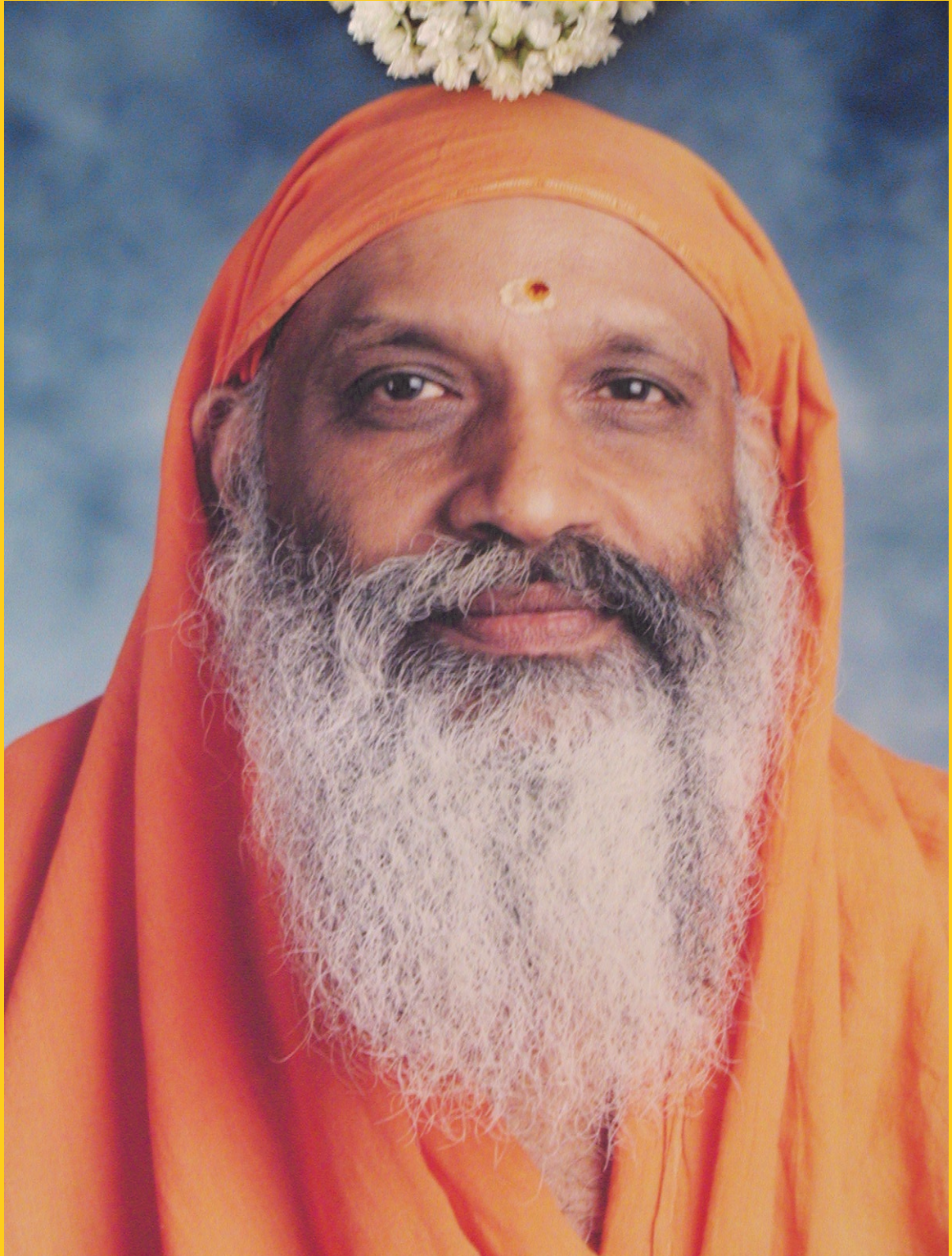




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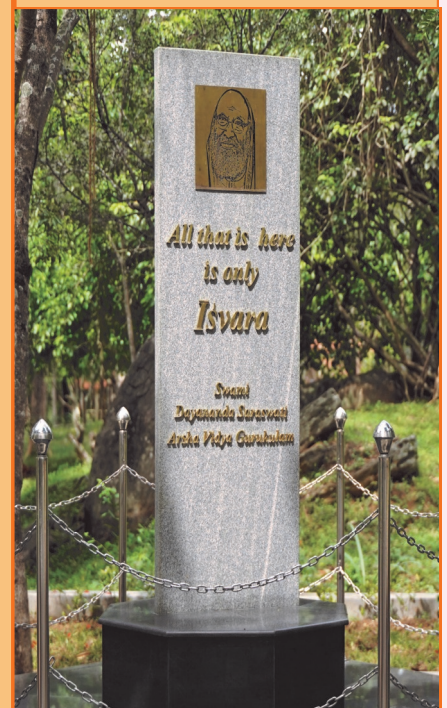
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Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the tenth part of the serial article, continuation from November 2021 newsletter.

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-vācya*, the direct meaning that is intended, rather the *pada-lakṣya*, 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 kevalamcaitanya*, 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 (Chāndogyaopaniṣad 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 anantaṁ 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 *anantaṁ 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 anantaṁ brahma*. That is called *jñānam*. Thus, *vākyārthaśca vicāryatām*.

⁵⁹ Chāndogyaopaniṣad 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

Kaivalyopaniṣad
Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk

This is the seventh part of the serial article, continuation from November 2021 newsletter.

Everybody is a *mumukṣu* in that everybody is seeking freedom, but it is necessary to recognize that freedom can be attained only through the knowledge of the true nature of the self. That is the kind of transformation that took place in Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. The verses of the first chapter and first ten verses of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita show us the transformation of Arjuna from *mumukṣu* to *jijñāsu*, that is, from being a desirer of liberation to becoming a desirer of knowledge. He then submits himself to Lord Kṛṣṇa with a request for self-knowledge.

All of this must have happened to Āśvalāyana. He must have led a very mature and intelligent life. Such a transformation can take place only when a human being lives an intelligent life; the *rajas* and *tamas* in the mind are slowly replaced by *sattva*. The desires arising in the mind are dependent upon the disposition of the mind. If the mind is predominant in *rajas*, it will desire pleasure, enjoyment, achievement, accomplishments, and so on. On the other hand, if the mind is predominant in *sattva*, it will desire knowledge. This is mentioned in the Gita¹.

The use of the word 'thereafter' implies the state of mind subsequent to having lived a life of *dharma*, of *karma yoga*. This is what we would call an intelligent way of living, where one uses free will to see that life is lived in harmony with the prevailing universal order. The Upaniṣad says that when the desire for knowledge arises, one should go to the teacher, who is well versed in scriptures. In Pūjya Swamiji's words, such a teacher is a *sampradāyavit*, a knower of the *sampradāya* or

¹ सत्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥

satvātsañjāyate jñānaṁ rajaso lobha eva ca
pramādamohau tamaso bhavato'jñānameva ca

From *sattva* results knowledge, from *rajas* only greed, and from *tamas* nothing but laziness, delusion, and ignorance. (BG 14.17)

tradition of teaching *brahma-vidyā*. The knower of the *sampradāya* is well versed in the scriptures, as well as in the art of communication.

Why should one go to a teacher?

Why is there this constant advice to seek out a teacher? Can we not figure this out by ourselves?

The reason we are told of the importance of being with a teacher is that none of us would ever suspect that what we consider ourselves to be is not right. Everybody entertains an unquestioning sense of limitation about himself or herself; the basic conclusion is that we are limited beings. There is simply no occasion to question the conclusion about the self. We question everything else, but take for granted that the questioner or seeker himself is a limited being. The questioner is never questioned.

We do not question our own conclusions about the world just as we do not question our conclusions about God. Yet taking those conclusions for granted, we set about leading our lives. Therefore, there is a necessity to go to the teacher, who alone can draw our attention to the fact that what we take ourselves to be is not right and what we think about the world is also not right, just as much as even what we think about *īśvara* is not right.

Life consists of three entities: I, the individual, called the *jīva*; the universe around me, called the *jagat*, and the creator, called *īśvara*. These three entities constitute our lives. It is therefore necessary that we come to know the true nature of these entities and the relationship that obtains between them. Vedānta addresses these basic realities of life. For example, if you read and analyze a text such as the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, you will find that the author spends some time talking of the qualifications of the seeker, but proceeds to elaborate more expansively on the nature of the individual, as in the *tvampadārtha* or meaning of the word 'you,' on the nature of the world around us, as in the *tat-padārtha* or meaning of the word 'that,' and upon the identity between the two or the *asipadārtha*, as in 'that you are.' This necessarily requires a teacher, because we have already taken things for granted,

just as the 'tenth man' is taken for granted, in the sense that he thinks he is not the tenth man. There is, in the very search for the tenth man, a denial of the truth about the tenth man.

The fact that we are searching for liberation, for freedom, and for happiness presupposes that we do not consider ourselves liberated, free or happy. Unless one denies one's own self, one would not remain in search of *mokṣa*. It takes a teacher to point that out to us. The teacher says, "What you take yourself to be is not what you truly are." It is to gain this knowledge that one should necessarily go to a teacher and submit to him or her with the right attitude.

The student must have the proper attitude

Merely going to a teacher does not necessarily ensure that the teacher will accept the person as a student. The teacher also needs to ascertain the qualifications of the student. Toward that end, the student needs to convince the teacher that he is a sincere seeker. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad tells us of how Indra, the lord of all the gods, himself had to wait for the teaching and perform penance for one hundred and one years before he could gain the knowledge of the self. This shows how great people have dedicated their entire lives to the pursuit of knowledge and indicates how valuable this knowledge is.

How does the teacher determine the eligibility of the student?

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Understand that (which is to be known) by prostrating, by asking proper questions, (and) through service. Those who are wise, who have the vision of the truth, will teach you (this) knowledge."²

'Know that this is the method,' he says. 'Go and prostrate to the teacher.' What does prostration mean? Prostration means surrendering to the teacher. The student must have complete *śraddhā* or trust in him and serve him through his

² तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā

upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ (BG 4.34)

actions, through his words, and through his thoughts. Doing this shows *bhakti* or devotion to the teacher. This alone enables the student to become attuned to the teacher in course of time. When the teacher is pleased in this way and recognizes the sincerity of the student, he consents to being asked the questions. All of this is understood to have taken place in the case of Āśvalāyana, as indicated by the word *atha*, thereafter.

