

Swami Sakshatkrtananda conducted a spiritual camp at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh from Sep 10, 2022 to Sep 19, 2022. He taught the summary of first 17 chapters and upto to verse 21 of Chapter 18 of Upadesa Sahasri. Swamiji plans to complete the rest of the verses in the camps in subsequent years. 150 students participated from different parts of India and also from different countries.

The camp was inaugurated by the lighting up of lamp by sumangalis. Resident Swamis blessed for the successful completion of the camp. The students participated in the morning and evening puja in the temple and Pujya Swamiji's adhishtanam. Swami Sakshatkrtananda conducted guided meditation in the mornings. Late in the evening there was satsang.

There was a talk everyday on one verse of the Gita by Arsha Vidya Teachers. The Teachers who addressed were Swami Satsvarupananda, Swami Aparoksananda, Swami Paramatmananda, Swami Muditavadanananda, Swamini Vidyananda, Swami Ganeshasvarupananda, and Swami Prakasananda, Swami Ramesvarananda and Sri N. Avinashilingam gave a presentation on Manjakkudi and Arsha-avinash website respectively.

There are five topics in Upadesa Sahasri - jiva, jagat, Isvara, bondage and liberation. Upadesa Sahasri has 19 chapters and 695 verses. It has two sections - gadya (prose) and padya (poetry). The gadya section has 116 sentences.

GADYA SECTION - Summary

We shall expound the method of teaching, the means to liberation to mumuksus who have sraddha in the Upanisad pramanam. The Guru should teach again and again until the Sishya understands. The Sishya should have dispassion, should have given up desire for progeny, wealth and other worlds, should be a renunciate, endowed with mastery of mind and sense organs, have compassion, have virtues described in Sruti and Smriti and has approached the Guru in the prescribed manner. The Guru shall ensure that the Sishya has all qualifications of jati, profession, conduct, learning and parentage.

The Guru should have accomplished all the qualities required of a Sishya. The Guru should understand the tatparya of the questions and remember the questions, be calm, have mastery over the mind, compassion, capacity to bless, tools of communication, mastery over the scriptures, unattached to pleasures of this world and other worlds and is established in the knowledge of Brahman. The Guru should be devoid of negative tendencies

like ostentation, false pride, criticism, cruelty, cheating, jealously, asserting himself, ego, attachment towards I and mine. He should be committed to helping others and sharing the knowledge. He should teach the Upanisad sentences establishing oneness.

PADYA SECTION - Summary

CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

Namaskara to Nirguna Brahman is done first for the successful completion of the text by the author, which is pure consciousness and all pervading, manifest in all beings. It is in and through everything, and transcends everything.

After talking about rituals for mental purification, Vedas talk about Brahman. Ritualists are of the view that jnana and karma should be combined. Jnani being akarta, jnanam being the only sadhana for moksa and karma being opposed to vidya, jnana and karma cannot be combined. The content of Upadesa Sahasri is the same as the content of Upanisad, which means Brahma Vidya which destroys samsara.

CHAPTER 2- NEGATION

Atma is self shining, cannot be objectified and cannot be negated. Anatma is negated by the Sruti, as 'neti neti.' But the negator atma cannot be negated. It is known when everything that is negatable is negated.

CHAPTER 3- ISVARA ATMA

If Isvara is different from atma, then Isvara will become anatma. Anatma is subject to change, insentient and subject to improvement. These attributes are contrary to the attributes of Isvara mentioned in the Vedas. Therefore Isvara is atma.

CHAPTER 4- THE NATURE OF RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

Even when one is a jnani, prarabdha karma continues. That is why jivanmukti is possible. A jnani knows that he is an akarta, hence his actions are like actions done in a dream. A common man's identification with the body is firm. Similarly a janani's knowledge of atma is firm. Knowledge releases one from samsara. But it does not eliminate prarabdha. The reasoning given is unique. Vikshepa is the cause of human body and because of vikshepa knowledge was possible. So knowledge and vikshepa are not opposed to each other and hence prarabdha continues even after knowledge.

CHAPTER 5- ERROR IN UNDERSTANDING

There is adhyasa or error in understanding reality. There is mutual superimposition between atma and anatma. Udanka rishi refused to take amrutam which he wanted, when of-

ferred by Indra in disguise because of doubt of impurity. We also do not go for knowledge due to our obsession with samsara. When one is moving in a boat, trees appear to move in the opposite direction. Similarly when thoughts are moving, atma appears to be moving. In sleep one is free from ahankara. Ahankara is responsible for samsara.

CHAPTER 6- NEGATION OF ATTRIBUTES

More the attributes, more the samsara. In negation of attributes alone there is freedom. Atma is the seer, in whose presence everything is illumined. Atma is the subject. Anatma is seen which includes body, mind and ahankara. Anatma is an object. I am atma different from the attributes of waker, dreamer and sleeper.

CHAPTER 7- KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE INTELLECT

I am the all knowing and all pervading Brahman. I illumine everything everywhere through the intellect.

CHAPTER 8- DIALOGUE WITH THE MIND

It is in the form of dialogue between oneself and mind. It helps one to develop a distance from it and also the contents conduce to contemplation. O Mind! I am pure consciousness without any attributes. Your activities are not going to benefit me. I am one and nobody belongs to me. I do not belong to anybody. I have no benefit to be derived from you.

CHAPTER 9- SUBTLENESS AND PERVASIVENESS

Consciousness is the cause of everything. Hence it is all pervasive and the subtlest. Consciousness is the subject. It is not an object.

CHAPTER 10- CONTEMPLATION

After sravanam and mananam, nididhyasanam is to be done. Knowledge is only gained in sravanam. Niididhyasanam is for owning up the knowledge. The nature of Brahman has been well ascertained in the Sruti. Atma is all pervasive like space. It is not limited by space, time or object. It is one without a second. I am free of bondage or liberation. Experiences belong to the sleeper, dreamer and waker. These states have no existence, apart from atma. One who has ascertained knowledge from Upanisads is free.

CHAPTER 11- NATURE OF WITNESS

Sakshi is the seer of ahankara. Ahankara is the seer of the external world. So the nature of Sakshi is of illumination without action of illumining. Sakshi is svayam jyoti which is known from dream experience where Sakshi illumines the dream world.

CHAPTER 12- LIGHT

When a person sits in a lighted place, it is mistaken that the light is a part of the body. Similarly when ahankara is the reflected consciousness, it is mistaken as the original consciousness. The limitation of reflected consciousness is taken as my limitation. The tenth man is occupied with the number nine and misses himself. Similarly one who is occupied with anatma, misses his real self which is atma.

CHAPTER 13- EYELESSNESS

Sakshi is the primary illuminator. Mind is the secondary illuminator. Atma has no eyes or ears. Itself free from organs atma functions through the organs and become a knower. Free of mind, atma becomes thinker through the miind. Atma is free from gross body, subtle body and causal body. Atma does not experience anything. At the same time without atma no experience can take place and so atma is evident in every experience. When one knows atma as everything, he becomes free. When one does not know atma, he may be said to have committed suicide.

CHAPTER 14- DREAM AND MEMORY

The dream and memory are talked about here as mind is clearly known as object only in these two states. In waking atma and mind, both are knowers and hence it is difficult to know mind as an object.

CHAPTER 15- IMPOSSIBILITY OF ONE BEING ANOTHER

One element cannot become another element. Finite cannot become infinite by action. Gaudapada says in his famous karika, prakriti or nature of a thing cannot become different at any time or by anyway, So karma cannot take you out of samsara. Only sannyasa gives you freedom from samsara. Atma is free from the three states.

CHAPTER 16- CONSITING OF EARTH

The body is insentient and is a transformation of five elements. We can see all the five elements in the constitution of the body. Sense organs and their respective objects are also produced from the five elements. Sense organs reveal the sense objects and it also must be of the same nature as sense objects and inert. Mind is also made of five elements as food nourishes the mind. So the entire upadhi is insentient, Atma alone is the sentient principle that lights up the mind and through the mind sense organs and body. Atma cannot be illumined by itself like fire can burn anything, but it cannot burn itself. Illuminating power of atma cannot illumine itself. Then how atma is known. When anatma negation takes place,

what is is atma. It is recognised as such. There is no amsa for atma. Hence there is no possibility of one amsa knowing another amsa. Known attribute do not belong to knower. I can objectify sorrow. Hence I am free from sorrow. Know atma that is param Brahma.

