

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the twelfth part of the serial article, continuation from January 2022 newsletter.

DUALITY REQUIRES NO TEACHING

Even after doing a lot of *vicāra*, some people, even great *ācāryas*, teachers with tremendous knowledge of grammar and logic, still come up with entirely different meanings. One person says that *tat tvam asi* means *tasya tvam asi*, 'You belong to him.' This is an entirely different meaning. Yet another person says it is *atat tvam asi*, 'You are not that.' *Tat* means 'that' and *atat* means 'not that.' How can they make such statements? The entire sentence is '*sa ātmātattvamasi śvetaketu*,' and the actual division of the words is *ātmā tat tvam asi*, but he breaks the words differently. He adds another *a* to make it *ātmā atat tvam asi*. He says this because of a phonetic rule in Sanskrit.⁶⁸ In this rule, *a* plus *a* is *ā*, *ā* plus *ā* is also *ā*, and even *ā* plus *a* is *ā*. Any combination leads to only one long vowel, *ā*. So instead of *ātmā tat tvam asi*, you are that, he says *ātmā atat tvam asi*, you are not that. But to know this, do you require teaching?

THE STORY OF MURĀRI

A great *mahātmā* was living in a village. He taught Vedānta there and said, 'You are Nārāyaṇa, the Lord.' The student thought to himself, 'How can I be Nārāyaṇa?' He was very uncomfortable with this thought, so he went to another swami who lived down the street. This other swami taught that everything is different, the Lord is the Lord and you are you. There is a difference between *jīvas*. There is a difference between *jīva* and *jagat*, and there is a difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara*. This is called *dvaita*, dualism. This *dvaita*-swami was teaching the *mahāvākya* as *ātmā atat tvam asi*, you are not that.

So this person went to the *dvaita*-swami, and the *dvaita*-swami said, 'That other swami is wrong. Thank Lord Nārāyaṇa you came here! If you had gone to that

⁶⁸ अकःसवर्णेदीर्घः (Pā. 6-1-101)

other swami, you would have become a *māyāvādin*, a proponent of *māyā*. Sit here and I will teach you.’ So for twelve years he taught him logic, grammar, and some Vedānta also. At the end of the course, this student was very proud. He had learned the *śāstra*. Now he wanted to have a debate with the first swami.

That swami had since become an old man. His hair and his beard were very long, and the situation was uncomfortable. So one day he went to the local barber, who was named Murāri. Just as Murāri was getting ready to give him a shave, this student came to ask for *vāda-bhikṣā*, a discussion. The swami asked him to wait till he was done with his shave, which was his first in 35 years. During all that time, he had completely forgotten what he looked like without all that hair.

When Murāri had shaved the swami completely, he gave him a mirror. The swami saw himself, looking so young and bright without all the grey hair, and with *tejas*, brilliance on his face. When he looked in the mirror, he said, ‘My God, Murāri, you are no ordinary barber! You have given me so much *tejas*, *brahma-tejas*. All these years I’ve been doing *tapas*, austerities, and did not get the *tejas*, and here with only a few strokes of your razor, you gave it to me. You must be Lord Nārāyaṇa himself.’ Then he prostrated at Murāri’s feet, saying, ‘You are Nārāyaṇa.’

Murāri was horrified that a swami was prostrating to him. He pulled his feet back and cried, ‘What are you doing? I am not Nārāyaṇa!’ And he looked at the student and pleaded with him, ‘Please tell him that I am not Nārāyaṇa!’ The student told the swami, ‘Are you crazy? He is not Nārāyaṇa. He is the local barber Murāri! What happened to you?’ Then the swami answered, ‘Okay, if you say, I accept it’, and went for a bath. When he came back from his bath, Murāri had packed up all his things and left. And the student who had been waiting for a discussion was also gone. But after a few minutes, he came back with a plate full of fruits, prostrated at the swami’s feet, and said, ‘*Adīhi bhagavo brahmeti*, O Revered One, please teach me Brahman.’ This student saw that although Murāri never went to school, he was convinced he was not Nārāyaṇa. The student realised, ‘Even after 12 years of studying logic, grammar, and Vedānta, I know no more than Murāri. I know that I am not Nārāyaṇa.’

So if I say *tvam asi*, 'you are,' and then keep quiet, what will you think? Everyone will interpret according to his or her own psychology, because 'you are' is an incomplete sentence. It creates an expectation. Once I say 'you are,' then something else has to be said, and that should be previously unknown to you. Otherwise what is the use of saying it? Suppose I come to you and say, 'You are a human being', it is a useless statement, unless of course I mean, 'Behave well!'

When a teacher wants to communicate a particular statement to a student, and that too, if the teacher is the father, interested in the welfare of his son, what will he teach? Will he say, '*ātmā atat tvam asi*, you are not that'? No, because the son knows that already. The son knows he is not the world, he is not father, he is not mother, he is not the sun, he is not the moon, he is not any of these things, including Īśvara. He knows this very well. Therefore, you do not need to say *ātmā atat tvam asi*. But if in fact you are the whole, then you have to be given the equation. That equation is in keeping with what was said originally, which was that knowledge, gaining which everything is as well-known.⁶⁹ Such a knowledge is possible only when *tvam* is *tat*. You are that, *ekam eva advitīyam*, one without a second.

⁶⁹ कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवतीति (Muṇḍakopaniṣad 1.1.3)

To be continued...

“*Vēdānta* says that the truth is non-dual. Non-dualism is not monism. Monism simply means one, and one is always available for fractioning, for becoming many. One plus *mithyā* (apparent reality) is still one; this is called non-dualism. *Satyam* (non-objectifiable, non-negatable reality) is one, which is yourself. Add the whole world, both known and unknown, is still one. This knowledge makes a great difference in one's life.”

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati