



Arsha Vidya Newsletter

Rs. 15/-



Swami Paramarthanandaji's Sivaratri Talk at Chennai



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Mundakopanishad

Mantra 3.1.8

न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा
नान्यैदेवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा ।
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्त्वः
ततस्तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥३.१.८॥

*na cakṣuṣā gr̥hyate nāpi vācā
nānyaidevaistapasā karmaṇā vā.
jñānaprasādena viśuddhasattvaḥ
tatastu taṁ paśyate niṣkalaṁ dhyāyamānaḥ. (3.1.8)*

na -- not; *cakṣuṣā* -- by the eyes; *gr̥hyate* -- seen/grasped;
na -- not; *api* -- even; *vācā* -- by word; *na* -- not;
anyaiḥ -- by the other; *devaiḥ* -- sense organs;
tapasā -- by religious discipline; *vā* -- or; *karmaṇā* -- by ritual;
jñānaprasādena -- by blessing that is knowledge;
viśuddhasattvaḥ -- one whose mind is pure;
ākramanti -- they go and claim; *yatra* -- where;
tataḥ tu -- thereafter; *paśyate* -- recognises;
taṁ --that; *niṣkalaṁ* -- free from parts; *dhyāyamānaḥ* -- by inquiry;

(The self) is not grasped by the eyes, or by words, by other sense organs, by religious disciplines or rituals. A person of pure mind enquiring into the partless Brahman gains it through knowledge.

You require a means of knowledge to recognise *ātman* in the *buddhi*. Can you use *pratyakṣa*, perception, as a means of knowledge to know *ātman*? The *śruti* answers, *na cakṣuṣā gr̥hyate*: *ātman* is not seen by the eyes. It has no form,¹⁷⁰ so it is not an object for the eyes to see. *Nāpi anyaiḥ devaiḥ*: nor is it perceived by other senses either. A sense organ is called a *deva*. You cannot know the *ātman* by inference either, because any inference is based on perceived data.

What cannot be experienced by the senses can at least be described by words. For instance, you cannot see heaven directly, nor can you arrive at heaven by inference, but the words of the *śāstra* can describe the heaven. Words can describe Indra, whom you do not see as one who has a *vajra*, a weapon, in his hand. So, where senses cannot dare, at least words can. But the *śruti* says, *nāpi vācā*: it cannot be revealed by words either. It is not *vākya*, the immediate meaning of a word,¹⁷¹ like a pot.

When you say, 'pot,' there is an object for that word which you see. A thought takes place in your mind having the form of 'pot'. You recognise the pot. So too, with reference to the words 'tree,' 'chair,' 'table' and so on. Every word has a corresponding object. The meaning of the word 'consciousness,' however, is just you, without any attribute. Therefore, it does not have a meaning or an object that can produce an object-thought in the mind. Any other word is not going to fare better to reveal that consciousness.

How then are you going to understand Vedanta, which is in the form of words? Words reveal the *ātman* by implication. The word 'consciousness' becomes a *lakṣaṇa* an implying word, for *ātman*, which is the *lakṣa*, implied. It is unlike other words. It has a meaning and at the same time, it does not have an object. It is not one single object for the mind to comprehend. Everything is Brahman, and so it is the *lakṣa* of the words, which is why we say it is beyond words. Words only negate all misconceptions about 'I,' the *ātman*. The immediate meaning of any word does not reveal the *ātman*.

If you analyse the word '*satya*,' the immediate meaning is 'anything that exists.' Retaining the immediate meaning of the word '*satya*,' its limitations are removed by using the word '*ananta*' in apposition to it. *Ananta* means limitless in time and space. It helps you remove the sense of time-bound existence from the meaning of the word '*satya*'. Brahman exists, but it is not time-bound. This understanding is not based on the meaning of a given word. It is by eliminating the limitations in the meaning of a given word.

Similarly, the word '*jñāna*' also is understood. The root meaning of the word '*jñāna*' is 'to know'. It implies the presence of consciousness. Only when the conscious knower is there, knowledge is possible, which is why the word '*jñāna*' is used to reveal *ātman*. But the word '*jñāna*' can mean either the knower or knowledge or the known. All three are Brahman while Brahman is free from all three. Therefore, the limited meaning of the '*jñāna*' is eliminated again by the word '*ananta*' which is used in apposition with the word '*jñāna*'. It now reveals the essential nature of *ātman* as *jñapti*, consciousness. The knower status of the *ātman* is incidental because you become a knower only in the wake of an object to be known. The knower's essential nature is *caitanya*. The *satya* of the knower-known-knowledge is consciousness.

One may ask, "If you are negating the immediate meaning of a word, then why do you use that word at all? Why not use some other word?" From the other word also one has to negate the general meaning. So one person said, "Do not use words. It is beyond words!" Then, the one who says so, need not appoint himself as a *guru*. Even a symbol like *cinmudrā* is not going to reveal what cannot be revealed by the words. When you want to give a visual form for the teacher and the teaching, then you must give a symbol and the symbol is a language. It is purely arbitrary. The *śāstra* does use some special words like *satya* and reveals the *vastu* as the *lakṣārtha*, the implied meaning, of these words.

It is highly sophisticated method because the *śāstra* is trying to reveal the infinite from the collection of finite words that you have. Naturally it is not going to follow logic; it is going to beat all logic. Therefore, *ātman* is not grasped by the immediate meaning of the words.

The Vedas have *karmas* for achieving everything in life--- for rain, son, money, cattle, *lokas* and so on. You may think that there may be some special Vedic rituals to bring about *mokṣa*. That idea also is negated now by saying, *na karmanā tapasā vā*: neither by ritualistic action nor by religious discipline. If *karma* can produce *ātman*, then you can see it. Action can produce only four types of result. It can create something, help you reach a place, cleanse an object or modify something. But none of these apply to *ātman*. The *ātman* cannot be created because it is here right now; it cannot be reached because it is all-pervasive; it needs no cleaning nor can it be objectified, it is ever pure; and it cannot be modified because it has no parts. It is not the result of an action. So it cannot be accomplished by action. It is *sat*, existence. *Karma*, from *agnihotra* to *aśvamedha*, has its desirable result, but it is going to be different types of *punya* and not *ātman*,¹⁷² which already exists.

Nor by *tapas* can one gain it because it is the *svarūpa* of the one who performs *tapas*. *Tapas* can accomplish anything, like tightrope walking, that is achieved by someone through dedicated effort. *Tapas* can accomplish what one has not yet accomplished. When it is an already accomplished thing, *tapas* has no access.

In *Taiirīyopaniṣad* it is said many times, "*Tapasā brahma vijijñāsva* may you know Brahman through *tapas*." Here it is said that *ātman* cannot be gained by *tapas*. There is an apparent contradiction between these two *upaniṣads*. But the context of each statement gives different meaning to the words. The meaning of the word, '*tapas*' in the *Taiirīyopaniṣad* is *vicāra*, inquiry. It is *jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ*, *tapas* in the form of inquiry leading to knowledge.

In the earlier *mantra* it was said '*tapasā labhyaḥ*,' *ātman* is gained through *tapas*. Here the *śruti* negates that by saying '*na tapasā grhyate*,' it is not achieved by *tapas*. It is exactly the style of teaching where something about the *ātman* is presented and then negated. The context is set up only to arrive at the true meaning. *Tapas* and *karma* are necessary. But they are not the means to accomplish the knowledge of the *ātman*. They are means to prepare a person for this knowledge. Therefore, assertion and negation are from different standpoints. Everything has its place in the scheme of things. In the scheme of the pursuit of *mokṣa*, one has to be clear about the position of everything. One has to clearly distinguish the primary means from the secondary means.

The primary means for gaining the knowledge of *ātman* is being said now. *Tu viśuddha-sattvaḥ jñānaprasādena tam paśyate*: whereas, the one whose mind is already rendered pure sees that (*ātman*) clearly with the blessing of the knowledge. By a life of *karma-yoga* and religious disciplines you do not come under the spell of *rāga-dveṣa*, likes and dislikes.

Sattva here means the mind. *Viśuddha-sattvaḥ* is one whose mind is *viśuddha*, free from *rāga-dveṣa*. The purity of mind is purely neutralisation of *rāga-dveṣa*. It is not the absence of *rāga-dveṣa*, but the absence of coming under the spell of *rāga-dveṣa*. That is *prasāda*.¹⁷³ What a difference it makes! *Jñāna prasāda* also is the blessing that is knowledge. Knowledge alone is *prasāda*. It is called *prasāda* because it is given by the *guru* and received by the disciple. The attitude on the part of the receiver is one of reverence. Blessing is always received, and what is not received is not a blessing. Because of the blessing of knowledge, you recognise *ātman* as free from any attribute. How does you recognise?

