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**Arsha Vidya Pitham
Swami Dayananda Ashram**

Sri Gangadhareswar Trust
Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh
Pin 249 201, Uttarakhanda
Ph.0135-2431769
Fax: 0135 2430769
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Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit
P.O. Box No.1059
Saylorsburg, PA, 18353, USA
Tel: 570-992-2339
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Institute of Vedanta and Sanskrit
Sruti Seva Trust
Anaikatti P.O., Coimbatore 641108
Tel. 0422-2657001
Fax 91-0422-2657002
Web Site:
http://www.arshavidya.in
Email: office@arshavidya.in

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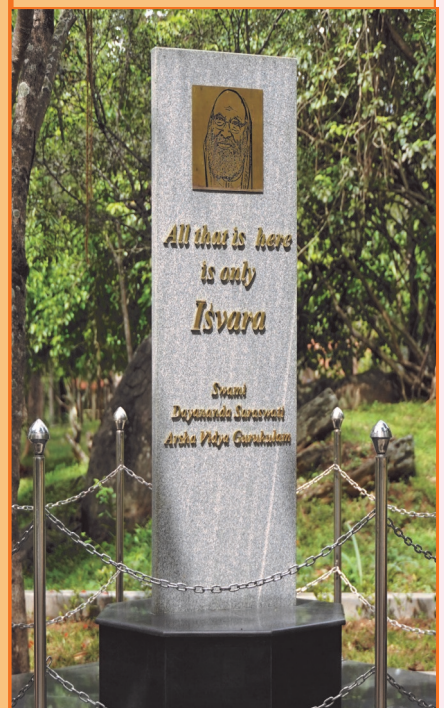
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Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

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.'²³

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*²⁴ 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

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

²⁴ 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 Janaka²⁵ 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*.²⁶

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

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

²⁶ 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*.

Nijagr̥hāttūrṇaṁ vinirgamyatām means that you should give up the *mama-buddhi*, the sense of 'mine', in the house and everything else. *Mama-buddhi* is *upalakṣaṇa*;²⁷ 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?

²⁷ *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 ॥
परमार्थतत्त्व-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.

Written by Sri Sharanji , Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti

Kaivalyopaniṣad

Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk

This is new serial article from the book published in the year 2008 and revised in the year 2013. This book was based on a retreat talks given by Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati in Ben Lomond, CA, USA in the year 2005.

1. Introduction

The Kaivalya Upaniṣad is part of the Atharva Veda. The Vedas are considered to be the sourcebooks of knowledge in the Vedic culture. They are held to be texts that were not written or composed, but 'revealed' to the *ṛṣis*. The *ṛṣis* are thus called *mantra-draṣṭārah*, the 'seers' of the *mantras*. The knowledge contained in the Vedas is such that it cannot be gained directly by human beings, not only because it is beyond the range of sense perception but also because no human intellect is adequately equipped to receive the knowledge. The *mantras* are seen to have been revealed to the ancient *ṛṣis* through the power of their penance and the purity of their hearts, which made them capable of receiving this knowledge in the form of the *mantras*. It is in this manner that the profound knowledge of the Vedas became available to us.

The Vedas can be seen to be segmented into two sections, one dealing with *karma* or *dharma* and the other dealing with *jñāna* or the knowledge of the self. The first section of the Vedas tells us about things that we cannot arrive at through our limited means of knowledge. For example, we have no way of proving the idea of a previous birth for the human being or a subsequent birth after the death of this body. Similarly, there is no way for us to determine whether heaven or hell exists. Heaven and hell remain *nitya-parokṣa*, always invisible to us, and cannot be verified. The Vedas talk of an afterlife and also of the kind of actions we should perform to achieve various desired ends. Because human beings have many desires, the Vedas prescribe the means to achieve those ends, as well as the kinds of related disciplines to follow, as in what to do and what not to do.

The Vedas also teach of the basic values of life that must be followed, called *dharma* or the righteous way of life, as also the nature of one's duty, as in the appropriate action to be performed in a given situation. They prescribe various kinds of duties for different people, keeping in view the particular situation in a person's life, his disposition, and his responsibilities. Thus, the duties of people of different dispositions, such as the *brāhmaṇa*, the *kṣatriya*, or the *vaiśya*, are clearly described, as also the duties of people in different stages of their lives, such as *brahmacarya*, *gārhasthya*, or *vānaprasthya*. All of this comprises the subject matter of the first section of the Vedas, called the *karma-kāṇḍa*.

