

Camp at AVG by Swami Viditatmananda Saraswati

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Value of Values Part 05 (Continuation from Sep 2020 newsletter)

Value 6 : आचार्योपासनम् (*ācāryopāsanam*)

Worshipping and serving the teacher is for acquiring the grace of the teacher. Serving is always for pleasing and acquiring the grace. *Ācāryopāsanam* is serving the teacher, pleasing the teacher; not in the sense of corrupting or flattering him. Pleasing by genuinely doing something that he likes to see in me. Teacher is always a pleased person and he doesn't need to be pleased by us.

There is a famous dialogue between *yājñavalkya* and *maitrēyī*. He says – “I am going to renounce everything, I have made enough provision for you.” She asks a question then – “Suppose I get the wealth of the entire earth, will that make me immortal?” *Yājñavalkya* says – “No, one cannot get immortality with wealth; you can lead a comfortable life.” Then she said – “What is the use of the wealth that does not make me immortal. Give me that knowledge that makes me immortal.” She is a *ji-jñāsu* and he was pleased with her question and her dedication to knowledge. That makes the teacher extra pleased. That gets the special grace of the teacher. In the word “Guru”, there are two letters - gu and ru. Gu – stands for darkness; ru stands for the remover of darkness.

In *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, *Yamarāja* was pleased with the sincerity of *Nacikētā* to knowledge and willingness to let go everything. He was able to create that conviction in *Yamarāja* that he is a right aspirant. You cannot bribe the teacher with something. *Muṇḍakōpaniṣad* says that the teacher should impart the knowledge to the person if he is an appropriate aspirant. There is no obligation for a wise person to do anything but scripture recommends. A worthy student creates a condition that the teacher is ready to impart knowledge and showers that additional grace. Do not think teachers are that easy to please. Serving the teacher means pleasing the teacher and he is ready to impart the knowledge. Then a relationship is established. You invoke a *śiṣya* in yourself. It took a long time for Arjuna to invoke a *śiṣya* in himself. He had the right frame of mind only in *Kuruṣṭhētra* having understood that other things cannot solve his problem of grief.

शिष्यस्तेहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् (*śiṣyastēham śādhi mām tvām prapannam*). So, Krishna

becomes the Guru from being a friend. That's what seva does, creating a bond. It establishes a special relationship when he is ready to impart the knowledge.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया (tadviddhi praṇipātēna paripraśnēna sēvayā).

Establishing that relationship is *ācāryopāsanam*. What important is attitude; it is the attitude that transforms us.

Value 7 : शौचम् (śaucam)

It means purity. Purity is at two levels, external purity and inner purity. External purity is cleanliness. External orderliness shows an organized mind. The importance of being a clean person is to be an organized person. Not only body and cloth, your life also has to be an organized one. That is external cleanliness. We can also include cleanliness of food as what we eat affects our mind and body. So we prescribe *sāttvika* food and avoid too much spicy food, stale food and left-over food. We consume fresh and stable food. What is not stable outside will not be stable inside.

The other cleanliness is cleanliness of the mind. I keep my clothes clean by detergent. We know that if the stains stay longer on clothes, it is difficult to clean them. Mind is also like a fabric as it can easily get stained. In our day to day interaction, we get hurt and entertain guilt, jealousy, attachment and aversion. Little stains, not deep, if they are cleaned right away, then it is fine. If you don't clean, then they build up. All these things don't happen overnight. The person has not taken care to keep his mind clean. If you allow clothes to get stained, a time will come when the original color will not be known.

What is the detergent for minimizing it? प्रतिपक्ष-भावना (pratipakṣa-bhāvanā)

Deliberately taking a contrary position like accommodating for anger, humility for pride, honesty for pretentiousness etc. Every negative thought arising in my mind creates a disturbance in me, and makes my mind restless and perturbed. We should be alert and conscious about the thoughts occurring in our mind. We should be able to identify those thoughts, jealousy, hatred and aversion. Sometimes we don't even know and may claim that we don't have *rāgadvēṣa*. Becoming familiar with mind is the first and the important step. Knowing the enemy is half the battle won. When I find whatever value more in someone else, jealousy comes in.

Animals do not have consciousness to feel; it's a great disadvantage. Human beings have this advantage which is converted into disadvantage. This great evolution of

self-consciousness has become the cause for misery, which can also be a cause for *mōkṣa*. I compare with others as I am not happy with myself, and I become jealous when I see someone has something that I do not have. For that, *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā* is the detergent. Even though I cannot tolerate his getting ahead but I go to him and congratulate him, and share the happiness of the person. Jealousy can be replaced by sharing the joy of whom we are jealous. Jealousy is a common stuff everybody has it. Other common thing is self-condemnation because of self judgment. It is the nature of our intellect to judge anything that it comes in contact with. First thing is to judge and then decide the strategy. First judgment I make is of myself, and usually I am not kind to myself. I expect myself to be all right and successful all the time. I want to be perfect. When I find that I am not able to live up to my expectation, I reject myself. If I do not do something about it, then this dislike can change its status from rejection to condemnation, and then it goes out of my hand. I am very critical of myself. I have set stringent standard for myself, and mostly that is all the cause of my unhappiness. Self-acceptance is the *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā* for this very important value.

Let us be graceful about accepting our own shortcomings, limitations and imperfections. Whatever shortcomings I have, I may want to do something about them and I will work on them. Acceptance does not mean I do not change; I am always ready to change wherever improvement is called for. It does not mean that I condemn myself. People say how we progress if we are satisfied with the self where history shows all progress comes because of dissatisfaction. It is not that you have to reject yourself and make progress. By self-rejection, I lose capacity to do anything as it takes away my inner vitality. It does not mean that I necessarily condone my limitations. I have commitment to overcome them. I overcome some of them; some I cannot.

Being accommodative and gracefully accepting myself is the best thing I can do to myself. Self rejection is the worst thing I can do to myself. Self-rejection is a great impurity. One should not brand oneself, judging and rejecting oneself. In short, we should be conscious about the thoughts of the mind. If the attitude of the mind is against our values, we should be ready to correct them.

To be continued...