Dhyāyamānaḥ : by thinking. Thinking refers to *vicāra*, inquiring here. The inquiry is in the form of *śravaṇa manana* and *nididhyāsana*. All three are covered by the word '*dhyāyamānaḥ*'. It is the particular or special means, *asādhāraṇa-karaṇa*, for knowing the *ātman*. You gain the knowledge of *ātman* from the teaching of the *śāstra*, but the knowledge can be vague due to doubts. You have to eliminate all the doubts through inquiry. Only then will you recognise the *ātman* as *niṣkalam*, free from attributes. Since *ātman* is free from attributes, you do not have to wait for a particular thought to take place. Brahman is invariable in every cognition. Every cognition is Brahman just as every wave is water.

We can also connect the words of the last two lines in this way, *viśuddha-sattvaḥ niṣkalam dhyāyamānaḥ jñāna-prasādena paśyate*: a person of pure mind enquiring into the partless Brahman gains it through knowledge.

170 अरूपत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

171 अनभिधेयत्वात् । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

172 तथा वैदिकेन अग्निहोत्रादि-कर्मणा प्रसिद्ध-महत्त्वेनापि न गृह्यते । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

173 ज्ञान-प्रसादेन आत्मावबोधन-समर्थमपि स्वभावेन सर्व-प्राणिनां ज्ञानं बाह्य-विषय-रगादि-दोष-कलुषितमप्रसन्नमशुद्धं

सन्नावबोधयति नित्यं सन्निहितमप्यात्म-तत्त्वं मलावनद्धम् इवाददर्शम् । विलुलितमिव सलिलम् । तद्यदा

इन्द्रिय-विषय-संसर्ग-जनित-रागादि-मल-कालुष्यापनयनाद् आदर्श-सलिलादिवत् प्रासादितं स्वाच्छं शान्तमवतिष्ठः अते तदा ज्ञानस्य

प्रसादः स्यात् । तेन ज्ञान-प्रसादेन । (मुण्डक भाष्यम्)

to be continued...

Swami Paramarthanandaji's Talk

during Sankara Jayanti Celebrations, 2017



I feel happy to be here at the *Gurukulam* on the auspicious occasion of *Śaṅkara Jayanti*. And I would like to share some general thoughts with you. All of you are aware that our primary scriptures are the *Vedās* and we look upon the *Vedās* as something given by the Lord himself for the benefit of the entire humanity. And with the help of these *Vedās*, a human being can fulfil all his legitimate desires, both worldly as well as the ultimate spiritual desire. And all this can be done, while living in harmony with the creation. This teaching of the *Vedās* has been made available to us because of the contribution of several *Rṣīs* as well as several *Ācāryās*, whom we remember regularly through the well-known *Śloka*:

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपरशरं च ।
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ॥

nārāyaṇam padmabhuvam vasiṣṭham śaktim ca tatputraparaśaram ca |
vyāsam śukam gauḍapadam mahāntam govindayogīन्द्रamathāsya śiṣyam ||

श्री शङ्कराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम् ।
तं तोटकं वार्त्तिककारमन्यान् अस्मद्गुरून् सन्ततमान्तोस्मि ॥

śrī śaṅkarācāryamathāsya padmapādam ca hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam |
taṁ toṭakam vārttikakāramanyān asmadgurūn santatamāntosmi ||

So, starting from *Nārāyaṇa* up to our *Guru*, the time duration will go to Millennia, we don't know even when the origin of the *Vedās* is. And therefore, if we are able to get the benefit of the Vedic teaching, the *Vaidika Dharma*, it is because of all these *Ṛṣīs* and *Ācāryās*, and therefore, in our tradition we regularly express our gratitude to all these *Ṛṣīs* and *Ācāryās*. And even though, every *Ṛṣi* and every *Ācārya* is great, we choose two of them for regular worship. One is *Vyāsācārya* and the other is *Śaṅkarācārya*. *Vyāsācārya*'s contribution to our culture in general and spiritual wisdom in particular is well known and therefore, every *gṛhasthā* in his daily *brahmayajña* ritual remembers *Vyāsācārya*. In *brahmayajña ṛṣi tarpaṇam*, those who do may remember, कृष्णद्वैपायनादयो ये ऋषयस्तान् ऋषींस्तर्पयामि।

krṣṇadvaipāyanādayo ye ṛṣayastān ṛṣīstarpayāmi।

First *Ṛṣi tarpaṇam* is for *Vyāsācārya*. And not only *gṛhastās* remember *Vyāsācārya*, *Sanyāsīs* also do remember *Vyāsācārya* on the special occasion while starting the *Cāturmāsya* ritual, during *Vyāsapūrṇima*. Therefore *Vyāsācārya*'s contributions are great. Next to that is the contribution of *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* also and we remember his contribution both for our culture in general as well as the spiritual wisdom in particular, we remember during *Śaṅkara Jayanti* day. We look upon both of them as the very *Avatāra* of Lord *Viṣṇu* and Lord *Śiva*.

Śaṅkaram Śaṅkarācāryam, Śaṅkarācārya who is none other than *Śaṅkara*, Lord *Śiva* himself. *Keṣavam Bādarāyaṇam*", and Lord *Viṣṇu* himself has come in the form of *Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsācārya, sūtrabhāṣyakṛtau vande bhagavantau punaḥ punaḥ* - We worship both of them again and again.

And *Śaṅkarācārya*'s contribution especially in the field of spiritual wisdom is well known in the form of his *prasthanatraya bhāṣyam* as well as the *prakaraṇa granthās*. And we are beneficiaries, and therefore we can fully appreciate *Śaṅkarācārya*'s contribution in this field. And today, I would like to remember a few of the fundamental principles, the foundational principles that *Śaṅkarācārya* has given in this spiritual tradition. I am only remembering aloud to appreciate the glory of *Śaṅkarācārya*, how they are still relevant and valid. And to understand this fundamental principle, we have to remember one point, based on that only I am going to present this. All the goals that we hope to accomplish whether they are worldly goals or spiritual goals we broadly categorise into two. Those goals which can be attained through several methods or several means, like a particular place which can be reached through several roads. Many roads are there and through any one of them we can reach the destination. I will call it, *aneka sādhana sādhyam. Anekaiḥ Sāadhanaiḥ Sādhyam*. Goals accomplishable through many methods. In English, multi path goal/many path Goal (MPG). Multi path- *Bahuvrīhi*, Multi path *yasya tat* multi path, then *Karma Dhārya*, Multi Path Goal, Multi Path Goal.

And other possibility, you can guess, is certain goals, which can be reached only by one method, one means or one path, *eka sādhana sādhyam* (SPG), Single path goal. Single path- *Bahuvrīhi*, then *Karma Dhārya*, Single Path Goal. To reach *Anaikatti*, I had only one road, (I think so) so this is Single Path Goal. But there are many destinations to which I can reach through Multipath. Now, *Śaṅkarācārya* through his *Bhāṣyams* makes very clear, what are all MPGs and what are all SPGs. This must be very clear otherwise we will be out of the traditional teaching. I will talk about three things and we will see which one is MPG and which one is SPG. This is going to be my simple discussion.

The first one is *mokṣaḥ*, *Śaṅkarācārya* in all his *prasthanatraya bhāṣyam* makes it very clear that *mokṣa* will come under MPG or SPG, you all know the answer. *Mokṣa* comes under *eka sādhana sādhyam* (Single path Goal). *Śaṅkarācārya* establishes this through *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. He clearly establishes.

तम् एवं विद्वान् अमृत इह भवति नान्यः पन्था अयनाय विद्यते।

Tam evaṁ vidvān amṛta iha bhavati nānyaḥ panthā ayanāya vidyate.

In *puruṣasuktam* it occurs twice. Initially, *nānyaḥ panthā*, down.