The primary effort in our lives must be to live the right way, exercise discrimination, and live intelligently. To do so, however, we need guidance and direction. As human beings, we are blessed with a free will that affords us the freedom to choose the course of our lives; we have the freedom to determine our goals in life, as well as the freedom to determine the means of achieving those goals. Thus, there is freedom with reference to choosing both the means and the ends. This freedom can be better appreciated when we compare ourselves to other living beings, whose lives seem to be pre-programmed and without the benefit of any such freedom of choice. They appear to have neither any particular destination nor any particular agenda other than survival and the propagation of their species. However, while human beings are endowed with an awareness of their destination in life, every person appears to have a different notion of the destination and how to reach it. Thus, we turn to the Vedas, which teach us of the one true destination and the way to approach it.

The Vedas speak of true fulfillment

The Vedas tell us that we already are what we are seeking to be. It is clear from the behavior of every human being that he is constantly seeking something. The fact is that, whether or not he is aware of it, what he is seeking is to be free, to be happy. If you ask a person how much happiness he wants, he will reply that he

wants boundless happiness, and of the kind that is not mixed with any kind of unhappiness at all. Indeed, whenever one depends on any external factors for deriving happiness, there is also a bit of unhappiness mixed up with that happiness. Man cannot truly accept that; he wants pure and unconditional happiness at all times, in all places, and under all conditions. Asking if one wants to be happy in the morning or in the evening, inside the house or outside the house, or whether in the company of one's friends or one's relatives will not make any sense to any human being. Everybody only wants that kind of happiness, which knows no boundaries, has no limits, and is subject to no conditions.

Happiness must be uncovered from within oneself

Very often, in not knowing of the nature of true boundless or limitless happiness, people confuse this freedom with licentiousness; it is thought that freedom lies in doing whatever one pleases, saying whatever pleases, writing whatever one pleases, and so on. In short, freedom is confused with the ability to live entirely as one pleases. If we do not discriminate between freedom and licentiousness, the very process of seeking freedom will only serve to bind us, as surely as the very process of seeking happiness only leads us to unhappiness.

The Vedas teach that the true freedom and true independence that one is constantly seeking is to be found within oneself alone and may only be discovered through living a certain way of life. We are told that happiness has to be uncovered from within ourselves, rather than created, and, therefore, life must primarily become a process of discovering the happiness or freedom that is already our true nature. Attaining one's true nature is thus the gain of that which is already gained. It is a process in which knowledge plays a primary role, as opposed to the process of gaining that which is not yet gained, in which *karma* or action is primary instead.

There are many that may not be ready or willing to understand the teaching that true happiness or freedom lies within ourselves, because they remain preoccupied

with fulfilling strong desires and their minds are crowded with aspirations and ambitions. Not everybody is ready to accept this message right away. The Vedas recognize this fact and therefore say that while we have the freedom to pursue whatever ends we desire, it is necessary to make sure that our attempts to attain these ends do not compromise the means we employ. The most important thing in life is, therefore, making sure that we follow the right means. This is called *dharma*, righteousness. We should ensure that in the process of achieving our desired goals, we do not trample upon the rights and requirements of other people. We must recognize that just as we ourselves love happiness and freedom, others also love happiness and freedom. Similarly, just as we would not want anybody to come in the way of our pursuit of freedom and happiness, others also do not want us to come in the way of their pursuit of happiness and freedom. This, then, is the basic value and we can see that every other value has its basis in this one.

Following a life of values fosters inner growth

The process of following a life of values results in inner growth or inner purification, because following the values requires us to control the impulse to violate the values. There are temptations that constantly prey on the mind, and tendencies, such as violence, dishonesty, falsehood, stealing, hoarding, or aggrandizing, may also be present. For instance, there may be a tendency to appropriate something that does not rightfully belong to us or a tendency to hurt somebody in the process of achieving our goals. In order to follow the life of values, it is necessary that such tendencies are kept under check. As Lord Kṛṣṇa points out in the Gita, *kāma*, *krodha*, and *lobha*, meaning lust, anger, and greed are likely to be present in us to varying degrees, and in order to follow a life of *dharma*, it becomes necessary that we curb these tendencies. For instance, we cannot lead a life of nonviolence unless we keep anger under control, just as we cannot live a life of honesty unless we keep greed under control. Similarly, we cannot live a healthy life unless we keep lust under control. It is required that we keep these harmful tendencies under control in order to maintain good relationships and live a life in which we reach out

to other people and address their needs as well.

