

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

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VERSE 2

सङ्गः सत्सु विधीयतां भगवतो भक्तिर्दृढाऽऽधीयतां
शान्त्यादिः परिचीयतां दृढतरं कर्माशु सन्त्यज्यताम् ।
सद्विद्वानुपसृप्यतां प्रतिदिनं तत्पादुका सेव्यतां
ब्रह्मैकाक्षरमर्थ्यतां श्रुतिशिरोवाक्यं समाकर्ण्यताम् ॥ 2 ॥

saṅgaḥ satsu vidhīyatām bhagavato bhaktirdṛḍhā''dhīyatām
śāntyādīḥ paricīyatām dṛḍhatarāṁ karmāśu santyajyatām ।
sadvidvānupasṛpyatām pratidinam tatpādukā sevayatām
brahmaikākṣaramarthyatām śrutīśirovākyaṁ samākṛṇyatām ॥ 2 ॥

सङ्गः *saṅgaḥ* - gathering, association; सत्सु *satsu* - with people committed to the pursuit of knowledge; विधीयताम् *vidhīyatām* - may it be done; भगवतः *bhagavataḥ* - of the Lord; भक्तिः *bhaktiḥ* - devotion; दृढा *dṛḍhā* - firm; आधीयताम् *ādīyatām* - may it be cultivated; शान्त्यादिः *śāntyādīḥ* - the six-fold virtues of *śama*, etc.; परिचीयताम् *paricīyatām* - may they be collected, gained through practice; दृढतरम् *dṛḍhatarām* - very firmly; कर्म *karma* - actions (even enjoined actions); आशु *āśu* - quickly; सन्त्यज्यताम् *santyajyatām* - may they be completely given up; सद्विद्वान् *sadvidvān* - one who knows the truth; उपसृप्यताम् *upasṛpyatām* - may he be approached properly; प्रतिदिनम् *pratidinam* - daily; तत्पादुका *tatpādukā* - his feet (lit. 'sandals'); सेव्यताम् *sevayatām* - may (the knower of the truth) be served, worshipped; ब्रह्मैकाक्षरम् *Brahmaikākṣaram* - non-dual, imperishable Brahman; अर्थ्यताम् *arthyatām* - may the knowledge be sought; श्रुतिशिरोवाक्यम् *śrutīśirovākyaṁ* - Vedānta, *upaniṣads* (lit. 'mahāvākyas, statements that are the head of the Veda'); समाकर्ण्यताम् *Samākṛṇyatām* - may they be listened to well.

'May you associate with people who are committed to the pursuit of knowledge.

May you cultivate a firm devotion to the Lord. May you firmly practice to gain the six-fold virtues of *śama*, etc.²⁸ May you quickly and firmly renounce actions, even those enjoined by the *śruti*. May you approach properly one who knows the truth, and serve him daily. May you request from him the knowledge of the imperishable, non-dual Brahman. May you listen well to the statements of the *upaniṣads*.'

IMPORTANCE OF SATSAṄG

The previous verse said *ātmeccā vyavasīyatām*, may one entertain the desire for self-knowledge. That desire for self-knowledge is called *śubha-icchā*,²⁹ a desire for that which is *śubha*. *Śubha* means auspicious, and what is auspicious is *mokṣa*. So let this be entertained first. Then, in order to fulfil this desire, the verse said *nijagrāt tūrṇam vinirgamyatām*, there should be a certain *vairāgya*, dispassion towards other pursuits. Then what should you do?

Saṅgaḥ satsu vidhīyatām; may you seek the company of, associate with *sat-puruṣas*, people who are committed to the pursuit of knowledge. *Saṅgaḥ satsu* means *satpuruṣaiḥ saha vāsaḥ*, association, living with and keeping the company of *sat-puruṣas*. This is very important because the desire for *ātmā* has to be protected, like one protects a small spark. In the old days, they used to make fire by churning a rod with two wooden blocks, one on top of the other. The friction caused by this churning would create some sparks, and they would collect the sparks in cotton. This was very carefully tended and then made into fire.