Vedā is worried, because it doubts some people might not have heard it. Hence second time, *nānyaḥ panthā*, up, so that everybody even the one hard of hearing also will hear it clearly that *mokṣa* comes under *eka sadhāna sādhyam*. It is very important because during *Śaṅkarācārya*'s time there were many people claiming that *mokṣa* can be claimed through *karma*, i.e., *purvamīmāṃsakā*, *Mokṣa* can be claimed through *upāsanā*, i.e., *viśiṣṭādvaitins*, all those people equivalent to *viśiṣṭādvaitins* were claiming that *upāsanā* gives *mokṣa*. Wherever the word *brahmavit* comes, *Brahmavid āpnoti param*, they interpret *vit* as *upāsanā*. *Brahma upāsakaḥ param āpnoti*. Only through meditation or *upāsanā* one can get *mokṣa*. *Śaṅkarācārya* dismissed all of them and established *jñāna mātrena mokṣaḥ*. Between *jñānam* and *mokṣa* there is not even a time gap, instantaneously *mokṣa* is gained. The most surprising thing is in spite of the *Ācārya* establishing so clearly even now there are so many counter opinions. Especially after varieties of *āgama śāstrās* proliferating, now Hinduism is dominated by more *āgamas* rather than *vedās*. Therefore they all declare that may be *jñānam* was method in those times, but now the times have changed and people don't have time for attending *gurukulams* and therefore we should have shorter cuts and therefore in all the *upanyāsās* we hear whether in TVs or public discourses, all of them keeping *Śaṅkarācārya*'s photo on one side, that is more *akramam*. They all say that in *Kali yuga*, *bhakti* alone gives *mokṣa* and *Jñānam* is not accessible for majority. The best method of practising *bhakti* is *nāma saṅkīrtanam*. Go on chanting *hare rāma*, *hare rāma* you can get *mokṣa*. And some people go further, you need not even work for *mokṣa*, you surrender, *Bhagavān* will give do door delivery of *mokṣa*, like couriers. Very unfortunate, only when you go for teaching out, you will know that you have to confront this question and by the time you erase all these misconceptions, you will have to take 3 courses for erasing. Then only there is a chance of communicating *Śaṅkarācārya*'s message, very big problem. *Jñānam* is blacked out or suppressed and *bhakti* and *nāma saṅkīrtanam* are glorified. If they say it is for *citta śuddhi*, wonderful. They never say that, *nāma saṅkīrtanam* will do everything. And therefore it is very important for all of us to remember *Śaṅkarācārya*'s reasoning to establish this. *Śaṅkarācārya* convinces if people are available, unfortunately people are not available. If people are available, *Śaṅkarācārya* convinces us very clearly. And it is nice to remember his argument. *Śaṅkarācārya* says nobody can get *mokṣa*, putting a bomb shell. And nobody can give *mokṣa*. What about *Bhagavān*? Even *Bhagavān*. Even though *Bhagavān* is omniscient, even though *Bhagavān* is omnipotent, *Bhagavān* can do many things, but as far as giving *mokṣa* is concerned, even *Bhagavān* cannot give *mokṣa*. Then we will all wonder what the audacity of *Śaṅkarācārya* is, what is the reason. You all know the reason. I am just enjoying remembering *Śaṅkarācārya*'s vision, conviction. Nobody can get or give *mokṣa* because *mokṣa* happens to be our very nature and therefore it is with us all the time. And whatever is already with us we cannot get. And whatever is already with us *Bhagavān* cannot give, because it is already with us. And *Pūjya Swāmiji* gives a humorous example also, he only can think of these examples to convey profound truths jocularly. Suppose some devotee goes to *Bhagavān* and asks, Oh! Lord, please give me a head over my shoulders, if a *Bhakta* asks *Bhagavān*, What will *Bhagavān* say, even though I am omnipotent, I cannot give head over your shoulders, because you already have a head. Then, *Swāmiji* adds, I can put something within your head, because that is absent. From your question it is very clear. I can give something inside your head, but I cannot give head over the shoulders, because it is already there. Therefore we all should remember fundamental traditional principle is *mokṣa* cannot be got by us and *Bhagavān* cannot give us *mokṣa*. This must be very deeply registered.

Then will be next question. If *mokṣa* is already my *svarūpam*, then how do you say *mokṣa* is *eka sādhanā sādhyam*? *Mokṣa* is attained by *jñānam*, you say. If *mokṣa* is already attained then how can we get *mokṣa* through *jñānam*. Because *jñānam* also cannot give *mokṣa*. For that our answer is, initially we say that *mokṣa* is *jñānena sādhyam*, but once a person comes to *jñānam* we teach that *mokṣa* is not gained through *jñānam* also, through *jñānam* we come to know that *mokṣa* need not be gained. So through *jñānam* we get *mokṣa* and what do you mean by that, through *jñānam* we come to know that *mokṣa* need not be gained, because *mokṣa* is our *svarūpam* only. Therefore, the job done by *jñānam* is not *mokṣa prāptiḥ*, but *adhyasta samsāra nivṛttiḥ*. We will have to land into *adhyāsa bhāṣyam*. So the whole effort is not the attainment of *mokṣa*, but only dropping ignorance and the notion that I am a *samsārī*. *Jñānena ajñānasya mokṣa*, that means the word *mokṣa* means what, *mokṣa* itself is a significant word. The word *Mokṣa* means dropping, *mokṣ dhātu* not *muñc dhātu*. It is to release or drop. Getting *mokṣa* means dropping. Dropping two important things. Dropping ignorance and dropping the notion that I am a *samsārī*. This dropping the *samsāra* notion is figuratively called attainment of *mokṣa*. *Jñānena adhyasta samsāra nivṛttiḥ eva mokṣaprāptiḥ iti upacaryate*. Through knowledge dropping the misconception than I am bound, that dropping alone is figuratively called attainment of *mokṣa*, we don't get anything, we drop something. That is indicated by *sanyāsa. tyāgenaike amrutatvamaṇaśuḥ*. What *tyāga*? Not Clothes. *ajñānasya tyāgaḥ, adhyāsasya tyāgaḥ, adhyastabandhasya tyāgaḥ*. *Adhyāsa*, ignorance and the notion can be removed by only *jñānam*. Therefore, we say *jñānāt eva mokṣaḥ*. *Nāma saṅkīrtanam* etc., cannot do this job. Therefore, what is the only path, which is not a path. That is what *Pūjya Swāmiji* says. *Jñānam* is the only path which is not a path. Path *iva* path. This we should remember, otherwise you will find so many discourses which are confusing. If we go on listening we also may get doubts. Therefore we have to regularly remind us. *Sampradāya* means dropping misconception is *mokṣa*. This is the great glory of *Śaṅkarācārya* in *tattusamanvaya bhāṣyam*. In *tattusamanvaya bhāṣyam*, *tat tu*, he has a commentary on the word “*tu*”. *Śaṅkarācārya* dismisses all these misconceptions. *Mokṣaḥ eka sādhanā sādhyah* is one fundamental principle of traditional teaching. A traditional guru has, as *Swāmiji* repeatedly says, should bring this point in all his discourses. And a teacher who does not bring this point is slipping away from tradition. Even if we talk about *bhakti* a lot, at the end we have to enlighten the audience, by saying that all these are wonderful, but you should all know that this itself is not enough. Finally, one has to gain *jñānam*. That means there is a stamp of *Śaṅkarācārya* or stamp of our *Pūjya Swāmiji*. If we want stamp of *Pūjya Swāmiji* we have to clearly say, *mokṣaḥ eka sādhanā sādhyah*.

The second point is, (totally three) *jñānena mokṣaḥ* we have established. *Jñānena mokṣaḥ* not *jñāna mātrena mokṣaḥ*. Now the question is, is *Jñānam* SPG or MPG? First question is *mokṣa* SPG or MPG? Answer is SPG. Otherwise write imposition. *mokṣaḥ* is SPG, *jñāna mātrena*. Second question, *jñānam* is attained through how many *mārgās*? Here also problem, many people say that *mokṣa* can be attained through various paths. They don't include *jñānam*, or they say *jñānam* is one of the paths. And there are some people, who concede that *jñānena mokṣa* and they say *jñānam* can be gained through several methods. *śāstra vicāra* they consider as one of the methods for those who have got the time to do. For others, *jñānam* can be gained through other methods. Therefore, they are MPG people. And some people say that you can go on asking “Who am I?” And what is the source of *ahaṅkāra*, you enquire and you will get the answer, the *jñānam* will come. “Who am I?” enquiry path is one alternative path suggested. And there are some people who say, by meditation or *Samādhi* you can get, *Samādhi mārgaḥ* or *yoga mārgaḥ*.

Yogaḥ citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ. Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam. You remove all the thoughts, you will abide in *ātma*. *Tatra ṛtam bharā prajñā, ṛtam bharā*- it holds the truth, knowledge of the truth. Thus, there are some people who quote the *yoga sūtra* and they say that by entering *Samādhi*, we can get *jñānam*.

Our topic is right now not *mokṣa*, our topic is *jñānam*. Therefore, “who am I” enquiry method, *samādhi* method and there are some other people who say off course, *bhakti* (*Āgamā* people) method. You have got *Bhakti* wonderful. *Śaṅkarācārya* has incorporated all the *āgamās*, for *citta śuddhi* but nowadays people are presenting *āgamās* as a means of *mokṣa* or *jñānam*. That is non-vedic. *Āgamā* for puja is okay, *Āgamā* for *mokṣa* or *jñānam* is non-vedic approach. That is why in *brahmasūtras* there are *khaṇḍanam*s of so many siddhantās, *bhāgavatamata khaṇḍanam*, and *pāsupatamata khaṇḍanam*. Presenting those methods as a means of *jñānam* and *mokṣa*, they are all *veda vāhya siddhantā*.

yā veda bāhyāḥ smṛtayaḥ yāśca kāśca kudṛṣṭayaḥ sarvāstā niṣphalāḥ pretya tamo niṣṭhā hi tāḥ smṛtāḥ.

We should be very careful, *śaivāgamās*, *vaiṣṇava āgamās*, *śākta āgamās* are beautiful, but are often misleading. They say *Bhagavān* will give *jñānam* at the right time. You needn’t do anything at all. As though, *Bhagavān* will make a drill and make a hole and they quote, “*dadāmi buddhi yogam tam yena mām upayānti te*”. You keep on practicing *bhakti*, *Bhagavān* will give knowledge at the right time. This is another *mahā* misconception. *Śaṅkarācārya* is very clear in all his *bhāṣyams*. *Jñānam*, any *jñānam* can only be gained by only one method. And that method is, *pramāṇa janyam pramā*. Any knowledge can come only by using a relevant instrument of knowledge. *Pūja* is not a *pramāṇam*, *yoga* is not a *pramāṇam*, *Samādhi* is not a *pramāṇam*, and “Who am I” is not a *pramāṇam*, *nāma saṅkīrtanam* is not a *pramāṇam*. None of them will come under *pramāṇam*. So, we have to use a *pramāṇam* and then we talk about varieties of *pramāṇam*. I am not going into the details, I am talking in this language because all of you all already students. Because, nowadays we are supposed to be inclusive. Inclusive means you should say everything is right. And you know what is *Pūjya Swāmiji*’s answer? I better be a fanatic, rather than a lunatic. Because, where there is only one method, we should assert that it is the declaration of a fact, there you cannot be inclusive. With regard to facts we cannot be inclusive, we should assert that *pramāṇam* alone will produce knowledge and the *pramāṇam* has to be a relevant *pramāṇam* also. And here, in knowing the nature of myself as *mokṣaḥ*, I require only one *pramāṇam*. And what is that *pramāṇam*, *tantu upaniṣadam puruṣam prchāmi*. *Upaniṣad pramāṇa mātra samadigamyam* because all other instruments of knowledge are turned extrovert. *parānci khāni naiṣā tarkaṇa matirāpaneya*. All of them make it very clear, that *pramāṇam* is required and *pramāṇam* is *upaniṣad śāstra pramāṇam*. And this is in the form of words and sentences, *pramāṇa vicāra* alone is the *pramāṇa* operation, which we call *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsanena eva ātmānvā* are *draṣṭavyaḥ*, *śrotavyaḥ*, *mantavyaḥ*. Therefore the second very important message that *Śaṅkarācārya* establishes is *jñānam* is SPG. And what is the only path for *jñānam* “*tad vijñānārtham sa gurumeva abhigacchet tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā*”. Therefore what is traditional foundation number one, *mokṣaḥ jñāna mātra sādhyāḥ* and what is the traditional principle number two, *jñānam śāstra vicāra mātra sādhyam*. This is the second point.

Therefore, *mokṣaḥ* is SPG, *jñānam* is SPG.

Then comes the last one, for receiving the message of the *śāstras* my mind must be fit, receptacle; *pātram*. So *jñāna yogyata* is important and if the mind doesn’t have *jñāna yogyata*, then *pramāṇam* cannot work. So *yogyata* is required, *adhikāritvam* is required. Even to desire for *vicāra*. In fact, first *yogyata* is desire for *mokṣa*. The second *yogyata* is desire for *jñānam*. Third *yogyata* is desire for *śravaṇam*. These three, themselves are very rare.

śravaṇāyāpi bahubhiḥ yonalabhyaḥ śrṇvantopi bahavo eṁ na vidyuh.

So *mumukṣā*, *jijñāsā*, *śuśrūṣā*. *Mumukṣā* - desire for moksha is first *yogyata*. Desire for *jñānam* is the second *yogyata*, as *Pūjya Swāmiji* says I am going for *vipaścanā*. If you have not heard, you are lucky. So desire for *jñānam* is *jijñāsā*. And, that *jñānam* is only possible by *śravaṇam* from a *Guru*, *śuśrūṣā*. All these three words are there in the *śāstras*. *mukṣurvai śaraṇam aham prapadye, āрто jījñāsurarthārthi*. And in the *Gita* Krishna says, *Gita* must be given to qualified persons. There he says,

इदम् ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यम् न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥

idam te nātapaskāya nābhaktāya kadācana |

na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam na ca mām yo'bhyasūyati ||

One who is desirous of studying the scriptures.

tametam vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti.

Three desires are important, desire for *mokṣa*, desire for *jñānam*, desire for *śravaṇam*. Then only our stay in *gurukulam* will fructify properly. And this is *jñāna yogyata*, if *yogyata* is not there then *śravaṇam* will not function. For that in tradition, they give a nice example. I want to look at my face, I have told this here before but I would remind; I like this concept very much; I want to look at my face. Assume some people said you have a beautiful face. I have a beautiful, charming, attractive, lovely face and the tragedy is I cannot see my face. And therefore, there is only one method, I have to bring a mirror. Suppose I have got a mirror and my eyes are not all right. The mirror will not be of any use. Eyes are there, mirror is not there. Then also you suffer. Eye also is important. Mirror also is important. When they join together, there is *ātma darśanam*, *mukha darśanam*. Similarly, *Guru's* words are *śabda darpaṇaḥ*. So *Guru* is continuously showing the mirror to his students, see your glory. And when the *Guru* is showing the *śāstra darpaṇa*, the *śiṣya* must have the eyes, not the local eyes, a *yogya antaḥ karaṇam* is required. If that is not there, *Guru's* effort will be like the *virocana* of *chandogya aṣṭamādhyāyaḥ*. Therefore it is said, *yasya nāsti swayam prajñā, śāstram tasya karoti kim, Locanābhyām vihinasya darpaṇaḥ kim kariṣyati*. You can understand. *yasya nāsti swayam prajñā*, that student who doesn't have the thinking and assimilating power, *śāstram tasya karoti kim*, what can *śāstra pramāṇa* do. Like what. *Locanābhyām vihinasya*, if the eyes are not there, what is the use of the mirror. Therefore *śāstra pramāṇam* will function only when there is *yogya antaḥ karaṇa*. For that the entire *veda pūrva bhāga* is useful. Thus the whole *veda*, *Veda pūrva* gives me *yogyata*. *Veda anta* shows me the *darpaṇam*. So the entire *Veda* has got only two functions. Prepare and show the mirror. And when we go through the preparation and look at the mirror. Then the knowledge is

अहमन्न महमन्न महमन्नम् ।

अहमन्नादो ऽहमन्नदो ऽहमन्नादः ।

अहग् श्लोककृ दहग् श्लोककृ दहग् श्लोककृत् ।

ahamannamahamannamahamannam |

ahamannādo ahamannādo ahamannādaḥ|

aham ślokaḥkṛdaham ślokaḥkṛdaham ślokaḥkṛt |

aham vṛkṣasya rerivā, kīrtiḥ priṣṭham gire riva...

I am not a speck in the creation, the whole table is turned, but the whole creation is a speck in me. *viṣṭabhya aham idam kṛtsnamekāmsena sthito jagat*. If I should receive this wisdom and it should become a fact for me, I require a *yogya antaḥ karaṇa*.

Now the last point is, this *yogyata* is SPG or MPG. Here alone, *Śaṅkarācārya* relaxes. Until then he is very tight. For purifying the mind you have got infinite methods. You use any method, *Veda* itself gives, *pañcamahāyajñāḥ*, *īśvara ārāadhanā* we can do and get the *citta śuddhi*, *pitṛ yajña*, even doing the house hold, many people, many household ladies ask this question. We cannot do anything, we are at home, and taking care of that also is called *pitṛ yajña*. *Pitṛ yajña* can purify the mind. *Manuṣya yajña*, all kinds of reaching out actions can purify the mind. To use *Swāmiji*'s expression, *Swāmiji* says, I invented or introduced AIM for Seva itself only for this purpose. Because, *Swāmiji* found many of his disciples, had a problem. And therefore, *manuṣya yajñāḥ*, *bhūta yajñāḥ*, contribution to animals and plants, or *Brahma yajñāḥ* teaching. Teaching also is a method of purification. Therefore, use one method or the other, you can do *yogābhyāsa*, *prānāyāma*, anything. Thus, use any method or combination of a few also, may you gain *jñāna yogyata* by any one of these methods. Because *jñāna yogyata* is MPG. By using MPG, *jñāna yogyata prāpti*, SPG *jñāna prāpti*, SPG *mokṣa prāptiḥ*. This is the traditional teaching. And when I went to Chennai and I was giving talks, once in a while, I used to write letters to *Pūjya Swāmiji* just updating what is happening and all, and in one of the letters *Pūjya Swāmiji* said only one thing. He said, never compromise with the tradition of the teaching, for satisfying the type of students. Just because the students love *bhakti*, they are *bhaktās*, therefore I say *bhakti mokṣaḥ*. And, I give a talk in a yoga institute, therefore I say *yogena mokṣa*. Never compromise with the basic, that we should never be untrue to the tradition. That is disservice to *Vedas*, disservice to *Vyāsa*, disservice to *Śaṅkarācārya*, disservice to our *Pūjya Swāmiji*. We can teach *bhajan*, *nāma saṅkīrtanam*, all of them, but we never make a statement we get *mokṣa*. So even if we say, we say that this will gradually lead to the next step and next step. But everyone should be very clear, that our ultimate aim is *jñānam*.

