

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

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RESOLVING THE CONTRADICTION

What is the meaning of these words *tvam* and *tat*? One of them, *tvam*, means *jīva*, the doer-enjoyer person, that is the meaning of the word 'you.' And the other word, *tat*, means *Īśvara*, someone who is *sarvasya kartā*, the creator of all. He may be a doer-enjoyer, and he is an enjoyer of *ānanda* all the time. But you are someone who is *sukhī-duḥkhī*, sometimes happy, sometimes sad, experiencing the results of *karma*. He is the giver of those results, whereas you are a helpless person. In fact, everyday you pray to him; 'You are everything, oh Lord.' So how can this Lord be yourself? It is just not acceptable.

Perhaps it is another kind of apposition, that of qualifier and qualified. But if you are the qualified and *Īśvara* is the qualifier, how can you, who are the doer and enjoyer, have unlimited knowledge, unlimited power and so on? That is not possible. Neither can the Lord have your attributes, your limited knowledge, limited power, etc., nor can the Lord's attributes be attributed to you. There is a contradiction here between the meaning of *tvam* and the meaning of *tat*, *padārthayoḥ virodhaḥ*.

LOOKING BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE MEANING

You should give up. Give up what? You should not give up the effort, but give up the *pada-vācyam*, the immediate meaning of the word. For the word 'you', the immediate meaning is you, who happens to be 5'9" tall. In 'you', everything else is included: your pleasure, your pain, your memory problems, your individuality, and your parentage. This 'you' is *pada-vācya*.

In the sentences, *so'ham*, 'I am that,' *tat tvam asi*, 'You are *Īśvara*,' the apposition is there, but it is impossible because the meanings of the two words are contradictory. A qualifier-qualified relationship is also not possible. But the apposition is

there, and thus there must be a meaning. What is the meaning? When we analyse the *śāstra*, we understand that it is not *pada-vācyam*, the direct meaning that is intended, rather the *pada-lakṣyam*, the implied meaning. This understanding is because of the statement *vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttiketyeva satyam*,⁵⁶ which means that all the *nāmarūpas* are *mithyā*, dependent realities. This being so, *satya-vastu* is only one, non-dual reality.⁵⁷ Therefore all the differences become *mithyā*.

When you say, 'I am a *kartā*, a doer', on what basis do you say that? The doership is because you are talking, I am talking. Or I am sitting, therefore I am a doer. Or I am walking, thinking, and so on. Now consider that very action that you are doing. Are you aware of it or not? Yes, you are aware of the action. It is because of the action alone that you have a sense of *kartṛtvam*, doership. Without that action there is no *kartṛtvam*. And you are aware of that action itself. If you are aware of all the actions, then who are you? You are not the doer. You are the one who is aware of the very act of doing. Therefore the *tvam-pada-lakṣya*, the implied meaning of the word 'you,' is *śuddham kevalamcāitanyam*, pure consciousness alone.

WHO ARE YOU?

What we are doing here is an analysis of the Vedānta *vākyas*. You must first ascertain the meaning of the word 'you,' *tvam-padārtha*. Therefore, when I point at you with my index finger and say that you are seated here, what do I mean? I mean the one who is sitting here. So, 'you' means the body, the physical body. 'You' indicates only what is sitting. That 'you' is the body. You seem to be hungry. Still my finger is pointing at you. What is hungry? Is the skin hungry? It is not the anatomy that is hungry but what is known as *prāṇa*, the vital force in the body. Still, 'you' continues. So, 'You are seated here. You are hungry,' refers first to the body, then *prāṇa*. Then, you seem to be restless. What do I mean? I mean the

⁵⁶ वाचाऽऽरम्भणं विकारोनामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् (Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.1.4)

⁵⁷ एकम् एव अद्वितीयं वस्तु

mind. 'It looks as if you did this.' 'You' is now *kartā*, *viññānamaya*, the doer. Then afterwards, if I say, 'You seem to be ignorant,' the 'you' becomes ignorance. Now suppose I say that you are aware of *ajñānam*, ignorance. You can only respond, 'Yes'. So when this finger is extended, first it goes and stops at the body. Then it penetrates the body and goes to the *prāṇa*, then further to the mind, then to the *kartā*, and finally to *ajñānam* also. Then afterwards, where does it go? It finally goes to *caitanya*, consciousness. Can it go beyond that *caitanya*? Some people are fond of mystic language, saying things like, 'It is beyond consciousness. It is north of The North Pole.' But is there anything beyond consciousness? Even your concept of 'beyond' is within consciousness.