Similarly, the *ātma-icchā*, desire for *ātmā*, will have many obstructions. There can be a lot of waylaying. For example, some people go to Rishikesh, giving up everything, only to end up learning to play the *vīṇā*.³⁰ You need not go all the way to Rishikesh for that. So they cannot completely dedicate themselves to *vīṇā* either. It becomes a problem. This is what they call waylaying. You get yourself

²⁸ *Śama* = mastery over the mind; *dama* = mastery over the external organs such as eyes, ears etc.; *uparama* = doing what is to be done by you at a given time, place and situation; *titikṣā* = enduring both pleasant and unpleasant situations with a cheerful attitude; *śraddhā* = commitment to the words of *śruti* and the *ācārya*; *samādhāna* = focus, concentration.

²⁹ शुभस्य मोक्षस्य इच्छा इति शुभेच्छा

³⁰ A stringed instrument played in Indian classical music.

completely waylaid. You do not reach what you want to reach and instead you go for other things. So you learn some *vīṇā*, some bhajans and some *āsanas*. Afterwards, you start your own society. This is an unfortunate thing, allowing yourself to be totally sidetracked.

Instead, you must find people who are really given to the pursuit of this knowledge. One should keep company with such people alone, *saha vāsaḥ krīyatām*. Then this desire, however small a spark it may be, can become a big and all-consuming fire. One must have this burning desire for the knowledge, because only a person with that kind of desire can really understand this. This is something very special. *Ātma-icchā* is the main thing, it is the only solution for you. No other solution is available. The *ātmaicchā* is such a jealous desire that it does not allow for other desires. It has to be an all consuming desire.

In Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, a *śirovrata* is discussed; a person with his hair, as though, on fire. If your hair caught fire, what will you do? Will you ask somebody, 'What shall I do now?' No, you will just dive into any water available, however dirty the water. That is the kind of urgency we are talking about. Similarly here, the person has this allconsuming desire for *ātmā*, meaning desire for *ātma-jñānam*, knowledge of *ātmā*. *Ātmā* is already there, so what is needed is *ātma-jñānam*. To tend this small little flame of desire so it becomes an all-consuming fire, you need to have *satsaṅga* with *sat-puruṣas*, those whose dedication is to knowledge. *Vidhīyatām* means *krīyatām*, may one do this.

There will be many difficulties along the way. These are called *antarāyas*, hindrances. Any one small thing can switch off the desire. You may think, 'I'll see about this later,' or else you might conclude, 'There is nothing there, what is the use of all that?' People can easily get sidetracked. There are many obstacles to *mokṣa*. This is because what you are interested in, is something that is against the ordinary, common pursuits of a human being. Since you are going against the current, the natural *svabhāva*, disposition of a human being, naturally there can be any number of obstructions. These obstructions can be emotional or they can be external.

DEVOTION HELPS TO ELIMINATE OBSTACLES

To get rid of these obstructions, *bhagavataḥ-dṛḍhā bhaktiḥādhīyatām*; may you cultivate *dṛḍhā bhakti*, firm devotion, for Bhagavān. Who is Bhagavān? *Bhagaḥ asya asti iti bhagavān*, the one who has *bhaga* is called Bhagavān. *Bhaga* means *ṣaḍ-aiśvarya*, the sixfold absolute virtues. They are *aiśvaryam*, overlordship, *jñānam*, all knowledge, *vairāgyam*, total dispassion born of fullness, *vīryam*, power, *yaśas*, fame and *śrī*, all forms of wealth. *Bhagavataḥ bhaktiḥ* means devotion for which the object is Bhagavān. It is not Bhagavān's *bhakti* !³¹

Bhakti is an internal attitude. When you do physical *pūjā*, that is also *bhakti*. But *dṛḍhā bhakti* is in the form of a conviction that with the grace of Bhagavān, it is possible for me to eliminate all my obstacles. Another word for *bhakti* is *viśvāsa*. *Upāsana*, various practices of meditation and worship, are also *bhakti*. Not only do you perform *pūjā* externally, internally you also do *dhyānam*,³² meditation, also a form of *bhakti*. *Dṛḍha-viśvāsaḥ*, strong faith in Īśvara, likewise is *bhakti*. This means that tomorrow will not be a problem. Things will happen for you, as they are meant to. There is nothing for you to worry about, no worry for the future. You live for today. Having strong faith in Īśvara, in the order of things, that is the surrender.

Bhagavat-bhakti is an important thing in this pursuit. It is both a religious pursuit and a spiritual pursuit because Bhagavān, the Lord, is involved here. All that we are seeking is Bhagavān, in fact. *Bhagavatbhakti* is part of the seeker's virtue, and is for gaining as much of the Lord's grace as one can in order to eliminate all the obstacles. The *dṛḍhā bhakti* itself gives you a psychological advantage. With devotion and faith, naturally you can relax because you let Bhagavān take over, it is his job. Once you have given the job to an efficient being like Bhagavān, you need not bother about it. We cannot have a better, more efficient person than Bhagavān.

