

END OF COURSE TALK BY SWAMI DAYANADA

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam Decemebtr 3,1989

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The course, of course, ends because we have set a date. We said we would teach for a certain period of time, like two-and-a-half years or three years. First I decided two years, then I thought three years would be okay. It's purely my own decision. There was no precedent for this. Nobody before said, "I will teach you Vedanta in three years." I thought that a certain period of time could be allocated for this purpose and I thought that three years would be the maximum period one could take off without damaging one's career completely. This is what I thought.

But if you watched some of the people in India who did this course, they made the very teaching as their life. They adopted a lifestyle which was suitable for just learning and teaching. So the study doesn't come to an end. Either one becomes a *sadhu*, one who doesn't have anything else, one who pursues this inquiry and continues to study, sharing what one has learned.

That kind of a lifestyle, which is a dedicated lifestyle, is possible in the Indian context. It's possible there because the society recognizes such a pursuit. It's a great blessing really. The society knows there is such a pursuit, a spiritual pursuit, and if it is a dedicated pursuit, one has to be away from other pursuits. The society knows this, and therefore, there is support and respect for a *sadhu*.

The people also look up that person for their own spiritual needs. So by just being a *sadhu* one is looked up to. As a *sadhu* one is expected to know. One is expected to know a few things. Therefore, people would naturally come to that person for learning. The person has to prove that he or she doesn't know and until otherwise proved, a certain respect is given. So the study doesn't come to an end and there is a lifestyle in keeping with what they want to pursue.

There again, there were people who did not choose to live a *sadhu* life. They continued to be in the society and to pursue the study. Study means inquiry.

One of the important things to know is that this is a lifetime study. It's not over. It's over. It's never over. It's always over. It's over because cognitively, we have spent enough hours unfolding the *vastu*, "what is," while dealing with different texts. As a teacher, I should construe that the students know what I have taught. But I'm also not blind to the fact that one has to pay attention to certain aspects of oneself.

Even two years are not necessary if one is an *uttama adhikari*, a person who has a mind which is just ready for the teaching. There are no *uttama adhikaris*. They are only on paper. This *adhikarivam* is said in the *saxtra* more to prove that Vedanta is a *pramana*. Otherwise, there would be a problem. The problem is that, "I have listened to Vedanta. It doesn't bless me at all." Then you have to say that is not because the *pramana* is defective, but the receptacle is not ready, because Vedanta is in the form of knowledge.

Therefore, the person requires a certain maturity. And that mature person alone is considered an *adhikari*, a person who is ready for this knowledge. Ready means, I would say, how much a person can enjoy the fruits of this knowledge. Otherwise, there are *pratibandhakas*, obstructions, obstacles.

This is because in all our perceptions there is always an element of subjectivity. This is a very unfortunate element, but it is the truth. It is very difficult to perceive how much there is a subjective interpretation, subjective projection, upon a situation and how much is objective. To say objectively "everything is okay" is also sometimes not true. If there is a real snake, you can't say that it should be one of those Vedantic snakes. There is a certain objectivity. It is a real rattler and therefore, it has to be dealt with objectively. Objective situations are there.

How much subjectivity is there? That is a very important factor to know. How much is subjective? How much is objective? That is very difficult to determine because everything seems to be objective.

This is the reason why we always have a reality check. Somebody must be there to point out that this is subjective, this is objective. If there are two perceptions, you can understand, this is subjective, this part is objective. So these situations always present themselves mixed-up like this.

I would say that one is an accomplished Vedantin when the subjectivity is almost nill. Even if it is there, it is provisional. There is no big conclusion. There is some subjectivity, because you understand empirical situations only from the standpoint of your empirical knowledge and empirical knowledge is always found wanting. Psychology is also empirical knowledge.

Therefore, empirical knowledge always has a limitation for anyone. Therefore, there can be a provisional judgment by even an accomplished Vedantin but the beauty of that person is that it is provisional and the person is ready to reshuffle.

Therefore, you can't categorically say, "This person is like this." If he is a Vedantin, he will always surprise you. You thought that this is his opinion. Next time when you hear the person he will say just the opposite. And people all tend to judge. Therefore, how do you recognize this is subjective, this is not subjective? It is very very difficult unless somebody is always around.

When you are out in society there are not many people who are going to help you because, even if they help you, they will give their subjective opinions which are not going to be of great use. Therefore, what can one do for oneself? I consider this to be the most important thing one has to pay attention to. If one can control this subjective interpretation which is two-fold (it becomes one later, but to begin with it is two-fold): one is the interpretation about oneself and the other is

the interpretation about the world. We will look at the world later. The first is about oneself and one cannot discover it unless one questions.

The major problem I find is that one says, "I don't think I understood." This is one of the major problems. All that is necessary is that a dog has to bark! You are in meditation (assuming that you are going to meditate, I'll talk about that later) and a dog barks. The dog didn't consult you, nor it cares that you are in meditation. He just barked. Now you are disturbed. Today a dog barked, the other day the telephone rang, another day someone was sneezing. You are disturbed.

There are two possibilities of your judgment. One is, you can say, "I think my *prarabdha* is not good for meditation. I think my *karma* is no good." If you are an astrologer, you will look into your chart and find out where Uranus is. This is a silly thing.

Or, you can say, "I have not really understood because I am disturbed. We are not supposed to be disturbed. We are Vedantins. We are not supposed to be disturbed." Or, you became sad because the dog died. You become very sad. And afterwards, what will you say? "I became sad." Whether you say it or not, there is somebody who says, "I thought you were a Vedantin?" There is always somebody there to point out you are a Vedantin and you are NOT supposed to be sad. Or, you get angry. The phone rings and you are angry. Against whom? Against whom are you angry? You have to find out. You don't know, but still you are angry. And definitely if you are a Vedantin, how can you be angry? You have all these verses: *kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ mahāsano mahāpāpmā viddhynamiha vairiṇam* (Gītā 3.37).

When you are subject to anger and even sometimes jealousy, that may also be there, or some sadness, some comparison, then naturally you feel that you have not understood. Thus we question our understanding. Alright, you have not understood. What are

you going to do about it? You tell me? Suppose your judgment is always very objective. Alright, you have not understood. What are you going to do?

I tell you, this judgment is subjective. It is purely subjective. The problem is not that I have not understood. The problem is, "I am no good." It is a good old problem of being told by somebody when you were young that you were no good and you bought it! Dumb children as we all were, innocent as we were, we bought some of these ideas given to us. It has nothing to do with understanding. Look at it.

What is understanding? Which area don't I understand? Is it an event or something? Did I say that one fine morning you would realize and get up like the Buddha. Even if you get up like the Buddha, what is the understanding? Is it Bodhi tree understanding or Chestnut tree understanding? Sartre sat under a Chestnut tree and got enlightened: everything is absurd. That is what he understood. Everything is absurd. There is no meaning. That I exist is the only fact. Why, etc., is absurd. It is all absurd. Did I talk about enlightenment like that? Never.

Therefore, how can you ever judge. What is it you are going to judge? Are you going to judge whether or not your *atma* is not *sat-cit-ananda*? You can only say, "I don't think I have understood *sat-cit-ananda*." You can say that. What is the basis for saying you have not understood? Can you say it is because I have no experience. Can you say that I have no experience of *sat-cit-ananda*? You can't say I have no experience of *sat-cit-ananda*. All experiences are *sat-cit-ananda*.

What is it that I don't really understand in this? Even suppose you say, I think I have to understand a little more. I say that is also not true. You don't require to understand a little more of *sat-cit-ananda*. There is no more in it. Therefore, you can say, perhaps I don't have that clarity. I accept that.

I don't have that clarity perhaps. So what? Clarity grows. A lifetime is there. Why do you judge? How much clarity do you have? Can you make a measurement? You can't make a measurement. You can't do anything about it.

And who said you won't be angry if you know *sat-cit-ananda*? I also never said that. I said that in spite of your anger, you are *sat-cit-ananda*. The truth of the anger is *sat-cit-ananda*. The truth of the very sadness is *sat-cit-ananda*. Why not work on that? Why should we judge? If a person is sad, it is a good chance to look at the sadness. You have some material.

The nature of a Vedantin is what? If I have not achieved anything, this much I have created, certain curiosities I have created. You tell me, what are the curiosities? Curiosities about compounds, eggplant, words we are using. By all these small little things, do you know what happens? By analysing these small things we naturally develop an inquiring mind. An inquiring mind. Who has an inquiring mind? The one who reads the National Enquirer. We have an inquiring mind. Vedantin means, Vedantin isn't a name, I don't want you to call yourselves anything. Whatever name you have is good enough. You don't require one more name. Vedanta makes you inquire. It helps you inquire. If nothing more, it doesn't allow you to take things as they are. It helps you inquire.

Therefore, sadness is what? A new thing to munch. You have some peanuts. If everything is quiet, you may not inquire at all. If some sadness comes, it's nice. You have some peanuts to munch. Something to munch.

Honestly I am telling this because these kind of situations really unnerve people. Then you can develop a whole buildup, a buildup that "I am no good." Again to knock it off takes ages. Slowly, it gets buildup. One has to understand that sadness, or whatever that comes, doesn't displace

sat-cit-ananda.* Nothing displaces *sat-cit-ananda.

Therefore, what do you have to be afraid of? There is nothing to be afraid of. If there is a sadness, what is this sadness? From where does it come? You can find a provisional answer, or if you want to find something more fundamental, you can find it has no origin. Provisionally you can say it is due to this, it is due to that. You can always make a provisional conclusion. Therefore, no situation is a situation worthy enough for any kind of self-judgement, no matter what happens to the mind.

Where is the necessity for any judgment? Why should anybody judge? Here is sadness. It has to be dealt with. It does not displace your understanding. It does not displace the object of understanding. It does not disturb Vedanta. And it was also not taught that if you have understanding there will be no sorrow. It was always said that in spite of anything that happens in the mind you are *sat-cit-ananda*.

Therefore, at best you can say, "I don't enjoy the fruits of this knowledge." It's okay. I don't think it is a big problem. Do you have the knowledge? That is the question. And one can never say, "I don't have the knowledge." *Aham mam na janami* is not a good *yukti*. Even an ignorant fellow cannot make a statement like that. *Aham mam na janami*. Who can make the statement, "I do not know myself." Nobody can make this statement. Even an ignorant man cannot make this statement. *Aham mam na janami* is not a valid statement.

Everybody knows about oneself. There is no categorical ignorance about oneself. There is no total blackout about oneself. That is called *ajnana*. There is no total blackout with reference to *atma*. In fact, everybody knows all that we are talking about really, because everybody experiences oneself.

One can be happy, one can be without anger, one can be without judgment occasionally. Everyone has the experience. Who doesn't have it? Everybody has it. Even a madman

is happy occasionally. And so nobody can say totally, *aham mam na janami*. You can say that, "I don't know Chinese language. I don't even know one word." You can say that because you have not studied. You had no occasion to know. You can say that but you cannot categorically say, *aham mam na janami*.

The whole Vedanta is nothing but what is me. And all the time it teaches, it draws my attention to my own *anubhava*, my own experience. It doesn't talk about anything outside my experience, nor does it talk about an object you have to experience. It is not talking of a unique *alaukika* experience which you will get later. Then it is a promised goal. It doesn't talk about that.

This is why modern Vedantins are in a *cakra*. They are in a great runaround, beating about the bush. They are waiting for a plenary experience, the acme of all experiences. It is the silliest thing to say, as though *atma* is to be experienced by you. Who is going to experience? I am the experience of all experiences. *Atma* is the experience of all experiences. It is all pseudo Vedanta. You are the experience of ALL experiences. You see me because you are there very much. Nobody can deny the existence of yourself. Nor you can deny it.

All experiences are strung in the experience that is yourself. Therefore, Vedanta doesn't talk about a unique experience, nor it talks about a *vastu* that is outside your common experience. In fact, the whole teaching of Vedanta is valid because it is talking about your experiences.

When the Veda talks about heaven, is it talking about a current experience? No. Does it talk about a *vastu*? No. It is not talking about a *vastu* that is in front of you, *parinisthita vastu*. It is not talking about an object that is there which it introduces you to. It is talking about an experience only. Heaven is an experience and that experience

is AWAY from you. You have to GO to heaven. Only then can you experience heaven. Therefore, a heavenly abode is an experience. You have to go there to experience that. Otherwise, there is no heaven for you. It is there if you are interested in it. And it is a long trip!

Therefore, heaven is an experience and like any other experience, it will have a beginning and an end also. It is another type of experience. But, here, we are not talking about any new experience. Nor are we talking about an object that is not available for your experience. In other words, it is *prasiddha vastu*. We have seen this argument in the upanisads and the *Brahma-sutra-bhasya*. The question was asked, *prasiddham cet na jijnasyam, aprasiddham cet na jijnasyam?* It is both. Therefore, it doesn't require to be known. No. It is known and unknown. It is known as *atma* because Brahman is *atma*. It is unknown as Brahman. It is unknown as *atma* being Brahman. Therefore, it is not a totally unknown object that we are talking about.

We are talking about what is the invariable in all the three states of experiences. We analyse all experiences. In any given experience, whether it is a visual perception or an auditory perception, whatever be the perception, what is invariable? That is *atma*. What is invariable is *atma*. What is invariable in all forms of thinking is *atma*. What is invariable in the dream state and what doesn't go away even in sleep is *atma*. Other things come and go. The invariable is *prasiddha atma*.

That is why the Veda can talk about it successfully. That is why it is a matter of immediate knowledge because it is already immediately known. As a mistaken *atma* it is immediately known and therefore, because it is immediately known, *aparoksa*, you can commit a mistake. Therefore, you are adequately informed to commit a mistake. Therefore, there is no question of my knowing or not knowing. Even an *ajnani* cannot totally say, *aham mam na janami*, and a person who is introduced to the teaching cannot say, *aham mam na janami*.

Therefore, there is no question of anybody exposed to the teaching for a length of time saying *aham mam na janami*. Nor one has to say *aham mam na janami*. This is also silly. **You need not go around saying, "I know myself." What is the big deal? It is not a big deal.** You are suppose to know anyway. If you know electronics it is a big deal. If you know something about some other discipline it is a big deal. What is the big deal about knowing myself? You don't make a big deal. *Aham mam na janami* is not a big deal. Neither is it something that you have to say that I know nor I have to say that I don't know. There is no necessity for it. One need not talk about it. One need not judge others also.

The maximum one can do is teach about it. You can share it with others because you have material. You cannot say, "I don't know the material." You may not know all the Sanskrit words but you can always share the material. Therefore, I need not conclude that I don't know. I need not conclude that I know. Therefore, the judgment about this understanding itself is wrong because it is not true. When it is not true, why should you make a judgment?

If there are any doubts, you can work on those doubts. Why do you make a conclusion leading to the further conclusion that what... "I blew it!" It is neither fair to yourself nor to Vedanta. It is not fair. You have to be fair to yourself. If you are very fair to yourself, the maximum you can say is that in spite of Vedanta you have sadness.

This is another problem. We know how to convert everything into problems. "I don't say I don't know Vedanta. In spite of the knowledge of Vedanta I have problems. Why, why do I have problems? Others don't seem to have problems. Why do I only have problems?" It is obvious that there is somebody there that wants to laugh at you and say you have not made it. There is somebody in everybody's heart, an imp of an idiot, who goes on pointing out that you have not made it. "Didn't I tell you that you can't make it. Didn't I tell you that you won't make it. Didn't I tell you that you can never make it." There is a fellow always sitting

there putting ideas into your head, and you buy them.

There are two persons. One person is reasonable. The other person also is reasonable from his own background. From his background he is a very reasonable person. Given the background he is highly reasonable. He is some kind of a self-condemning person and perhaps he wants to get released in some form or another. No attention is paid to that person in pain. The best means of security for that person is offense. The best defense is offense. Before you get punched, you punch first and you are safe. The best defense is offense. It is a good old trick.

There is a person there who is having some problem, some pain or whatever, and wants attention, and if you don't pay attention to him because you are a Vedantin, then he is going to say, "What Vedantin? You are nobody. You don't know anything." There is a fellow there. "Just because you know some Sanskrit, do you think you know Vedanta?" And you can't stand somebody else knowing it also. Therefore, you will condemn the other person also. "You know Sanskrit. Therefore you think you are a Vedantin?" You not only say it to yourself, but to others also. It is a constant judgment. It is absolutely silly.

There are a lot of things to say here. One thing I would say is that you have to always see whether you judge yourself. Sadness is a fact. On that basis, do I JUDGE myself in any way? Do I judge my understanding? Do I judge my status? Do I judge my parentage? Do I judge my past? Or do I judge the present? Do I judge anything about myself? That can be a very important question. Do I judge myself?

Sadness is sadness. Let there be sadness. Frustration. Yes, I'm frustrated. Okay. In all this, "I" is involved. When you say, "I am frustrated," I is involved. When you say, "I am sad," I is involved. Or "I am depressed," I is involved. Without "I" there is no depression or sadness. There is an I that has nothing to do

with the cognitive I. There seems to be another I who is sitting there, some child I or whatever I that is there, which is sad, etc. On THAT basis—the sadness that is there—you convert that "I am sad," into a simple fact of sadness. If I can convert that, "I am sad," into one of sadness, then I can deal with it. If I can convert that "I am frustrated," into frustration, I can deal with it, or "I am angry," into anger, I can deal with it. Yes, I am sad. Why should I judge myself on that basis? There is no reason for a person to judge oneself on the basis that "I am sad, I am frustrated, I am angry." There is no necessity to judge.