Upasametya means having approached. *Upa* means proximity and *sametya* means having approached. *Upasametya* means approaching the teacher and being in the proximity of the teacher. Such proximity can occur in two ways. There can be physical proximity, inasmuch as the student lives with the teacher and at the feet of the teacher. There can also be emotional proximity, inasmuch as the student develops an emotional bond with the teacher. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad says, “One who has total devotion to the Lord and has similar devotion to the teacher, to him do the secrets of self-knowledge that have been told become clear.”³

Āśvalāyana thus approaches the teacher, who is none other than Parameṣṭhī or Lord Brahmājī, the very creator of the world. Having approached in the manner that we have seen described, he prostrates to the teacher, serves him, wins his trust and affection, and then asks the question, “Oh Lord, Oh revered Sir, please teach me; impart to me the knowledge of *brahman*.” The literal meaning of *adhīhi* is, in fact, ‘remember.’ The student seems to say, ‘For my sake, for blessing me, please recollect.’ Indeed, the teacher does not have to remember *brahman* because he abides in that; hence *adhīhi* is to be seen to mean ‘please become a teacher to me.’

³ यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।

तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau

tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah (Śve.Up. 6.23)

***Brahman* is the subject of the teaching**

What does the student want to know?

The student wants to gain *brahma-vidyā*, the knowledge of *brahman*. *Vidyā* means knowledge and *brahman* means limitless. *Brahman* is a word that is derived from the root *br̥h*, in the sense of growth or greatness. *Brahman* means that which is unconditionally great, unconditionally big. Normally, the words 'big' or 'great' are used as adjectives. For example, we would say, 'a big mountain' or 'a great civilization.' But we could also say, 'What a big rat!' Or 'What a great person!' Here the sense of bigness or greatness is defined by the noun being qualified by the words big or great. However, the word *brahman* indicates 'big' or 'great' as a noun, to indicate that which is free of every kind of boundary, that which is limitless.

The presumption is that Āśvalāyana must have known of something called *brahman*. That also presupposes some stage of preparation. For *jijñāsā* or the desire for knowledge to arise, one must have some general knowledge. For example, sometimes, students ask me to tell them the meaning of the *mahā-mṛtyuñjaya-mantra*. It is clear that they know of something called the *mahā-mṛtyuñjaya-mantra*. *Jijñāsā* or the desire to know something in particular arises when there is some general knowledge of that thing. Then again, a student might ask, as mentioned in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad⁴, "What is it, knowing which everything is as well known?" It is clear that such a question cannot arise unless there is some background that has been acquired, either in some *satsaṅga*, class, or assembly of scholars debating the truth of existence. As Pūjya Swamiji says, reading paperbacks on spirituality can be useful, if not in gaining precise knowledge, at least in gaining some sense about it, which can lead to further inquiry.

The most exalted among all forms of knowledge

Āśvalāyana uses two adjectives to describe *brahma-vidyā*: *variṣṭhām* and *nigūḍhām*.

⁴ Mu.Up. 1.1.3

Variṣṭhām means the noblest, the most exalted. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad⁵, it is said that two forms of knowledge should be gained: *parā-vidyā* and *aparā-vidyā*; the knowledge of that which is superior, and the knowledge of that which is inferior. These are the only two kinds of subject matter in all knowledge. The subject matter of the inferior or *apara* knowledge is the created world that can be objectified.

Why does the Upaniṣad say that we should have the knowledge of the world? What is that knowledge going to do for us? Why not only pursue *parā-vidyā*? It is because it is necessary to first understand that the world is impermanent, in that it is subject to creation, sustenance, and dissolution. Whatever is born is bound to perish. Whatever can be objectified, including Brahmaloka⁶, is perishable. All achievements in the universe are perishable. We have to understand this clearly.

Mithyā

Mithyā means that which does not enjoy an independent reality and possesses only a relative reality. For example, take a length of cloth, with reference to cotton. Cotton is the substance from which the cloth is made. Cloth is perishable, in that if we separate all the strands, the cloth will no longer be. Yet, even if we separate the strands, the cotton yarn which constitutes the cloth will continue to be. These strands can also be cut into small pieces. The strands may then perish, but cotton, as the material of which the strands are made, will remain. Therefore, whereas this cloth, which is a name and a form, constantly undergoes change or is subject to change, the reality of the cloth, which is the underlying cotton, does not change.

Just as in this example of cotton and the cloth, the whole universe is constantly changing, but that change is possible only against an unchanging substratum. This is the manner in which we need to understand the universe. There is no need to know how many stars there are or how many grains of sand there are or the like. There is no end to that knowledge and also no need for it. What we need

⁵ द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद्ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति परा चैवापरा च ।

dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yadbrahmavidō vadanti parā caivāparā ca. (Mu.Up. 1.1.4)

⁶ Brahmaloka is the highest of the seven superior worlds, also called Satyaloka.

to know about the world is that it is *mithyā*, only relatively real. Then there arises the need to know the absolute reality behind the world. For instance, it is not as if the piece of cloth does not exist; the cloth is certainly there, only, it is there entirely because of cotton. Similarly, the pot exists because of the clay of which it is made. When something exists because of something else, it is only relatively real and not absolutely real. It derives its reality from something else. Cloth derives its reality from cotton, the pot derives its reality from clay, and the wave derives its reality from water.