³¹ कर्मणिषष्ठी नखत सम्बन्धषष्ठी

³² सगुण-ब्रह्म-विषय-मानसव्यापारः ध्यानम्

So hand over the baby to Bhagavān. Let him babysit, why do you bother? Make Bhagavān your babysitter, this is the idea. What is the baby? It is a problem baby. 'Problem baby' means your problem is the baby. Hand over all your problems to Bhagavān. You cannot have a better babysitter. Bhagavān has so many tricks. Whatever the baby wants, he can bring. He can keep the baby in good humor, so there is no problem for you.

BREAKING THINKING HABITS

Śāntyādiḥ paricīyatām; śānti means *śama*, mastery over the ways of the mind. The word *ādi* means 'and so on,' referring to *dama*, *uparama*, *titikṣā*, *śraddhā*, and *samād-hāna*.³³ *Paricīyatām* means may you collect a lot, or in other words, *abhyasyatām*, may one practice. Let *śama* and the other virtues be collected by you, practiced by you. How can you practice inner tranquility? Understand the ways of your mind. *Śama* covers all of your psychological and emotional well-being. *Dama* is external discipline. *Śama* means understanding the ways of your mind. These can be gained through effort alone, involving a lot of pain, sacrifice and understanding. The whole process is a painful one. You have to deny yourself of certain things. You have to go through the pain because the more you look into yourself, the more painful it becomes, to yourself and to others. Others also should be understanding. And you should be understanding to yourself. Only then can you go through that small spell, which one has to go through.

Therefore, *śāntyādiḥ paricīyatām*, may these qualities be cultivated in your daily living. You have to break old habits by living, understanding, maintaining a certain attitude, and so on. It is especially important to break thinking habits. These are very difficult to handle. Being diehard, they do not go away easily. May these thinking habits be reconstituted so that you do not get into the same groove of wrong thinking. When wrong thinking is there, pain will be there immediately. There are certain ways of thinking that cause pain, and you must understand these well. You must do whatever is necessary to have psychological well-being.

³³The six-fold qualifications for seeker of self-knowledge – refer to footnote 28.

THE PURPOSE OF SANNYĀSA

Dṛḍhataram karmāśu santyajyatām; here he is prescribing *sannyāsa*.³⁴ This renunciation of karma is meant for a *sannyāsī*, of course, and therefore we have to understand this properly. *Dṛḍhataram* means very firmly. *Karma* here means *vihita-karma*, all the *karmas* enjoined by the *śāstra*. *Kāmya-karma*, *karma* to fulfil a desire, was mentioned before. The person is already set to give up *kāmya-karma*. But now it says one should give up *vihita-karma* also. You cannot give that up unless you take *sannyāsa*, so here the verse says, 'May one quickly give up *karma* in accordance with the *śāstra*.'³⁵ The time has come for you to give up even *nitya-naimittika-karmas*, the daily duties, etc., which you have been doing regularly and properly. This is because your commitment is for only one thing, knowledge. How do you give up these duties? By *sannyāsa*, which means letting your sole pursuit be for knowledge. *Sannyāsa* is not simply cutting off all your hair and wearing ochre robes. There is something special about *sannyāsa*.

The special thing is that once you take *sannyāsa*, you are not good for anything else. The only thing you are good for is *ātma-jñānam*. A *sannyāsī* is meant only for *jñānam*, knowledge. You are not qualified for anything else. You are not qualified for marriage. You are not qualified for a job. You disqualify yourself from everything else by taking to a life of *sannyāsa*. Thereby, there is a clinching that takes place inside. You have committed yourself. There is nothing else you can do. Thus, you pursue *jñānam* to the exclusion of everything else. This total dedication does something good. Simply taking to *sannyāsa* is not enough to gain *jñānam*, but it does help a *mumukṣu*, one who wants to gain this knowledge and discover freedom. Therefore, it is important to understand the spirit of this, the dedicated pursuit of knowledge. The author also gives you a certain time for that, namely *āśu*, quickly, do not postpone.

To be continued...

³⁴ Renunciation, the final stage of life in the Vedic tradition.

³⁵ कर्म आशु विधिवत् त्यज्यताम्