

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the sixteenth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2022 newsletter.

MANANAM REMOVES DOUBTS BORN OF INTELLECT

We come now to *mananam*. Some people say that *mananam* means reflection: 'Listen, reflect, meditate.' But as we saw, *śravaṇam* is not simply listening, it is *vākya-vicāra*. After doing *vākya-vicāra*, you have a very clear vision of what Vedānta says. You have no *pramāṇa-sankhā*, no doubt at all about what the *pramāṇa* says. You have analysed everything that the sentences say and the vision of the *śruti* is very clear. Then what is *mananam*? We also use a lot of logic while doing *śravaṇam*, but that is only to understand the sentences. In English, we call this hermeneutics. The Sanskrit term is *mīmāṃsā*. It implies *upapatti*, reasoning. Grammar is also used. Everything is used.

However, there can be a doubt: the *jīva* cannot be *Īśvara*. We have already taken care of the arguments claiming that *śruti* does not say *ātmā* is *Īśvara*. But now, even though it is clear that *śruti* says *jīva* is *Īśvara*, you still cannot accept it. Why? Because it beats your reason. This is because there is no understanding with reference to *prameya*. *Prameya* means that which is to be understood by the *pramāṇa*. So there is this doubt: 'How can I be Brahman?'

This doubt is born of your intellect. How do you remove this doubt? This is the problem with the *paṇḍita* tradition, namely that they will quote *śruti* here. But what *śruti* says is not the problem. The *śāstra* itself has enough *prakriyā*, methods, and logic to prove its point. But there may be a person who does not accept the *śruti* at all. He tried his best with the *śruti*, but his position is, '*Śruti* may say you are Brahman, but I say that you are only a *jīva*. You were born, you are going to die, and there is no such thing as *ātmā*. When the body is destroyed, you are destroyed. So you should just live for the day. Did anyone ever get up from the ashes in the cremation ground? No, and that is why we completely burn the per-

son, reduce him to ashes, and then immerse those in the river. We make sure that nobody comes back.'

THE MATERIALIST POSITION

So this person's thinking is, 'As long as I live, let me make merry.' Even if you go into debt, who cares? Move your business operations elsewhere. Just enjoy life and drink ghee.⁸⁸ This notion of drinking ghee is based upon an Ayurvedic statement: *ghṛtaṁ vai āyuh*, ghee is life. But ghee is meant only for *agni*, sacrificial fire, not *jāṭhara-agni*, the fire in your stomach. Ghee is all cholesterol. A little bit of ghee is okay, but these days it is not good because we do not walk like they used to in the olden days. Here, ghee is an *upalakṣaṇa*, standing for various things. It means that you should just live for the day. Suppose a person does not pay back his debts and asks, 'Why should I pay them back?'

'Because it's a *pāpa*, a wrong action.'

'*Pāpa* for whom?'

'For the *jīva*.'

'So when will I experience this *pāpa* result?'

'Later, in the next *janma*, next birth.'

'There is no next *janma*. It is all over, here. When you are dead and buried deep enough, or burnt to ashes, you do not come back. Afterwards there is no *jīva* or anything.'

This person will say there is no survival after death, that death is the end. If there is consciousness, it is just a matter of brain chemistry. When the brain is destroyed, consciousness is also gone. It is all a combination of varieties of things brought to manifestation. Afterwards it goes away, like the red colour produced by chewing betel leaf with betel nut and lime paste.⁸⁹ The leaf is green, the lime

⁸⁸ यावत् जीवेत् सुखं जीवेत् ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत् भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं कुतःञ

'As long as one lives, one should live happily. Even incurring debt, one should drink ghee (i.e. make merry). Once the body has become ashes, where is its coming back again?' (चार्वाक- School of thought)

⁸⁹ Traditional stuffed betel leaf, consumed as a digestive after meals

paste is white, and the nut is a very light brown. When you put them all together, you get a red colour. Similarly, all these things like brain cells, etc. may be *jāda*, inert, but if you put them all together, then there is consciousness. It functions for some time and when these things are destroyed, consciousness is gone. It is all very simple. There is no individual surviving or anything. So he argues that one should just live for today. Such people call themselves rationalists.

How are you going to answer this person? Everything seems to be all right, including that person's argument. Then you come to me and say, 'Even Buddhism says the same thing, Swamiji. How can you say that they are different? All of them say the same thing.' If they speak like this, then they are only pseudo-Buddhists. A real Buddhist will say it is *śūnya*, nothing. Or he will say it is *kṣaṇika-vijñānam*, flickers of consciousness. He will never accept that there is something free from all this, something that is a *satya-vastu*, free from all divisions of time and space.

