीक्षेत.

And as even as I invoke my ब्रह्मभावः .भावः means the state or status, the जीवभावः gets displaced because ब्रह्मभावः and जीवभावः are diagonally opposite attributes, they cannot co-exist in one locus. You know the law – opposite attributes cannot co-exist in one and the same locus at the same time and the same place. Therefore, ब्रह्मभावः and जीवभावः are diagonally opposite. As even I bring in my ब्रह्मभावः through निधिध्यासनम्, it will displace the जीवभावः. So this is the निधिध्यासनम् to remove the habitual प्रतिबन्ध. Īavna means jlvĪavna. ivprIt means which is contrary to the Vedantik teaching. So habitual contrary attitude towards myself, which is called जीवभाव विपरीत भावना, it has to be displaced.

And then Shankaracharya says that the removal of जीवभावः by this निधिध्यासनम् may not be sufficient because it is only an indirect method. Because, I am not directly pushing the जीवभावः. I am only bringing in ब्रह्मभावः and through that indirectly pushing. And therefore निधिध्यासनम् may not be sufficient. Therefore, the advice, शमादि सहितः ॥

Separately also you have to learn to push the जीवभावः because it is so deeply entrenched. Because the mind has got the habitual thinking as Arjuna complained in the 6th Chapter of the Gita – do you remember –

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात् स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥

हे कृष्ण your teaching is very beautiful. You are the greatest teacher in the world because you are साक्षात् नारायण. But the problem is that I remember the teaching within the confines of the lecture hall. The moment the chappal is on, the teaching is gone. तस्याहं नप्रपश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात् स्थिराम् स्थितिं ॥

Because जीवभावः is so entrenched that it stifles the ब्रह्म ज्ञानम् that I have received. And, therefore, we have to exclusively practice शमः. And what is the definition of शमः in तत्त्व बोधः? What is the definition of शमः? We are supposed to know these things by heart. At least minimum तत्त्व बोधः must be by-heart. शमः कः ? मनो निग्रहः – mental discipline is शमः because mind is the greatest obstacle in reaping the benefit of my knowledge. And Krishna says this is universal problem

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरपि सुदुष्करम् ॥

It is extremely difficult and you cannot ignore this mental problem. If you ignore this mental problem, you won't get the benefit of this knowledge.

In माण्डुक्य कारिका also you will see गौड़पाद emphasises

मनसो निग्रहायत्तमभयं सर्वयोगिनाम् ।

दुःखक्षयः प्रबोधोश्चाप्यक्षया शान्तिरेव च ॥

If you want real peace, joy, fearlessness etc. all these benefits of knowledge you can reap only if you have mastered your mind. Otherwise involuntary thoughts will be continuously assailing the mind and any involuntary thought can get converted into worry, fear – “what will I do after the course?” And in our course Pujya Swamiji used to tell “don't worry, after the course I will take care of you. If you want a job, I will get. If you want to get married I will get a girl also. So just don't think of the future”. It is very very difficult. Therefore, involuntary thought getting converted into emotional disturbances is a very big problem. Learning to handle the involuntary thoughts is शमः. And I must be able to say no to those thoughts and order them out when I want. It is like some people who take a house for rent. Then vacating them is a very big problem in India. They will become the owners of the house. Similarly the involuntary thoughts enter my mind and they remain stay put and when I want to drive them away, they don't go. Thus mind instead of करणं becomes कर्त्ता and I instead of कर्त्ता ends up करणं. Like people taking dog for a walk and the dog is so big that after sometime the dog will be taking them for the walk. As long as mind management and thought management is not accomplished reasonably well, knowledge cannot give the expected result. Therefore, अहङ्कारवृत्तिः, ममकारवृत्तिः, रागवृत्तिः, द्वेषवृत्तिः these four are जीवभावः. And by seeing ईश्वरा's order, to use Pujya Swamiji's expression, “everything is ईश्वरा, everything happens according to ईश्वरा's order, and whatever happens is well and good”. Unless we are willing to accept that, these emotional disturbances will stifle the knowledge and will not allow the knowledge to get converted into जीवन् मुक्तिः. Therefore, शमः is something to be separately practiced which is called मनो निग्रहः in the माण्डुक्य कारिका and in the 6th chapter Krishna says

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते.

So thus through श्रवणं, मननं and निधिच्यासनम् repetition and by reinforcing शमः, we can convert ज्ञानम् into दृढज्ञानम् and reap the full benefit of ज्ञानम् called जीवन् मुक्तिः. With these words I would like to conclude my few words.