Even if the primary teaching of the Vedas is to show the way to true inner fulfillment, they are not insensitive to our material needs. For instance, the Vedas accept the validity of the desire for cattle, progeny, wealth, power, or even *svarga* or heaven. They even prescribe specific means in order to fulfill such desires and only caution us to make sure that we follow the right values in achieving these ends. The important thing is that we live the life of *dharma*. When we do that, we progressively start becoming free from all negative propensities; the goodness and purity already obtaining within us, our true nature, become manifest.

Living a life of *dharma* leads to self-purification

Living a life of *dharma* becomes a process of self-purification and makes the mind *sāttvika*; the mind becomes tranquil, transparent, contemplative, and more objective. On the other hand, when *kāma* (desire), *krodha* (anger), or other such harmful impulses arise in the mind, there is a tendency to project, thereby making the mind see things that are not there. For instance, when we get angry, our perception is vitiated and we project either guilt or offence upon the object of our anger; such projection leads us to see faults that are not there in that person. In a similar fashion, even when we become greedy we tend to project, perhaps unjustifiably, that we need more than somebody else.

When such tendencies in the mind gradually reduce, one becomes more contemplative, more thinking, and more objective with reference to life around oneself, as well as with reference to oneself. The mind is then able to discriminate between right and wrong and examine the quality and usefulness of one's daily pursuits in life. Until then, however, comforts and pleasure remain very important. The desire for success and pleasure is so strong that one never thinks about whether or not their pursuit is right or justified. Once the mind begins to inquire into whether or not pleasure and success do indeed give lasting peace and deserve to be desirable goals, we begin to see that life has something more to offer. We begin to real-

ize that what we are truly seeking is more lasting and much greater than that which success and pleasure can ever offer.

The limited cannot offer happiness or satisfaction

When the understanding that success and pleasure are fleeting and impermanent dawns upon us, the entire course of our lives changes. An important verse of the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad¹ says, “After examining the worlds (achievements) gained through actions, may the discriminative person discover dispassion, because *mokṣa*, which is not created, cannot be gained through action. Therefore, to gain the knowledge of *brahman* he must go with sacrificial twigs in hand to a teacher who is well-versed in scriptures and who abides in the knowledge of *brahman*.”

Karmacitān lokān parīkṣya, having examined the achievements gained through *karma*, efforts. Upon such enquiry, one comes to recognize that whatever has been achieved through effort has been limited and unsatisfactory. There is also the recognition that whatever one can hope to achieve in future through any kind of effort is also going to be just as limited, because, regardless of the degree of effort, that which is achieved through any kind human effort is bound to be limited. The limited can never offer satisfaction or happiness.

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¹ परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

parīkṣya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirvedamāyānnāstyakṛtaḥ kṛtena

tadvijñānārthaṁ sa gurumevābhigacchet samitpāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahmaṇiṣṭhaṁ

(Mu.Up 1.2.12)

effort is also going to be just as limited, because, regardless of the degree of effort, that which is achieved through any kind human effort is bound to be limited. The limited can never offer satisfaction or happiness.

As a result, regardless of how wealthy, famous or powerful one can become, one will still remain a limited person. No degree of wealth, fame or power can ever satisfy. One will remain a limited person, a seeker dissatisfied with oneself. Once this understanding is gained, not only because it is what Vedānta tells us but because it has become one's own understanding, the search for that which is permanent and limitless finally begins.

Gurumeva abhigacchet, for that knowledge one should approach a teacher. This is where the teaching of the Upaniṣad comes into the picture. The need of such a seeker has changed. His need so far was for success and pleasure, both in this life and in the hereafter, and the rituals prescribed in the *karma-kāṇḍa* along with other efforts were adequate for gaining both; the setup of means and ends thus far was satisfactory. However, he now seeks the permanent and recognizes well that the permanent cannot be achieved through action that is limited.

The permanent or lasting is something to be discovered. The section of the Vedas, called the *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, helps one in this objective. It deals with knowledge that one could call the knowledge of the truth, the knowledge of the reality, the knowledge of the self, or the knowledge of God. This section of the Vedas addresses a smaller number of people who, upon thinking through their needs, have become sensitive to their one true inner need. There are two lifestyles for one to choose from: *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*; the life of activity and achievement, and the life of contemplation. The life of achievement involves thinking about something other than oneself, something outside of oneself. The life of contemplation involves thinking about something that is within, looking into one's own self. Yes, it is true that some sense of achieving something still remains, but the method of achievement has changed because the perception of what has to be achieved has changed. This

is the subject matter of the *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. It is also called the Upaniṣad.