Pūjya Swamiji says that the human being is always in search of the infallible, as in that which can never go wrong, which never fails, never deceives, which is ever reliable, ever trustworthy, and which, in other words, is the truth. This is what one is ultimately pursuing. It is only after any object is gained that it is recognized as being perishable, as being changing or as being dependant on something else for its existence. It is not infallible. Such recognition leads to disillusionment and disappointment with the world.

One cannot bank upon a clay pot because it will someday merge back into clay; so it makes sense that we hold on only to that which is infallible, reliable, and trustworthy. This constantly changing world points to something that is its substratum, which does not change. Hence, when the Upaniṣad says that we should acquire two kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of the nonself or the world and the knowledge of the self or *brahman*, it indicates that we must grow out of the world.

The knowledge of the world becomes a gateway to the knowledge of the self through the recognition that because it is changing, the world is *mithyā* or unreal, and, therefore, there must be something that is absolutely real. All other forms of knowledge are seen to be inferior. *Brahma-vidyā* is called the most superior, noblest, and the most exalted, knowing which nothing else remains to be known. That is the extent to which the Upaniṣad glorifies *brahma-vidyā*.

To be continued...

Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa
As Taught by Swami Dayananda Saraswati

This is the sixth part of the serial article, continuation from November 2021 newsletter.

इक्ष्वाकुवंशप्रभवो रामो नाम जनैः श्रुतः । नियतात्मा महावीर्यो द्युतिमान् धृतिमान् वशी ॥ १-१-८
बुद्धिमान् नीतिमान् वाग्मी श्रीमाञ्छत्रुनिबर्हणः । विपुलांसो महाबाहुः कंबुग्रीवो महाहनुः ॥ १-१-९
महोरस्को महेष्वासो गूढजत्रुररिन्दमः । आजानुबाहुः सुशिराः सुललाटः सुविक्रमः ॥ १-१-१०
समः समविभक्तांगः स्निग्धवर्णः प्रतापवान् । पीनवक्षा विशालाक्षो लस्मीवाञ्छुभलक्षणः ॥ १-१-११
धर्मज्ञः सत्यसन्धश्च प्रजानां च हिते रतः । यशस्वी ज्ञानसंपन्नः शुचिर्वश्यः समाधिमान् ॥ १-१-१२
प्रजापतिसमः श्रीमान् धता रिपुनिषूदनः । रक्शिता जीवलोकस्य धर्मस्य परिरक्शिता ॥ १-१-१३

ikṣvākuvāṇśaprabhavo rāmo nāma janaiḥ śrutah |
niyatātāmā mahāvīryo dyutimān dhṛtimān vaśī || 1-1-8
buddhimān nītimān vāgmī śrīmān catrunibarhaṇah |
vipulāṁso mahābāhuḥ kambugrīvo mahāhanuḥ || 1-1-9
mahorasko maheṣvāso gūḍhajatrurarindamah |
ājānubāhuḥ suśirāḥ sulalāṭah suvikramah || 1-1-10
samah samavibhaktāṅgaḥ snigdhavarṇah pratāpavān |
pīnavakṣā viśālākṣo lasmīvāñchubhalakṣaṇah || 1-1-11
dharmajñah satyasandhaśca prajānāṁ ca hite rataḥ |
yaśasvī jñānasampannah śucirvaśyah samādhimān || 1-1-12
prajāpatisamah śrīmān dhatā ripuniṣūdanah |
rakṣitā jīvalokasya dharmasya parirakṣitā || 1-1-13

Narada in fact gives a bigger list of Rama's qualities than Valmiki asked for.

“You want to know about that man called by his people Rama. Ikshvaku, Raghu, and others were all kings in the Solar dynasty. Rama was born in that family. He fulfills all that you asked for, and a few more things as well. Rama is one whose mind is at his command, *niyatātāmā*; he is a master of the ways of thinking. The mind is an instrument which he handles and which does not handle him. He is *mahāvīryah*: he has immeasurable strength. He is well coordinated, *vaśī*. He has a

multi-faceted brilliance, *dyutimān*. His has fortitude, *dhṛtimān* and his heart is not fickle. To find them together is a rare thing. He is not just a King Kong who cannot handle Panini. He has a brilliant mind and body capable of stamina and strength and physical skill. They do not often go together. *Buddhimān*: He is one who gathers and makes use of his wisdom. He is able to make his wisdom serve him. He has the capacity to learn from his experiences and to put what he has learned to work for him. Rama is a man of justice, of *dharma*. He has that sense, and even at the cost of his own comfort and safety he will uphold justice. He never swerves from that line. He is eloquent and has a way with words. He speaks well with a measure that shows his discipline and his will' he is a *vāgmī*. His delivery is unmistakably true. One never doubts his intent or his commitment."

We will see that another character in the Ramayana, Hanuman, is considered to be a great conversationalist and orator. In the Ramayana, we will see Hanuman give instructions on proper speech. You can see Valmiki changing his style of writing when he has Rama speak. When Rama or Hanuman speaks, the whole style of expression changes. Valmiki subtly changes the structure of the Sanskrit to show the discipline Rama uses, how he measures his words in order for each one to carry proper weight.