*annapūrṇe sadāpūrṇe śaṅkara prāṇa vallabhe
jñāna vairāgya siddhyartham bhikṣām dehi ca pārvati*

Therefore, *jñānam* alone can give “*mokṣa*”. If anybody asks whether *bhakti* can give *mokṣa*, we say, *bhakti* can give *mokṣa*, if *bhakti* means *jñānam*; no problem.

svassvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirityabhidhīyate.

If the word, *bhakti* means anything else, we should say it gives *citta śuddhi*. For that, this wonderful tradition of *jñānena mokṣaḥ*, *pramāṇa vicareṇa jñānam* and *yogena cittasya śuddhiḥ*. This is our tradition which *Vyāsācārya* established through *brahmasūtrās* and which *Śaṅkarācārya* established through his *bhāṣyam*, and which our *Pūjya Swāmiji* made available to all of us in a way that we will understand. Therefore, I think on this auspicious occasion of *Śaṅkarā jayanti*, we should be grateful to *Vyāsa* and particularly *Śaṅkarācārya* that we are able to get this particular tradition. And that is till now confusing, is very clear. If you listen to any number of discourses, very rarely it is said that this is SPG and this is MPG. Very rarely people mention. We should make it very clear, wherever we are sharing this knowledge. With these few words, I would like to conclude my talk.

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Sivaratri Talk 2018 by Swami Paramarthananda

sakāma bhakti and niṣkāma bhakti

सदाशिवसमारम्भां शङ्कराचार्यमध्यमाम्
अस्मदाचार्यपर्यन्तां वन्देगुरुपरम्पराम्
sadāśivasamārambhāṁ śaṅkarācāryamadhyamām
asmadācāryaparyantāṁ vandeguruparamparām

Today I would like to share some thoughts on two types of *bhakti*, namely *sakāma bhakti* and *niṣkāma bhakti*. We all know the word *bhakti* means devotion to *īśvara*, the *īśvara* about whom a *bhaktā* has got some understanding, from the scriptures. That *īśvara* or *bhagavān* is the ultimate cause of universe, *śriṣṭi sthiti laya kartā*.

The *bhagavān* is *sarvajñaḥ* omniscient, *sarva-śaktiḥ* omnipotent etc,. A *bhaktā* has got a general understanding, and the devotion towards such an *īśvara* is called *bhakti*. And for the sake of practicing *bhakti*, our scriptures have given several forms for the *bhagavān*, even though *bhagavān* is only one. Several representative forms are given in the form of *śiva*, *viṣṇu*, *devī*, etc,.

And according to the taste, a *bhaktā* shows his devotion towards the desired *iṣṭa devatā*. This reverential attitude towards *bhagavān* is *bhakti*. The attitude is *bhakti* and the worship is also called *bhakti*. And this *bhakti* alone is of two types, *sakāma bhakti* and *niṣkāma bhakti*.

What is *sakāma bhakti* ? When a *bhaktā* offers reverential worship, and through that worship he wants to fulfill his various desires. He wants to employ the *bhakti* for the fulfillment of his desires. The desires can be either in the form of getting various things, or in the form of getting rid of various things. When a *sakāma bhaktā* uses this *sakāma bhakti*, for the fulfillment of his desires, he has got a rough idea about the *sakāma bhakti*. And the understanding of the *sakāma bhakti* is based on various ideas, he has heard and gathered from different sources.

What is the common understanding of *sakāma bhakti* ? It is widely held understanding, unfortunately a wrong understanding. In many places a *bhaktā* has heard that *bhagavān* is omniscient, omnipotent and all compassionate. The combination is very important - omniscient, omnipotent and compassionate. We are all children of the *bhagavān*. Because *bhagavān* is the creator and we are *bhaktās*, when we appeal to the *bhagavān* for anything, what is *bhagavān's* job? As the omniscient , omnipotent, compassionate Lord, whatever I appeal, *bhagavān* will fulfill. *Bhagavān* can never say, "I cannot give". When I seek, anything from local people, they can answer "I cannot afford". But *bhagavān* cannot give that answer. Therefore what is the expectation of the *bhaktā*? Whatever I ask, it is *bhagavān's* job to just keep giving them.

There is something fundamentally wrong about our understanding of *sakāma bhakti*, therefore we should revise our understanding. According to the scriptures, *sakāma bhakti* means *sakāma karma sahita bhakti*. Always *sakāma bhakti* should go along with a relevant *karma* or action. A relevant *karma* prescribed by the scriptures, based on the type of *kāma*. The scriptures do prescribe varieties of *sakāma karmāṇi*. After performing those *karmāṇi* or actions, a *sakāma bhaktā* appeals for the *karma phalam*. So the appeal is always for *sakāma karma phalam*. And when *bhagavān* receives this appeal, *bhagavān* gives the result not based on the appeal, but based on the type of *karma* performed. Because *bhagavān* is defined as *karma-phala-dātā*. Therefore *sakāma bhakti* should be understood as a type of *karma* only. And once I understand it is a *karma*, and *bhagavān* will give the *karma-phalam* not according to my desire, but according to the law of *karma*.

According to *sakāma bhakti* which is a form of *karma*, the *phalam* is going to be dependent on the law of *karma*. So, the result may be in keeping with my expectation, or the result may not be in keeping with my expectation. The *karma-phalam* can be *aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśram ca trividham karmaṇaḥ*. Therefore, *sakāma bhakti* may become successful, or may not become successful. There is no guarantee, that our *sakāma bhakti*, our *sakāma pūja* or our *sakāma japa* or our *sakāma pārayānam* will be always successful. This understanding must be very clear.

Thus a *sakāma bhaktā* faces a very high risk of losing his very faith in God, if he doesn't understand the principle of *sakāma bhakti*, when his expectations fail. Therefore according to our scriptures, *bhakti* should never be confined to *sakāma bhakti* only. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Kṛṣṇā strongly criticizes, *sakāma bhaktās* who totally rely upon *sakāma bhakti*

*yāmimām puṣpitām vācam pravadyantavyapaścitaḥ
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha nānyadastīti vādinaḥ* BG Verse 2-42

*kāmātmānaḥ svargaparā janmakarmaphalapradaṁ
kriyāviśeṣabahulāṁ bhogaiśvaryagatim prati* BG Verse 2-43

*bhogaiśvaryaprasaktānām tayāpahṛtacetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ samādhau na vidhīyate* BG Verse 2-44

*kāmaistaistairhṛtajñānāḥ prapadyante'nyadevatāḥ
taṁ taṁ niyamamāsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā* BG Verse 7-20

These *sakāma bhaktā's* mind will never rest in peace. It is always with anxiety. When *sakāma bhakti* doesn't work, it would give rise to lot of anger and depression. Anger towards God himself.

And in Bhagavad Gita, Lord Kṛṣṇā warns that the success of *sakāma bhakti* is highly doubtful, because always rules and regulations in *sakāma bhakti*, are more rigid. Which deity should be worshipped? What *naivedyam* should be offered. Which type of flower can be offered? What should be the type of *pūjā*? If we violate the prescribed rules and regulations, result may not come as expected.

So our scriptures suggest *niṣkāma bhakti*, where the rules are very relaxed.

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyāṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛtamaśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ* BG Verse 9-26

So, What will *niṣkāma bhakti* do? If *sakāma bhakti* doesn't fulfill as my desires, will *niṣkāma bhakti*, fulfill them?

Niṣkāma bhakti is a *bhakti*, by which a person wants to make one's own mind strong, healthy, and resistant to all emotional disturbances. And these emotional disturbances can either come from outside or from inside.

Scriptures give a very important message, *manaḥ eva manuṣyāṇāṁ karaṇaṁ bandha mokṣayoḥ*. Mind alone is the cause of all human bondage as well as the human freedom. A strong mind can convert a hell into heaven. A weak mind manages to convert heaven also to hell. Therefore whether you practice *sakāma bhakti* or not, scriptures point out *niṣkāma bhakti* is extremely important for all those people, who want to practice *bhakti*. In fact gradually the *sakāma bhakti* should become lesser and lesser, and *niṣkāma bhakti* should become more and more in a person's life.