The *karma-kāṇḍa* addresses the first stage of one's life and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* addresses the second stage. *Karma-kāṇḍa* is meant for a *gṛhastha* or householder and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* is meant for a *sannyāsī* or renunciate. Although, technically, there are four *āśramas* or stages of life, called *brahmacarya*, *gṛhasthya*, *vānaprasthya*, and *sannyāsa*, they can broadly be divided into two stages—the life of activity and the life of contemplation.

The four āśramas or stages of life

As we understand it, *brahmacarya* is the first stage of life. It is the life of a student. A *brahmacārī* is one who approaches the teacher, lives with the teacher and serves him, and studies the Vedas and related texts under his tutelage. It is not only a period of the study of scriptures in the *gurukula* or teacher's house, but also a study of how to live life effectively. Traditionally, the students learned *dharma-śāstra* or texts dealing with the righteous way of life, and learned of various rituals, their purpose, and how and when to perform them. They learned to recite the Vedas and were required to memorize them with their meanings. They learned *vyākaraṇa* or Sanskrit grammar, the principles of logic, astrology, and so on. The student's only priority was to study, along with observing the discipline required to pursue knowledge and keeping oneself fit. Service to the teacher included going out into the community to beg for food and serving food to the teacher. All of that was a part of the duties of the students. Sometimes, such service also included taking cows and other cattle out to graze and taking care of them. If there was a farm, the service included participating in the activities of farming, and so on. One can see that all this also provided the students sufficient exercise. Such was the life of a student—no political activities or any other kinds of activities at all.

To be continued...

The Wholeness of You **by Swamini Saralananda**

This is a new serial article from the book written by Swamini Saralananda who was a disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. This book is intended to be a beginner's book on Vedanta for a Western audience and it was published by Swamini Tattvavidyananda .

The Innate Longing for Wholeness

The Wholeness of You

There is a Wholeness of you, a Oneness of Being, which is your essential nature. It is the ultimate truth of who you are. And it innately longs to just be what it is. It is a limitless fullness wherein all your inner conflicts and turmoil do not intrude. It is a fullness of unconditional love and as you keep discovering the truth of this, you need not suffer the pain of self-unacceptability and a sense of disconnection from others.

Suppose two people can enjoy a sense of oneness, what they have is a mutually supportive and nurturing relationship. They feel safe with each other. They can just be who they are. Into-me-see, I allow you to see me being me, and I can see you being you, where there's no need to impress one another.

Yet, if you look within yourself, you can see a lack of this sense of oneness within yourself. You can find many reasons not to accept yourself just as you are. There are inner conflicts and splits and you find that you are not able to understand yourself, and you may feel that you are never good enough. You may struggle to claim self-acceptance and self-love. The wholeness of yourself, to be discussed in this book, invites you to look at our self-conclusions, and find that just maybe, you need not suffer from self-unacceptability. To suffer means to be, constantly engaged in a futile drama of finding someone, others, to give you what you are not able to give to yourself: self-validation, self-understanding, and self-care with the freedom from self-judgment.

This wholeness of you, which is a ONENESS OF BEING, is Unconditional Consciousness. It is pure awareness which is the witness of all you perceive and think and feel. It is the ultimate self and it your birthright to come to know the truth of this and to own it. And consciously and/or unconsciously everyone seeks to be that. It does not deny other aspects of your personality, rather this knowledge al-

lows you to see those in a more realistic perspective, that they are ephemeral. This unconditional Consciousness is timeless.

Unconditional Love

Most people, long for a sense of wholeness, completeness, that relieves the pain of alienation they feel within themselves, the inner conflicts that make them feel unacceptable. Then there is the disconnect they feel with others. It is a deep, mostly unconscious ache, for most human beings. Without a sense of wholeness within ourselves, we live our lives, seeking to find remedies for this pain, without understanding it and knowing the source of it. What we are seeking in all our relationships is unconditional love. It is the ultimate and highest form of love. Unlike any other love we have ever known, it confirms that we are acceptable and lovable just as we are. Many wisdom teachings of the ancients, reveal that unconditional love is the very essence of our being. Therefore, according to them, WE ALREADY ARE WHAT WE SEEK.

This is why the longing for it is undeniably innate. What denies us of this truth is the endless wrong notions about who we think we are. We conclude that we are limited and lacking. When enough of our erroneous conclusions are understood to be false, we get the chance to own up who we are in our essence of oneness, which is nothing but unconditional love.