NOTHING IS 'BEYOND' CONSCIOUSNESS

There is no such thing as 'beyond consciousness.' Beyond is in terms of time, space, and object. You can say something is beyond an object because it transcends the object. But time itself is not separate from *ātmā*. Space is not separate from *ātmā*. Any object is non-separate from *ātmā*, yet *ātmā* transcends all of them. There is no 'beyond.' If *ātmā* is beyond the world, then the world is beyond *ātmā*. If one is beyond the other, then the other is also beyond this one. A person said, 'Let me be with this beyond, and you go to that beyond.' That is all silly. The world is never away from the *vastu*, *ātmā*. Any object that you confront is not separate from you. When you see me, I am not separate from you. That is the truth about the whole thing. Therefore, *idaṁ sarvaṁ ahaṁ asmi*, this entire thing is myself. It is a totally different ballgame. There is nothing mystic about it. It is a clean equation that must be understood as it is, without mysticism or mystic language. We can use paradoxes methodically because it is a teaching tradition.

Thus the meaning of the word *tvam* here can only be *caitanya-ātmā*, consciousness which is the self. You cannot go beyond that. This is called *lakṣyam*, the implied meaning. *Lakṣyam* also means target, that which is targeted by a *lakṣaṇa*, a word that conveys its meaning through implication.⁵⁸ So the word *tvam*, you, becomes

⁵⁸ लक्ष्यते अनेन इति लक्षणम्

the *lakṣaṇa* for the *lakṣya*. The implied meaning is *caitanya-ātmā*.

We say that Īśvara, that *parokṣa-Īśvara*, is also the cause of this world, wielding the power of *māyā* alone. Therefore, who is that person? Here also we require the *śāstra*. *Śāstra* tells us that before this creation, the entire world was in the form of *sat* alone, and it is non-dually one.⁵⁹ That non-dual Brahman is *saccidānanda*. It is with *māyā* alone that Brahman appears as this form of the creation. So now we can reduce things. All the varieties of objects are but five *bhūtas*, elements. And the *sthūla-bhūtas*, gross elements, and *sūkṣma-bhūtas*, subtle elements, are nothing but *māyā*. Is there such a thing as *māyā*? No, because *māyā* is also *mithyā*. *Mithyā* means that it is *nāma-rūpa*, name and form. It has no independent existence. Thus *māyā* is Brahman.

What is Brahman? *Satyam jñānam anantam brahma*.⁶⁰ Therefore the *svarūpam*, essential nature of Īśvara is *jñānam*, knowledge, the same *caitanyam*. As we have already seen, that *caitanyam* is *satyam*. *Satyam* is *caitanyam*, which is *trikāla-abādhitam*, not subject to the three periods of time, which is *nityam*, timeless. It is also the truth of everything, the *adhiṣṭhāna*. That is *satyam jñānam*. It is *anantam jñānam*, limitless knowledge. It is *jñānam* which is not the knower⁶¹, knowledge⁶², or the known⁶³. It is all three, and at the same time, independent of all three. *Tat tvam asi* means that you are that *tatpada-lakṣyam*, the implied meaning of the word *tat*. This *sākṣī-caitanyam*, witnessing consciousness, is the *sākṣī-ātmā*, nothing but *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*. That is called *jñānam*. Thus, *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*.

⁵⁹ Chāndogyopaniṣad 6.2.1

⁶⁰ Taittirīyopaniṣad 2.1.1

⁶¹ जानाति इति ज्ञानम्

⁶² ज्ञायते अनेन इति ज्ञानम्

⁶³ ज्ञायते इति ज्ञानम्

THE MEANS FOR GAINING FREEDOM

For the knowledge of *ātmā*, which is called *mokṣa*, freedom from all insecurity, there are three primary *sādhana*s, means. One of these is called the *aṅgin*, the principal factor. The other two are called *aṅga*s, supplementary factors. *Śravaṇam* is the *aṅgin*, and the other two, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*, are *aṅga*s. *Śravaṇam* means that the *śruti-vākyas* must be listened to and analysed properly to see what the vision of the *śruti* is. *Śruti* is a *pramāṇa*, a means of knowledge, and the *pramāṇa* is in the form of words. Therefore, the words have a certain vision to convey. That vision is called the *tātparyam*. This is why *tātparya-niścaya*, a clear understanding of the intention of *śruti*, is very important. And it is why the author says to listen to the *śāstra* with the help of the teacher.

This listening implies *vākyārtha-vicāra*. *Vākyam* means sentence. There is only one sentence, *tat tvam asi*. The *mahāvākya*, *akhaṇḍārtha-bodhaka-vākyam*, the sentence that reveals the identity between *jīva* and *Īśvara*, is found all over the *upaniṣads*. People say there are four *vākyas*, but in fact there are more than 400 *vākyas*. Any verse that equates *jīva* to *Īśvara* is a *mahāvākya*. *Mahāvākya* does not mean it is a long sentence. It means it is an *akhaṇḍārtha-bodhaka-vākya*, a sentence that reveals identity, oneness, between *jīva* and *Īśvara*.