For the strengthening of the mind, *niṣkāma bhakti* can be practiced in 2 different ways. One is offering varieties of *pujas* to the Lord and offering a prayer, "O Lord give me a strong mind which will remain resistant to all disturbances inspite of all types of situations. We all are born with varieties of *prārabdha karma*. They will continuously give varieties of ups and downs. O Lord, I want you to help me to get a strong mind which will be able to resist all kinds of negative emotions".

That is what the prayer, we are chanting in our classes, *vidyāṁ śuddhāṁca budhiṁ kamalajadayite satvaraṁ dehi mahyam*.

The second method of strengthening the mind, is following all mind- strengthening exercises given by the Lord through scriptures. *Bhagavān* through his scriptures, has given several disciplines and exercises by practicing which we can make the mind strong and immune to emotional disturbances. All of them are *niṣkāma bhakti* only and they will come under *yogābhyāsaḥ*.

Bhagavad Gita is one wonderful text which gives several exercises to strengthen the mind, *karma-yoga abhyāsaḥ upāsana-yoga abhyāsaḥ jñāna-yoga abhyāsaḥ*. All these will come under *niṣkāma bhakti*. Through this *niṣkāma bhakti*, I am trying to change the mind which is easier as compared to changing the world. Instead of trying to change the world, one must use the intelligence to make the mind stronger. As the nice saying goes: "instead of carpeting the whole world it is better to wear slippers - *upāna ghūḍā pādasya ananu cramavṛtāmahi*".

Then the scriptures point out that *sakāma bhakti* may be successful or may not be successful. But *niṣkāma bhakti*, is a *bhakti* which doesn't have failure at all. It is always successful.

*nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt* BG Verse 2-40

Even with a little bit of practice of *niṣkāma bhakti*, one will see a sea of change in his/her mind. The difference will be in the degree of success, but it is always success. The degree of success is directly proportional to the time and effort I am willing to put in practicing this *yoga-abhyāsa* as prescribed in scriptures. And by practicing this, I seek mental strength rather than anything else. Scriptures point out as what type of transformation one can accomplish by practicing *niṣkāma bhakti*. It is so wonderful and attractive.

In Bhagavad Gita there is a chapter called, 'bhakti-yoga' in which Lord Kṛṣṇā condenses the *niṣkāma bhakti* and *yoga-abhyāsa* in a set of 10 - 12 verses.

santuṣṭaḥ satataṁ yogī yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ

mayyarpitamanobuddhīyo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ BG Verse 12-14

satataṁ santuṣṭaḥ - always happy and contented with whatever he can earn legitimately without comparing himself with others. He is happy with what he has.

yasmānnodvijate loko lokānnodvijate ca yaḥ

harṣāmarṣabhayodvegairmukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ BG Verse 12-15

The one who doesn't disturb the world also. He enjoys such a tender considerate mind that he doesn't disturb the world. But more importantly he enjoys such a strong mind that he is not disturbed by the events of the world. Not only the world, events happening in the family, events happening to own body.

yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi na śocati na kāṅkṣati

śubhāśubhāparityāgī bhaktimānyaḥ sa me priyaḥ BG Verse 12-17

He doesn't divide the world into *śubham* and *aśubham*. For him the whole creation is manifestation of *bhagavān*. Therefore, there is no *aśubham*, everything is *śubham* and *maṅgalam* only. We don't consider anything *aśubham* including death.

"mṛtyorbhibhēti kiṁ mūḍhā kiṁ na vimuñcati".

Are you afraid of death O fool! ? Just by being afraid of death, do you think that death will leave you" ?

Biggest problem of the mind is *bhayam*. And the first benefit of *niṣkāma bhakti* is understanding and removal of this *bhayam*.

abhayaṁ satvasaṁśuddhiḥ jñāna yoga vyavasthitiḥ BG Verse 16-1

abhayaṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ vindate atha so'bhayaṁ(सौभाग्यं) gato bhavati TU

Therefore *sakāma bhakti* is ok, but more important is *niṣkāma bhakti*. It requires scriptural study, minimum Bhagavad Gita study. *Jñānam* is the remedy for *bhayam* and *jñānam* is the only medicine for *bhayam*.

Thus understand *sakāma bhakti*, understand *niṣkāma bhakti*. Follow both of them and enjoy the benefit of *bhakti*. On this auspicious *śivarātri* day (or night), may Lord *śiva* help us in practice *niṣkāma bhakti*, study of scriptures, and discover a strong mind.

Om pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇātpūrṇamudacyate I

pūrṇasyapūrṇamādāyapūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate II

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Human Aspirations

We humans act with a norm or standard that is to be achieved in our minds however small or big the action is, otherwise one would never become dissatisfied and seek something better. Suppose a man goes to drink coffee for the first time. He cannot possibly know whether it is a good cup of coffee because he has no norm or standard by which to judge it. He will observe the others having the same coffee and if they uniformly say that is good coffee, perhaps he will form a norm for coffee in his mind. That will form the norm for the rest of his life, norm for good coffee.

Now let us look at the larger picture. In life one finds oneself dissatisfied, uniformly. So there is already some kind of norm for satisfaction, which we see across all sections of society and that norm is a pleased "me," a pleased self, to begin with as a child, later the pleased self aspires to be ,total,' with no let or hindrance in any time and place.

A human child is unique, in the sense it is born with total trust on its handlers, be it mother, father, grandparents or any caretaker who handles the child. The oneness with the total is the norm, standard, with which it is born. The ,total' is the immediate surroundings in which it is born. The pleased ,me' is one who enjoys the total trust and the world around the child conforms to that total trust. It looks at mother as God. It thinks infallible is mother.

As days pass by, the child comes to see, mother can't do this, mother can't do that. The mother transfers the trust to father. He also fails. Still the child cannot survive without trust. The disappointment is stored in the child's memory as unconscious and forgotten to be processed at a later date when the child becomes an adult. For the present the child continues to trust. Without the trust, the child would die of despair. Pujya Swamiji says it is sheer Īśvara's grace that the disappointments are temporarily forgotten and stored in the unconscious to be handled at a later date when the child grows into adult and is in a position to recall and handle those disappointments. This is where modern parents can tweak a bit and play an important role in the child's growth.

They should keep the child's trust as far as possible. Be affectionate, be around, be cuddling, even if the child is sent to KG, either a parent or grandparent should be in the vicinity. The child while playing, will look around, and if it sees the mother, will go back and play. If it can't see the mother, the disappointment will get added to the unconscious. The child will think there is something wrong with itself, that is why mother is not around. The child will do anything to win the trust and appreciation of the mother. If these aspects are kept in view and to the extent they can help if the parents do not disturb the trust, then the child would be able to grow healthily with less unconscious.

So the norm for totality, completeness, total trust is still lurking in the background. All along as we grow up we contend with the erosion of trust, the erosion of total trust one began life with. So, later when the child becomes adult and when another trusted person walks into his/her life, the process of seeking the total trust by seeking to address disappointments stored in the unconscious through that intimate relationship begins.

The child in the adult sees safety in that relationship to give expression to the unconscious. The expressions can be love, seeking and giving trust, letting out childish desires through various forms; when not responded properly can give way to anger, tantrums, etc. The adult couple, together they should be able to be understanding with each other and process the expressions; we can't postpone them any further. This is the time to turn to Īśvara. Why Īśvara? Pujya Swamiji refers to Īśvara as super therapist.

We are lucky we are born in this culture, and what I say can easily be appreciated by people who are born and brought up in this culture. Hence it is equally important that we have Īśvara awareness, that everything around us is governed by Īśvara's order and for all that we take up in life, we should pray to Īśvara and seeking his anugraha we should do whatever is appropriate in a given situation, referred to as svadharma, and take whatever comes to us as result as prasāda. That Īśvara buddhi as we grow can offer the cushion in our life. We should cherish this culture and guard against fissiparous tendencies in the growth of the child. The prasāda buddhi leads to prasannata, a cheerful disposition.

As young parents, as we process our own childhood hurt and guilt by pūjā, rituals, temple visits, etc, we should also be aware that to our children we should give the least disturbance, help them grow healthily with minimum scars, hurt and guilt. We should always appreciate their small achievements, play down their mistakes, correct the mistakes by making them know that appreciation is around the corner when they correct the mistakes. Maybe occasional surprise gifts, for a mistake corrected would be in order. When they grow as mentally sound individuals with less unconscious, you as parents would reap the benefit of a harmonious home. They would be able to see how their parents resolved any uncomfortable situation at home by pūjā, rituals, temple visits, how the prasannata, the cheerful disposition helped the family have the space to wait out difficult situations, adjust themselves to setbacks and give them the buoyancy to get back to sanity, in short live a life of dharma without any undue pressure. Because everyone is fallible, only the extent differs, this appreciation is there when one grows into an adult. The child, grown into adult, be it wife (would be mother) and husband (would be father) should know that it is incumbent on their part to mutually understand that the tantrums and anger are part of the growth process, and the fallibility of everyone, processing the unconscious, the scars and disappointments carried from their childhood can only be resolved by understanding the total as Īśvara.