We are all born into this world with certain, natural needs and as we mature, we also have to acknowledge and accept that we have limitations and frailties when trying to get our needs fulfilled. We definitely have a need to feel safe and to belong. We all have parts of ourselves, where we feel weak and inept and unbecoming, parts that we would rather keep hidden. When I am close with someone, there is a mutual empathy and understanding, that we need not deny or hide our vulnerabilities and that we will do our best to fulfill certain needs for each other. This takes a lot of trust which implies unconditional love.

Everyone longs for this kind of unconditional love, because it fills a void where feelings of loneliness and shame about our imperfections make us think we are unlovable. And if we look a little deeper, we would find that loneliness is not a lack of company but rather the feeling of not being understood. We may have a companion but when we feel we are not understood, especially when it comes to our needs, vulnerabilities and shortcomings, we feel lonely. A sense of separation

and loneliness will find its way into almost any relationship, at least every now and then. We all know about this first hand.

When we hear people say how special it feels to be able to be vulnerable and accepted, it means they feel understood. We all long to have that with at least one other person and we assume, it will guarantee us this precious gift of a sense of wholeness. When we feel understood, it validates and confirms the value of who we are. It is no ordinary blessing, indeed rare, when we can find the comfort and safety of this kind of a sense of oneness with someone who has earned our trust.

A healthy feeling of closeness brings with it a sense of well-being, because everyone has, recognized or not, a deep innate sense of isolation, which can only be resolved, when we can have a feeling of oneness. When we love someone, it means we identify with them, in fact we can say that love is measured by the degree of identity. When two feels like one, this is the identity of love. A loving mother feels her child's pain because she feels one with her child; some husbands even feel birth pains along with their wives. This identification of feeling non-separate from the loved one, seems to be a natural human condition.

Alienation ... The Human Condition

Even when having closeness with a companion, many there is a sense of separation lurking quietly inside. There can never be a perfect oneness that is totally fulfilling and stands the passage of time. Different opinions and needs must come into conflict sometimes and feelings of not being understood and being alone, will be there. When the feeling of oneness is breached, the pain of disappointment and rejection can come up.

Feeling one with someone else is rare. Because first one must be secure and enjoy a fullness in oneness with oneself. Both need to enjoy wholeness within themselves in order to share it with another. We originally feel incomplete on our own and we thought that if we just found the right person, we two, incomplete-without-each-other-halves will make one loving whole. People hold onto this dream, a notion, only because the need feels so intense. Feeling separate and alienated is the cause for so many mental problems because only when we feel "I belong and I matter", can we have enough confidence and support to deal with the ups and downs of life.

To be continued...

**Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh
Jirnoddharana Kumbhabhishekam of
Sri Haimavati Sameta Gangadharesvara Swami**

The Jirnoddharana Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Haimavati Sameta Gangadharesvara Swami began on 10th June 2021. After puja to Gangaji at the sangam of Bhagirathi and Alakananda at Devaprayag, waters from the sangam were brought by Swamini Vidyanandaji and a few students. All the kalasams were filled with these waters and the vimana kalasa was placed on the main tower on the night of the 10th.



On the 11th the rituals and the first kala-puja were done in keeping with the injunctions of sastra, following minutely all the details, by performing the pitha puja, ashta dikpalaka puja and mandapa dvaara puja and entering the yagasala ceremoniously. Purnahuti and mahadiparadhana were done at the end of every kala-puja. Ganapati homam and Navagraha homam were done in the evening along with the second kala-puja. The kalasas on vimanas of smaller shrines located within the temple were placed on the 11th night.

On the 12th morning vastu homam was performed and abhishekams to the murtis were done near the yagasla besides the third-kala puja. In the evening along with

the fourth kala-puja, the murtis were installed in their respective pithams using the ashta bandhanam, a material made of eight items that binds the murtis with the pithams. Balis were offered to ashta dikpalakas and kushmaanda bali was also offered for vastupurusha.

On the last day, elaborate anganyasa and karanyasa were done to each devatas (Sri Gangadharesvara, Sri Varasiddhi Vinayaka, Sri Dvadasa Jyotirlingesvara, Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Sri Bhakta Anjaneya and Sri Medha Dakshinamurti) with the chanting of mantras and homa was done for each deity. Rudra Homa was done and varieties of offerings were done in the fire addressing the Lord. Vasordhara was special at the end of fifth kala-puja where ghee was offered in an unbroken flow to the chanting of all the anuvakas of camakam.