The *mahāvākya* is a sentence of equation, and the equation itself is a necessity because of seeming difference. If there is no seeming difference, you do not require an equation, such as ten is equal to ten. But here, there is a seeming difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara*, and yet there is identity. The identity is visualised by the *śāstra*. You must gain its vision, and therefore *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*, the sentences must be analysed.

IMPLIED MEANING OF THE MAHĀVĀKYA

A sentence may not make any sense in its initial form, like '*śveto dhāvati*.' *Śvetaḥ* means 'white,' *dhāvati* means 'runs.' But white is a *guṇa*, an attribute or quality. White cannot run, as white is not an object. A quality being what it is, it qualifies

an object, *guṇin*. Thus there must be a *guṇī*, a substantive. White, *guṇa* cannot run. So we have to see the context. When you say, 'White runs', it may be a white horse or a white cow. Therefore this sentence is known as a *lakṣaṇa-vākya*, a sentence by which something is implied.

A sentence that is a *lakṣaṇa-vākya* must be understood only as such, otherwise it creates a problem. For example, take the sentence, '*kākebhyaḥ dadhi rakṣyatām*, let the curd be protected from crows.' A woman was to going to have a feast in her house. She had a pot of milk that she wanted to make into curd. The curd was not forming properly because it was a little cold. She put the big pot outside in the sun so that the milk would ferment well and went to the market to buy some vegetables. She told her son, 'Please protect the curd from crows.' He took a big stick in his hand and sat there. When the mother returned, she found that the pot was broken and the curd was mostly gone. Some of it had spilled on the ground. And this person was still sitting there with the stick.

'Hey, what happened? What have you been doing?', she asked.

'I've been protecting the curd.'

'How did you protect it?'

'You told me to protect it from crows. So I've been chasing every crow away.'

'Then how did you lose all the curd?'

'Oh, the neighbor's cow did that.' So he took the sentence literally and protected the curd only from crows, not from the neighbour's cow etc. But here, the word *kākebhyaḥ* (from the crows) is a type of *lakṣaṇa* called *ajahat-lakṣaṇa*. Here the primary meaning of the word is kept, and an additional meaning is also implied: 'Please protect the curd not only from crows but from every other danger as well.' The son should have understood that he was not supposed to take the sentence literally.

Therefore, whenever the *vākya* is a *lakṣaṇa*, there will be a problem if it is not understood as a *lakṣaṇa*. In the case of *tat tvam asi*, there is a *virodha*, contradiction in the *vākyaārtha* or immediate meaning. *Jīva* cannot be *Īśvara*, and therefore the *vākya* is a *lakṣaṇa*. At the same time there is *sāmānādhikaraṇya*.⁶⁴ It is okay if the meaning is obvious, such as with *nīlaḥ ghataḥ*, a blue pot. That is not a problem. But if you say a phrase like *rāmaḥ dāśarathīḥ kodaṇḍapāṇīḥ*,⁶⁵ then who do all these words indicate? Each of the words has meaning, and all refer to the same person, Rāma. This is what we call *sāmānādhikaraṇya*.

Similarly here, *jīva* is *Īśvara*. But how can *jīva* be *Īśvara*? Even though the words are in apposition, *Īśvara* cannot be the *jīva*, nor can *jīva* be an adjective for *Īśvara*. With the phrase ‘blue pot,’ for example, the relationship between the blue color and the pot is that of qualifier and qualified. One is a quality that qualifies the other. But here, in *tat tvam asi*, the meaning cannot be that of qualifier and qualified because *Īśvara* cannot have the attribute of *jīva*. Similarly, *jīva* cannot have the qualities of *Īśvara* because *jīva* has limited knowledge. So there is contradiction. When there is a contradiction in the meaning of the sentence, then you have to go for the *lakṣya-lakṣaṇa* relationship. Here the *vākya* is really a *lakṣaṇa-vākya*, a statement which implies something, and therefore we have to understand what is the *lakṣyaārtha*, implied meaning.

To be continued...

⁶⁴ भिन्न-प्रवृत्ति-निमित्तानां समानविभक्तिकानाम् एकस्मिन्विषये तात्पर्यं सामानाधिकरण्यम् (*sāmānādhikaraṇya* occurs when two words agree in their grammatical case and refer to the same subject)

⁶⁵ Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, the one who holds the Kodaṇḍa bow in his hand.

“All of our problems are because of refusal to accept facts. Very often we worry about things we cannot change. We do not know what can be changed and what cannot. If we knew that, we could spare our efforts and divert our energy. Our efforts can gain a direction.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati