

## śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avaihi

*Eighth part of the serial article continued from September 2019 issue.*

### DHYĀNA

The third type of *karma*, *mānasa-karma*, comes under *dhyāna*. It is also meant for earning *īśvara-anugraha*, but mainly the *phala* is different here. *Adṛṣṭa-phala* is limited for *mānasa-karma* but *dṛṣṭa-phala* is much more and which is critical in spiritual pursuit. *Dṛṣṭa-phala* here is *antaḥkaraṇa-naiścalya*, steadiness of the mind.

Is there such a thing as steadiness of the mind? The mind itself changes constantly. When you have a thought, it is *kṣaṇika*, momentary. Because it is momentary, you are able to see the motion of my hand. If the thought frame were not momentary, you would not be able to see the motion of my hand. The smoother the perception of the motion, more the frames are available; like a movie camera, you have many thought frames.

So, thought being momentary, what does this ‘steadiness of mind mean?’ If you are asked to dwell upon a given topic and maintain it, you find that you think of the topic only occasionally. You start with the topic and then move away from it. Sometimes you come back and sometimes you do not. The mind is meandering; it moves all over like the river Godāvarī reaching the ocean, creating big islands on the way. So to maintain a given topic<sup>1</sup> is difficult for us.

The other problem is mechanical thinking. Things happen. Thinking takes place. We do not seem to have any say over the ways of thinking. Sadness, anger, all these are *vṛttis*, thoughts. Nobody can be sad without thinking. Nobody wants to be sad. Even though nobody wants to be sad, one does become sad. By what? By thinking. Thinking that leads to sadness happens; it is not deliberate. Therefore, one has to look into oneself. *Dhyāna* is a great boon, a blessing we have for overcoming these problems. Here again, *dhyāna* is not bereft of *Īśvara*.

*Dhyāna* really is not as it is presented today—looking at a place, looking at the tip of the nose and so on. Anything that you do mentally relating you to *Īśvara* is *dhyāna*. You can do *pūjā*, *pārāyaṇa*, etc., mentally. In fact the definition of *dhyāna* is—any mental activity for which the object is *Īśvara*.<sup>2</sup>Physical activity connected to *Īśvara*, is *pūjā*.<sup>3</sup>When you do *pārāyaṇa*, reciting verses relating you to *Īśvara*, that is oral activity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sajātīya-vṛtti-pravāhaḥ*—flow of thoughts centred on a given topic.

<sup>2</sup> *Saguṇa-brahma-viśaya-mānasa-vyāpāraḥ*.

<sup>3</sup> *Saguṇa-brahma-viśaya-kāyaika-vyāpāraḥ*.

<sup>4</sup> *Saguṇa-brahma-viśaya-vācika-vyāpāraḥ*.

Now, you can understand what is dhyāna. Any mental activity is not meditation. If any mental activity is meditation, then we are all in meditation all the time, for there is always mental activity. Any activity related to Īśvara is also not meditation. It should be exclusively mental activity. It should be mental activity with the object *saguṇa-brahma*, Īśvara with attributes. This is *dhyāna-lakṣaṇa*, the definition of *dhyāna*.

*Saguṇa* means that which is with *guṇas*. It is a descriptive form of Īśvara. Īśvara means *saguṇa-brahma*. There is no meditation on *nirguṇa-brahma*, Brahman without attributes. *Nirguṇa* is to be understood. Is there a *saguṇa-brahma* really? What is this *guṇa*, attribute?

Take for instance a tree. A tree is *saguṇa*, it has attributes. What is the *guṇa* of a tree? Suppose you say 'tree-ness'. So a tree has tree-ness. Wherever there is tree-ness there is a tree. That a tree is *saguṇa* means it has tree-ness. Tree-ness is a *guṇa* and tree is the *guṇin*, that which has the *guṇa*. The tree-ness belongs to what? A tree or non-tree? There is a locus for the tree-ness. What is the locus for tree-ness? A tree or non-tree? If you say it is tree, that means there is already a tree. How did it become a tree? Because there is tree-ness, it becomes a tree. We will be getting into a regression.

To get out of this regression, if you say tree-ness is a quality of a non-tree, that tree-ness belongs to a non-tree, then how can a non-tree have tree-ness as its quality? A non-tree cannot have tree-ness as its quality. However, we accept that the tree-ness belongs to a non-tree, pot-ness belongs to a non-pot, chair-ness belongs to a non-chair, table-ness belongs to a non-table, and so on. So too, *jagat-ness* belongs to non-*jagat*, that is, *nirguṇa brahma*.

The words such as *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* are technical words. They have to be understood. One has to commit oneself to the study of *śāstra* and know their meanings. One cannot understand them over ordinary discussions. *Nirguṇa-brahma* is not available for *dhyāna*. So, we restrict ourselves to *saguṇa-brahma* in meditation or in any other type of *karma*, like *pūjā*. *Saguṇa-brahma* is Īśvara, the cause of the *jagat*. He is *sṛṣṭi-sthiti-saṁhāra*, author of creation, sustenance and withdrawal. *Saṁhāra* does not mean destruction. There is no destruction at all; nothing is destroyed. *Saṁhāra* means withdrawal. What is manifest becomes unmanifest in *saṁhāra*. The one who can wind up the show is Īśvara.

Some people can create but cannot wind up. Some can wind up but cannot create. Some can create but cannot run it, cannot maintain, run the whole show. Īśvara is capable of all three functions. For *sṛṣṭi-sthiti*, creation and maintenance, we need all the *guṇas*. So *sṛṣṭi* presupposes *sarvajñatva*, all-knowledge, and *sarva-śaktimatva*, all power. These qualities cannot be placed elsewhere. They can be placed only in one locus and that is only Īśvara whom we refer to as *saguṇa-brahma*, and who is the object of our mental activity.

**to be continued...**