

**Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati** has been unfolding the vision of Vedanta in its pristine glory to the modern mind for over forty years now. He was born on August 15, 1930 at Manjakkudi village near Kumbakonam in South India. It was in 1952 at Madras that he was first exposed to Vedanta when he attended the public classes by Pujya Gurudev Chinmayananda. He was deeply impressed and became Gurudev's disciple and his first full time *sevak*. In 1962, Gurudev inducted him into the *sannyasa ashrama*. From Sri Swami Pranavananda of Gudivada, he got the clarity that Vedanta is a means of knowledge and came to know of the method of handling it. From Parama Pujya Swami Tarananda of Rishikesh, he gained the strength of the roots in the *sampradaya*. While he has been conducting public classes in India and abroad, he has established besides his ashram at Rishikesh, *gurukulams* at Anaikatti, near Coimbatore, Vedapuri, near Nagpur and Saylorburg in Pennsylvania. He has also revived the *parampara* by designing and conducting the long-term residential course in Vedanta and Sanskrit, which equips the student to become the teacher. More than four hundred of his students teach Vedanta true to the tradition in India and abroad. He has brought the teaching of Gita into the homes through the Gita Home Study Program. He has also got graded texts on vedic heritage called *Purna Vidya* prepared for being taught to children. He has succeeded in bringing the wisdom of Vedanta within the access of everyone and in the continuance of the authentic teaching tradition.

He has given the *Dharma* a single voice by convening the Acharya Sabha comprising the acaryas in the entire gamut of Hinduism. He has launched the All India Movement for Seva to bring a sense of belonging among all the sections of society through caring programs. In the context of the threat to the indigenous religions all over the world, he has brought them together by convening the World Congress for Preservation of Religious Diversity. He is their effective spokesman in the international forums and in the inter-faith dialogues.

We owe an enormous debt to him, which this book seeks to discharge in a small measure by setting out the *sampradaya* and presenting his outstanding contributions.

**D. Venugopal** is a student of Swami Paramarthananda and has also successfully completed the long-term residential course in Vedanta and Sanskrit conducted from May 2002 to July 2005 at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti.



### About the Book

**Pujya Swamiji:** It is a book of insight.

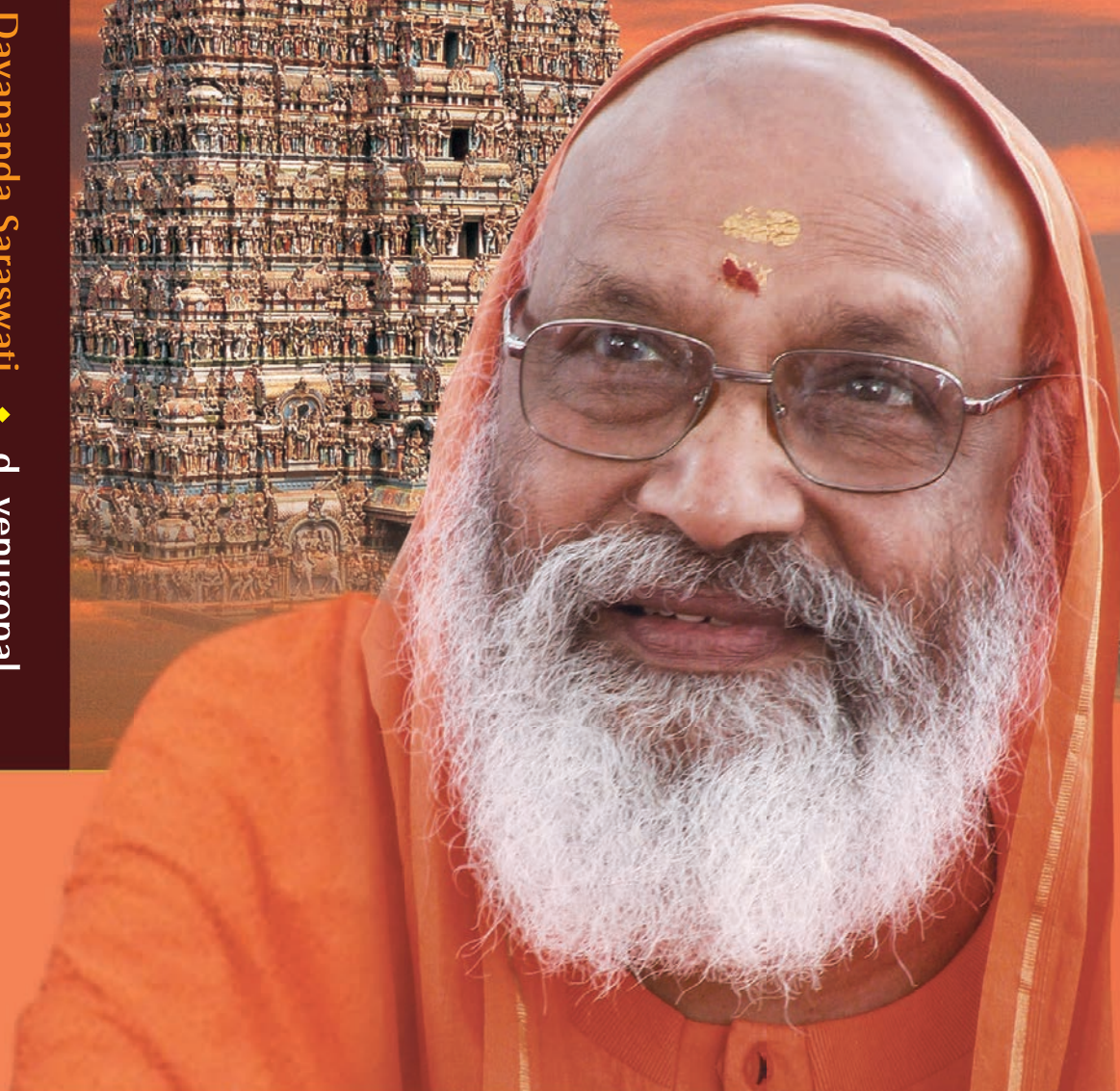
Swami Paramarthananda: By going through this, a Vedantic student can steer clear of the possible pitfalls of misunderstanding. May this book reach all the sincere students of Vedanta and benefit them.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati ♦ d. venugopal



**Pujya Swami  
Dayananda Saraswati**  
*his uniqueness in the  
vedanta sampradaya*

d. venugopal



ॐ

**PUJYA SWAMI  
DAYANANDA SARASWATI**

*his uniqueness in the  
vedānta-sampradāya*

D. Venugopal

Foreword by  
**Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati**

**Sruti Seva Trust,**  
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam  
Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641 108  
S.India

Published by

**Sruti Seva Trust**

Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641 108

Phone : 0422-2567001 / 2658269

Fax : 0422-2657002

email : arsha1@vsnl.com

Copyright with the author

email : venu\_vijaya@hotmail.com

First Edition : 2008

Second Edition : 2014

Price: Rs. 100

Books available at:

**ARSHA VIDYA GURUKULAM**

Anaikatti, Coimbatore 641108

Phone : 0422-2567001 / 2658269

Fax : 0422-2657002

email : arsha1@vsnl.com

**SWAMI DAYANANDA ASHRAM**

Purani Jhadi, P.B. No. 30,

Rishkesh, Uttaranchal 249 201

Phone : 0135-2431769 / 2430769

Fax : 0135-430769

email : dayas1088@hotmail.com

**ARSHA VIDYA GURUKULAM**

P.O. Box 1059, Pennsylvania,

PA 18353, USA

Phone : 001-570-992-2339

Phone : 001-570-992-9617

Fax : 001-570-992-7150

email : suddha@epix.net

**ARSHA VIDYA RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION CENTRE**

32/4, 'Sri Nidhi' Apts III Floor,

Sir Desika Road, Mylapore,

Chennai 600 004

Phone : 044 - 2499 7023

Fax : 044 - 2499 7131

email : avrandpc@dataone.in

Typeset and Printed at Sri Sai Printers, Chennai 600 028

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

**VEDANTA** – the solution to our fundamental problem

Published in 2012 by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, K.M.Munshi

Marg, Mumbai – 400007

email : bhavan@bhavans.info





# CONTENTS

Preface	
Preface to the Second Edition	
Anugraha of Pujya Swamiji	
Key to Transliteration	
Abbreviations Used	
List of Illustrations	
Foreword by Swami Paramarthananda	

## 1

<b>An Outline of the <i>Vedānta-sampradāya</i></b> .....	<b>1</b>
Vedānta.....	1
<i>Vedānta-guru-śiṣya-paramparā</i> .....	3
<i>Vedānta-sampradāya</i> .....	5
Veda is a means of knowledge ( <i>pramāṇa</i> ) .....	6
Establishing the vision of Vedānta .....	8
Arriving at the implied meaning of the words .....	10
Arriving at the purport of Vedānta .....	11
Arriving at the meaning of “ <i>Tat-tvam-asi</i> ” .....	12
Revitalising the <i>Vedānta-sampradāya</i> .....	14
Bhagavad-gītā.....	14
<i>Ādhikārika Puruṣaḥ Vyāsacārya</i> .....	15
Vyāsacārya systematically establishes	
the vision of Vedānta .....	16
The Vision of the <i>Darśanas</i> .....	19
The different <i>darśanas</i> .....	19
Common features between Vedānta and the <i>darśanas</i> .....	20
The perception of the <i>darśanas</i> about our	
problem and its solution.....	21
The conclusion of the <i>darśanas</i> about the basic reality .....	23
Process of the manifestation according to the <i>darśanas</i> .....	24
Vyāsacārya’s refutation of the divergent	
views of the <i>darśanas</i> .....	27
The <i>Sampradāya</i> after Vyāsacārya .....	27
Gauḍapādācārya’s <i>Kārikā</i> on Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad .....	28

The waking state and the waking experience are as illusory as the dream state and the dream experience .....	29
Negation of <i>jīva-srṣṭi</i> .....	30
The highest truth is that nothing is ever born .....	30
<i>Ātmā</i> , the true self, is untouched by the world.....	31
Negation of the divergent views expressed by the <i>darśanas</i> ..	32
Govinda Bhagavatpāda.....	33
Śaṅkarācārya (Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda).....	33
Śaṅkarācārya is the follower and not the originator of the <i>sampradāya</i> .....	34
<i>Adhyāsa-bhāṣyam</i> .....	35
Untenability of <i>Jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda</i> .....	37
<i>Sarva-karma-sannyāsa</i> .....	39
The futility of holding divergent views .....	41
Untenability of the differing views of <i>Sāṅkhya</i> .....	41
Untenability of the differing views of <i>Vaiśeṣika</i> .....	43
Untenability of <i>Cārvāka</i> .....	46
Untenability of Jainism.....	47
Untenability of Buddhism.....	48
The accommodative <i>sampradāya</i> .....	51
Spreading of the vision.....	52
The <i>Sampradāya</i> after Śaṅkarācārya .....	53
Sureśvara .....	53
Padmapāda .....	54
Toṭaka.....	54
Hastāmalaka .....	55
Maṇḍanamiśra.....	55
Vācaspatimiśra .....	56
Prakāśātman .....	56
Different methods of explanation do not adversely affect the central teaching.....	57
Writings by later <i>Ācāryas</i> .....	58



## Vedānta is Unfolded by Pujya Swamiji as a *pramāṇa* ..... 61

Vedānta is a Means of Knowledge or a <i>Pramāṇa</i> .....	61
Pujya Swamiji stresses that we must have <i>pramāṇa-buddhi</i> towards Vedānta .....	63
The conditions that a <i>pramāṇa</i> satisfies.....	63
Is any <i>pramāṇa</i> needed to know <i>ātmā</i> which is <i>nitya-aparokṣa</i> ? .....	64
Can the <i>pramāṇa</i> , functioning through erroneously known <i>ātmā</i> , provide valid knowledge about <i>ātmā</i> ? .....	65
Is not the knowledge revealed by Vedānta negated by <i>pratyakṣa-pramāṇa</i> ?.....	66
Cannot <i>ātmajñāna</i> be gained through reasoning or science? .....	66
The scope of reasoning in <i>śāstra</i> .....	67
Vedānta and science cannot either affirm or negate each other.....	68
<i>Puruṣa-tantram</i> and <i>vastu-tantram</i> .....	69
<i>Pramāṇa-tantram</i> .....	69
The effect of Vedānta being the <i>pramāṇa-tantram</i> and the <i>vastu-tantram</i> .....	70
We have to give the <i>pramāṇa</i> a chance to prove itself.....	71
We have no way of proving that Vedānta is not a <i>pramāṇa</i> ...	73
Our attitude to the teacher has to be the same as towards the <i>pramāṇa</i> .....	74
<i>Śraddhā</i> is essential for pursuing the <i>śāstra</i> .....	76
Pujya Swamiji cites his personal experience.....	77
Pujya Swamiji stresses that values, which prepare the mind for self-knowledge are indispensable .....	79
Values have to be assimilated so that they become natural ...	80
Only Handled Words Become the <i>Pramāṇa</i> .....	83
The condition under which a word can reveal.....	83
Pujya Swamiji indicates the method of handling the words..	86
The teacher should have received knowledge in accordance with the <i>sampradāya</i> .....	89

Pujya Swamiji reveals as to how to make the <i>pramāṇa</i> come alive.....	90
Teaching is done in an intimate homely atmosphere .....	91
Maintaining the ambience through humour .....	92
What Pujya Swamiji Avoids while Handling the <i>Śāstra</i> .....	94
Avoiding charts.....	94
Avoiding the equation “Brahman + <i>Māyā</i> = <i>Īśvara</i> ” .....	95
Avoiding words with physical connotation .....	96
Avoiding words understood in different ways.....	99
Avoiding newly coined words.....	100

### 3

<b>Samples of Pujya Swamiji’s Exposition .....</b>	<b>104</b>
TV Talk on Consciousness .....	104
Class in the <i>Gurukulam</i> on recognising <i>Aham</i> as <i>Brahman</i> .....	111
Meditation on Acceptance .....	114

### 4

<b>The Unfolding of the Vision by Pujya Swamiji regarding our Fundamental Problem and its Solution.....</b>	<b>120</b>
The Fundamental Problem.....	120
We hanker for the support of the infallible to end our insecurity.....	120
Our basic problem is our sense of being a limited entity .....	122
Freedom from the cycle of birth and death in not our real problem.....	125
Neutralisation of our Problem of Insecurity.....	126
Understanding <i>Īśvara</i> neutralises our sense of insecurity ....	126
Understanding <i>Īśvara</i> makes <i>Īśvara</i> the super therapist.....	132
The order that is <i>Īśvara</i> is the basis for <i>Karma-yoga</i> .....	135
The Equation between <i>Jīvā</i> and <i>Īśvara</i> Negates all Limitations .....	139
<i>Satyam jñānāmanantam brahma</i> .....	139
<i>Tat-tvam-asi</i> .....	142
Living intelligently as a simple conscious being .....	147

## 5

<b>Handling of the <i>Prakriyās</i> by Pujya Swamiji.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<i>Kāraṇa-kārya-prakriyā</i> .....	151
The clay-pot example.....	152
‘The <i>sat-vastu</i> is <i>ātmā</i> and you are that’ .....	153
Pujya Swamiji demystifies <i>mithyā</i> .....	155
<i>Satyam</i> and <i>Mithyā</i> ‘connection’ is: B can be A; but A is not B.....	157
<i>Pañca-kośa-prakriyā</i> .....	158
<i>Avasthā-traya-prakriyā</i> .....	163
Analysis of the waking state is sufficient to show the true nature of <i>ātmā</i> .....	164
<i>Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka</i> .....	165
Handling of the <i>Prakriyās</i> .....	166

## 6

### **Correction of the Current Deviations**

<b>from the <i>Sampradāya</i> by Pujya Swamiji.....</b>	<b>169</b>
Is Śaṅkara the Founder of <i>Advaita</i> ? .....	169
“Modern Vedānta” .....	171
What is Wrong with Modern Vedānta? .....	172
Do not all religions lead to the same goal?.....	175
Do not all <i>yogas</i> lead to <i>mokṣa</i> ?.....	180
Does not self-realisation mean self-experiencing? .....	184
Does not <i>ātmānubhava</i> mean experiencing of <i>ātmā</i> ? .....	190
The cleansing confusion .....	192
<i>Vāsanā</i> -cleansing confusion .....	193
<i>Pañcakośas</i> -cleansing confusion.....	195
<i>Mano-naśa</i> or thought-free-mind confusion .....	197
Can the enquiry, “Who am I?”, reveal <i>ātmā</i> ?.....	201
Confusion relating to <i>ānanda</i> .....	206
Confusion about <i>karma-yoga</i> .....	209
Is there a separate <i>yoga</i> called <i>bhakti-yoga</i> ? .....	212
Confusion regarding desires.....	214
What it takes to be enlightened .....	215
Conclusion .....	221

## Nurturing and Spreading of the Vision

<b>by Pujya Swamiji.....</b>	<b>223</b>
The Scenario .....	223
Swami Chinmayananda's Momentous Role .....	225
<i>Jñāna-yajñas</i> by Pujya Swamiji.....	226
Revival of the Institution of <i>Gurukulam</i> and the <i>guru-śiṣya</i> <i>paramparā</i> .....	227
Formulation and conduct of residential long term courses .....	228
Assessment of the course.....	231
Establishment of other <i>Gurukulams</i> and conduct of courses.....	232
Bringing the Teaching of <i>Gītā</i> into the Home .....	234
Bhagavad <i>Gītā</i> home study groups .....	237
Teaching the Children the Heritage of the Vedas .....	238
Origin of the programme .....	238
Perspective and scope of the <i>Pūrṇa Vidyā</i> programme.....	240
Inculcating the spirit of the cultural forms.....	240
Growing up with self esteem .....	243
Growing up among different value systems .....	245
The value of values .....	247
Spiritual Life .....	248
The Significance of <i>Gītā</i> .....	249
The Structure and content of <i>Pūrṇa Vidyā</i> .....	250
Need for teaching <i>Pūrṇa Vidyā</i> in the school .....	251
<i>Pūrṇa Vidyā</i> and Secularism.....	252
The Hindu psyche – “Practicing my religion hurts others” .....	253
The State also feels that way.....	254
Attempts afoot to negate native culture and <i>Bhārat</i> .....	254
Denying core personality to children is a crime .....	255
Our culture has to be understood the way it is .....	256
Hinduism, which requires to be protected, is being discriminated against.....	257
Knowledge of native culture is essential for every Indian.....	258

Other Initiatives relating to the <i>Dharma</i> .....	259
Conference on Saraswati River and the Hindu civilization .....	259
Digital Library Project to preserve ancient manuscripts .....	260
Preservation of Vedas and Agamas.....	260
Oduvar Project .....	261
Bringing back to life the famous Brhadeesvarar Temple at Tanjore.....	262
The Tiruvidaimaruthur Chariot Project.....	262
Preservation of art and music .....	262
Composition of <i>Kritis</i> .....	263
The Cumulative Effect of Pujya Swamiji's Efforts .....	264

## 8

<b>Protection of the <i>Sanātana Dharma</i> by Pujya Swamiji</b> .....	<b>266</b>
The Converting Religions .....	266
Subversion of religion and culture .....	269
The demographic situation .....	273
The Response.....	275
Pujya Swamiji's response.....	276
Conversion is Violence.....	277
Destroying another culture is the rankest form of violence .....	279
Double Standard in Religious Freedom.....	280
Religious freedom includes the freedom to protect the religion.....	281
The story of the Native Americans is a cautionary tale .....	282
Reverse Discrimination by Government .....	283
Organizing of the Apex Body for the Hindus and its activation.....	284
Giving the <i>dharma</i> a single voice through the Hindu Acharya Sabha .....	284
Induced religious conversion should be banned by law .....	286
Common Civil Code should be enacted and religious minority privileges should be ended .....	287
Discriminatory control over temples should be ended .....	288

Countering the disinformation on Hinduism and denigration of <i>Ācāryas</i> .....	289
The resounding affirmation of the Hindu unity at Tirupati .....	290
Action in regard to the <i>Ram-setu</i> .....	291
Preventing the raising of the height of Tehri dam .....	292
Preservation of the <i>Dharma</i> in the United States .....	292
Swamiji's Prescription for the Protection of the <i>Dharma</i> .....	293
Launching of the All India Movement for <i>Sevā</i> .....	294
The vision of society where people care for people .....	294
Caring is our culture, not consumerism .....	295
Call to his disciples to do <i>sevā</i> in addition to teaching .....	297
Caring starts with the children .....	298
Other activities of the Aim for <i>Seva</i> .....	299
Pujya Swamiji's International Initiatives .....	299
Participation in international forums .....	299
Highlighting the harsh truth in the Millennium Peace Summit, 2000 .....	301
International Congress for Preservation of Religious Diversity, 2001 (or the Conference of the Endangered Species) .....	303
Induced conversion offends human rights and religious freedom and is a grave threat to peace and harmony .....	304
Assertion of the Basic Issues in the Parliament of World Religions, Barcelona, 2004 .....	306
Hurt caused by conversion cannot be healed and secularism lies in the State protecting people from this hurt .....	306
Converting religions are incapacitated to concede religious freedom to others .....	307
Trying to combine evangelisation with freedom of religion amounts to fundamentalism .....	308
The call for conversion makes the call for inter-faith dialogue meaningless .....	308
If the Church is interested in peoples' welfare, let it allow people to follow their traditions .....	309

Protest against abuse of religious freedom is not a violation of any kind of human right .....	310
Summit of the Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders of the World, Geneva, 2002.....	310
God is both Man and Woman .....	311
The outcome of the meet.....	312
Faith in Human Rights Conference, The Hague, 2008 .....	313
Inter-faith Dialogues.....	314
Pujya Swamiji's experience in some inter-faith dialogues.....	314
Hindu - Jewish dialogue removes misconceptions .....	317
Hindu - Buddhist meets, 2009 and 2010.....	318
Dialogue rooted in scriptures and addressing tough issues is necessary .....	320
Action should not be Impulsive but Deliberate .....	321
<i>Maṅgalam</i> .....	<b>323</b>

## PREFACE

Pujya Swamiji invariably discusses with the students of the residential long-term course on Vedānta and Sanskrit about what they can do after the course. The writer had along with his wife attended the course at the *gurukulam* at Anaikatti from May 2002 to July 2005. During such a discussion held with me, I submitted to Pujya Swamiji that I intend writing about the special place that he occupies in the *Vedānta-sampradāya*. It is, of course, well known to his disciples, devotees and admirers that he unfolds the authentic vision of Vedānta in the most understandable and appealing way with remarkable clarity and that he is the living example of what he teaches. But what is only vaguely known is his uniqueness in the *sampradāya*. As Pujya Swamiji did not discount the proposal, an outline was immediately prepared and shown to him. The text was then got ready by June 2006 and it was submitted to him as a token of gratitude to Pujya Swamiji. After Pujya Swamiji has been able to have a look at it, the text has been printed.

Being a student of Swami Paramarthananda has been a great blessing. It has been under his benign guidance and active help that the text has been completed. He has also been gracious enough to introduce the text to the reader.



This book would not have been written but for Swami Siddhabodhananda and Swamini Pramananda who admitted us into the course and taught us so painstakingly with love and care.

Prof. R. Balasubramanian's lectures on *darśanas* at the *gurukulam* and the references that he cited have provided the material on that subject in Chapter One.

I am deeply grateful to all of them.

Conversion of the teaching of Pujya Swamiji, which is in the format of a live class, into a narrative has led to editing of the material. So, persons who wish to quote Pujya Swamiji verbatim must rely on the original source.

D. Venugopal

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Being the first “serious attempt to record Swamiji’s contribution to the teaching tradition and Vedic *dharma*” after Padma Narasimhan’s celebrated “Swami Dayananda Saraswati (The traditional teacher of *Brahma Vidya*)”, copies of the first edition of this book were exhausted in a few months. Its reprint has taken considerable time. Now, entirely due to the grace of Pujya Swamiji, it is being published by the Sruti Seva Trust, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti.

The text has been updated wherever necessary. Changes have also been made in it to improve its readability.

My *namaskārams* with deep sense of reverence and gratitude to my *gurus*, Pujya Swamiji, Swami Paramarthananda, Swami Siddhabodhananda and Swamini Pramananda.

D. Venugopal



SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

Dear Venugopal,

I have glanced through your book on the content and methodology of my teaching Vedanta. It is a book of insight revealing the importance of the methodology of the usage of the words and means employed in teaching. I have no objection whatsoever for your extensive use of the published material from my books and also material collected through the audio/video tapes.

With best wishes and love,

Yours,



Swami Dayananda

# Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation

English

Sanskrit

Pronunciation

a	अ	but
ā	आ	mo <u>m</u>
ai	ऐ	ai <u>sl</u> e
au	औ	lo <u>u</u> d
b	ब	bu <u>l</u> in 5
bh	भ	ab <u>h</u> or * 5
c	च	chu <u>l</u> k 2
ch	छ	ca <u>l</u> ch hi <u>m</u> * 2
d	ड	tha <u>t</u> * 4
ḍ	ጁ	da <u>r</u> t * 3
dh	ध	breath <u>e</u> * 4
ḍh	ጁ	god <u>h</u> ead * 3
e	ए	pl <u>a</u> y
g	ग	g <u>e</u> t 1
gh	घ	log <u>h</u> ut * 1
h	ह	h <u>u</u> m
ḥ	ः	aspiration of preceding vowel
i	इ	it
ī	ई	be <u>e</u> t
j	ज	ju <u>m</u> p 2
jh	झ	hedg <u>e</u> hog * 2
k	क	sk <u>a</u> te 1
kh	ख	block <u>h</u> ead * 1
l	ल	lu <u>l</u> k
m	म	mu <u>l</u> ch 5 n
m̄	ं	nasalisation of preceding vowel
n	न	nu <u>l</u> ber * 4 n
ñ	न्	bun <u>l</u> ch 2 n
ṅ	ङ	si <u>l</u> ng 1 n
ṇ	ण	u <u>l</u> nder * 3 n
o	ओ	to <u>e</u>
p	प	sp <u>i</u> n 5
ph	फ	loo <u>l</u> phole * 5
r	र	dra <u>l</u> ma

s	स	s <u>o</u>
ś	श	s <u>u</u> re
ṣ	ष	s <u>h</u> un
t	त	pat <u>h</u> * 4
th	थ	th <u>u</u> nder * 4
ṭ	ट	st <u>a</u> rt * 3
ṭh	ठ	an <u>th</u> ill * 3
u	उ	f <u>u</u> ll
ū	ऊ	p <u>o</u> ol
v	व	av <u>e</u> rt
y	य	y <u>o</u> ung

- 1 guttural, pronounced from the throat
- 2 palatal, pronounced from the palate
- 3 lingual, pronounced from the cerebrum
- 4 dental, pronounced from the teeth
- 5 labial, pronounced, from the lips
- n pronounced nasally
- \* No exact equivalent available in English

## Abbreviations Used

A	Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti, Coimbatore – 641108
BG	Bhagavad-gita
BS	Brahma Sutra
GHS -1	Gita Home Study, Volume 1
lect	Lecture
p	Page
R	Swami Dayananda Ashram, Purani Jhadi, Rishikesh - 249201
SB	Sankara bhasyam
1.3.4	4 <sup>th</sup> item of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> sub-division of the 1 <sup>st</sup> division
R – VC, 2004, 2.3.04, 2	Second Lecture given by Pujya Swamiji on 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2004 on Vivekachudamani at the Rishikesh Ashram
A – Pancadasi , 1992, Tape 25	Tape numbered 25 in the Tape Department of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Anaikatti recording the lecture of Pujya Swamiji on Pancadasi given in 1992 at the Gurukulam.

## List of Illustrations

1. Photo of Pujya Swamiji
2. Photo of Swami Paramarthananda
3. Photos of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda,  
Sri Swami Pranavananda of Gudiwada and Parama  
Pujya Swami Tarananda.
4. Group photo of Pujya Swamiji with his disciples.

## FOREWORD

In Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad, there is a profound statement – “With what instrument can one know the knower?” (2.4.14). All our sense organs and other instruments are designed to explore the objective universe. With their help, how can one know the very subject? Hence, the Self remains always unknown. Whatever conclusions one has about oneself are misconceptions born of ignorance. When the vision of the observer is coloured with self-misconceptions, everything gets distorted. This is the cause of all struggles in life. This is called *samsāra*.

Vedānta is a teaching tradition, which addresses this issue. Through an ingenious method of teaching, it reveals the nature of the Self. However, this teaching has to be handled by a master who has grasped the spirit of the teaching and who has the skill of communication.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati is a modern master, rooted in this ancient tradition. Without compromising with the traditional methodology, Swamiji unfolds the vedantic vision in such a way that the modern mind can grasp it.

Sri. Venugopal has been my student for several years. He had the good fortune of attending a residential course of Pujya Swamiji at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore. Having appreciated Pujya Swamiji’s method of unfoldment, he has come up with this book, which brings

out the salient features of Swamiji's approach to vedantic teaching. By going through this, a vedantic student can steer clear of the possible pitfalls of misunderstanding.

I congratulate Sri. Venugopal for this useful work. May this book reach all the sincere students of Vedanta and benefit them.

With

*Nārāyaṇasmṛitis*

**Swami Paramarthananda**



# CHAPTER ONE

## AN OUTLINE OF THE VEDĀNTA-SAMPRADĀYA

This book deals with the uniqueness of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati in the *Vedānta-sampradāya*. As the prelude, a brief account of the *sampradāya* is given.

### I

#### Vedānta

The word Vedānta is constituted of two words, *Veda* and *anta*. The word Veda is derived from the root 'vid', 'to know' and Veda means a body of knowledge. Veda is divided into two main portions: *Veda-pūrva*, the anterior portion of Veda and *Veda-anta*, the latter portion. *Veda-pūrva* provides the knowledge about *karmas* or actions, physical, oral and mental, by doing which we can gain a fair degree of security and happiness in this life as well as in the life to come. *Veda-pūrva* is called as *karma-kāṇḍa*.

Vedānta, on the other hand, provides self-knowledge (*ātmajñāna*). It reveals that the reality of the entire existence is Brahman, which is without a second. It identifies the true nature of the individual (*jīva*) as *ātmā* and reveals that *ātmā* is none other than Brahman. It reveals that the mistaken notion (*ajñāna*) that we are limited to the body-mind-sense complex is

the cause (*hetu*) of our constant struggle to become secure and happy (*saṁsāra*). It affirms that when we have doubt-free and firm knowledge that we are the limitless *ātmā* (*ātmajñāna* or *brahmajñāna*), we are totally free from our self-imposed limitation and the resultant *saṁsāra* (*mokṣa*). Vedānta is thus the *mokṣa-hetu*. As Vedānta provides this vital knowledge (*jñāna*), which is otherwise unavailable, it is known as *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of Veda. This knowledge is contained in the Upaniṣads, which come at the end of the respective portions in which they appear in Vedas. Vedānta, *jñāna-kāṇḍa* of Veda and Upaniṣad mean the very same. Even though a number of works going by the name of Upaniṣads are available in print today, only fifteen of them are considered as authoritative.

The word Upaniṣad, is formed from the root *sad* with the prefixes *upa* and *ni*. *Sad* has the meanings of *viśaraṇa* (wear out or break), *gati* (reach) and *avasādana* (put an end to). In respect of the word 'Upaniṣad', all the three meanings are applicable. This knowledge wears out or breaks the state of *saṁsāra*. It also makes one 'reach' Brahman in that it makes him know that he is none other than Brahman (*ātma-jñāna* or *brahma-jñāna*). This knowledge also puts an end to the sense of limitation, which is the cause of sorrow (*kāraṇam avasādayati*). The prefix *upa* means *upasadana* (approach). The extended meaning of *upasadana* is *guru-upasadanaena prāptavyā vidyā*, that is, the knowledge gained by approaching the *guru*. *Ni*

stands for *niścaya jñāna* or well-ascertained knowledge. Thus, Upaniṣad means the well ascertained *ātmajñāna*, which is acquired from the *guru*, and which frees us from *saṃsāra*. Apart from the primary meaning of self-knowledge, Upaniṣad also means the book whose text constitutes this knowledge.

## II

### *Vedānta-guru-śiṣya-paramparā*

An essential part of the *Vedānta-sampradāya* is the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā*, which is handing down of the knowledge contained in Upaniṣads in regular succession from the *guru* to the disciple without interruption. Veda is revealed knowledge. Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.1.1 and 1.1.2) states that Brahmāji (the suffix 'ji' is added to distinguish it from Brahman), who is the first to come into being, manifests the entire universe and sustains it. He imparts *brahmavidyā* or *ātmajñāna* to his eldest son, Atharva and initiates the handing over of the knowledge from one generation to the next. Bhagavad-gītā (4.1 and 4.2) also speaks of this knowledge being imparted to Vivasvān (Sun), the head of the solar clan of kings. Sun teaches this to Manu and Manu to Ikṣvāku. Śaṅkarācārya in his *bhāṣyam* (commentary) on Bhagavad-gītā adds that after the *jagat* was manifested, Prajāpatis (progenitor and master of

beings) were created and, for ensuring its stability, the knowledge of the rites and duties to be followed were revealed to them. Sanaka, Sanandana and others were also brought forth and the way of life of renunciation marked by detachment and knowledge was given to them. The former knowledge refers to the *karma-kāṇḍa* and the latter to the *jñāna-kāṇḍa*.

Veda, being a part of the manifestation, is always available in a subtle form and some of the sanctified sages are able to perceive it. For instance, Sages Atharvaṇa and Angīrasa perceived the Atharvaṇa Veda, while Sage Yājñavalkya perceived the Śukla Yajur Veda. Brahmaṛṣi Vasiṣṭha perceived the seventh *maṇḍala* of Ṛg Veda. Maṇḍūka Ṛṣi perceived the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad. Viśvāmitra Ṛṣi perceived the famous *Gāyatrī mantra*. Such ṛṣis are not *mantra-kartās* (authors of *mantras*) but *mantra-dṛṣṭāraḥ* (perceivers of *mantras*). They teach them to their disciples (*śiṣyas*). The *śiṣya* becomes the *guru* when he teaches his *śiṣya* and this process keeps the knowledge available at all times.

Handing over of the knowledge from the *guru* to his disciple in regular succession is called the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā*. The present *guru-śiṣya-paramparā* is contained in the *ślokas* (verses) of obeisance that are recited at the beginning of the Vedānta class. They are reproduced below.

*Nārāyaṇam padmabhuvanṁ vasiṣṭham śaktim ca  
tatputraparāśaram ca |*

*Vyāsam śukam gauḍapadam mahāntam  
govindayogīndramathāsya śiṣyam | |*

*Śrīśaṅkarācāryamathāsya padmapadam ca  
hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam |*

*Tam toṭakam vārttikakāramanyān asmadgurūn  
santatamānato'smi | |*

In this *paramparā*, the lineage of preceptors after Bhagavān are: Brahmāji, Vasiṣṭha, his son Śakti, his son Parāśara, his son Vyāsa, his son Śuka, his *śiṣya* Gauḍapāda, his *śiṣya* Govinda Bhagavatpāda, his *śiṣya* Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda (Śaṅkarācārya), his *śiṣyas* Hastāmalaka, Sureśvara, Padmapāda and Toṭaka. Since then, this knowledge has continued to be taught by each *guru* to his *śiṣyas*.

In the *paramparā*, the *guru* may be different but Vedānta remains the same. This is called *pravāhanitya* based on the analogy of the river which continues to be perennial.

### III

#### *Vedānta-sampradāya*

The word *sampradāya* is formed from the root, *dā*, 'to give' with the prefixes *sam* and *pra*. *Sam* stands for *samyak*, which means completely and thoroughly. *Pra* stands for *prakarṣena*, which means exceedingly well.

Thus *Vedānta-sampradāya* means the teaching tradition by which the knowledge of Vedānta is handed over completely and correctly.

The teaching tradition becomes crucial as the transmission of the knowledge fully and correctly is fraught with problems. The words available in the language are suited only for revealing the objects of the world and not the subject. Also, the knowledge that we are the whole, without a second, is belied by our everyday experience of being a limited individual in the vast world. The validity of this knowledge is also under question by different systems of philosophy. It is the *sampradāya* that takes care of these problems and communicates the knowledge completely and correctly in a fully assimilable form. This keeps the knowledge alive without any loss or aberration despite the passage of time.

### **Veda is a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)**

The *Mīmāṃsā-sāstra* set out by Jaimini Muni in *sūtras* and developed further by eminent Mīmāṃsakas, upholds the validity of Veda as a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and also provides the key to correctly determine what it reveals. An outline of its reasoning for Veda to be the means of knowledge is given below.

The basic principle in knowing is that whenever all the conditions necessary for gaining a specific

knowledge are fulfilled, there must be that knowledge and it must be valid. That is, it is *svataḥpramāṇa* (self-authentic). In other words, it is intrinsically valid. This is because -

- The validity of knowledge arising from the *pramāṇa* is spontaneous and is inherent in the knowledge; that is, its validity is self-established (*svatahsiddha*);
- With the apprehension of the knowledge, its intrinsic validity is also spontaneously known; that is, its validity is self-evident (*svaprakāśa*); and
- On the sole testimony of a single cognition, we accept it as an indubitable fact.

As for the test of truth, it arises from the principle of non-contradiction. When no self-contradiction is found in a particular cognition, its truth is automatically secured without any extraneous means. A valid cognition is the one whose content is not contradicted while the erroneous cognition is that whose content is contradicted validly. In other words, it is intrinsically valid unless it is proved to be otherwise.

As for the knowledge contained in Veda, it cannot be contradicted at all as its subject matter is not available for knowing by any other means of knowledge, namely, *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison), *arthāpatti* (postulation of an unknown fact to account for a known fact that is

otherwise inexplicable) and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception). What Veda reveals is thus *abādhita* or that which cannot be disproved.

In addition, the *veda-vākya* is not on par with the *laukika vākya* (non-vedic or worldly sentence) as the latter is *puruṣānupraveśa* (with human contact) and is liable to be *apramāṇa* (invalid) occasionally. Veda does not owe its origin to the personal knowledge of any person and is *apauruṣeya* (without human contact). It is thus free from error (*viparyaya*), doubt (*saṁśaya*) and other defects that are connected with a human being and is a *pramāṇa* that is *nirduṣṭa* (without any invalidity).

The words of Veda (*śabda*) are revelations and are not created (*kārya*); therefore, they are not subject to *vikāra* (change) and are invariable (*nitya*). As the relationship between the word and its meaning (*śabda* and *artha*) is intrinsically constant (*autpattika-nitya*), its meaning is also invariable. What is true of the words is equally true of the sentence that communicates through them. Therefore, the knowledge conveyed by the *veda-vākya* is unchanging. There is thus no basis to doubt the validity of any *veda-vākya*.

### **Establishing the Vision of Vedānta**

The need to establish the true vision of Vedānta arises from the nature of the text itself. The problem arises essentially from the intrinsic limitation of the



language in revealing this unique knowledge. The words in the language are based on the distinction between the subject and the object and are relative and contextual. Brahman, which is *ātmā*, is not an object and the existing words are thus unsuited to deal with this subject matter. Only words relating to objects can have *mukhyārtha* or the direct meaning while those relating to the subject, which is *ātmā* or Brahman, can have only *lakṣyārtha* or the implied meaning. This makes it very essential for the words used to be understood in accordance with the intent with which it is used (*vivakṣa*). Under the circumstances, doubts can arise about the competence of the means of knowledge to reveal Brahman (*pramāṇa asambhāvanā*).

The text also contains both *tātparyā-yukta-vākya*m (statement intended to convey the main purport) and *tātparyā-rahita-vākya*m (statement intended for a purpose other than conveying the purport). There are also unclear statements relating to Brahman (*aspaṣṭa-brahma-liṅga-vākya*ni). These give rise to doubts about the seeming contradictions in the text (*śruti virodha*).

The revelation is also totally contradicted by our every day experience. Doubts will therefore, arise about the validity of the revelations made (*prameya asambhāvanā*).

These problems are addressed in the following manner:

- The implied meaning of words, is ascertained through three implications (*lakṣaṇās*).
- The exact purport of the text (*tātparyā*) is arrived at through six indicators (*ṣadliṅgas*).
- Comprehension of the knowledge is ensured by taking the incorrect understanding of the experience (*adhyāropa*) as the starting point in the exposition and by unfolding the vision systematically by negation (*apavāda*) of the incorrect notions.

We may look into these in some detail.

### **Arriving at the implied meaning of the words**

The *śāstra* specifies the method for determining the implied meaning of a word (*lakṣyārtha*). It provides three implications (*lakṣaṇās*) for arriving at the implied meaning. They are -

- *jahad-lakṣaṇā* where the direct meaning of the word is given up totally and its implied meaning which is appropriate is accepted;
- *ajahad-lakṣaṇā* in which the direct meaning of the word is fully accepted and its implied sense which is appropriate is also added to the direct meaning; and
- *jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā* or *bhāga-tyāga-lakṣaṇā* wherein, on valid grounds, one part of the direct meaning is given up and the other part of the direct meaning is accepted.

We will shortly see as to how these are applied in arriving at the purport of the *mahāvākyam* “*Tat-tvam-asi*”.

### **Arriving at the purport of Vedānta**

The *śāstra* also provides *ṣadliṅgas* (six indicators) to arrive at the exact purport (*tātparyā*) of the text. They are:

- *upakrama* (the subject matter at the beginning of the text); and *upasaṁhāra* (the subject matter of the concluding part of the text);
- *abhyāsa* (the subject matter that is repeated);
- *apūrvatā* (the subject matter, which is unique);
- *upapatti* (the subject matter, which is supported through reasoning);
- *arthavāda* (the subject matter, which is glorified and that which is contrary to it is condemned); and
- *phalam* (the subject matter, whose fruit or benefit is given)

These indicators applied to the sixth chapter of Chāndogya Upaniṣad clearly indicate that the central theme of Vedānta is that the non-dual reality known as Brahman is *ātmā* (“*Tat-tvam-asi*”). The reasoning is as follows:

- *upakrama*: In the beginning, Uddalaka, who reveals the knowledge, asks his son: “Did you ask for that knowledge gaining which everything is gained, that is, what is not heard

of becomes heard, what is not thought of becomes thought of, and what is not known becomes known?" From this, we understand that there is a *vastu* by knowing which everything is as well as known. It also means there is only one *vastu*;

- *upasarīhāra*: The concluding statement is: "This *sat* is the *ātmā* of all this. That is the ultimate reality. That is *ātmā*. You are that".
- *abhyāsa*: The conclusion: "That is *ātmā*. You are that." is repeated nine times;
- *apūrvatā*: It is only through the Upaniṣad that we gain this knowledge;
- *upapatti*: The reasoning given is that cause alone is real, while its products known by different names are mere words without any substantiality of their own. So, the only reality is Brahman, which is *ātmā*;
- *arthavāda*: The glorification is the statement that by knowing Brahman, everything is known, whereas what we know is only that the truth of everything is Brahman;
- *phalam*: Every Upaniṣad reveals that by gaining this knowledge, we recognize that we are free from all limitations (*mokṣa*).

### Arriving at the meaning of "Tat-tvam-asi"

In the equation, "Tat-tvam-asi", which is the *tātparyā* (purport) of Vedānta, 'tat' is consciousness associated with remoteness while 'tvam' is consciousness associated with immediacy. *Tat* stands for *Īśvara* and

*tvam* stands for *jīvā*. *Īśvara* consists of consciousness, the causal, subtle and gross manifestation in its totality and the reflected-consciousness in the manifestation. *Jīvā* consists of consciousness, the causal, subtle and gross bodies of the individual and the reflected-consciousness in them.

Between consciousness characterised by the total and consciousness characterised by the individual, there is agreement regarding the consciousness part and contradiction in its characteristics part. For determining the implied meaning, dropping of the entire direct meaning through application of *jahad-lakṣaṇā* is not possible, as it would mean giving up of the parts that agree with each other. It is also not possible to retain the entire meaning through the application of *ajahad-lakṣaṇā*, as it would include the contradiction between the total and the individual. So, it is only the *jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā* that can be applied under which, for valid reasons, one part in each can be accepted and the rest dropped.

Consciousness, which is self-existent, does not depend on anything else for its existence. Since it manifests time and space, only the manifestation is limited by them. It is *satyam*. It cannot, therefore, be dropped. The causal, subtle and gross manifestation and the reflected-consciousness in them are dependent on consciousness for their existence and are subject to time and space. All these have dependent, limited and

transient existence. These are *mithyā* and can be dropped. Thus, these *mithyā* characteristics of *tat* (*Īśvara*) and of *tvam* (*jīva*) are given up. Only consciousness, which has independent existence and is intransient and unlimited, and is *satyam*, is accepted. The meaning thus arrived at makes the equation between *tat* and *tvam* reveal the essential oneness of *Īśvara* (*tat*) and *jīva* (*tvam*) as consciousness.

## IV

### Revitalising the *Vedānta-sampradāya*

#### Bhagavad-gītā

Gītā talks of times when this precious knowledge deteriorated – *Sa kāleneha mahatā yogo naṣṭaḥ parantapa* (4.2). Śāṅkarācārya explains that this happens when people lose control over their senses and the society becomes associated with goals other than *brahmajñāna*. The society then gets afflicted by disharmony and instability and when this affliction becomes acute, Bhagavān takes *avatāra* (descent to the earth) to redeem the situation. Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa is one such *avatāra* and his teaching of Gītā to Arjuna is for the resuscitation of *brahmajñāna*. Besides imparting this *jñāna*, he brings home the nature and effect of proper and improper human conduct.

## *Ādhikārika Puruṣaḥ Vyāsācārya*

Another way of revitalising the *sampradāya* in difficult times has been through the *ādhikārika puruṣaḥ* or the person with special duties. Brahmasūtra (3.3.32), which speaks of them, says that they are persons who have realised Brahman (*brahmajñānīs*) and specially take birth as *ādhikārika puruṣaḥ* to discharge special duties for the welfare of the world. The ancient seer and Vedic teacher Apāntaratamas is born in this manner as Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana. (He is also known as Bādarāyaṇa and as Vyāsācārya).

In the present *Kali Yuga*, the most inferior in the cycle of the four spans of time, people have short lifespan and low memory. These render preservation of the entire Veda through *pārayaṇam* very difficult. So, to facilitate *pārayaṇam* (recitation) and preserve Veda, Bādarāyaṇa classifies the then available 1180 *śākhās* (branches) into four Vedas: *Ṛig*, *Yajus*, *Sāma* and *Atharva* and entrusts them to different groups. This earns him the name of Veda-Vyāsa or Vyāsācārya.

Another vital contribution to the *sampradāya* that Vyāsācārya makes is to establish the true vision of Vedānta and enunciate it through *sūtras* (aphorisms), called Brahmasūtra. He is thus both the compiler of the text of Veda as also the consolidator of the knowledge of Vedānta and is the most crucial link in the entire *sampradāya*.

## Vyāsācārya systematically establishes the vision of Vedānta

The vision of Vedānta is systematically presented by Vyāsācārya in Brahmasūtra. He analyses Upaniṣads to see whether there is consistency in it that would clearly indicate its central theme and whether the conflicting views on the central theme invalidate Vedānta in any measure. After such analysis, Vyāsācārya enunciates the consistent and incontestable vision of the Upaniṣads to be as follows:

- Brahman is both the maker and material of the manifestation (Chāndogya, 6.2.1 and 6.2.2; Bṛhadāraṇyaka 3.9.26; Taittirīya 2.1.1 and 3.1.1; Māṇḍūkya, 6; Muṇḍaka, 1.1.6, 1.1.9 and 2.1.3; Aitareya, 1. 1. 1 and 1.1.2; Kaṭha, 2.1.9; Praśna, 1.4; Śvetāśvatara 4.10, and 4.9).
- The entire manifestation is Brahman (Chāndogya, 3.14.1, 6.2.3, 7.24.1, 7.25.1 and 7.25.2; Muṇḍaka, 2.2.11, 1.1.7 and 2.1.1; Taittirīya, 2.6; Bṛhadāraṇyaka 1.4.10 and 2.5.19; Aitareya 3.1.3).
- *Jīva* is none other than Brahman (Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 1.4.10, 2.4.6, 2.5.19, 4.3.7 and 4.3.23; Chāndogya, 4.15.1, 6.3.2, 6.8.7, 8.1.1 and 8.14.1; Māṇḍūkya, 2; Muṇḍaka, 2.1.4; Taittirīya, 2.6.1; Kaṭha, 2.1.5, 2.1.12 and 2.3.2; Kaivalya, 12, 16 and 19; Śvetāśvatara, 1.16, 3.18).
- Knowledge of the non-difference between *jīva* and Brahman is *mokṣa* (Taittirīya, 2.1.1 and



2.9.1; Muṇḍaka, 2.2.5 and 3.2.9; Śvetāśvatara, 1.8 and 6.15, Chāndogya 7.26.2, 8.7.1 and 8.12.1; Kaṭha, 1.2.22 and 2.1.11; Kaivalya, 11; Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 4.4.12 and 4.4.17).

- *Brahmajñāna* destroys all *karmas* except those that have started fructifying (*prārabdha-karma*) and actions performed after attaining *brahmajñāna* do not bind the *jñāni* through their results (Muṇḍaka, 2.2.8; Kaivalya, 1; Taittirīya, 2.5.1; Chāndogya, 5.24.3, 8.13.1, 4.14.3 and 8.4.1; Praśna 5.5).

He also clearly brings out the following revelations of the Upaniṣads:

- Brahman is consciousness (BS 3.2.16), is unmanifest (BS 3.2.23), without attributes (BS 3.2.11) and form (BS 3.2.14). When associated with limiting adjuncts, it seems to participate in their nature (BS 3.2.20). Brahman, like light, has different appearances, when it comes into contact with adjuncts (BS 3.2.15) or like reflections of one sun in many reservoirs of water (BS 3.2.18). Since Brahman is not conditioned in any way, *śruti* indicates its nature negatively as 'not this', 'not this' with reference to different objects and attributes (BS 3.2.22). From the denial of everything else, it follows that there is nothing else but Brahman (BS 3.2.36).
- *Ātmā* is not different from Brahman. Non-difference is natural whereas difference is the

creation of ignorance and when the individual drops this ignorance through knowledge, he comes to know that he is Brahman (BS 3.2.26).

- Vyāsācārya affirms that liberation has no grades (BS 3.4.52) and that knowledge of the self liberates in this very life (BS 3.2.26 and 3.4.51). He also clarifies that the knower of *saguṇa* Brahman (Brahman with attributes) goes to *Brahma-loka*. As for the recogniser of *nirguṇa* Brahman (Brahman without attributes) as the self, he is freed from all *karma* except *prārabdha* (BS 4.1.13 and 4.1.15). His body continues to exist till the exhaustion of *prārabdha karma*. On death, being non-distinct from Brahman, there is neither travel to any *loka* and nor any return for him (BS 4.2.16, 4.1.14, 4.4.4 and 4.4.22).
- Vyāsācārya concludes that the Upaniṣads recognise Brahman as *ātmā* and make others understand it as such (*Ātmeti tūpagacchanti grāhayanti ca* - BS 4.1.3). His last *sūtra* affirms that for those liberated through this knowledge, there is no return to the cycle of birth and death (BS 4.4.22).

Through Brahmasūtra, we also come to know of the then existing and earlier *ācāryas* through Vyāsācārya's reference to them. Such *ācāryas* are Āśmarathya (BS 1.2.29 and 1.4.20), Ātreya (BS 3.4.44), Auḍulomi (BS 1.4.21), Bādari (BS 1.2.30), Jaimini (BS 3.4.2, 3.4.18 etc), Kārṣṇājini (BS 3.1.9) and Kāśakṛtsna (BS 1.4.22). We

come to know of some more *ācāryas* in the *sampradāya* through Śaṅkarācārya's reference to them in his *bhāṣyams*. They are: Bhartṛprapañca, Brahmanandī, Draavidācārya and Upavaṛṣa. But we do not have the text of the teaching of any of these *ācāryas* except for Jaimini.

Vyāsācārya, in his epic Mahābhārata, communicates the knowledge contained in the Upaniṣads through Bhagavad-gītā, Sanatsujātīyam, Anugītā and Mokṣadharmaprakaraṇam. He explains the principles of *dharma* through Viduranīti, Yakṣapraśna, and Anuśāsanaparva. It is held that what is not in Mahābhārata is not anywhere else; hence, it is considered as the *pañcamaveda* (fifth Veda).

## V

### The Vision of the *Darśanas*

#### The different *darśanas*

Veda is not recognised as the means of knowledge by everyone. There are schools of thought (*darśanas*) that totally reject Veda as valid knowledge. They are called *Nāstika Darśanas*. Their vision is based on the teaching of their founder and on reasoning. Important among them are (i) Materialism known as *Cārvāka* or *Lokāyata* propounded by Cārvāka; (ii) Jainism founded by Rṣabha Deva and (iii) Buddhism established by Gautama Buddha. As for their means of knowledge, Buddhism and Jainism depend on

*pratyakṣa* (perception through sense organs) and *anumāna* (inference). *Cārvāka* uses essentially *pratyakṣa*.

The following *darśanas* accept Veda as the means of knowledge (*āstika darśanas*):

- *Sāṅkhya* promulgated by Kapila Muni;
- *Yoga* of sage Patanjali;
- *Vaiśeṣika* founded by Kaṇāda;
- *Nyāya* of Akṣapāda Gautama; and
- *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* of Jaimini.

But all except *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, subordinate Veda to reason and differ from Veda. They are called as *tārkikas* or logicians by Śaṅkarācārya.

All *āstika darśanas*, which depend on Veda, also accept *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna* as the means of knowledge. *Nyāya* and *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* use *upamāna* (comparison) in addition. *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* depends, in addition, on *arthāpatti* (postulation of an unknown fact to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable) and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception). *Vedānta*, which is itself the means of knowledge, makes use of *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna*, *upamāna*, *arthāpatti* and *anupalabdhi* for unfolding the vision.

### **Common features between Vedānta and the *darśanas***

*Vedānta* and all *darśanas* except *Cārvāka* have some important common features. The first is that the *jīva* continues to live through a succession of lives until he

gains liberation from it and that there is an order in the universe in the form of the law of *karma* under which one reaps without fail at some time or the other what one sows through his physical, oral or mental actions. The implication is that man who has the free will and who has the discriminating intellect has to pursue a moral life. This value is accepted as the foundational value (*dharma*) on which all the other values are based. The other point of agreement is that though human life is full of suffering and pain, man can be mentally free from them. They also recognise that the desire to be free is as instinctual as the desire to live.

### **The perception of the *darśanas* about our problem and its solution**

According to Jainism, the source of our problem is the passions collectively known as *kaṣāya* originating from the ignorance of oneself and other things. So, right knowledge (*saṃyagjñāna*) along with right faith (*saṃyagdarśana*) and right conduct (*saṃyagcaritra*) is the solution. As *sarvajña* (the omniscient), we can be free from *ajñāna* and *duḥkha* and can go beyond to the *alaukika ākāśa* (unworldly space).

Buddhism considers birth to be the cause of misery and desire to be the cause of birth. The path to the cessation of misery (*nirvāṇa*) is the eight fold noble path, namely, right views, right determination, right

speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right concentration.

In *Sāṅkhya*, suffering is caused by the non-discrimination (*aviveka*) between *puruṣa*, the intelligence principle and *pradhāna* or *prakṛti*, the matter principle. The extrication of *puruṣa* from *pradhāna* through knowledge of the distinction between them frees the person from pain and pleasure (*apavarga*).

*Yoga* is not union but extrication from *prakṛti* through practice of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. This consists of *yama* (control of the sense organs), *niyama* (control of the mind), *āsana* (control of the body), *prāṇāyāma* (control of the breath), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the mind from its habitual outward movement), *dhāraṇa* (holding the mind on to a name, a form or a chosen idea), *dyānam* (steady contemplation) and *samādhi* where there is no cognition of any kind whatsoever.

*Vaiśeṣika* considers that the problems of living are due to adventitious qualities of the self, which arises from the contact with objects through the mind and the sense organs and that freedom from suffering (*apavarga*) is obtained by remaining pure and neutral.

*Nyāya* states that ignorance of truth (*tattva-jñāna*) results in *doṣas* (errors) of *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion) and *moha* (delusion). Removal of *doṣas* through *tattva-jñāna* (knowledge of reality) removes

*pravṛtti* (activity); lack of *pravṛtti* prevents *janma* (rebirth); lack of *janma* rules out *duḥkha* (misery). This is *apavarga* (cessation of misery), which is freedom from pain and pleasure.

*Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* considers non-adherence to the injunctions of Veda to be the cause of our problems and following its precepts in regard to *karma* takes the person to blissful higher *lokas* after death.

In *Cārvāka*, death is the final cessation of all suffering. So, life is to be spent by enjoying it to the full by all the means that we have.

Vedānta reveals that our sense of insecurity and unhappiness arises out of self-ignorance which makes us consider ourselves to be limited to the body-mind-sense complex. It prescribes self-knowledge as the remedy to all our problems.

### **The conclusion of the *darśanas* about the basic reality**

Almost all *darśanas* recognise the existence of self as the subject of common experience and the physical world as the object of experience. There is, however, significant difference as to whether the world and the self point to a higher reality. In some of the *darśanas*, such a reality either does not exist or is posited feebly. In *Cārvāka*, Jaina and Buddhist *darśanas*, ultimate reality does not exist at all. In *Sāṅkhya*, it is not single. *Yoga* admits a Personal God. In *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, there

is no supreme reality. In *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, there is an ultimate intelligent cause. *Sāṅkhya* and *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* among the *Āstika Darśanas* and all the *Nāstika Darśanas* do not also admit of the existence of any creator. Vedānta reveals Brahman, which is *ātmā*, as the only reality.

About *ātmā*, the self, there is wide disparity among the *darśanas*. *Cārvākas* consider the physical body to be the self and consciousness as a temporary product of matter. While one section of Buddhists (*Vijñānavādin*) holds that momentary consciousness is the self, another (*Mādhyamika*) considers that what is momentary cannot be the self and since nothing is left behind, there is only *śūnya* or nothingness. Jainism considers that every *jīva*, which is eternal, is functioning through a conscious agent. According to *Nyāya*, *ātmā* is all pervading and eternal, acquiring consciousness when related to a body through the senses. *Vaiśeṣika* considers *ātmā* to be non-material, eternal and all pervading. According to *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, *ātmā* is an eternal substance with potential for consciousness. Vedānta reveals the all pervading, divisionless, changeless and attributeless whole, which is Brahman, to be the same as *ātmā*.

### **Process of the manifestation according to the *darśanas***

According to *Sāṅkhya*, the starting point of the manifestation (referred to generally as creation) is the



*saṁyoga* (association) of *puruṣa*, the consciousness principle with *pradhāna* or *prakṛti*, the matter principle. From *pradhāna* arises *mahat* (the great one). Then, *buddhi* (intellect) comes into being. From the *buddhi*, *ahankāra* (sense of “I”) and *abhimāna* (sense of “mine”) arises. Then, arise *tanmātrāṇi* (five subtle elements), *manas* (mind), *jñānendriyas* (five organs of knowledge) and *karmendriyas* (five organs of action). From the *tanmātrāṇi* arise *sthūla butāni* (five gross elements) and from the gross elements are formed the various gross objects. Thus, *pradhāna* becomes the world. This is called as *satkārya-vāda* or *pariṇāma-vāda* (theory of actual change).

*Vaiśeṣika* holds that the world is constituted of *aṇus* (atoms) of earth, water, fire and air. Śiva is the creator of the world of effects and is the intelligent cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*). As for the material, atoms are eternal and are not created. When an object is produced, what was not in existence earlier comes into existence. The principle is that causation is creative as the effect cannot exist before it is produced by the cause (*asatkārya-vāda*). This is also called the theory of origination (*ārambha-vāda*).

*Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* holds that there is neither *sṛṣṭi* (manifestation) nor *pralaya* (resolution). There was never a time when the world was otherwise than now. Individual things come and go through the self-

evolving character of reality and the stimulus for such change comes from past *karma* of the *jīvas*.

According to Jainism, the physical world is made of *paramāṇus* (atoms) and consists of the elements of matter, space, time, cause of motion termed as *dharma* and cause of rest called as *adharmā*. Universe is eternal and uncreated with two everlasting categories of conscious *jīva* and the material world. Every substance has accidental *pariyāyās* (modes) and origination and destruction belong only to the modes.

According to *Hīnayāna* Buddhism, the external world is made of *paramāṇus* of earth, water, fire and air. The internal world is made of five *skandās*, which are senses with their objects, cognition of objects, emotions, registered impressions and the mind.

*Cārvākas* state that the world comes into being by combination of earth, water, fire and air and that consciousness is the temporary product of matter.

Vedānta reveals that Brahman is the apparent maker and material of the manifestation (*vivarta-abinnanimitta-upādāna kāraṇam*) and that it is *Māyā*, which is based on Brahman that brings it about with its veiling and projecting power.

## **Vyāsācāryā's refutation of the divergent views of the *Darśanas***

The *āstika darśanas* are based on Veda but differ from it mainly through reasoning. In this regard, Vyāsācārya enunciates the basic position that logic that has no Vedic foundation cannot conclusively determine the purport of Vedic statements. It cannot also be known through perception, being devoid of attributes or through inference, being devoid of grounds of inference (*tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt..* - BS 2.1.11). Using reasoning based on the knowledge gained by other means of knowledge to verify Veda would be like using the ears to validate the data on color collected by the eyes. Reasoning with reference to Veda has to be based on the facts revealed by Veda itself and not by any other.

Besides this blanket refutation, Vyāsācārya also points out the specific illogicalities present in the position taken by the *darśanas*. Śaṅkarācārya explains these and we shall revert to this subject there.

## **VI**

### **The *Sampradāya* after Vyāsācārya**

In the *sampradāya*, the basic work of *sūtra* is followed by *bhāṣyam* (commentary), which explains the meaning of the *sūtra* in keeping with the *sūtra* order and uses its own words where necessary. The *bhāṣyam* is often followed by *vārttika*, which examines the *ukta*

(what is said), the *anukta* (what is not said) and the *durukta* (what is not well said) in the original. In addition to *vārttikas*, further explanatory work called *tikā* (gloss) and additional comments called *tippanī* (gloss on gloss) are also there. *Bhāṣyams* and other works have been written on Brahmasūtra and their expositions often take differing positions. The main ones are by: Bhāskara (*Bheda-abheda*), Yādavaprakāśa (*Bheda-abheda*), Rāmānuja (*Viśiṣṭa-advaita*), Madhva (*Dvaita*), Nimbārka (*Dvaita-advaita*), Śrīkaṇṭha (*Śaiva-  
viśiṣṭa-advaita*), Śrīpati (*Bheda-abhedātmaka-  
viśiṣṭa-advaita*), Vallabha (*Śuddha-  
ādvaita*), Śuka (*Bheda*), Vijñānabhikṣu (*Ātma-  
brahma-aikya-bheda*) and Baladeva (*Acintya-  
bheda-abheda*). We are not going into these interpretations in this outline except to say that they are not acceptable on valid grounds.

### **Gauḍapādācārya's Kārikā on Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad**

After Vyāsācārya, the next luminary in the *paramparā* is Gauḍapādācārya. He has analysed in detail the purport of the Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad in verse form (*kārikā*). This Upaniṣad, though consisting only of twelve *mantras*, occupies a special position, as it is affirmed by the Muktikopaniṣad that the seeker can gain *mokṣa* through the study of Māṇḍukya alone.

This Upaniṣad makes *a-kāra* of *om* stand for the waker-*jīva* and the gross world, *u-kāra* stand for the dreamer-*jīva* and the dream world, *ma-kāra* for the sleeper-*jīva*

and the sleep experience. While all of them are not separate from *ātmā*, *ātmā* itself is not

- the waker-consciousness; or
- the dreamer-consciousness; or
- the sleeper-consciousness; or
- the consciousness in between waking and dream consciousness; or
- all-consciousness; or
- unconsciousness.

In other words, it is neither the waker-*jīva*, nor the dreamer-*jīva* nor the sleeper-*jīva*. These are *mithyā* attributes of consciousness. When these are negated on the ground that they are *mithyā*, what remains is only consciousness, which is not related to anything. This is the true nature of ourselves.

### **Waking state and the waking world are as illusory as the dream state and the dream experience**

In the *Kārikā* to the Upaniṣad, Gauḍapādācārya shows that the waking state and the experienced gross world, which are taken to be real, are as illusory as the dream state and the experienced dream world. He states that the waking state is considered to be real since (i) it is useful; (ii) it is experienced outside; and (iii) it is experienced clearly. All these conditions are also fulfilled in the dream experience. Therefore, these are not valid conditions for reality (*Kārikās* 2.7, 2.9, 2.10, 2.14, 2.15). Both are equally unreal.

He also proves that the world that is experienced is unreal. The world is considered to be real since (i) it is outside us; (ii) it does not depend on us for its existence; and (iii) it affects us. When the self is known as *ātmanā* or consciousness, the world turns out to be unreal as (i) the world is within consciousness; (ii) it depends on consciousness for its existence; and (iii) it does not affect consciousness.

### **Negation of *jīva sṛṣṭi***

Gauḍapādācārya also negates *jīva sṛṣṭi* through comparison with the space inside the pot. Only from the point of view of the pots, the space inside the pots appears to be the divisions of space giving rise to plurality. From the point of view of space, however, regardless of the presence or absence of the pots, it continues to be present everywhere all the time, without any birth, movement or destruction. Only the pots, which exist in space, undergo change. In the same manner, the body-mind-sense-complexes, which are in the all-pervading consciousness, seem to be multiple in numbers and undergoing change from birth to death. (*Kārikās* 3.3 to 3.9).

### **The highest truth is that nothing is ever born**

Gauḍapādācārya makes explicit the unreality (*vaitathya*) of the manifestation and proves that there is no *sṛṣṭi* (manifestation) as such at all (*ajāti-vāda*). The reasoning is that Brahman, which is unlimited, cannot

become what is limited; and, what is immortal cannot become what is mortal (*Kārikās* 3.21, 4.7). As in a dream, *Māyā*, which is based on Brahman-*ātmā*, with its veiling and the projecting power projects the aggregates of body etc. in the waking world (*Kārikās* 3.10, 3.29). If the true nature of a thing is inquired into, it takes us from one cause to another cause and no final cause ever gets revealed. As such, the causality behind the existence of the object has no real basis (*Kārikā* 4.25). He says that nothing is ever born and that it is the highest truth (*Kārikā* 3.48). What had no existence in the past and what has no existence in the future does not exist in the present also (*Kārikā* 4.31). Brahman is that highest truth where nothing whatsoever takes birth. Even as the unreality of the dream is recognised on waking, *śṛṣṭi* also becomes unreal on the attainment of *jñāna*.

### ***Ātmā*, the true self, is untouched by the world**

The *śruti* reveals that *ātmā* remains untouched by the world (*prapañcopasamam*). Gauḍapādācārya explains that anything that perceives objects outside of it is related to those objects. Consciousness, having no such external object, is unrelated. It is thus declared to be eternally without relations (*Kārikā* 4.72). He, therefore, calls this knowledge as *Asparśa Yoga* (knowledge of no contact).

## Negation of the divergent views expressed by the *darśanas*

As regards the divergent views expressed by the *darśanas*, Gauḍapādācārya negates the *Sāṅkhya* view that *pradhāna* is the cause for creation as birthless *pradhāna* cannot take birth and as it is not possible for the unborn cause to produce any effect. (*Kārikās* 4.11 to 13).

As for the *asatkārya-vāda* of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, he dismisses it on the ground that the non-existent thing can never originate anything (*Kārikā* 4.4).

As regards the view of the *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism that unborn consciousness takes birth momentarily, he rejects it on the ground that birthlessness is the very nature of consciousness and transmutation of this nature cannot take place in any way (*Kārikās* 4.28, 4.29).

As regards those who believe in the reality of both the subject and the object, he says that it is mere *citta spandanam* (an act of the mind) since duality is never experienced when the mind ceases to act (*Kārikās* 4.72 and 3.31). He says that if it is remembered that everything is unborn Brahman, the duality will not be seen.

He concludes that Vedānta is *avivādaḥ aviruddhaḥ ca* (beyond argument and contradiction).



## Govinda Bhagavatpāda

Govinda Bhagavatpāda is the *śiṣya* of Gauḍapādācārya. As directed by his *guru*, he waits on the banks of Narmadā for the arrival of Śaṅkarācārya and on his arrival, he inducts him into proper *sannyāsa* and imparts knowledge to him.

## Śaṅkarācārya (Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda)

Śaṅkarācārya is the only child of a devout Nambūdri couple of Kālaḍi born as the boon to them from Lord Vaḍakkannāda of Tirucchūr in Kerala. He becomes a *brahmacārī* at the age of five and studies the *śāstra*. At the age of sixteen, he takes *āpatsannyāsa* and takes leave of his widowed mother and becomes the disciple of Govinda Bhagavatpāda. Later, on getting the vision of Vyāsācārya and his message that he should clarify the *śāstra*, he fulfills it by writing *bhāṣyam* on the *prasthāna-traya* (the three basic works), namely the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-gītā and Brahmasūtra. Among the Upaniṣads, he writes *bhāṣyam* on ten of them (Īśā, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Māṇḍukya including the *Kārikā*, Muṇḍaka, Aitareya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya and Taittirīya). He also writes *prakaraṇa granthas* (explanatory text on particular topics) like Upadeśasāhasrī.

## Śaṅkarācārya is the follower and not the originator of the *sampradāya*

Śaṅkarācārya states clearly in his *bhāṣyam* of Kaṭha Upaniṣad that his intention in writing it is to make the meaning of the Upaniṣad easily understandable (*sukhārtha prabhodanārtham*). In the *bhāṣyam* of Bhagavad-gītā, he is more explicit and says: “Because of the multiplicity and extreme contradictoriness of the expositions (*atyanta viruddha aneka arthatvena*), people do not comprehend the text. I shall explain it briefly to determine its meaning distinctly (*artha nirdhāraṇārtham*)”. Again, in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad *bhāṣyam*, he bows to Brahman and all the adorable teachers in the past who explained the Upaniṣads taking into consideration the words, sentences and the means of valid knowledge and says that with the grace of his teacher and for the benefit of those who prefer a clear exposition, he is composing the explanation of the essence of the Upaniṣad. Śaṅkarācārya thus makes it abundantly clear that he is only following the *sampradāya*. He is also emphatic that a person who does not know the *śāstra* according to the *sampradāya* has to be kept away exactly like an ignorant person even if he were learned in all the *śāstras* – *asampradāyavit sarvaśāstravidapi mūrkhavadeva upekṣaṇīyaḥ*. (SB on BG 13.2) Therefore,

- *sampradāya* was already in existence in Śaṅkarācārya’s time; and

- Śaṅkarācārya is a knower of this *sampradāya* (*sampradāya-vit*) and is not a creator of *sampradāya* (*sampradāya-kṛt*).

### ***Adhyāsa Bhāṣyam***

Śaṅkarācārya's introduction to Brahmasūtra is known as *adhyāsa bhāṣyam* (commentary on error) and it is a classic. Here, he affirms that the study of Vedānta is the remedy for *saṁsāra*. He brings home that *saṁsāra* is due to *adhyāsa* (error) about *ātmā* and that this *adhyāsa*, which is committed naturally, makes us think that we are the body, the mind and the senses. This is like mistaking light to be darkness. Śaṅkarācārya says: 'It is for the removal of this cause of 'evil' (*anartha*) and for the attainment of the knowledge of the wholeness of the self that the study of Vedānta texts is commenced.'

For illustration of the error, Śaṅkarācārya uses the example of the rope being mistaken for the snake. The rope has two components – the thingness or existence, which is the *sāmānya aṁsa* (non-particular part), and the ropeness, which is the *viśeṣa aṁsa* (particular part). When the rope is taken to be the snake, no mistake is committed in regard to the *sāmānya aṁsa* of existence but only in regard to the *viśeṣa aṁsa* of particularity. The mistaken notion is called *adhyāsa*. It is described as '*Atasmin tat buddhiḥ*' or perception of an object on a wrong locus and as '*Anyatra anyadharmādhyāsaḥ*' or super-imposition of

the attributes of one thing on another. *Adhyāsa* results in *satya-anṛta-mithunīkaraṇam* or the combining of *anṛtam* (falsehood) with *satyam* (truth).

In the perception of the rope as “snake is”, “is” pertains to the rope and not to the snake. Therefore, “is” is *satyam* (truth) and “snake” is *anṛtam* (false) or *adhyāsa*. When the “rope” knowledge takes place, the correction is only in regard to the *adhyāsa* snake. As for the truth of the perceived snake, it cannot be called as *asat* (non-existing) since it is seen as a snake; it cannot be called as *sat* since it is actually not a snake and gets negated on being known as a rope. The reality status of the mistaken snake is neither *sat* nor *asat* (*sat-asat-vilakṣaṇīya*). The reality status is thus non-categorisable (*anirvacanīya*) and it is called as *mithyā*.

As regards the statement that “I am a *saṃsārī*” (the person who ceaselessly exerts to be free from limitations), “I am” is the *sāmānya aṃsa*, and is *sat* while “*saṃsārī*”, which is *viśeṣa aṃsa*, is an erroneous notion or *adhyāsa*. “I am” is *ātmā*, which is limitless and is correct (*satyam*) while *saṃsārī* which is an error (*adhyāsa*) is non-*ātmā* (*anātmā*). It is thus the *adhyāsa* or the error of combining *anātmā* with *ātmā* that makes us the miserable *saṃsārī*. Vedānta categorically states that *jīvatvam* (*ātmā* being identified as the body-mind-sense-complex) is an erroneous notion and that we are the limitless whole. It does not, therefore, prescribe any steps to improve the status of the *jīva*, which all

the others, including the *karma-kāṇḍa* of Veda do. This is the reason why Śaṅkarācārya keeps on repeating in his *bhāṣyam* that *jīvatvam* is an error and that our real nature is *nitya-suddha-buddha-mukta* or free from the limitations of time, attributes, ignorance and bondage. It is this knowledge that frees us from *saṁsāra*, which arises from our wrong notion of *jīvatvam*.

### **Untenability of *Jñāna-karma-samuccaya-vāda***

Some philosophers, however, hold the view that knowledge cannot by itself be fruitful as only *karma* produces results (*phalam*). As such, the *karmas* prescribed by Veda should necessarily be performed for gaining *mokṣa*. Śaṅkarācārya rebuts this stand comprehensively, whenever the opportunity arises.

Firstly, he points out that the subject matter of *karma-kāṇḍa* and *jñāna-kāṇḍa* are poles apart (*dūramete viparīte* - Kaṭha Upaniṣad, 1.2.4). The former deals with various *karmas* for getting limited results for the *anātmā* while the latter provides the *jñāna* by which we know that we are ever free from all limitations (*mokṣa*). The former provides various means (*sādhana*) for various ends (*sādhya*) and persuades a person to do action (*pravartakam*) making him a *kartā* (doer) and a *bhoktā* (enjoyer) while the latter makes the person understand that the solution does not lie in the world making him indifferent to worldly matters (*udāsīnaḥ*) and withdraw from unessential activities (*apravartakam*) and seek self knowledge to recognise

that he is already free. Thus, their subject matters, which are *karma* and *jñāna*, are entirely different; persons who pursue them have entirely different understanding of their problem; the goals that they seek which are, respectively, *karma-phalam* and *mokṣa* are totally different. Finally, since *ātmajñāna* removes the ignorance that impels one to do *karma*, *ātmajñāna* and *karma* are mutually contradictory like light and darkness and cannot be combined at all. Darkness does not abolish darkness. *Ātmajñāna* alone can dispel *ātma-ajñāna*.

It is also incorrect to say that *karma* ordained by Veda cannot be given up, since Veda itself prescribes *sannyāsa* as a stage of life in which *karma* is abandoned to gain self-knowledge from a *guru*. In addition, *śruti*, which indicates the means for various ends, nowhere prescribes any *karma* for gaining *mokṣa*. On the other hand, it categorical at numerous places that attainment of self-knowledge is itself *mokṣa*.

It must be noted that *mokṣa* is not produced by knowledge. *Mokṣa* is always an existent fact, being the essential nature of *ātma*. Knowledge only removes our ignorance, which is the cause of bondage. That is why *mokṣa* is by knowledge alone.

The *Pūrva Mīmāṃsaka* defends himself by saying that the primary purpose of Veda is to make us act and not to reveal a fact. Śaṅkarācārya reiterates that the *karma* enjoined in the *śāstra* is meant for the *avidvān* and not

for the *vidvān*. Even the call for *mokṣa*, “*ātmā vā are dr̥ṣṭavyaḥ ...*” (Bṛhdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 2.4.5) is not an action oriented statement but a direction to turn the mind’s attention away from external objects to recognise the error centered on “I” through knowledge. As for *karma* oriented injunctions, when both Viṣṇumitra and Devadutta hear them, Devadutta does not act on them since *mokṣa* is his *puruṣārtha* (goal). But for those who take *ātmā* to be the body-mind-sense complex, Śaṅkarācārya says that the entire *karma-kāṇḍa* is a *pramāṇa* for fulfilling their desires. But the very same *karma* done without any desire for personal results but as an offering to *Īśvara* gives *cittaśuddhi* (mental purity), which is an essential qualification for receiving *ātmajñāna*. It is only in this respect that the *karma-kāṇḍa* becomes relevant to *jñāna kāṇḍa*.

### ***Sarva-karma-sannyāsa***

Another contentious area in which Śaṅkarācārya brings clarity is *sarva-karma-sannyāsa*, which indicates the absence of any personal relationship with action on the attainment of *ātmajñāna*. The basic objection is that the nexus with *karma* cannot be given up at all, since it is impossible to give up all *karma*. Śaṅkarācārya clarifies that the person who is enjoined to do *karma* is the one who identifies himself as the body and the body as himself. By this identification, he considers himself as ‘I am the doer’. He becomes

the agent of action and retains the doership or *kartṛtvam*. Such a person cannot give up action. For such a person, *śāstra* suggests that he may do the enjoined *karma* without commitment to the result and accept the result as the *prasāda* from *Īśvara*. He retains his *kartṛtvam* but converts his daily life into *yoga* by acting not in accordance with *rāga-dveṣa* but in keeping with *dharma*.

*Sarva-karma-sannyāsa*, on the other hand, is the ceasing of the sense of doership, which takes place in the wake of self-knowledge. *Kartṛtvam* arises because of the erroneous notion that I am the *kartā*. When it is known that I am *ātmā* who is *akartā* (non-doer) and that doership is superimposed upon the *ātmā* due to ignorance, the *kartṛtvam* is gone. So, renunciation of action means realising that I am *ātmā* and not the body-mind-sense-complex and that *ātmā* is *akartā* even when the body-mind-sense-complex performs the action. So, *sarva-karma-sannyāsa* is purely the result of *jñāna*.

Even when performing action, the person, who no longer considers himself to be the body-mind-sense-complex, does not perform any action. *Kurvan api na karoti*; doing, he does not do. This is called *sarva-karma-sannyāsa*.



## The futility of holding divergent views

As regards the differing views of the *darśanas*, Śaṅkarācārya makes the following observations about the futility of holding such views:

“Considering scriptural texts as apparently contradictory, they, with a view to arrive at their true meaning on the strength of their own intellect, put forward fanciful interpretations, as, for instance, that the self exists or does not exist, that it is or is not the agent, is free or bound, momentary, mere consciousness, or nothing – and never go beyond the domain of ignorance, because everywhere they see only contradictions. Therefore, those alone who tread the path shown by the *śruti* and the spiritual teachers, transcend ignorance. They alone will succeed in crossing this unfathomable ocean of delusion, and not those others, who follow the lead of their own clever intellect” (SB, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 2.5.15)

## Untenability of the differing views of *Sāṅkhya*

With reference to *Sāṅkhya*, Śaṅkarācārya states that it is patently false since the duality of *puruṣa* and *pradhāna* that it preaches is contrary to Veda. Its proponent, Kapila, cannot override Veda. *Sāṅkhya* maintains that as the world is inert, its cause must also be inert like *pradhāna*. In reply, Śaṅkarācārya points out that the Taittirīya Upaniṣad text (2.6.1) - “*viḥvānaṁ cāviḥvānaṁ ca*” (He became the knowledge

and the opposite of it) - can be explained only if Brahman were both the intelligent and material cause. As for *Sāṅkhya*, it cannot explain how intelligence is present in what has been created by *pradhāna*, which is insentient. *Sāṅkhya*'s contention is that *pradhāna* is omniscient, as it contains all the effects in the seed form. Brahman, on the other hand, has no instrument of knowing and can have no knowledge. In reply, it is stated that Brahman, which is knowledge, does not need instruments to know. As for *pradhāna*, even if it were omniscient, it does not have consciousness to enable its omniscience to function.

