

Camp at AVG by Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati

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Value of Values Part 03 (Continued from April 2020)

अमानित्वम् (*amānitvam*) - absence of मानित्वम् (*mānitvam*)/pride is the first value prescribed by Lord Krishna. Pride arises from inflated vision of oneself. Looking at oneself as someone great is mānitvam - pride. Pride results in demanding respect from others which is what referred to as mānitvam here.

That pride definitely shows certain kind of inner difficulty; the need for me to announce my qualifications which means that I am not comfortable somehow with what I have and I have this need to declare myself in order to get approval from others. In demanding respect from others, there is inner need of getting approval from others. When there is a demand, satisfaction comes if I get what I demand; demand and respect.

When I have the sense of incompleteness, then it becomes important for me to fulfill that need by demanding respect. When it is fulfilled, I am happy; if not fulfilled, I am unhappy. This is likely to get a lot of hurt when the respect is not forthcoming. Inadvertently people disappoint me by not knowing my expectations. Among many of the expectations, one is to demand respect from others. Particularly when I am enjoying a position of authority, it is recognition from society - demanding respect becomes a prominent thing. Any demand has a potential for not getting fulfilled and creating hurt in us. Whenever we are hurt, we should ask ourselves - What demand is not fulfilled? Demands are more likely not to be fulfilled than they are fulfilled. Fire cannot be satisfied by putting butter in it. Similarly, any demand cannot be satisfied by fulfilling them. There comes a point that world cannot fulfill your demands anymore. Therefore, this need to demand respect will always result in hurt and misery. Everybody has this mānitvam tendency in one degree or the other. As long as it doesn't create conflict and I can deal with it, that is okay. You can afford to have that desire.

When unfulfilled desire causes pain in me, then we need to resolve it by प्रतिपक्षभावना (*pratipakṣabhāvanā*) - by deliberately taking contrary position. Pride arises because of some qualification for which I feel proud; I take ownership of those qualifications - I am tall, fair etc., I am a scientist or a doctor and so forth ... this is taking the ownership. Let us analyze this ownership. Sense of self-dignity is okay, that makes me conduct myself in a dignified manner. Awareness of one's identity is quite alright. That's why rights of passages are performed in Vedic culture and other cultures as well. A person becomes Brahmachari after *yajñopavītam*; husband-wife after marriage; every identity creates in me a sense of dignity and responsibility that I can no more conduct myself in unbecoming manner. Now you are a Brahmachari, so you perform *sandhyā* etc. and serve your teacher. With every title goes responsibility. It makes me conduct myself in a dignified manner. That kind of self-respect is quite in order. When a time comes, that too has to go.

But here we are talking about inflated self-respect. Let us analyze this. When you distinguish yourself from others, you may have a sense of pride, but then it divides you from others; you become more isolated. How do you feel when they don't talk to you? This is how we isolate ourselves through pride. We may get temporary satisfaction. We need to ask - how I am torturing myself by keeping this attitude. Okay, I may be an accomplished person; can I take full credit for it? How the whole world has contributed in those accomplishments? How long my mother should have taken to teach me first alphabets? How many people have contributions in making me what I am today? Who am I to claim the ownership of what I have - body, sense-organs, mind, intellect; the capacity to use also given; inspiration and motivation also given. Ultimately, we find that everything is given to us. I have all the freedom and enjoy the privileges I have. Ownership makes no sense at all; it is only ignorance, delusion.

When I realize contribution of others in what I am, the pride turns into a

sense of gratitude. Enjoy what you have, but no need to be proud about it. Enjoy it with humility. Humility arises from looking in to the realities of life. Don't take anything for granted as Shankaracharyaji said in Bhaja Govindam: -

मा कुरु धनजनयौवन गर्वम्
हरति निमेषात्कालः सर्वम् ।
मायामयमिदमखिलं हित्वा
ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥
mā kuru dhanajanayauvanagarvaṁ
harati nimēṣātkālaḥ sarvaṁ ।
māyāmayamidamakhilam hitvā
brahmapadam tvam praviśa veditvā ॥

Meaning: -

Do not boast of wealth, friends and youth; these can be taken away in a flash by time. Knowing this whole world to be under the illusion of *māyā*, you try to attain the abode of Brahma. We don't need to have a negative picture but can be grateful, that is *amānitvam* - humility, the very first value.

Value 2 : अदम्बित्वम् (*adambitvam*)

दम्ब (*damba*) meaning pretend to be different from what I really am. This is everywhere in the world. People claiming positions by wrong certificates, forging documents etc - these are all *dambitvam*, showing qualification that I do not possess. There is a difference between मानी (*māni*) and दम्बी (*dambī*). *Māni* has it, and he is proud of it whereas *dambī* does not have it and trying to show it off. Both have need for respect and acceptance from others. Demanding respect by faking and cheating is worse than *mānitvam*. Everybody has both these, *mānitvam* and *dambitvam*. Because we don't like camels or buffalos, but they don't go for plastic surgery. Only human being has the sense of insufficiency and inferiority. Nobody in nature wears clothes. All the business of beauticians and dress designers will go away if this complex was not there in humans. Every part of the body creates complex and sense of insufficiency in humans. I don't want people to see my inadequacy, and therefore want to present myself as a complete person.

