

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the fourteenth part of the serial article, continuation from March 2022 newsletter.

MEANING OF ŚRAVAṆAM

All of this is *vākyārtha-vicāra*, otherwise called *śravaṇam*, determining exactly what the meaning of the sentence is. There is only one sentence, *tat tvam asi*, the *mahāvākya* is the sentence. All other sentences are *avāntara-vākyas*, secondary sentences meant only to unfold the truth revealed by the *mahāvākya*. Therefore *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*, inquiry with the help of the *śruti*, is called *śravaṇam*.

Śravaṇam is a very beautiful word. It has two meanings. One meaning is 'to listen'. The other meaning of the root *śru* is *vicāra*, inquiry. So *vicāryatām*, may you inquire. Inquiry is done through listening. That means somebody has to talk, or at least you require an audio device. A teacher is necessary. Listening means you require a teacher. The subject matter of your inquiry, however, is only the *śruti*. The words of the *śruti* are the *pramāṇa*, the means of knowledge. The teacher is not the *pramāṇa*, but this *śruti pramāṇa* has to only come through a teacher. The words have to be handled properly, otherwise they do not make any sense. If the teacher is a *śrotriya*, he can handle the *śruti pramāṇa*. Thus *śrūyatām* means both *śravaṇam kriyatām*; may you listen to the *sāstra* and *vicāryatām*, do *vicāra*, inquire with the help of a teacher. In order to gain *mokṣa*, *ātmā* has to be seen by you as the *vastu*, meaning it has to be recognized by you as it is. Because the means of knowledge for this is Vedānta, one must therefore do Vedānta *śravaṇam*.

In the sentence '*ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyaḥ*,'⁸² may one know *ātmā*, listen to the knowledge of *ātmā*, etc., the suffix *tavya* has an imperative sense.⁸³ It is used in the sense of 'should be done'. It is not a command, rather its intent is to turn your mind away from what is *anātmā*. This is necessary because people seem to have a *prīti*, love, for *anātmā*. That love is not really for *anātmā*, however, rather only for *ātmā*. This is the context in the *sāstra*, in the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, where it is said that even your love for an object other than yourself is a love for yourself

alone, for the pleased self.⁸⁴ The nature of the self is *ānanda* and that is what you want. Therefore, all the love should be turned towards *ātmā* and away from *anātmā*. This sentence, *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ*, is said only in order to turn your attention towards *ātmā*, to create in you the *jijñāsā*, the desire for the knowledge of *ātmā* alone. It is not a *vidhi*, command. This is a big argument in the *śāstra*. The reasoning that we saw previously is all meant only to understand the *vākya* and thus the *tātparya*, vision.

UNDERSTAND THE VISION OF ŚRUTI

Śrutiśiraḥ pakṣaḥ samāśrīyatām: *Śrutiśira* means Vedānta. *Pakṣa* means the vision, the contention. *Samāśrīyatām* means *samyak āśrīyatām*, may one follow, pursue, conform to the vision of the *śruti*. In this vision, *ātmā* is *aparicchinna*, not bound by any form of limitation such as time, space and so on. All that is here is *ātmā*. *Ātmā* is the *adhiṣṭhāna*, the truth of everything and therefore it is the *svarūpa* of Īśvara.

This is the vision of Vedānta and may you have *śraddhā* in this particular vision. If you have *śraddhā* in that vision, then the inquiry into the meaning of the *vākyas* will be proper. Otherwise, you will be saying *tasya tvam asi, atat tvam asi*, and so on. Such an understanding does not bless you. What is the use? Some will say that the goal is *sāyujya*, joining Īśvara, or *sāmīpya*, going near Īśvara, but the individual is still there. If you have to join with Īśvara and become one with Īśvara, then are you going to retain your individuality or are you going to lose it in Īśvara? If you lose your individuality, then individuality is not real. Because anything that is *anitya*, limited by time, is *mithyā* and therefore not true. So how can you lose it? And anything that is real is *nitya*, and therefore there is no *bādha*, negation, or *nāśa*, destruction, of what is real.

⁸² Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 2.4.5

⁸³ तव्यत्तव्यानीयरः (Pā. 3-1-96)

⁸⁴ आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 4.5.6)

To be continued...