We have to know that there is no choice, as the norm is already set for a human being. A human being cannot accept anything less than total. This awareness will help them understand that hurt and guilt we pickup all through life are inevitable unless we see the order, and Īśvara as all-knowledge order. Pujya Swamiji talks of īśvarising all hurt, guilt as an order of karma; Swamiji refers to Īśvara as a supertherapist.

The question still remains, how to get to be the total pleased self at all time and place.. With the cheerful disposition thus acquired, śāstram (vedas) paṭha. The śāstra, guru upadeśa, the keenness to do a thorough enquiry into life, can lead to understanding 'that total, Īśvara, I am'. The guru can ensure even in these days when everything has changed since vedas' days, the guru can contemporaries the teaching so that we can still pursue the study and make it during our lifetime. It is a pleasant journey all the way because we are moving towards 'total,' the norm for fulfillment

by

V.Ramanathan

Second Swami Dayananda Saraswati Memorial Lectures

8th National Conference
organised by Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra, Bhubaneswar

Arsha Vidya Vikas Kendra, Bhubaneswar organised the second **Swami Dayananda Saraswati Memorial Lectures** in Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh from 10th-12th February 2018.

Nine Speakers presented eleven scholarly papers on Concepts in Vedanta, Bhagavadgita, Vedangas (Chandas, Vyakarana), Interfaith, Holistic Health etc. Questions raised by the learned audience were answered by the speakers as well as discussed by other speakers after presentation.

The Conference was convened by Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati. Mr Sugavanam Krishnan was the Organising Secretary and Ishwarya Chaitanya was the Master of the Ceremony.



Swami Suddhananda Saraswati, Swami Santatmananda Saraswati, Swamini Atmaprajnananda Saraswati and Mr Sugavanam Krishnan lighting the lamp in the Inaugural session.

The Speakers-2018

		
Sugavanam Krishnan presenting - Validation of Avidya/Maya prakriya	Prof. Dr. Bhaskar Nath Bhattacharyya presenting his paper	Prof. Dr. Mani Dravid presenting -Tatparyya-linga
		
Swamini Atmaprajananda presenting - Pre-Sankara Advaita	Sugavanam Krishnan presenting - Common Denominator for Effective Interfaith Dialogue	Swami Tattvavidanandajii speaking on - Discrimination between Vivekabhava and Sarvatmabhava
		
Acharya Medha Chaitanya speaking on -Teaching methodology of Paninian Grammar	Prof. Dr. Mani Dravid speaking on - Brahma- satyam jagat-mithya	Prof K Ramasubramaniam presenting - Pingala's Chandas-sastra as a fountainhead of Binary Arithmetic
		
Swamini Sadvidyanandaji presenting - Various Yajnas in Bhagavadgita	Durga Prasanna Das presenting - Holistic Health	



Arsha Kala Bhushana Smt Revathi Ramachandran and her troupe presented Dance Drama **Mohana Krshna** on the 1st day



and **Om Namah Shivaya** on the 2nd day of the Conference.

Vedanta camp by Swami Brahmaavidananda ji and Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji

Knowledge Unfolded As Emotions Overflowed

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, amidst the Nilgiri mountains proved to be the ideal place, conducive for the knowledge of the shastras to be unfolded by Swami Brahmaavidananda ji & Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji. To be in the place which has been sanctified by the overflowing grace of Dakshinamurti, the place which has been blessed by Pujya Swami Dayananda ji's teachings over decades, the place which is indeed Guru-tirtha was a shower of blessings.

The Vedanta Camp 27th Jan. to 2nd Feb, 2018 drew 60 participants from various places in India (Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Coimbatore, Kolkata, Mussoorie, Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad), Portugal and Malaysia.

"The fullness and serenity of the place was simply awesome. Pujya Swamiji's presence was all over, from his kutiya, temple, dining hall, lecture hall and everywhere." – **says Dr. Bina Nangia, Delhi.**

'Brilliant unfolding of the mahavakyas through mahavakya vichaara by Swami Brahmaavidananda ji bettered our understanding of Tat Tvam Asi, Aham Brahma Asmi, Prajnanam Brahma, Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma and So Ham.

*The last chapter of Upadesha Sahasri wonderfully explained by Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji, a conversation between Self and the mind, helped us to see that only knowledge and objectivity can put an end to the wrong notions which cause delusion. The classes by both the teachers were interwoven and connected beautifully, which helped us to bridge the gaps and join the dots in our understanding and learning. ' – **Rashmi Kaikini, Mumbai***

Starting with mantra chanting, pooja, and aartis at the temple was a mesmerizing experience. The morning meditation guided by the soothing voice of Swamini Brahma-prajnananda, would set the theme for the day. Purnima Bhatt received a lot of clarity from the Saakshi bhava meditation, *"It made me realize that one needs to only observe the thoughts and let it pass without being judgmental about anything whether it is external noise, abuse, harassment, critical comments invoking past etc. When the mind becomes calm it abides with Ishwara. Then, there is no duality between Ishwara and me and one discovers one is Brahman."*

Swamini's and Swami's talks, containing plenty of illustrations, anecdotes, examples and stories, delivered with wit and humour, made it all so interesting.

It was definitely our prarabdha that got us under the nurturing umbrella at Annaikati.
As Rama Krishnan, Bangalore puts it in a verse –

The Guru Parampara's call was there
Though I wished to be elsewhere
So, I joined the elite flock
To try to unlock the lock
The jwara of samsara is gone
As even the knowledge Dawn
As the Ahamkara I have a gratitude to say
and I, the Atma forever to stay...

The classes were interspersed with workshop sessions to gain better understanding of our life and the teachings. The students found the session on “What you want others to say about you at your funeral” as thought-provoking. Ganesh Pai shared that ‘It made us reflect on the priorities in our life, and led us to develop clarity in our roles, goals and tasks.’ ‘ The daily workshops have left their mark and I bring back with myself a vision to work towards my goals in personal, professional and spiritual life. But bigger than all of this is the grace felt in being able to spend so much time with my Gurus felt like Ishvarah prasada and the biggest blessing. – Gunjan Arora, Delhi



Held at the end of the day, the *Sanskrit Sambhaashanam* classes by Br. Laxminarayan ji was enjoyed by all. The enthusiasm to learn and speak in Sanskrit was audible and visible. All the participants were able to speak a few sentences by the end of the camp. Mission accomplished or rather Br. Laxminarayan ji's sankalpa was fructified.

The participants were amazed to see the commitment of Swamini Saradananda ji, Swamini Vedarthananda ji and the temple priests who conducted elaborate pujas and chantings with such reverence. The visit to the temple at Perur was a blessing as well.

In conclusion, Sundara Raghavan, Mumbai shared that, “Self knowledge is simple but not easy. Understanding intellectually is simple when the loving teachers from the parampara of Aarsha Vidhya unfold the truth. However, it is not easy to integrate the truth into life as long as blocks, especially emotional blocks, exist.

I thought I would let Ishvara flow through me. Who am I to let Ishvara? Upon further thinking, based on workshops and classes in the camp, I understood that all I have to do is to recognise Ishvara's presence in everything.”

Om tat sat

Compiled by students of Swami Brahmanandananda ji and Swamini Brahmaprajnananda ji

Sumedha-2017

Sumedha-2017 is a specially designed program of the 'Aarsha Samskriti, Hyderabad' for school students is intended to open up young minds to the issues surrounding them in the real world and suggestions to effectively tackle them. Value-building is the aim here through channelling their boundless energy, which improves the students' memory, self-study skills, academic performance, and generally foster in them a socially responsible mindset.

Sumedha-2017 (A Self Development Contest), has been conducted annually. It is held both in urban centres and rural areas. This year, this self-development contest for standards 6-10 was conducted in 88 schools in which government and private schools in seven districts of Telangana State. Level-1 contest attracted 17,557 students from various schools. For Level-2, the top performers were each asked to share their learning outcomes, and 1,099 received prizes. For Level-3 half day workshops were conducted at selected locations for the participant schools with eminent motivational speakers.



Nrupatunga-2017



Sai Sarani Alwal



Vivekananda Medchal



ZPHS Jagdgirinagar

The major contributions of this project were Ramakrishana Math, Hyderabad and Arsha Dharma Seva Trust, Bangalore apart from few other individuals. Twenty Two volunteers are contributed their time, energy and money.