CHAPTER 17- RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

What we require is right knowledge without vagueness and doubt. The greatest human goal is moksa. We have unconditional love for atma. So atma is the source of limitless ananda. Self knowledge is the only means for moksa. The means for knowledge is renunciation, austerities, approaching a Guru, asking for self knowledge and scriptural study under a Guru. The benefit of self knowledge is moksa.

CHAPTER 18- TAT TVAM ASI

Swamiji started to unfold the eighteenth chapter verse by verse. The summary of first few verses are as follows

This Chapter consists of 233 verses. This Chapter analyses in depth the mahavakya Tat Tvam Asi. First two verses are managala slokas. In the first Sankaracarya does namaskara to caitanya atma. Remembering the atma is mangalam. Like waves, thoughts arise from and dissolve into consciousness, which is my nature. Then he salutes his paramaguru, Gaudapadacharya who destroyed the enemies of the Sruti by the sword of words, strengthened by reasoning, and protected the treasure of the meaning of the Vedas.

Like an affectionate mother, Sruti repeatedly teaches the oneness of atma and brahma and hence it should give us aparoksa jnanam. Sruti negates the super imposed anatma attributes from the atma like rope is known by negation of snake. Sastra is the pramanam to know Brahman. Sentences that talk of ahankara which is karta, doer and duality of the jagat are anuvada vakyas, restatements and does not have pramanatvam in them. Sruti goes along with our adhyasa so that karma kanda can be used by us for our citta suddhi and citta nasicalya and later Sastra reveals akarta atma. Sastra does not negate duality. Sastra does not negate perception of duality. But it does not give reality to duality. In karma kanda portion, Sastra says you are karta. In jnana kanda portion, kartruvam is negated by Aham Brahmasmi jnanam.

PURVA PAKSHI'S VIEW

Purva pakshi says that Sravanam alone is not adequate for getting self knowledge. Only by nididhyasanam one can get aparoksa jnanam. Only by repetition and reasoning one can get aparoksa jnanam. Just by knowing vedic rituals, one cannot get its benefit. One has to perform the rituals. Similarly sravanam is not adequate. Meditation is required. Sastra pre-

scribes sannyasa because it is meant for dhyanam. Dhyanam is to be done until self knowledge is gained. Jnanam gained through sravanam is weak. Strong doership negates the weak knowledge gained through sravanam. Knowledge gained through sruti and anumanam are weak for another reason because it is samanya in nature. Knowledge gained by pratyaksha is visesha jnanam and so it is stronger. So knowledge can be made stronger only through dhyanam. If one gains knowledge through sravanam we infer that he has done adequate dhyanam in his previous life. Sannyasa is prescribed so that you can give up everything else except dhyanam.

SIDDHANTI'S VIEW

Sruti teaches Brahman by neti neti, which is not followed by any vidhi to do action. Non understood Sruti cannot be understood through repetition. Any means of knowledge can be only self verified by repetition. Sorrow of son is superimposed by the father on himself. Similarly the problems of ahankara are super imposed on atma and one suffers. First neti negates gross body and gross world. Second neti negates subtle body and subtle world. You as though suffer due to adhyasa. You as though gain moksa. Ajnana once gone does not come back. Jnana is only through sravanam. Moksa is only through jnana gained in sravanam. Therefore moksa is not gained through meditation.

Report by N. Avinashilingam

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It is true that there are problems which have to be faced factually, objectively. But the problem of sadness is centered on you and your vision or notion about yourself and the world. You are the problem when you say, "I am sad." And when you laugh at a simple joke, what are you? You are the solution. There was no fulfilment of a desire nor a solution of an external problem when you laughed. All that happened was that you looked upon yourself as you are. All that is required to be free from sadness is that you look at yourself as you are.

- Swami Dayananda Saraswati