There is much concern about rejection and non-acceptance. There is such a need for getting approval from others because I do not approve of myself. That is what brings pride on the one hand and pretension on the other hand. There is non-acceptance of myself as I have the need for being different from what I am. Let us recognize these tendencies. I will never feel sufficient as long as I keep considering myself at this body-mind-sense-complex level. There is no need to have a sloppy look but painstakingly going out of way to show myself as superior is not needed. Many people don't even take notice of it. The more proud and pretentious I am, the more intense my identification is. How long can I pretend? Truth will come out at some stage. All those creams and make-ups to hide wrinkles; how long will they last? Going to party with make-up knowing that it will last only three-four hours; if party gets longer, I am worried about my wrinkle getting exposed. When I am not able to get the memories of wrinkles away, what is the point in hiding them? You can hide them if you want, that's okay; but going out of the way is called pretense.

The standard definition of *damba* is "blowing one's trumpet". There are people who will always keep talking about what he has done, they keep declaring it. This is nothing but torturing ourselves. How do we overcome it? It arises from a strong sense of self non-acceptance. Everybody has it but when it becomes very strong and when it becomes a strong need to hide blemishes and show them as virtues, we need to look at it. Why do I need to pretend? I will get some respect, some temporary respect? So what? We should spot these needs and slowly let them go. There should be graceful acceptance of myself and my limitations. A very important value is to gracefully accepting oneself. The body being created, if it is imperfect, it is not my fault. It is what it is. If we find limitations, we can work on them. We do not suggest not to work on them. But hiding them and presenting them differently is a problem. People use to make fun of my nose and ears. I used to be upset about it. Then I realized that this is the best *Īśvara* has made. The shape of my nose doesn't come in the way of my spiritual pro-

gress. For spiritual seekers, these things don't matter; grey hair, wrinkles, body shapes ... all these don't matter. It's matter of perception. No need to feel bad or miserable about these realities. That's what *Īśvara* has created and I accept the judgement of *Īśvara* about myself.

Value : 3 अहिंसा (*ahimsā*)

Ahimsā means not causing pain to any living being. We must add to it that not causing pain to the environment and nature, and not disturbing the harmony also. Value of not causing pain is there because I do not want others to cause pain to me. *Ahimsā* or nonviolence is the most fundamental value. *Ahimsā*, *satyam*, *asteyam*, *brahmacarya* - these are all nothing but modified forms of Ahimsa. Ahimsa is the primary value and the other four are facets of non-violence. It is a primary value because I do not want to be violated at physical or emotional level. I want to live and live happily; the simple desire I have.

Evolution of a being is in sensitivity. We, the humans are much more sensitive than other creatures. Other creatures are sensitive about their needs; only humans are given sensitivity for all creatures. The need of not getting hurt or not hurting any other living being is *ahimsā* or nonviolence. Lord Krishna describes *ahimsā* in Chapter 6:

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ गीता, ६- ३२ ॥

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo'rjuna

sukhaṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ Gītā, 6- 32

Anybody can become exalted person by practicing this value. Hurting causes pain to others. If I was in the position of being hurt by others, what would be my reaction? What would be my expectations from others? What kind of behavior or treatment I would have expected from others? The other person whom I hurt also expects the same type of behavior from me and therefore, it is my duty to display that. Therefore, treating others as I treat myself is *ahimsā*. That person is a yogi - *sa yogī paramo mataḥ*.

I am the self of all; hurting others, I hurt myself; Everyone has to be treated by me as I treat myself. I never want to hurt myself. I always want to make myself happy. I never want to make myself unhappy. This is the basic value that can change me immediately. All values are based on this basic value. Ahimsā is based on the oneness of *ātmā*, oneness of self. I can hurt person at two levels, physically or emotionally. Ahimsā means a commitment; not to hurt others at physical and emotional level. The second one is more subtle. When does violence take place? Whenever I am overwhelmed by my passion. Through the Verse 21 of Chapter 16 in Gita, Lord Krishna says –

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतच्चयं त्यजेत् ॥ १६-२१ ॥

kāmaḥ krodhastathā lobhastasmādetatrayaṁ tyajet ॥ 16-21 ॥

I cannot control craving. I cannot control anger and greed. I am controlled by them. Arjuna's question was - what makes a person perform wrong action? For that, Lord Krishna says - कामः (*kāmaḥ*), क्रोधः (*krodhaḥ*) and मोहः (*mohaḥ*). Greed is result of unfulfilled desire like putting butter in the fire. It becomes more and more intense. When my action is guided by these three, I am invariably going to be violent. I become blind and violate the rights, dignity, requirement, feelings and sensitivities of others. When any passion takes over me, my *vivekabuddhi* or free-will do not come into play. I lose my all sense of proportion. Then what I do is unbecoming of me. We should be constantly working on these three passions as they make us violent. If human could control these, the world will become a heaven.

No creature has these three; for them, it is only seasonal. They don't do things out of anger or greed. When they are satisfied, they walk away. Gorging of tasty foods can happen to me, not to dog or other animal. Human being, the most evolved creature, appears to be the most helpless creature as he is controlled by his behavior. I ask myself - what emotion is guiding my behavior. It is desire, anger, greed, jealousy, hatred, and frustration. Whenever we are controlled by demoniac tendencies, our action would be violent. So, watch out before doing any action. We should be aware of the

thoughts, emotions and motivation of our mind. If what I say is out of jealousy, anger and frustration, then I should stop it.

We should try and follow two step response. One step is action out of emotions; immediate impulse based reaction which mostly takes place in the world. Two step response is step back and ask myself - what is it that is motivating my response? Is it anger, greed, jealousy etc.? Bring back *vivekā* and do what is appropriate in this situation. That is two step response. The way to remain free from violence is to keep impulses under control. A non-impulsive behavior is a deliberate action. Either behavior can be *avivekātmaka* - impulsive or *vivekātmaka* – deliberate. When one lives this way for a long time, it becomes normal. One needs to keep practicing. This is the basic thing about *ahimsā*.

.....To be continued

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