Therefore, each one has his own philosophy. Any philosophy seems to look the same to me and seems to sound alright. In this way, you become a sitting duck for anybody who says anything. That is why the verse says that you cannot just quote *śruti* for him, you have to answer him. You cannot simply say, 'I believe.' This is not a matter for belief. This is a matter for clear understanding. You will not have clarity if you are oscillating between Buddhism and Vedānta.

Truth is always the same, it has got to be the same. You are Brahman means you are limitless. Or, they can say what amounts to the same meaning in any language. That is Vedānta. The truth can be told in Latin or Greek or any language, it need not necessarily be in Sanskrit. And if anyone says anything different from that, then it is going to be less than infinite. Whatever differs from infinite cannot be more than infinite, it can only be less than infinite.

Therefore, nobody is going to say anything more because *śruti* has the last word about you: 'You are Brahman.' But some people do not like it at all. If someone tries to prove that you are not Brahman, you get all enthusiastic. Whether you like

it or not, you are Brahman. Anything other than *śruti* is going to be opposed to *śruti* because it is just the opposite of *śruti*. One is infinite, everything else will be only finite.

SEE THE FALLACIES IN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Those arguments either arise in your intellect or they have already come from another intellect, which is why it is called a school of thought. Vedānta is not the sixth school of thought. It is neither a school nor a thought. Vedānta is a *pramāṇa*, whose vision is that you are Brahman. Any school of thought is going to say something different than what the *vastu* is and what the *śruti* says. It will therefore have an argument to support that contention. You have to see how he establishes his argument. If it is against *śruti*, it is wrong. If it is wrong, there must be a fallacy in the argument establishing the contention. Do you see that fallacy? If you do not see it, that means your understanding is in trouble. There is no *niṣṭhā*, firmness, in your understanding.

Having *jñāna-niṣṭhā* means that fallacies in other arguments are seen as one sees big pumpkins. Even a small mistake is a big mistake for a *paṇḍita*. The characteristic of a good *paṇḍita* is to see the mistake as a mistake. What is a small mistake for you is a huge blunder for a *paṇḍita*. Any small deviation becomes very clear to one who has clarity of the vision. That person alone has clarity and has assimilated the vision. The assimilation implies what we call reasoning, and that reasoning is called *mananam*.

So *mananam* does not mean 'reflection,' even though some people describe it that way. It is seeing the fallacies in the different schools of thought, not to dismiss them, in order to get your *buddhi* straight. It is not to dismiss a Kapila or a Kaṇāda. Kapila is the author of the school of Sāṅkhya, and Kaṇāda is the author of the school of Vaiśeṣika. There are different people and all are sparring partners for Vedānta. It is like a boxer who practices every day with punching bags. But when he gets into the ring, the other person is not a punching bag, he punches back! So, you need to have a sparring partner.

Similarly, Vedantins have got some sparring partners. There were never any Sāṅkhyas or Vaiśeṣikas living in the world, only sparring partners for Vedantins. Only Vedantins talk about Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika. They were all Vaidikas alone. With these sparring partners you can box, and thereby you get your knowledge really straight. It is purely for your own clarity's sake that you have to analyse all this. The purpose is not to dismiss anybody. It is to redeem the knowledge from any kind of blemish or vagueness.

LOGIC ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

While you are analysing, however, do not enter into *dustarka*, wrong logic. Do not try to establish that *ātmā* is *jīva* just by *tarka*, reasoning. Instead, you should follow *śrutimatastarka*. *Śrutimatastarka* means *śrutimata-anukūla-tarka*, a reasoning that helps you understand what the *śruti* says. Do not be trapped by *dustarka*, which is pure reason and so on. Pure reason does not help here because the self is not an object of inference. The self is always self-evident, self-revealing and therefore it is not the subject matter of *pratyakṣa*, perception or *anumāna*, inference. You must see the fallacies in wrong arguments. Seeing the fallacy is what is called *mananam*, for which you must follow proper reasoning. Otherwise you will get lost somewhere in the jungle of reason.

That is the purpose of this *nyāya*, logic, and other related disciplines. Those days they did not have any other type of education for creating a capacity to reason properly. So they used to say that without the study of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Vedānta is '*anyāya-Vedānta*.' *Anyāya* means without logic, in other words, confusion. But today it is not like that. When you go through school and study mathematics, physics and so on, you develop an intellectual discipline. Once you have an intellectual discipline, it becomes very clear to you when anyone says something that is wrong. That intellectual discipline is gained by proper thinking.

To be continued...