When Rama speaks, he is behind the words - there is nothing for him to take back. He delivers the goods. His heart gets into his voice and into his words. When you are being empathetic, when you express sympathy or love or share another's grief, you cannot say much. What can you say? But your honesty and sincerity imbue your words and your voice; you are convincing and communicate to that person. There is a way of saying everything: a request, an order, an imploration, empathy - each requires a certain quality. It is not something you can teach, but it is something that can be cultivated and learned. It is an accomplishment of communication. Rama has that in full.

Rama is one who wields wealth - *śrīmān*. He is not wielded by wealth. There

are those who worship wealth, and they become the servants of that wealth. Wealth is great, but it should not rule you and make you miserly. Rama is born a prince, and wrongdoers become inimical to him. He does not make enemies, but those who oppose him will be taught a lesson; he is the *śatrunibarhaṇaḥ*.

He has broad shoulders and strong arms, *vipulāṁsaḥ* and *mahābāhuḥ*. His neck is like a conch - for some reason – perhaps it tapers. His cheeks are fine and wide. His chest is massive, and he is a great archer. In fact, Rama proved himself to be the greatest archer. His shoulder blades are well-developed and flanked by muscle. He disciplines his foes. His long arms reach toward his knees. His head is well proportioned with a wide brow. His walk is an engaging, smooth stride. In every aspect this man is radiant and forthright, and handsome.

Narada describes this man who is all Valmiki asked for and more. This man, Rama, is tall but not too tall. His limbs are perfectly proportioned - as if he were designed according to the *sāstra lakṣaṇā* which describe the ideal person. His color is something pleasing. He is renowned and is recognized wherever he goes. His chest can expand for a prodigious amount of air. His eyes are clear, large, and well set in his head. He has *lakṣmī*; he has an aura. This is the only time I will use this word. When you are around this man, you feel secure. You feel he can take care of all your needs. He has the infectious confidence of a rich man. All the other *aṅgalakṣaṇāni*: the lines on the hands, the lines on the feet, the pores on the face, all the signs that show the qualities of a person are auspicious on him and show his nobility.

He is a *dharmajñā*: Without any conflict he knows right from wrong. His expression is in keeping with his knowledge. His grasp of *dharma* is complete. He is committed to the words he speaks. He abides in his concern for the good of the people. He has glorious accomplishments and knowledge. He is clean inside and outside. In a way Rama is like a child, for he can easily be won over by love. Those who seek his help will never be let down. He is one who is very alert in protecting those who come to him for his refuge and protection. He is a man whose mind is

capable of unqualified absorption. In his creative power Rama is equal to Prajapati, to Brahman, the four-headed creator himself. He has *śrī*, all wealth, with him. He is well married to Sita. He nourishes and succors all people. He is their sustainer.

Rama becomes victorious in battle. He is one who protects. He protects plant life and animal life and human life. Anything that lives has nothing to fear from him. He is the champion of justice. How does one become the protector, *rakṣita*, of *dharma*? Humans have the power of choice; they can choose between two courses of action. One is right, and one is wrong. It is not difficult to understand. By enforcing *dharma*, by his example and his conviction, he is the protector of *dharma*. His enforcement includes the qualities of sympathy and mercy. He has such stature and influence that even a criminal will respect his verdict. Rama commands *dharma* because he knows it in terms of the whole and in terms of himself. In fact, this whole book is one of *dharma* alone. All the time, in different situations, the concern is what is right. Rama decides and follows what he decides. He is a king worthy of his station. His protection of his own *dharma*, *svāsyā dharma*, and of his people's *dharma* coincide.

रक्षिता स्वस्य धर्मस्य स्वजनस्य च रक्षिता । वेदवेदाङ्गतत्त्वज्ञो धनुर्वेदे च निष्ठितः ॥ १-१-१४

सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञः स्मृतिमान् प्रतिभानवान् । सर्वलोकप्रियः साधुरदीनात्मा विचक्षणः ॥ १-१-१५

rakṣitā svasya dharmasya svajanasya ca rakṣitā |

vedavedāṅgatattvajña dhanurvede ca niṣṭhitaḥ || 1-1-14

sarvaśāstrārthatattvajñaḥ smṛtimān pratibhānavān |

sarvalokapriyaḥ sādhanuradīnātmā vicakṣaṇaḥ || 1-1-15

Rama knows Veda, and Veda here is *karmakāṇḍa*, that which deals with various rituals, and actions and their results. He knows *dharmasāstra*, what is right and wrong in terms of the first portion of the Veda. He knows those truths. He is the *sarvaśāstratattvajña*. He knows the six-fold disciplines of knowledge, the *vedāṅgas*, which go along with the study of the Veda - phonetics, regulations for rituals,

etymology, astronomy and astrology, prosody and meter. He knows the *śāstra* that explain the world and God - about men, about a man, about the self. He knows all Upanishads and the allied books that go along with them. He knows very clearly the fact of the truth unfolded by the various Upanishads.

One may know all the *śāstra*, but when the time comes to cite the *śāstra*, to quote the verse, he may just scratch his head. Rama is one who can recite any and all of the texts that he understands. He remembers all that went before. He is the *smṛtimān*. There are those students for whom, if you tell them something, it is like sprinkling water on a hot griddle. What they remember lasts that long. That is the first type of student, the teacher's tragedy. Some things need only be understood. Certain things are to be understood and remembered. Just as is true with grammar rules, it does not work if every day is a fresh, new class and what has gone before has disappeared. Then you may see a *śloka* that describes another type of student who is like a lotus leaf off of whom water pours without a trace. He may embellish with some words what he has heard, but nothing really sticks. The third type of student is like an oyster: he picks up a grain of sand along with the water and makes it into a pearl. He makes it his own. He thinks over what he has heard and makes it complete. This one is the teacher's blessing. The one in-between receives the teaching, and at the same time he is untouched by it. In spite of any amount of teaching, he remains the same. His heart is not wet by the knowledge. Rama is one who has made the *śāstra* his own. He is the *pratibhānavān*. He has made it more thorough. He hears one thing, and he understands the whole from that.