Thereafter the main kalasam was taken in procession to the top of the tower and abhishekam was offered to the chanting of the mantras, telecast live by a drone hovering over the tower. The kalasa abhishekams to the other four vimanas inside the temple were then done followed by abhishekams to the murtis.

The whole atmosphere was filled with serenity and divinity and the playing of the mangala vadya Nadasvara reverberated through the entire area.

For the first time the whole function was telecast live to enable the Arsha Vidya family to witness the auspicious event. The function ended with an anugraha message by Sri Swami Paramarthanandaji (who informed that he is withdrawing from the social media engagements and hence was unable to send any video or audio) followed by Anugraha Bhashanam of Sri Swami Veditatmanandaji. We will try to transcribe the illuminating talk and publish it in the newsletter.

Swami Dayananda Ashram profusely thanks the donors for their spontaneous and generous contributions for the renovation work as well as for performing the kumbhabhishekam in a befitting manner. The donors are being forwarded the prasadam by courier.

It is a new avatara, incarnation of the temple with the sannidhyam of the Lord having increased manifold. Devotees can get the blessings of the Lord by sponsoring pujas on various occasions.

Swami Dayananda Ashram

Note: Kumbhabhishekam photos are in wrapper pages #31 and #32.

ॐ

I am very happy to indirectly participate in the kumbhābhisheka of Haimavatīsameta-sri-Gaigādhareśvara-swami temple at Rishikesh.

Sri-gaigādhareśvara, who includes Pūjya-svāmiji, is the presiding deity of Arsha Vidya-sampradaya. All the beneficiaries of Arsha Vidya-teaching-tradition are receiving the Grace of this Lord Trīnagaigādhareśvara in abundance continuously.

This kumbhābhisheka is a special occasion for all of us to express our reverential gratitude to the Lord.

आजीवितं त्वयं सेव्यं वेदान्तो गुरुरीश्वरः ।
आदौ ज्ञानाप्तये पश्चात् कृतघ्नत्वनिवृत्तये ॥

The following three i.e Vedānta, Gurn and Īśvara should be worshipped lifelong. Initially, this is meant for the attainment of knowledge and, later, for the avoidance of ingratitude.

ॐ

The Book of Enlightening Laughters

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Collection of Stories & Anecdotes From the Talks of

H.H. Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati

SO WHAT?

There are always pleasant and unpleasant situations in life. Human life is always fraught with situations which are both pleasant and unpleasant. But people want things always to be pleasant. Most of our responses to situations are reactions because there is no acceptance of facts. The following response, attributed to a great Stoic philosopher upon hearing tragic news, shows reduction of facts to facts.

The philosopher who was waiting for the news of the safe arrival of a large sailing ship carrying aboard his wife and children and all his wealth, answered a knock upon his door and found a breathless messenger who announced:

"Sir, the ship carrying your wife and money has sunk!"

"What?"

"The ship has sunk!"

"So what?"

"Sir, you have lost all your wealth."

"What?"

"Your fortune is gone."

"So what?"

"Sir, nothing was salvaged; you are penniless!"

"What?"

"You are a pauper!"

"So what?"

"Sir, no one survived. You have lost your wife and children."

"What?"

"You are a childless widower."

"So what?"

Look at these two types of responses from the same person. The first response is an excited "What?" The second is a cool "So what?" The difference is obvious. When he said "What?" it is not that he had not understood what he was told and that he was asking for a clarification. The messenger had announced the news in clear words and it was very clear to him that the ship had sunk, and still when he said, "What?" it meant, "Oh, no! Not really!" Thus, "What?" is the response of the non-acceptance of a fact. There is a great distance between these two types of response. This philosopher took only a few seconds to bridge this distance.

An ordinary person will keep building upon that non-acceptance. There is a sense of loss and one sees oneself as a person without the family and all that money brings. One would have to start all over again and there is no certainty of success. One sees a variety of things associated with the absence of family, with the absence of money, and becomes sadder and sadder. It is all due to the resistance to accept the fact that the ship has sunk.

The philosopher also said, "What?" as an ordinary person would say it. "What?" is the response from a person who has not accepted the fact, who does not want to accept the fact. But he was a thinking person, a mature person and therefore the next response was, "So what?" That is the response from a person who has accepted the fact.

"The ship is sunk, so what? There is nothing I can do about it. If something can go wrong, it will go wrong - that is Murphy's law. If a ship can sink, it will sink. I am a pauper. Well, so what? I am penniless. I made money, lost it. Now I shall work to make it again. My wife and children are gone. Grief and despair won't bring them back. They are gone. So what? That is a fact. I am here. That is a fact. I assimilate the facts and do what is required of me under the circumstances."

