

Sādhana-pañcakam
Pujya Swamiji's transcribed talk

This is the third part of the serial article, continuation from April 2021 newsletter.

SEE THE LIMITATIONS OF SUKHA

What are the limitations of *bhava-sukha*? First, it is *anitya*, limited in time. Before the *sukha* is born, there is pain. After the *sukha* is gone, there is pain. While the *sukha* is there, there is also pain because it is going away. Some people are afraid even before the *sukha* comes. They worry it is only going to last one minute, or ten minutes, or an hour, or a day. In this way, *sukha* goes away even before it comes! Even before the springtime comes after the winter, many worry that it is only going to last for two months. Such people are always counting down, 'One day gone, two days gone, three days gone.' You do not look at what is coming, instead you always count down, worried about what is going away.

This is what is called a 'countdown mentality.' The countdown *buddhi* is a very difficult mind. You can say, 'Coming, coming, coming,' but this is not the case. This type of *buddhi* is orientated towards, 'Gone, gone, gone.' 'Going away' is a problem with *bhava-sukha* anyway because it is limited in time, *anityatvāt*. It is a problem even before it comes and after coming, it goes away. It does not last.

Even when it comes, it does not fulfill all your needs. That which is instrumental in giving you *sukha*, the *sukha-sāadhanam*, is not totally satisfying because it always lacks one thing or the other. Therefore, degree-wise there is a *doṣa*, limitation, time-wise there is a limitation and quality-wise there is a limitation. *Bhava-sukha* includes not only *sukha* here on earth, but also *amutra*, in *svarga*²¹. The *sukha* of *svarga* is also *bhava-sukha*, also limited in time. *Anusandhīyatām*, may you remember these *doṣas*. So what happens now? The person has no *arthakāma* interests. He is not interested in *kāmyakarma*, fulfilling desires, because he has seen the limitations of *bhava-sukha* connectedly. Now he has *viveka*, discrimination and *vairāgya*,

²¹*Svarga* is the Vedic equivalent of the 'Heaven' discussed in other scriptures.

dispassion, as well as *antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi*, purity of mind. He gets the *antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi* by doing his duties properly with the right attitude of *karma-yoga*. So the mind is also taken care of. Then what?

BURNING DESIRE FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Previously he had a desire for self-knowledge, but it was like a small glow-worm. Now and then he heard something here and there. There was some curiosity. Then it became a small flame. Now, as *viveka* and *vairāgya* become more and more firm, the *ātma-icchā*, desire for self-knowledge, grows proportionately, eventually becoming a huge flame of desire.

Therefore, *ātmecchā vyavasīyatām*; may you entertain and pursue, *ātma-icchā*, the desire to know the *ātmā*. Generally your desire is for *anātmā*, non-self. 'I want this,' means what? *Ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati*.²² It is for the sake of the *ātmā* that I want it, as some addition to me. Or I want to avoid something so that I can get rid of some pain. Whether it is for gain or for getting rid of something, desire is always with reference to *anātmā*. If you want to take care of your physical body, that is *ātma-icchā*. But if you just shift your standpoint, that is also *anātmā-icchā*. If you are interested in psychology, taking care of the mind and so on, that is *ātma-icchā*. However, afterwards you find that is also *anātmā-icchā*.

Then you want *svarga*, heaven, which is *anātmāicchā*, a desire for non-self. Wanting heaven is a desire for non-self. Wanting wealth is a desire for non-self. Wanting power, name, influence, people, relationships, all these are a desire for non-self. We do not say it is right or wrong. We must simply know that it is a desire for non-self. Suppose you say, 'I want better health', there is nothing wrong with that. But it is a desire for non-self. I want to have a clearer mind. It is not wrong because it is important. But still, it is a desire for non-self. What then, is a desire for self?

To be continued...

²² 'Everything becomes beloved only for the sake of the self.' (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 4.5.6).