BUT, all our lifetime we always move based on judgments. All our security lies in judgments. Our insecurity also lies in judgments. "I am insecure," is also based on judgments. And naturally the insecure person has to make judgements. Then only he can be secure and control. So, all our lifetime we have been labelling, judging people, judging ourselves, judging situations. It is not provisional, it is something fundamental.

From my experience I have learned one thing. If there is a person who is of judgments that person becomes very visible—even though you don't want to judge the person. But then, even if you don't want to judge, it becomes a fact. You see that all the time the person is making judgments. Even with reference to those persons, I am telling you, you can be free from being judgemental if only you know how to treat people as they are today.

You know, if you keep the same vegetable for a day, the next day it is not the same. If you keep it outside the refrigerator, it is not the same. The milk is also not the same. It undergoes some reaction with some other chemical. It is not going to be the same. There is a reaction. So, things are not always the same. A human being is much more than a chemical. He is a conscious person and need not be the same as he was yesterday. Why do you judge? Why do you judge because yesterday he was like that.

Yesterday he was like that. Today? I don't know. It's not an ideal. It can be you.

You can meet people as they are today. Even though they don't surprise you, it's okay. They need not surprise you. Yesterday they were like this. Today also they continue to be like this. But that doesn't mean that tomorrow the person is going to be the same. The person may be the same. Why should I bother about it? Let the person change, but today, this is how it is. Tomorrow the person may be entirely different; we don't know. Or, I may be different. I may understand the person better. I don't require to judge people and then deal with them.

This one attitude is very important in Vedanta. If I can meet people as they ARE, and meet MYSELF, being FAIR—without being unfair to myself, to my understanding or to anything—just meet people day to day, whoever they are, a lot of subjectivity will go out of you.

The problem is subjectivity. Vedanta is ABSOLUTE objectivity. Think it over. What is reality? *Vasni-tantravat*. It is not *purusa-tantra*. *Purusa-tantra* is subjective. *Purusa-tantra* is subjective. Vedanta is purely *vastu-tantra*. It is centered on the *vastu*, and therefore it has nothing to do with what you think or what you don't think. A fact, a reality, is as it is. The whole of Vedanta is dealing with realities. *Mithya* is reality. It is a kind of reality. *Satyam* is reality. Then what? These are the two types of reality. In this, there is *pranibhasikam* and *vyavaharika*; both are *mithya*. *Vyavaharika* is empirically real. It is always provisional. And there is *pranibhasikam*, there is subjectivity, and the two get mixed up all the time.

Values are all empirically based. They always get mixed up. It is very difficult for me to distinguish how much is subjective and how much is objective. How do I circumvent this problem? The only way is to refuse to judge. I refuse to judge. Then,

poor subjectivity has no hold over you. I refuse to judge. Let there be subjectivity. Who cares? I refuse to judge. It's an attitude one has to cultivate. It is to be cultivated. It's not something that one comes by. Then you see that there is truth in all your dealings. There is a certain truthfulness. Even if there is a mistake then we can always own it up. There is nothing to regret. There is always learning. Empirically we always learn and we keep learning. There is no end for learning. That is empirical. We keep learning.

As the subjectivity gets reduced, what will happen? You tell me. You may call it clarity or the fruits of knowledge—call it what you will. One's clarity should be more. The clarity of the vision and your understanding should be more. Everything should be more, naturally.

So, we start with nonjudgment. Try it these few days. I thought we could practice this for a few days. Try it on the people around whom you have judged a lot. Honestly, I'm telling you, if you are a really serious person, you have to try it on the people you have judged. You know it so well. You should try it with those people. It will be interesting. You will see new people. It will be different.

Swamini Vilasananda came across this article and her comment is:

Attached is the July 22, 1982 message to Piercy students from Pujya Swamiji at end of course regarding Arsha Vidya. Pujya Swamiji talks about not having a place for a while, but being able to help students find places using the name Arsha-Vidya (Knowledge of the Rishis).

This is a historical document and the original letter signed by Pujya Swamiji was fotocopied and given to each of us as we were packing our things and preparing to leave.