The factual response is the approach to situations of a truly practical person. One is most practical when one sees situations objectively. This is real human strength. Human strength is not found in powerful miracles but in the quiet mind of the one who faces situations as they are. Such a one is a strong person. Human weakness is the inability to accept situations, to face facts. Human strength is the strength of reducing situations to simple facts.

Om Tat Sat

"Find you will yourself; The self hitherto unknown but sought after, The self that is strangely missed and searched for, The self that you love to be, That you are."

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati

Uniform Civil Code, A Constitutional Promise

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

“We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic.”

Underlying the current discussion about the institution of a common civil code for India, is a serious question: Are we willing to uphold the resolve of our Constitution to shape India into a secular, democratic republic ? A secular republic ensures no discriminatory practices on the basis of religion, a welcome assurance to people of all religious and non-religious persuasions.

A democracy ensures that the power of governance is vested in the people, all the people. The promise of such a republic is a truly pluralistic society, a harmonious mosaic of diverse religions and cultures in which the security and dignity of each individual is assured. But conversely, it also ensures no special privileges. In short, no double standards.

The integrity and security of any society, whether as small as a family unit or as large as the global community, is deeply threatened by double standards. They offend our innate sense of fairness; they undermine our natural parity of identity with our fellow human beings, setting individual against individual, community against community, nation against nation. Double standards are the main building blocks of every racist ideology and system. One has to numb the human heart to entertain the idea that double standards are acceptable in the human community.

This innate understanding of every human being is, however, challenged by the frailties of the human heart. The fact is, there are double standards in every sector of our life - and all the strife that they engender.

The question is: Are we going to legislate to indulge our frailties, or are we going to legislate to help us live according to our finer, more noble, and, I would argue, more human tendencies ? Our Constitution has clearly chosen the latter. It is heartening to note that the founding fathers of our fledgling democracy have not failed to understand (Article 44) that this includes a common civil code, which we

have so far not had the moral courage to implement. Such a code, which implicitly means the abolition of double standards, is a basic and long-overdue element of a society which aspires to be secular and democratic. There is good reason for the wide appeal - and success - of secular, democratic societies. These ideals conform to the most basic ethical norms. Without wishing to be harsh, those who oppose the implementation of a common civil code are opposed to these norms.

These very opposing forces talk of religious freedom and raise the spectre of secularism whenever it is convenient for them. Reservations are understandable if such a code is an innovation of the current government.

But it is an existing article of the constitution; the constitution needs to be fulfilled. Reservations are also understandable if such a code is to be imposed in a non-democratic structure. But India has chosen democracy. Let the people speak. In a democracy, there is no question of imposition. Reservations are understandable if such a code violates basic ethical norms.

But, in fact, it upholds them. If India, with her unparalleled richness of thought and culture is to take her rightful place in the global community, the Indian people must overcome their sectarian impulses and raise their vision to a set of universal norms that befits their heritage. In adopting a common civil code, we have an opportunity to demonstrate that we have the courage to honour our deeper moral understanding and make whatever sacrifices we need to in order to help our Constitution fulfill its promise “to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.”

Om Tat Sat

Compiled by Swamini Agamananda. This is the eighth of nine articles based on Pujya Swamiji's talks on the said subject matter.

Welcome the Ordinance Swami Dayananda Saraswati

I welcome the promulgation of the ordinance by the government of Tamil Nadu to ban religious conversions “by use of force or by allurements or by any fraudulent means.” This is a long-awaited step. A step that ensures for the citizens of Tamil Nadu the most basic of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) in December 1948 holds in Article 18 that “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief....” While the article endorses each person’s right to change his or her religion, it does not in any way allow for another person to change a given person’s religion. On the contrary, a systematic, coercive effort to impose one’s religion on another “by use of force or by allurements or by any fraudulent means” is a clear violation of this basic human right. Further, Article 5 of the Bill of Rights states that no one shall be subjected to degrading treatment. No conversion is possible without denigrating the religion and the religious practices of the target person. This denigration hurts the family members and the community of the converted person. He or she has to disown his or her parents and all of their family, denouncing them as wrong, while he or she alone is right. If this doesn’t hurt a person, I wonder what else can cause hurt. The denigration of one’s religion and the humiliation that accompanies the conversion experience are violations of the dignity ensured to every human being. Article 19 grants every person the freedom to hold opinions, and matters of belief, no matter how fervently held, are only matters of opinion. Article 22 ensures that everyone is entitled to the cultural rights indispensable for his or her dignity. Everyone who is a convert from a non-Christian tradition suffers an irreparable alienation from one’s culture and, tragically, from one’s own family. The family, in turn, is alienated from the community. With the conversion experience come shame, isolation, deep personal conflict and ultimately, the seeds for discord. History testifies to the devastating loss of rich and diverse cultures, gone forever in the aftermath of religious conversion. Article 26 (2) of the Declaration of Human Rights requires that education “shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.” Religious conversion is anathema to this. It promotes discord, intolerance and enmity, and as such, is an act of violence. I again say that conversion is an act of violence because it hurts deeply, not only the members of the family of the converted, but his or her entire community. The religious person in every individual is the deepest, inasmuch as