To be continued...

“You do not require a particular altar to invoke the Lord. You can invoke Him anywhere, because what is it that is not the Lord? The whole order is the Lord, all the laws are the Lord. That is the appreciation of the Lord on the part of a mature person.”

.- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

The Wholeness of You by Swamini Saralananda

This is the seventh part of the serial article, continuation from November 2021 newsletter.

Bringing Down The Voltage Of My Judgments

Suppose I could lighten the intensity of my likes and dislikes, judgments and fears, prejudices and choose to have more objectivity. I may still have the subjective feelings but they wouldn't 'jerk me around' nearly as much. If I stay alert and aware of my responses to things, I would want to look at the reasons for what makes me helplessly respond the way I do at times. It is all for the purpose of better understanding my life and who I am in it. Wouldn't I be a far better 'captain of my own ship.'? If I can keep making the attempt, to make the effort to enjoy a better understanding of my own 'inner workings', I won't so often slip on my 'inner banana peels' and fall into painful dark spaces. (I always use the word 'dark' to mean ignorance and its pain.)

The newly-wed woman in chapter three, without thinking it through objectively, could not get even a small wedge of free space between her subjective interpretation and what was true. The false assumption immediately took over her entire mind and body and it turned into excruciating pain. The mental slip is when I don't have enough objectivity to say to my mind, "Wait a minute, don't jump to conclusions yet, let's find out what's really going on here". This is the 'wedge' of space we need to develop and then keep ready for any time I see something happening which can potentially be an occasion to suffer. This practice is for my own sanity and peace of mind.

Also, far more often than necessary we worry when there is no need to worry. Again, it is only because of being caught in the web of our subjective interpretations and conclusions. Mark Twain, a famous American writer, once said: "I am an old man and I have seen a lot of troubles in my days and most of them never happened." This is exactly why, in the daily business of my life, it behooves me to set up an internal spotlight and be on the look-out for where and how I need to be more neutral and objective. This means that I can face my self-torturing ways of thinking and gain some mastery over it. Otherwise, my mind can get away from me like a run-away train and derail me when I least expect; we all know how that feels.

When we really seriously look at our subjectivity, it reveals to us that so much of our suffering is not really about what's happening to us. The newly-wed wife's pain was 'real' from a feeling standpoint but it was not valid from a truth stand point. So that ultimately

means that her emotional pain was not valid.

Subjectivity always traces back to the spell of self-ignorance that we 'dysfunction' under. We take ourselves wrongly. That is the absolute great dysfunction of them all. All the endless acting out of what we nowadays like to call 'dysfunction' is nothing but the direct fall out of the one overwhelming spell. And all our false subjective assumptions feed our dysfunctional behaviors and make a whole composite of a personality I call 'myself' but a mistaken self.

Objectivity Is Sanity

The more objective I am, means the saner I am. In fact, objectivity equals sanity. Sanity allows me to enjoy far better peace of mind. The reason why we use judges and mediators is that they are supposed to be objective and advise us to make sensible choices when we are stuck in conflicts. Counselors, at their best, are supposed to listen to us with objectivity and help us to see ourselves more objectively so we can become saner.

The only point here, is to again remind us of this spell binding subjectivity by which I am hypnotized. It keeps me from knowing who I am and like the over-drugged boy who is lost to himself and cannot tell what is real from unreal, so too I see everything wrongly, there is no objectivity. To be objective means I see things as they are for what they are, nothing more, nothing less. The sanity of objectivity means freedom. An endless ball of subjective yarn is what usually goes into the fabric of my existence. The tapestry that hangs as a picture of my life is never static, it can be woven into something more beautiful rather than an ongoing sorry soap opera. Through wisdom and some good therapy, I can choose to grow to become more mature, sane, and free. It is doable, there is a way out.

Defining Happiness

When people use the words 'realization', 'liberation' and 'enlightenment' most often they take it to mean 'happiness' or 'bliss'. Yet happiness and bliss are like love, god, good, bad, fine.... all are intangibles and totally relative, none have a definite clear definition. We use the words happiness and bliss as though they carry some kind of quantum value for everyone. But we all have our own different meaning-values for these words. It can be said with all certainty that words for intangible feelings are totally relative. Is it possible to arrive at another perspective, particularly on 'happiness' that can free the word from all the various relative conditionings? Can there be any definite logic about what is 'happiness'? I wish to offer that in this chapter.

Anything Logical About Happiness?

Think about the time-line of your life and you will be looking at your own history of happiness because that's all we have ever struggled for. As a toddler, colorful balloons made you happy; as a preschooler a tricycle, in elementary school, games and friends to play with; as a teen, a boyfriend or girlfriend, in college, a good car, good grades with time to party; after college, a good job that will hopefully lead to a lucrative career, and when that looks possible the next thing is to find a suitable spouse, then house and family; ceaselessly on it goes. So, what makes me happy throughout my life keeps changing according to the age and stages in my life.

