

**Sādhana-pañcakam**  
**Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk**

*This is the fourth part of the serial article, continuation from May 2021 newsletter.*

### THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

In all of this, the desire for the self is, 'Who am I?' The question is more than psychology. If you are saying, 'I want to know the self, *ātmā*,' then you have *āpātata-jñāna*, a certain knowledge that the self is the one that is self-evident, which is considered to be Brahman. 'I want to know. Because I am told that the one who knows the *ātmā* gains freedom from sorrow.'<sup>23</sup>

You know that any addition to an unhappy person does not make the person happy. You have discovered this. One experience is good enough for analysis. You do not need an additional thirty years. Pressing one grain of rice in a pot of cooked rice is enough to find out whether all the rice in the pot is cooked. So you are certain the fulfillment of desires for non-self does not really change you, the *ātmā*. It will not solve your problem. What you do not know, however, is whether this particular knowledge of the self will free you from sorrow. But that is the only possibility left open for you. You can also check whether it is possible, whether there is a *prima facie*<sup>24</sup> case, as they say. It is logical upon first examination because if one side does not work, then only the other can work. You can also logically accept that the self is not necessarily what you take yourself to be. Your own experience confirms this because in spite of all your wants, you find yourself happy occasionally. So your whole estimation of yourself may be wrong, which means that *ātma-ajñāna*, self-ignorance, is there.

### HOW TO GAIN SELF-KNOWLEDGE?

Self-ignorance is everyone's birthright. Everyone is born with *ātma-ajñāna*, ignorance of the self, as well as *anātma-ajñāna*, ignorance of the non-self. Even the

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<sup>23</sup> आत्मवित् शोकम् तरति the knower of the self crosses all sorrow. (Chāndogyopaniṣad 7.1.3)

<sup>24</sup> Evidence which, unless rebutted, would be sufficient to prove a particular proposition or fact.

psychological self is not known. For that itself, we require a psychologist. That psychologist has to know himself, then only can he understand you. So again there is a catch-22 situation. Each psychoanalyst himself, requires another psychoanalyst, all the way back to Freud. Then, even Freud needs a psychoanalyst. It goes on and on, back to whom? Who is the original psychologist? The original psychologist can only be Bhagavān, the Lord. It is the same way with a doctor. The original medicine man is Bhagavān alone. Doctors came later. There is no beginning for anything because knowledge is like that.

If even the psychological self is not very clearly known, then what of the self that we are talking about in the *śāstra*? Knowing the psychological self only allows us to shift the problem, shift the blame. Previously you blamed yourself. Now you can necessarily shift it and put the blame on the people who are responsible for damaging you, such as your parents. But you are still stuck with a mother and father, so the problem remains. You do not completely get out of it. All other problems arise because there is a basic problem of self-ignorance and the self is misconstrued. Your own experiences of small happiness or short experiences of big happiness confirm that in spite of what you take

yourself to be, you are happy. You need not fulfill all your wants in order to be happy and secure. This implies that you must already be happy and secure and therefore just ignorant of what you are.

To solve the problem, you must know what you are, so *ātmecchā vyavasīyatām*. To know this, there must be a desire for *ātmā*. Desire for *ātmā* is not like a desire for something else, like an apple. Desire for *ātmā* is already there in the person. *Ātmecchā* is *ātma-jñānecchā*, the desire for self-knowledge. *Vyavasīyatām*, let the desire for self-knowledge be properly ascertained. Let it be entertained, pursued and made to grow. Once you want *ātmā*, then what should you do? If you want *ātmā*, then you do not require *anātmā*. What is your house? *Anātmā*. Previously you thought it was *ātmā* and very important, 'I and my house are one and the same.' But now house, carpet and so on become *anātmā*.

'Swamiji , I don't mind leaving the house, but not the carpet.' A Persian carpet is a great investment and naturally very difficult to give up. That is also *anātmecchā*. Everything in the house is also *anātmā*. 'Everything' also includes wife and the rest. The whole world is *anātmā*. You only have to take care of *ātmā*, for which you need not be in the house.