Report by: Pulluri Srinivas, Aarsha Samskriti, Hyderabad

Sannyasa Diksa at Arsha Vidya Pitham,

Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rīṣhkeṣh

On Mahasivaratri (13.02.2018), sannyasa dikṣa was ordained at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh by Swami Tattvavidananda Saraswati to the following students:

- **Swami Atmananda Saraswati**, formerly known as Raju Indran; he belonged to the 3rd batch of students who studied at Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam, Nagpur under Acarya Swamini Brahmaprakashananda Saraswati.
- **Swami Cidghanananda Saraswati**, formerly known as Chandrasekhar; he belongs to the 3rd and current batch of students who study at Arsha Vidya Pitham, Rishikesh under Acarya Swami Santatmananda Saraswati.
- **Swami Sadasivananda Saraswati**, formerly known as SR Ganesh; he belonged to the 3rd batch of students who studied at Arsha Vijnana Gurukulam, Nagpur under Acarya Swamini Brahmaprakashananda Saraswati.



Sannyasa rituals and viraja homa were performed on the previous day of Mahasivaratri and a padaka-puja was offered to Pujya Swāmiji immediately after the sannyasa dikṣa.

Photos attached as per the above order left to right.

Report by Sri Sugavanam

SRI SWAMI BRAHMAVIDYANANDA SARASWATI

(29 Nov 1961 – 13 Feb. 2018)

Swamiji attained Samadhi on Sivaratri day 13 th February 2018 at Rishikesh



VEDANTA LEARNING CENTRES:

SWAMI TATTVANANDA ASHRAM, DINDIGUL

ARSHA VIDYA GURUKULAM, COIMBATORE

POSITIONS HELD:

- ACHARYA OF 3 YEAR RESIDENTIAL COURSE THENI, 2000-2003
 - ACHARYA AND TRUSTEE AT ARSHA VIDYA PITHAM, RISHIKESH 2003-2006
 - ACHARYA OF 3 YEAR COURSE THENI, 2006-2010
 - ACHARYA OF 3 YEAR RESIDENTIAL COURSE , RISHIKESH 2013-16
 - ACHARYA OF 3 YEAR RESIDENTIAL COURSE, RISHIKESH 2016-19
 - MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SWAMI DAYANADA SARASWATI SUKHANAND CAREER PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, 2003-2018
 - FOUNDER OM MANDIRAM , VADIPATTI, TAMIL NADU
 - TRUSTEE OF SRI JNANANANDA TAPOVANAM, TIRUKOVILOOR
 - FOUNDER & MANAGING TRUSTEE OF DAYANEE SEVA TRUST, VADIPATTI
- ◆ CONDUCTED VARIOUS SHORT TERM COURSES AT SWAMI DAYANANDA ASHRAM, RISHIKESH 2003-2018
- ◆ CONDUCTED VARIOUS SHORT TERM COURSES IN YOGA AND VEDANTA IN MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, CHINA, THAILAND, HONG KONG, ETC

A Report on Swami Brahmavidyananda Saraswati

Sri Swami Brahmavidyananda Saraswati attained Maha Samadhi on Tuesday the 13th of February, 2018 around 11.20 pm. He had a massive heart attack and the end came almost immediately. Two students, and one of his previous course students and the Ashram Acharya were with him when the attack came. They all did their best and rushed him to the hospital where it was declared that Swamiji was brought dead.

On Friday, the 9th of February, 2018, Swamiji was coming to the class at 08:45 AM. But unusually he first came to the office and immediately lied down on the sofa stating that he felt some chest pain. He was attended to by the office people and the Acharya. As the pain increased, he was rushed to the near-by hospital around 9.30 a.m. He was given oxygen, saline, followed by ECG. The 1st ECG was abnormal and after initial medication, the Medical Officer recommended for an Angiogram. It was confirmed that he had a mild heart attack in the office here, and on reaching the hospital as well.....he was sweating profusely.

But Swamiji was against Angiogram and never wanted any surgery. Despite the request from all of us attending him, he never yielded to our repeated requests. He was firm in his decision, not to undergo angiogram. In the meantime, there was good response to the treatment and the second ECG was better. Yet, the Doctor insisted on Angiogram to rule out all possibilities of another attack. Swamiji, was admitted and treated as an in-patient for 24 hours.....though he was supposed to be in the hospital for 72 hours, as he became normal, Swamiji preferred to be discharged. Therefore, he was discharged around 1 p.m. on Saturday, the 10th of Feb. with medications and strict advice to take minimum one week bed rest.

He followed the instructions just for one day. The very next day, i.e., 12th, he stopped taking medicines and started his routine work of visiting ashram, temple, ensuring the preliminary rituals meant for the sannyasa diksha are carried-out as per schedule – the whole day he was often visiting the venue. On Tuesday the 13th, he helped the newly initiated sannyasins by providing breakfast, presenting them with shawl, socks, cap, etc. and did namaskaram, as well. He helped them in filling up the necessary forms to be given to the administrative office for necessary registration as sannyasins.

Then in the evening, he came to the Temple around 5 p.m., and took the lead of the Sivaratri Programs. He led the Rudram chanting along with many others repeated it 11 times, stayed for astotram, bhajans, etc. He was extremely active, and took part in every activity which went on till 10.20 p.m. He then took prasadam at the dining hall and went to his room.

About 5 minutes to 11 pm, he rang up one of the students and called his name followed by the cry of pain. The student rushed to Swamiji's room and found him lying in his bed in pain. He massaged his chest on the right side where the pain was and he felt relaxed, he was speaking normally for about 10 minutes - despite the request, he yet again refused to come to Bharadvaj Hospital which is close by. Therefore, we made arrangements to take him to Himalayan Hospital near the airport. In this hospital, they declared him brought dead. We were all shocked, though with him, doing our best, we could not save him.

SRI SWAMI BRAHMAVIDYANANDA SARASWATI was a disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He was a great Acharya, teaching Vedanta and Samskrtam to long term course students at the Arsha Vidya Pitham, Sri Dayananda Ashram, **Rishikesh**, since 2003. He had successfully completed two three year course at Rishikesh, and was in to the teaching of the third 3 year course, which was commenced on the 15th of August, 2016. He also had completed 2 courses at Theni, Swami Chidbhanananda Ashram.

Swamiji was very humble, simple and highly compassionate. He was full of knowledge which he was happily sharing with one and all, particularly to the present course students. The students, naturally are shocked and speechless.

FEELINGS OF ACHARYA:

" I have been associated with Swamiji for the past 15 years and had seen him to be consistent in all that he does. His patience while teaching the Sutras are un-parallel, his kindness shown towards his students and others, as well as his emphasis on living a life of dharma was the best I can take from him.

He was soaked in the Bashyas, and was a great teacher indeed. It is a great loss to Arsha Vidya and all of us.”Om--
Swami Santatmananda –

FEELINGS OF STUDENTS:

“Swamiji was KNOWLEDGE himself. He was simple, humble and highly compassionate. He was a man of contentment. Easy to approach and he was all the time ready to clear our doubts. Indeed, a Mahatma. It is an irreparable loss and we are yet to come out of this shock!...Om...Chidghanananda.....

“Swamiji is the best of human can ever be” ...Vikas Luhash.

“Swamiji was a very beautiful person filled with compassion, simpliity, with a wonderful smile, he will enlighten our life forever.” ..Om – Vagdevi –

“Swami Ji IS Acharya of brahma Vidya par excellence! He lived Brahma Vidya through his thoughts, words and actions. He knew the art of making man out of Monkey and gradually turn him to Atman/Brahman. In my opinion he was the best ever acharya on Brahma Vidya that Arsha Gurukulam can ever produce. He is in my heart in the form of repeated teachings which he inculcated in us during his presence. I will keep him alive by following his teachings,” ..Om... –a Student—

“I remember our first class with Swamiji. While introducing himself he said, ‘I am a teacher, this is my identity.’ It sounded very firm and humble at the same time, as were his classes. For me, he was the embodiment of vast knowledge, genuine love for learning, simplicity, modesty, kindness, committed life and self-discipline. He gave us the sense of stability and continuity – no matter what is going on – the class is always there, the class should always be there, the learning should never stop. I think, if at all there is a way to thank Swamiji enough for his kindness, it is to keep on learning, lifelong just as he taught and did. Thereby, he will always be with us.” ..Om.. –Yuliya—

“Swami Brahavidyananda had a special connection with all students in the 3-1/2 year course. When teaching Sanskrit and Vedanta, he took great care in imparting the message that was given to him by Pujya Swamiji. I will always remember Swami Brahavidyananda as the one who takes great effort in teaching irrespective of his personal circumstance.”.. – Damian -- ..

“I will cherish in my heart Swamiji’s love for knowledge and tireless dedication to teaching.” ..—Andrea--..

“So blessed and grateful to be able to be a student of Brhmavidyananda Swamiji, who is an exceptional teacher of brahavidya, as well as an embodiment of teaching. Namah, Namah, Namah.!”..—Jun--..

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Sivaratri Puja at AVG