All the possible things I can desire for to make me happy are endlessly varied throughout my life. And so too from person to person. Desires always have relative levels of intensity and most of our desires are cultivated in the society and home environment in which we grow up. Yet there is one desire that is universal to all - regardless of what time, age and place or culture; in fact, it is the mother desire of all. It is the root cause of all our desires and that is simply the desire to be happy. And it is not merely a desire to be happy, what we really want is lasting happiness, without interruption, without it being conditional. Many of us got conditioned by this childish belief: "And they lived happily ever after". Everyone wants limitless happiness. If we could control everything that affects us, we would have it so that we could be happy all the time. It might eventually bore us and that would make us as powerful as God.

Hopefully we eventually come to see that every time I fulfill a desire, it makes me happy but that same original level of happiness never lasts. It is always limited by something, it is never 'ever after'. Simply because of the time that goes by, the object of happiness, is usually taken for granted i.e. boring or it can even turn sour on me. I may want to get rid of it, to be comfortable again. And this is just the nature of the mind, to get bored and regularly go looking for something new to want. It seems like, unfortunately, my happiness is always dependent on things and situations outside myself over which I can never have total control. Since all forms of happiness are conditional and relative to something else, I always enjoy 'happiness because'. I become happy because I've earned something or something has been given to me, or some favorable situation has occurred. It's almost always 'happiness-because' which translates into, there will always be a lot of variables that need to come together 'just right' for me to get a 'happy-fix'.

Happiness Is Not A Product

A lot of people have a notion that happiness is like a commodity, like money, that it can

be earned and won, managed and manipulated, stored and even stolen. Certainly not! We know from our experience that it is something that always fades or changes in one way or another, I am not the master over it. Happiness wanes, changes and leaves in its own time of its own accord, no matter how well I may fool myself into thinking that I can do something about it. And therefore, we are consistently off and running to find the next thing. There are endless other new things, situations and people to enjoy. We have given the advertising business a good leash and they have us well trained.

It is said that every dark cloud has a silver lining and we can say there's a flip side to that; every bright, fluffy cloud of happiness has a dark lining. Say X decides to buy his dream car, a Benz; the sale is made, he drives the car off the lot and he feels like a king, he's on top of the world, this is a peak experience. He drives next day to his office and when he reaches the parking lot he looks around with great concern, " Let's see, where can I park far enough away from all the other cars to make sure nobody gives me a dent. "But such spots are not always available, and even if they are there's no guarantee that some sneaky vandals won't do him a dent anyway. In the office he gets the 'ooh and aahs' of congratulations. Then three months and one dent away from the dealership floor, his feeling of being on top of the world, has lost a bit of its luster. How long can the novelty-joy last especially when X is faced with the oppressive monthly payments. He also has to regularly tolerate his wife's subtle reminders that this wasn't the smartest thing he's ever done even if he did need to soothe his mid-life crisis; they are well enough in debt already. Then the 'prestige factor ' of his car takes a hit when a competitive co-worker buys an ultra-model Jaguar that cost substantially more than his Benz. And if that isn't enough to rain on his parade, it's some bad luck that his Benz turns out to be a lemon. This list of unforeseen variables can go on as the reasons that continue to dampen the original 'top-of-the- world- quantum-of- happiness'. Every fluffy new cloud of happiness has a dark lining whether we want to acknowledge it or not.

To be continued...

“Maturity is nothing but the appreciation of what is. To be objective, to be alive to reality is maturity. These are all simple facts. We are not believing in anything. We just appreciate the facts and do not take things for granted. We are talking about what is, so there is no question of belief.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Vedic Wisdom Festival online
11-12 Dec 2021

In the fourth year of the Vedic Wisdom Festival organized by the Aarsha Vidya Foundation, Mumbai, spiritual masters from across the country and globe over two full days gave a glimpse of the richness of the Vedic Wisdom. The highest teaching of Vedanta and allied knowledge for our well-being with its depth, simplicity and sophistication were shared with about 350 participants. They shone the light on topics such as Mental health and Ayurveda, How Vedanta works, The glory of temples, Yoga for Vedanta, Sanskrit - the oldest and the most sophisticated language, Learning for Life from the Bhagavad Gita, Kalarippayattu - The ancient Indian martial art and much more.

The festival was inaugurated by the founders, Swami Brahmaavidananda Saraswati by lighting of the lamp and Swamini Brahmaprajnanada Saraswati by chanting the inaugural prayer. Mr. Suresh Balakrishnan being the event moderator made sure that the participants got the most from all sessions.

Swami Brahmaavidanandaji paid tribute to Swami Omkarananda Mahaswamingal who spoke at the last Vedic wisdom festival and was very enthusiastic about coming for this year's festival as well. Unfortunately we lost him to Covid. Paying homage Swamiji said that Swami Omkaranandaji was a wonderful teacher of Vedanta, a great scholar of the Vedic wisdom and also an authority in the Dharmashastras and Karma Kanda. We received his blessing of a 22 minute video about 'Lessons from our scriptures' put together lovingly by his team. Swamiji was indeed present with us this festival too.