*Nijagṛhāttūrṇam vinirgamyatām*; to fulfill the desire to know *ātmā*, the verse says *vinirgamyatām*, one should get out, *tūrṇam*, quickly, *nijagṛhāt*, from one's own house. This is because if you are in the house, there are so many things to which you have to pay attention. The idea is that we need to be free from all these concerns. You can still be physically in the house, like King Janaka<sup>25</sup> and others. The idea is that even with a big palace and so on, you can still have this attitude. Or you can have a simple, wooden house or no house at all, and yet have all your attachment concentrated on a *kaupīna*.<sup>26</sup>

Once Janaka was listening to his guru, Vasiṣṭha. Vasiṣṭha's other disciples were also attending the class. Janaka was the king of Mithila. He was a great king, an emperor, really, and he was attending the class. The others attending the class were *brahmacārīs*, students. These were dedicated people who had left everything behind and wanted to gain this knowledge. They were doing *gurukulavāsa*, living with the teacher. Janaka's guru had a small hut where he taught. The students also had small huts here and there, all next to the palace, and the guru's hut was somewhat further away. They all attended class together. There was a rumor among the *brahmacārīs* that the guru was a little partial to Janaka. This was because if Janaka came late, the guru kept the class waiting until he arrived. Suppose Janaka came earlier and the *brahmacārīs* came later, then Vasiṣṭha would have already started the class. So even though the *brahmacārīs* had great respect for the teacher, they could not understand this. One disciple even said to the others, 'You know why our guru favors him? Because he has money. What have you

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<sup>25</sup> King Janaka appears in Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad as someone who was not only a king but also a *jñānī*.

<sup>26</sup> The traditional undergarment of a *brahmacārī* or *sādhu*.

got? Nothing!' Every guru's *prārabdha karma* is to have a student like this one!

Anyway, one day the class was going on. All the *brahmacārīs* and Janaka were sitting in the hut. A messenger came from the palace and gave Janaka a small piece of paper. Janaka read the note, said, 'Okay,' and sent the man away. Vasiṣṭha continued the class, closed his eyes just to refocus on what he was saying, and talked for a few minutes with his eyes closed. When he opened his eyes again, all the *brahmacārīs* were gone, only Janaka was there. So he continued the class to the end, with only Janaka sitting there. Suddenly all the *brahmacārīs* came running, saw Janaka leaving, and asked him if the class was over? Janaka said, 'Yes, the class is over.' They were so angry. They came to Vasiṣṭha and asked, 'Did you finish the class?' in a needling sort of way.

'Yes, I finished the class.'

'But we were not there.'

'Yes, I know you were not there. Where were you?'

'Didn't you hear? Don't you know what was in that note that came to Janaka? The palace was on fire!'

'Oh, really?'

'Yes, that's why we left!'

'Why did you go?'

'Because all our *kaupīnas*, were hanging there on the line outside the palace walls to dry! And we have only one extra *kaupīna*.'

Taking this as a good opportunity, Vasiṣṭha told them, 'That is why I conduct the classes whether you are there or not. The whole palace is burning, and Janaka is able to sit here and listen to me. But you all have one *kaupīna* hanging there, and run to save it. So tell me, who is really detached here, you all or he?' Therefore, you can have a palace and still be free inside. Or you can have a hut and one extra *kaupīna* and the whole universe of attachment is concentrated on that *kaupīna*.

*Nijagṛhāttūrṇam vinirgamyatām* means that you should give up the *mama-buddhi*, the sense of 'mine', in the house and everything else. *Mama-buddhi* is *upalakṣaṇa*;<sup>27</sup> it stands for a whole series of things. It does not mean that everybody has to run away from his or her house. What would happen then? Where would they go? The place that they go to would become crowded then, and they would have to find yet another place. The *mama-buddhi* is the only thing that has to be taken care of and given up. So if you run away from the house, where will you go?

<sup>27</sup> *upalakṣaṇa* = synecdoche, i.e. a figure of speech in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa.

*To be continued...*

अनन्त-कल्याण-निजरूपताभ्यामतीव-कारुण्य-प्रदर्शकाभ्याम् ।  
पूज्यश्री-चरण-नल-प्रभाभ्याम् नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥ १ ॥  
परमार्थतत्व-प्रकटीकराभ्यामज्ञान-भ्रान्ति-दूरीकराभ्याम् ।  
स्वामिति भक्त्या सुपूजिताभ्याम् नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥ २ ॥  
अपार-संसार-निमग्न-त्राण-समुद्धारकाभ्याम् कैवर्तकाभ्याम् ।  
दया-सु-प्रभाभ्यां ज्ञानप्रदाभ्याम् नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ३ ॥  
ज्ञानोपदेशेन मुक्तिप्रदाभ्यामशेष-कलिदोष-दूरीकृताभ्याम् ।  
आनन्ददाभ्याम् शिष्यप्रियाभ्याम् नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ४ ॥  
असार-संसार-निवारकाभ्याम् शिथिलीकराभ्यां मोक्षप्रदाभ्याम् ।  
सरस्वतीकटाक्षप्रदाभ्याम् नमो नमः श्रीगुरुपादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ५ ॥

*The highlight is - If you connect the first word of the second line of all the shlokas , you will get the name of our Guru - पूज्यश्री-स्वामी-दया-आनन्द-सरस्वती i.e. पूज्यश्री-स्वामीदयानन्द-सरस्वती.*

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