

Absolute Value¹

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Everybody struggles to be happy, to be secure, to be something bigger, to be significant. This one word “significant” is enough, it includes everything. That I want to be secure, I am frightened of my future, feel that nobody approves of me, respects me, are reasons for unhappiness. You have to gain the respect of everyone in the world who, according to you, is significant. But all those persons also expect respect from you. This is an unfortunate thing, because they are also mortals, human beings, and therefore, it becomes a problem.

All these struggles that we have, like seeking approval, etc., are the common problem of every human being, and not peculiar to any given person. That seeking is called *samsara*. Seeking to be different from what I am now, because as I am, I am not acceptable, is *samsara*. Whenever you have a happy moment, you see yourself as a whole person, but for that you need a person whose words or deeds make you feel pleased, as a person. Then you become happy. You are pleased. So what you require then, is not the absence of the world, but the absence of the demanding person in you. The person who has agenda, that person has to be absent for the time being. And whenever that person—the demanding person, the calculating person, the scheming person, the manipulating person, the sad person, the struggling person, the longing person, the lonely person, the forlorn person—is absent for the time being, you are happy. Because that person is not true. Otherwise he can never be absent I tell you, you will be stuck. But because that person is only incidental, because a particular way of thinking about oneself makes the person sad, longing etc., and because that person is not true, that person can be suspended for the time being.

The demanding person is suspended in the wake of a desired situation. I say desired and not desirable, because a situation may be desirable but not be a happy one, like following a certain diet. The diet is desirable, but it is not desired. I am avoiding the word ‘desirable’ because all that is desirable is not desired and all that is desired is not desirable. That is why they say that anything you like is immoral, illegal or fattening. Therefore, when the desired thing is there and it is also desirable, you are lucky. If the desired thing is there and it is not desirable, then there is conflict inside. When what is desirable is there and it is not desired, then there is a lack inside. But when there is the desirable and desired situation, then, you are happy.

That is why the mountains make you happy—they are incapable of evoking the demanding person in you. Unless of course, you want the mountains to be different. They are people like that also, who see the mountains and think, “See. They have cut all the trees on the mountain. Previously there were trees; now they are gone. At this rate everything will be denuded. Humanity is going to suffer. People are destroying the environment.” Then they champion the cause of the environment. Some people need a cause; otherwise they feel empty inside. They have to fight for some cause, because when they fight for something they feel that they are real. It is all a psychological need, really speaking, and not a great awareness. Very few people have that, though some do. Well, then, if you find that the mountain is O.K., you enjoy the mountain and find that it does not evoke in you

the demanding, the needing, the longing person.

The mountains are the objects known, knowledge is the cognitive thought process which brings in the cognition of the mountains, then there is the one who knows the mountains. All three are one consciousness. The knower consciousness, the knowledge consciousness and the known consciousness become one whole consciousness, because the known does not evoke the longing person. The knowledge naturally does not evoke the longing person because the known and knowledge are together, knowledge being of the known. When you are not a longing person, you are, naturally, just a conscious, appreciative person and there is wholeness. This is the wholeness that is you. The knower, knowledge, and known become one whole, and then you experience happiness. This wholeness that is you is what you want to be, because you know that this is the height that you can reach. You cannot go any further; up to wholeness you can go. Beyond wholeness? There is no beyond wholeness. Now, this wholeness is experiential; it is not born of knowledge. But that you find yourself whole, in spite of your self-condemning attitude etc., in spite of a low self-image, in spite of whatever value you think you lack, in spite of yourself, means that you find the truth revealing itself.

You have doctrine, you have dogma that tells you that you are basically imperfect, and you have been told this from childhood again and again. Is there anyone who is perfect? Everybody accepts that. "True, I cannot see that well, I cannot hear that well, etc.; there is imperfection everywhere. My knowledge is imperfect, everything is imperfect and therefore I am imperfect." This is the conclusion. My own estimation of myself is not that great at all, and my partner in life does not really improve it. He is a person who always says, "Didn't I tell you?" So naturally, in this situation, how am I going to be happy at any time? Most of my likes and dislikes, my desires, were unfulfilled. I was able to fulfill a few, but all the important ones I could never fulfill at all. From childhood we always settle for something less—and less and less. The deck was never cleared; it always had some pending desires. Then we find we have grown up. But it is just as it was when we were children. There were some toys we wanted, that everyone else had, and we didn't get. Like that Cabbage Patch Doll. I did not get my Cabbage Patch Doll, and now I have become nineteen. What should I do? That I did not get my Cabbage Patch Doll was a sad situation that I had to live with. Now I cannot get a Cabbage Patch Doll because the age for that is over. Therefore, that mutilated, that unfulfilled desire left me sad and high and dry, and that sad person is still there. That person is me. It is not a different person. These are the core issues. Not getting a Cabbage Patch Doll is the core issue. Thus, there is a person who is sad and who is constituted of these unfulfilled desires—umpteen in number.

When this is the situation, there is no possibility of my being happy if this fact is not there. What is the fact? I am free. I am free in the sense that I am free from any limitation. I am the whole. This fact means that I cannot completely avoid being happy. It is impossible. Why? What makes me miss my wholeness is all my notions, memories, etc., which are variable. They all get suspended because they are not real, mithyā. If they are real, they will always be there, but because they are variable, they go away. Something captures my imagination, in fact, captures me as a person. It may be a star, a lone star in the sky that I see. Everything else is all vague, covered with clouds, and this star stands out. Or it may be the setting sun or the rising sun.

Or my son being successful in his exam, which I never expected because of the way he was going about it. He surprises me, so I am happy. Or it may be anything—like music, or a joke, or whatever captures me. It captures me for the time being and I am happy, I am the whole. That is a window to understanding that I can be different.

In spite of all my problems, if I can be happy, then to be happy I need not solve all these problems. It is simple logic. You need to be a great thinker for this—only some marbles are good enough because you are dealing with realities. Details need a lot of learning, but to know the whole, you don't need a lot of details. That is why a pot is good enough for me as an example. I do not need complex things. I need something as simple as possible, because we are talking of the whole, which is not made up of parts, and which makes a difference in my life. The difference is between struggling to be whole, and recognizing that I am the whole. That is the difference.

When I recognize that, when ignorance of that is not there, when can I struggle? I can only do. Everything becomes a privilege—desiring is a privilege, doing is a privilege, knowing is a privilege. One swami sang:

sarvam brahmamayam re re sarvam brahmamayam
kim kartavyam kimakartavyam kim jnatavyam kim ajnatavyam

Sarvam brahmamayam, everything is a manifestation of Brahman. Everything includes your mind, please. In fact everything is the mind, really. All that you know, everything, is only through this mind. That doesn't mean that the mind is everything. I am saying that through the mind alone you see everything. It is the platform of all that you experience. Therefore, sarvam brahmamayam, including my mind.

Then he sings, kim kartavyam, what is there for me to do? Nothing. Somebody worried, "Swamiji, if I become Brahman, does it mean that I won't do anything?" Why should you do anything? Why do you have this problem? Suppose you are Brahman, you are everything, and suppose you don't do anything, what is the problem?

"No, no, I have a lot of things to do." If you have a lot of things to do, well, that is what requires Brahman. You don't need to do anything.

"Oh, should I not do anything?" Kim akartavyam, what should you not do? What is the rule? You are free not to do. You are free to do anything, kim kartavyam, kim akartavyam.

Kim jnatavyam, kim ajnatavyam sarvam brahmamayam. What is there for me to know, kim jnatavyam? I know one thing by which everything is known, because everything is me and that me is Brahman. Where is the question of there being anything else to know? What counts is one, and that I know. Everything 'else' is a manifestation of that. What is there for me to know? What is it that I should not know, kim ajnatavyam? Is there a rule—you are a jnani, you are a wise person, therefore you should not know this?

Why?

This is all dot.com. You should not know this.

Why?

If you know this, you are not a jnani.

What is freedom? Please define that freedom for me. What is the freedom that you are talking about? What is it that I should not do? What is it that I should do? What is there for me to know? What is it that I should not know? Kim jnatavyam kim ajnatavyam.

The idea is this: there is no such thing as something to be done and something not to be done, something to be known and something not to be known for a jnani. You don't use a measuring tape to find out whether a person is a jnani or not. Sarvam brahmamayam—if this is you, there is no more ignorance. If the mistake is corrected, you know what is what, and therefore, there is no more confusion and no hindrance for your being what you are. That is why for every swami the last word in his name is ananda—Dayananda, Saccidananda, Cidananda, Gopalananda, Govindananda. Whatever it is, this ‘ananda’ is there because whatever is done or is not done, you are what you are. This being the situation, the value for this knowledge is absolute.

Prof. Ranganayaki, founder editor of Arsha vidyā Research and Publication Trust left for heavenly abode on 18/09/2017.

We at Arsha vidyā Research and Publication trust share the grief with the bereaved family. We fondly look back how Prof. Ranganayaki enthusiastically helped in carrying out the vision of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati along with our managing trustee in editing and bringing out quality books of Swamiji's teachings ever since the Publication started in 2005. She helped establish the Publication office and put the process of publishing in motion.

During her association with the Publication, we could bring out many titles and give a head start to the Publication.

We share with all our readers this message in remembrance of Prof. Ranganayaki.