Swami Brahmaavidananda Saraswati, spoke on 'How does Vedanta work?' Our normal living brings tension because we are seeking freedom from isolation, loneliness, purposelessness and lack of fulfillment. Quoting from the Mundaka Upanishad, he said that our outward focused sense organs seem to have turned our attention away from oneself. But, Vedanta sees oneself as a fulfilled being and a source of joy. So how can I discover this? In the vision of Vedanta, Atma is not available for perception, inference etc. The pramana has to come from an external source. The one who gives me this knowledge about myself, we call him/her a guru from a parampara with a traditional methodology of teaching.

Dr Parthasarathy R, a practicing Ayurveda Vaidya currently heading Swami Dayananda Jayavarthanavelu Ayurvedalaya(SDJ Ayurvedalaya) as a Director & Chief Medical Officer spoke on 'Ayurveda and Mental health' which was the continuation of the last year's

topic, 'Ayurveda for wellbeing'. Quoting the first shloka from the celebrated book 'Ashtanga Hrdaya', it salutes the vaidya par excellence for removing all the diseases that have originated from rāga. Every single disease originates from the mind and then affects the body. Kama (binding desire), shoka (grief), bhaya(fear) are the three factors that aggravate the vāta, pitta, kapha, the three doshas which are governing the functioning of the body further disturbing the sattva, rajas and tamas at the level of the mind. Then over an hour, Dr Parthasarathy elaborately explained how the mental wellbeing are closely related to one's lifestyle and cleared confusions.

Gurukul Belraj Soni an artist/performer/trainer of Kalaripayattu, the ancient and traditional martial art form of Kerala along with his student, Delna V Sridhar showed many video clips of demonstration of the many forms of Kalaripayattu (translated as Space for action or a battlefield). Kalaripayattu was revealed by Rishis Parashurama and Agastya and traditionally namaskara is done to the 7 storied altar before practice. Most societies had some form of martial art to keep fit, have control over mind and body and also to resolve conflicts. Over an hour the participants were able to appreciate how the sadhana of a martial art form could also serve as a powerful way to have adhikaritam for Vedanta especially as one maintains samatvam in the face of physical threat.

Padmashri Gloria Arieira student of Swami Chinmayananda and Swami Dayananda Saraswati who has been teaching Vedanta and Sanskrit since 40 years in Rio de Janeiro and other cities in Brazil and in Portugal spoke on 'Yoga for Vedanta'. *Moksha purushartha* is for understanding *paramarthika satta*, the absolute reality as 'I'. She said that this is a tradition of understanding. If you understand something completely, then that changes your way of looking at it. So, understanding of 'I' gives vairagya. We are prepared naturally to let go what is not real. Hence, freedom comes from understanding knowledge.

The second day of the festival began with a curated video clip from the archives by our beloved Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji. Swamiji helped us see that the sampradaya is a living tradition and hence the vision cannot be obtained from mere books or recordings.

Swamini Brahmaprajnananda Saraswati, spoke on the 'Learning for life from the Bhagavad Gita'. Reflecting on the worldwide experience of the pandemic, everything that we held on to for the sake of stability and security gave way. Arjuna an accomplished warrior also found himself shaken in the middle of the battle field and he did not want to fight. Quoting the verse 18.46, she beautifully summarized karma yoga. Definition of success according to the Bhagavad Gita is the one who performs *svadharma* to gain attain *an-*

tahkarana shuddhi. That is an accomplishment. How does one get that? She unfolded how by doing one's *svakarma*, one gains success, at whichever stage of life he/she is.

Chithra Madhavan with an M.A. and an M.Phil. in Indian History and a Ph.D. in Ancient History and Archaeology took the audience on a virtual tour to some of the most glorious ancient temples of Badami, Hoysalas, Kanchipuram, Srirangam, Hampi explaining the archaeological significance, their heritage, their culture and giving minute detailing of the magnificently carved sculptures in the temples.

Prof. C. R. Anantharaman an erudite academician with masters across multiple disciplines, MA in Sanskrit, Philosophy, Astrology and an M.Phil in Sanskrit with a Diploma in Hindi, spoke on the 'Greatness of Sanskrit'. Sanskrit means *samyak krtam* which is done to perfection. He further went on to explain how the great grammarian Panini made rules and regulations for the grammar in the form of sutras which we call as aphorisms and set the structure of the language so that a person with basic knowledge of Sanskrit can easily understand our ancient texts.

Swami Atmatrptananda, a traditional teacher of Vedanta teaching in Kolkata for more than 3 decades firmly believes that music played a huge role in understanding the knowledge. He spoke of his life journey from 'Music to the fulfilment of Vedanta'. Completely drawn in by the singing of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswatiji, he became his disciple and studied 3 years in Sandeepany ashram, Powai, Mumbai and 4 years in the Rishikesh ashram. He said that music was a wonderful way to evoke and demonstrate bhakti, understand Ishvara and helped to own up the ultimate knowledge of Vedanta. He also said that folk songs, lyrics of Hindi songs, subhashitams are revealed to writers by infinite intelligence in the form of Maa Saraswati 's blessings. So, instead of dismissing it outright he said we can learn and relate it to the knowledge of Advaita.

The event ended with a vote of thanks to all who had contributed to making it a resounding celebration of our own Vedic Wisdom.

The videos of the talks can be accessed here -

<https://www.youtube.com/c/VedicWisdomFestival/videos>

Om Tat Sat

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