he or she is connected to a force beyond the empirical. One is connected to various persons in one's world. The religious in a given person is connected to a force beyond. That is the reason why the hurt of a religious person is deep and when it becomes acute, it explodes into violence. Conversion is not only violence, it does generate violence.

The hue and cry made by some of the Christian leadership protesting this ordinance against conversion only show that they want to continue their conversion activities. I appeal to them to think about how conversion affects the converted person. This is the time for the Christian leadership to come forward to point out that the ordinance does not violate, but on the contrary, ensures the right of any person to practice his or her religion. Further, it does not single out any particular religious group. In fact, it is the responsibility of the leadership of all religions to allay the fears of the people within their individual fold who have such misgivings. It is not, on the other hand, either responsible or moral for any religious leader to use a distorted interpretation of this ordinance to establish a right to convert. The more such leaders protest, the more they are alienating themselves from the mainstream population who support a religiously plural and just society, committed to the respect and well-being of every one of its members.

India has a long tradition of living in harmony with people of numerous religious beliefs. Hindus did not have any problem whatsoever with the Parsis living in India for centuries. Why? Because they do not cause any hurt by a planned program of conversion. A planned program of evangelization and conversion is a war waged against the native tradition of a country whose people have an openness of heart that is very well known. Their very concept of Isvara allows that kind of accommodation. In fact, the concessions the minorities enjoy in India cannot be seen anywhere in the world. On the other hand, India is the only country where the majority feel oppressed.

I appeal to the political leadership of all other States in India to promulgate similar laws and make sure that all possibilities of religious conflict are avoided, and the tradition of religious harmony in India is maintained. While I congratulate the government of Tamil Nadu for the promulgation of this ordinance, I request all the religious leaders to refrain from doing anything which causes religious disharmony.

Om Tat Sat

Compiled by Swamini Agamananda. This is the ninth and final article of nine articles based on Pujya Swamiji's talks on the said subject matter.

Sri Swamini Sivatmananda Saraswati (previously P. Sarala Prasad), Hyderabad attained Mahasamadhi on June 19th, 2021.

Swaminiiji was a student of Vedanta for a lifetime. She had the privilege of studying with Sri Swami Svaroopanandaji in Hyderabad. She later did a 3yr course in Rishikesh under (Brahmaleen) Swami Brahmaavidyananda Saraswati between 2003-2006. After the course she started teaching vedanta and sanskrit and continued almost till her end. She was initiated into Sanyasa by Parama Puja Swami Dayananda Saraswati on Mahasivaratri day of 2007.



She has inspired many to pursue Vedanta through her simple living and clarity of teaching.

Though she has been unwell for the last 2 1/2 yrs she bore it well drawing inspiration from vedanta.

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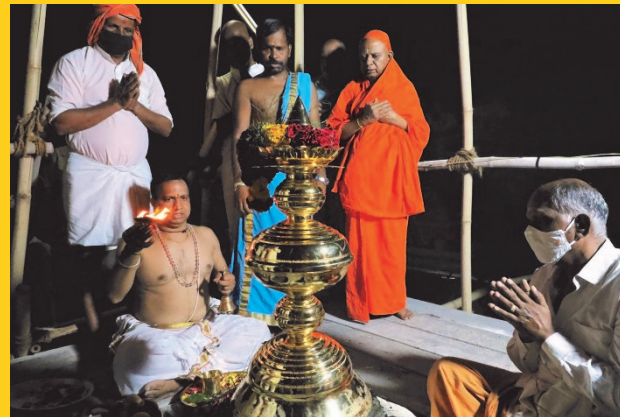
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