

## śraddhā-bhaktidhyāna-yogād avaihi

With this issue a new serial article based on Pujya Swamiji's talk on *Sraddha-bhakti-dhyana-yogad avaihi*, a topic coming under *Kaivalyopanishad* is being started.

### PRAMĀṆA-VICĀRA

The entire Veda is looked upon as a *pramāṇa*, a means of knowledge, whose subject matter is not available for any other means of knowledge. The five means of knowledge available at our disposal are: *pratyakṣa*, sensory perception; *anumāna*, inference; *arthāpatti*, presumption; *upamāna*, comparison and *anupalabdhi*, absence (a means by which the absence of a thing is known). *Laukika-śabda*, words at our disposal, also serve as a means of knowledge. This counting of the *pramāṇas* is very important.

What is understood by a particular means of knowledge, such as inference, is not known by perception. To appreciate what is available for perception, you do not need inference. You do not say, "I infer a Swamiji is sitting there," when you are looking at him. You see him directly. You can infer that he had taken a bath. It can be a presumption. Once you reckon or count something as a means of knowledge, its subject matter is not available for knowing by another means of knowledge. You infer there is fire on the hill, but at the same time it is not perceived. What is not available for a one-step inference is arrived at by an inference involving more than one step. All scientific theories, without exception, are arrived at by inference requiring more than one step. Every medical diagnosis is reached by this means of knowledge known as *arthāpatti*. We recognized this long, long ago. We use the word 'presumption' to translate *arthāpatti*, though we do not know whether it is an apt word.

*Arthāpatti* is the conclusion that takes place, *anyathā anupapattau*, when the given facts are otherwise not possible. Once, one Swami told me two things in Rishikesh, when I was there in the 1960s. His first statement was: "This is the first time that I came to India from Fiji a month ago." When I was conversing with him another time, he said, "I took *sannyāsa* from Swami Sivananda." Swami Sivananda had passed away ten years ago. His taking *sannyāsa* from Swami Sivananda was not possible because he had come to India a month ago for the first time, and Swami Sivananda had not travelled outside India. Since he came to Rishikesh for the first time after Swami Sivananda's passing away, I figured out that he got it by post when the Swamiji was alive; otherwise it is not possible. This is a classic *arthāpatti*. It is how you arrive at different conclusions. You require two facts to make *arthāpatti*. One fact is enough for inference. You see smoke and understand that there is fire. But here, two facts cannot be reconciled unless something else is presumed.

Again, by *dr̥ṣṭānta*, example, you can gain indirect knowledge. Through *dr̥ṣṭānta* you gain the knowledge of something that is *dr̥ṣṭa-sadr̥śa*, similar to what is seen. The example used in this means of knowledge is something that you have seen before. Suppose I ask, “Have you seen a wildebeest?” You ask me, “What is a wildebeest?” My saying that it is an animal does not give you any knowledge since, from a mouse onwards, there are animals up to an elephant. I further elaborate that it is an antelope but looks like a cow with horns. You now have some knowledge about wildebeest—its size and shape. This indirect knowledge of the wildebeest is born of comparison. It looks like a cow but is not one. It is an antelope. Its habitat is Tanzania and Kenya. So you get *parokṣa-jñāna*, indirect knowledge, from *dr̥ṣṭānta*, which is not available for inference or presumption. We have not only *dr̥ṣṭānta* but *śrutānta*, what is heard also. When you eat something sweet and say that it is like nectar, it is only *śrutānta* because you have not tasted nectar at any time, but only heard about it.

The next important means of knowledge is *anupalabdhi*. For instance, after eating in a restaurant when you put your hand in your pocket, you find that only the pocket is there. The purse that was in the pocket is missing. The *abhāva*, absence, of the purse is knowledge. You know that you had put it there, but it is not there now. Sometimes the purse may be there, but when you take it out to pay at the counter you find there is nothing inside. You knew that you had kept some money there. The purse is there, intact, but in the purse there is *abhāva*, absence, of money. You can now understand how important is the knowledge of *abhāva*, to know what is absent and where it is absent.

The knowledge of absence of a given thing in a given place is gained not by direct perception, but by a separate means of knowledge called *anupalabdhi*. The absence of flower in my hand is not a direct perception because eyes can only pick up the reflected light of the object. The reflected light of the object is only from the hand. If the object is not there, how can the eyes pick it up? You see ‘what is’ and you do not see ‘what is not’. *Anupalabdhi* is counted separately as the fifth means of knowledge. These five means of knowledge are traditionally accepted. There are some who do not accept *anupalabdhi* as an independent means of knowledge.

There are also things such as *puṇya* and *pāpa*, which are *adr̥ṣṭa*, invisible. *Adr̥ṣṭa* is not only not seen, but also not knowable by any other means of knowledge. It is *anadhigata*, not understood, by other means of knowledge. Any wrong thing you do is *pāpa*. When you kill the mosquito that bites you, it is a *pāpa*. It is inevitable for people to do this kind of *pāpa* in day-to-day life. We even have names for various types of small *pāpas* such as *cullī* and so on. For instance, there may be small insects in the firewood that is used for fuel. When you burn the firewood, some of them are burnt alive though you don’t see them. This small *pāpa* is called *cullī*. It is something like arson. Therefore, the word ‘*pāpa*’ is entirely different from sin.

There is no way of knowing *punya-pāpa* by perception. You cannot say, "I saw *punya* yesterday." There is no inference or presumption either. Therefore, you require a means of knowledge to say '*punya* is there' if it is there. The Veda is the means of knowledge for knowing such things. The subject matter of the Veda should be something *phalavat*, useful, to you and at the same time *anadhigata*, not known.

The Veda can never be scientific. If knowledge of something is scientific, it should then be available for your demonstration, perception, inference and for your presumption. That is what science is, whereas the Veda, being not available for any other means of knowledge, is exclusive in its subject matter. It has its own sphere of operation like every other means of knowledge. What the eyes can do, the ears cannot. What the ears can do, the eyes cannot. You cannot say, "My eyes see, therefore, my ears do not hear." Eyes see, ears hear; each means of knowledge has its own sphere; that is all.

The Veda as a whole is looked upon by the Vedic tradition as a means of knowledge. It is not some imagination or fantasy, as some people claim. But then, the Veda does have materials which are otherwise known. Such a subject matter is called *anuvāda*, re-statement. The Veda has mentioned a lot of things which today have been proved by science as true. Therefore, you can draw some material from the Veda saying, "The Veda also has said this." That is all.

The last chapter of the Veda is also Veda. But we have a special name for it, which we call Vedanta. It has a subject matter that is *anadhigata* and, at the same time, is unlike what was said in the previous section of the Veda. *Anadhigatatva*, being not known through any other means of knowledge, is common for both sections of the Veda, namely, the first portion, *karma-kāṇḍa*, and the last portion, Vedanta.

The Veda does talk, here and there, about what is said in Vedanta, but it is not cogently presented. In fact, it becomes an exception. There is an *upaniṣad* called *Īśāvāsya* that is right in the *saṁhitā* section of the *karma-kāṇḍa*, in the middle of *Śukla Yajurveda*. It is called *Saṁhitopaniṣad*. It is an exception and an exception is never quoted when teaching the general rule. One can quote it only when there is a necessity to cover it.

Therefore, the subject matter that goes under the name Vedanta is predominantly available only at the end of the Veda. Its subject matter is self-knowledge, *upaniṣad*, which, by implication, is also referred to as Vedanta.

**to be continued...**