The protagonist of *Sāṅkhya* raises several other objections. Firstly, if the world were essentially non-different from Brahman as an effect, then all the defects of the world will make Brahman highly defective. Viewed in the other way, since Brahman and the self are the same, the individual should also have all the powers of Brahman. If the self were free, why should it undergo *saṁsāra*? It can also pass on the responsibility of its actions to Brahman. Also, if the self had created the world, it should also be able to absorb it back, which it does not do. Śaṅkarācārya clarifies that all these problems arise out of mistaking Brahman to be the body-mind-sense-complex. Brahman is not the body-mind-sense-complex but is the consciousness, which enlivens it. It is this mistaken identification with the body-mind-sense-complex (*avidyā*) that is corrected through the *śāstra*.

The question is now raised as to how Brahman, which is defined as intelligence and as without a second, could find the material to create the world. The question is also asked as to whether Brahman would not cease to exist after it has transformed itself into the world. The reply is that while Brahman is the cause of the world, it does not undergo any real change to cause the world even as when the rope is mistaken for the snake, a snake is produced from the rope without bringing in any material and without the rope undergoing any change. The manifestation of the world also involves only apparent change of Brahman (*vivarta-upādāna-kāraṇa*). The world would be taken as a creation only so long as the truth of all existence as Brahman is not known.

The point is brought up as to why Brahman should create the world that is full of problems. Śāṅkarācārya says that any motive imputed to Brahman for creation has neither the support of Veda nor of reasoning. As for the condition of the world, what everyone experiences is only the fruits of their actions.

### **Untenability of the differing views of *Vaiśeṣika***

As regards the manifestation process detailed in *Vaiśeṣika*, Śāṅkarācārya asks the question as to how the partless *aṅus* can combine and form the building blocks of bigger dimension. Without these, the entire world that is experienced (*bhogyaprapaṅca*) cannot be

formed. Again, according to them, the inert *ātmā*, which is partless, and the inert *manas*, which is also partless, combine together to produce consciousness. It is not possible for the partless entities to combine and for the inert to change into consciousness. This means that consciousness cannot also be formed. So, the creation of the experiencer (*bhoktrjīva*) is also not possible. Since neither the experiencer nor the experienced can be manifested, there can be no manifestation at all.

*Vaiśeṣika* says that substances when related as the cause and effect have inseparable relationship (*samavāya sambhanda*). Śāṅkarācārya states that such relationship between the permanent cause and the temporary effect is impossible. Before the effect comes into being, only cause is there. Neither can the cause establish a relationship with the non-existent effect nor can the non-existent effect have relationship with the cause. The answer of *Vaiśeṣika* is that *dvyanukas* (the building blocks) have connection to their cause, the *paramāṇu*, through *samavāya*. But this is not tenable as they hold that *dvyanukas* do not exist before their connection to the *paramāṇu*. The answer of *Vaiśeṣika* is that though they are non-existent, still they can have *samavāya sambhanda* with its cause, as non-existence is of different types. Śāṅkarācārya responds by pointing out that there are no features in non-existence to enable any differentiation to be made in it. Also, positing a relationship between two entities to bring

them into connection introduces the third connecting factor. Then this third connecting factor would also require another connecting factor to establish the relationship. This would go on endlessly (*anvasthā*) without resulting in any *sambhanda*.

As regards the *asatkārya-vāda* of *Vaiśeṣika*, Śāṅkarācārya says that if the effect is not potentially pre-existent, there will be no basis for any causal operation to function. Their counter argument is that if effect is as much an accomplished fact as its cause, there is no need for any causal operation. Śāṅkarācārya replies that the causal operation is necessary to rearrange the cause in the form of the effect. Again, if according to them, non-existence can become existence and existence can become non-existence, there would be no certainty about what would exist and what would not exist. Moreover, if the effect does not exist in some form or other, it is not even possible to speak about it. For instance, we cannot say: "The effect is non-existent prior to its production". The words "effect" and "its" cannot refer to anything since what is referred to is non-existent. The non-existent cannot also be posited in time. Śāṅkarācārya affirms that it is only one, which appears both as the cause and as the effect, like the actor putting on different costumes on the stage.

## Untenability of *Cārvāka*

The *Cārvākas* (materialists) hold that the living being is nothing more than the body and that consciousness and memory are the products of the body. They base it on the fact that consciousness is observed only in the body. Śaṅkarācārya points out that the presence of consciousness in the body does not delimit consciousness to the body. For example, the knowledge of the object is possible only when there is light. This does not mean that knowledge is the property of light. Similarly, the body, the nervous system and the brain are only necessary conditions for cognition of objects to arise. On that account, one cannot conclude that consciousness is the property of these and is confined to them.

Śaṅkarācārya points out that the statement, “It is I that saw this”, is proof of the continuity of the self and of the consciousness. Moreover, during the dream state when the body and the senses are dormant, experiences do take place. Therefore, consciousness is different from the body and its instruments. Also, the elements that are stated to produce consciousness are themselves the objects of consciousness. The objects of consciousness cannot produce consciousness. Consciousness has therefore to be different from the elements. The basic tenet of *Cārvāka* is thus totally without any basis.

## Untenability of Jainism

Śāṅkarācārya refutes the two important tenets of Jainism, namely (i) the finite dimension of *ātmā*; and (ii) *Syādvāda* which states that everything is non-specific in nature and has seven facets (*sapta-bhaṅgī-naya*). As regards the first, he says that if *ātmā* has a finite dimension, it will lack completeness. *Ātmā* is stated to be the size of the body, expanding and contracting along with the body. It is not clear wherefrom the parts accrue to *ātmā* when the body expands and where the parts go when it contracts. With such modifiability, *ātmā* cannot be immortal. The Jainas state that after release, the size of *ātmā* does not vary. This is not possible since *ātmā* cannot be both finite and infinite.

According to Jainism, all objects have seven facets. These facets are mutually contradictory. Śāṅkarācārya points out that this does not stand to reason, as these mutually contradictory attributes cannot be simultaneously present in the same object.

Jainas accept seven categories (*jīva*, material world, flow of *karma* to *jīva*, stoppage of such flow, extinction of past *karma*, bondage and *mokṣa*) as those whose nature has been determined. The question arises as to whether these seven facets apply to these categories. If they do apply, one will be left with unrelieved doubt about their nature and such knowledge would be useless. The same question

arises in regard to their application to *asti-kāyas* (*jīva*, matter, the principle of motion, the principle of rest, and space) to know whether this number is at least fixed. If it were fixed then *anekānta-vāda* (variety of natures) fails. If it were not fixed, the system is adrift without any foothold anywhere. This being so, how can a teacher of the Jaina school impart instruction when the knowledge remains indefinite in nature?

### Untenability of Buddhism

Śaṅkarācārya mainly deals with *Hinayāna*, *Yogācāra* (*Vijñānavādin*) and *Mādhyamika* (*Śūnyavādin*). In that order, they hold that (i) both the subject and the object are real; (ii) the subject alone is real; and (iii) both the subject and the object are unreal.

According to *Hinayāna*, both the internal and external objects are real and consist of aggregates of physical entities. Śaṅkarācārya questions as to how the physical entities, which are lacking in intelligence, can form into meaningful aggregates. Without aggregates, there would be neither life nor activities. Again, their activities cannot be controlled owing to the absence of any restrictive principle in Buddhism.

The Buddhists say that “mutual causality” keeps life and its activities going. The cycle of causality called *pratītya-samutpāda* consists of twelve links (*nidānas*) with *avidyā* at the beginning and *durmanas* (mental affliction) as the end. *Avidyā* and the others are the



efficient causes of their own immediate effects; the effect then becomes the next cause in the link. Śāṅkarācārya points out that this thinking is flawed since all these must have some aggregate as their abode. Without a locus, these will have no occasion to start and function. Also, when every cause is momentary, no cause-effect relationship can also be sustained. Even assuming that what exists the previous moment is the cause, he asks the question as to whether the origination and destruction are the very nature of the entity, or different states of the entity or different entities altogether. If both origination and destruction are considered to be the nature of the entity, it involves a contradiction since both are opposed to each other. If the momentary entity has two states, it then persists and is not momentary any more. If origination and destruction are different entities altogether, they will no more be momentary. Thus, as the cycle fails to explain itself, it cannot at all explain the world process.

As regards the concept of *kṣaṇikatvam* (momentariness) of *Yogācāra*, Śāṅkarācārya says that the fact of memory conclusively proves the *kṣaṇika-vāda* to be false. The statement, "This is similar to that", contains three different things, the first belonging to the past, the second belonging to the present and the third is the cognition of similarity. If cognition were momentary with no relation to the past, this statement is not possible. The Buddhists

reply that the second moment arises on the extinction of the first moment. Śaṅkarācārya replies that a mere nothing is never known to be the cause of anything. Hypothetically, if anything appears from nothing it will also have the character of nothing.

In *Vijñāna-vāda* the knower, the known and the knowledge arise only in the consciousness. There is nothing external and what appears as external is only of the nature of consciousness. No object is conceived which is unperceived by the mind and which is quite apart from the mind. The object and the mind always appear together in experience. This is the proof of their non-difference.

As regards this hypothesis, the question is asked as to why there should be distinctions in one uniform consciousness if there were no external objects to cause them. The *vijñānavādin* answers that internal distinctions in the consciousness is caused by residual impressions (*vasanās*) caused by cognitions as in the case of dreams. In reply, Śaṅkarācārya says that this analogy is incorrect as dreams are mere reproductions and not direct experiences. Moreover, the subject and the object cannot be two modes of the same consciousness as a thing cannot be both the subject and the object of itself. In addition, they consider the modes of consciousness as momentary which precludes their becoming the object of another. The *vijñānavādin* replies that consciousness is self-

luminous like a lamp. Śaṅkarācārya points out that the *vijñānavādin's* concept of momentariness limits illumination only to a moment.

As regards *Śūnya-vāda*, Śaṅkarācārya says that the denial of existence is contrary to all the means of valid knowledge. The reality of what is experienced cannot be negated so long as a different order of reality is not recognised.

Śaṅkarācārya concludes that from every point of view the Buddhist doctrine breaks down like the well sunk in sand.

### **The Accommodative *Sampradāya***

Śaṅkarācārya makes a very significant point that the *advaitin* can reconcile every point of view without compromising himself. As regards dualists, he states in his *bhāṣyam* on *Kārikā* 3.18 of Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad as follows:

*“Advaitam paramārthaḥ, non-duality is the highest reality. For the dualists there is nothing but duality both from the standpoint of absolute reality and transactional reality. Though those deluded persons have a dualist outlook, we, the undeluded ones, have a non-dualistic outlook in conformity with the Vedic texts, ‘The Lord, on account of māyā is perceived as many’, ‘But there is not that second thing’ (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.19 and 4.3.23). Our point of view does not clash with theirs*

because of this non-dualist point of view. The knower of Brahman knows that he is the very self of the dualists. A man sitting on an elephant in rut knows that none can oppose him; yet he does not goad his animal against a madman who challenges him while standing on the ground, as he has no inimical feelings towards the deluded person.”

Śaṅkarācārya also blends the different approaches by *tantra yukti* through which the views of others that are not refuted can be accepted as one’s own, *paramatam apratiṣiddham anumataṁ bhavati*. Śaṅkarācārya is, however, severe against scholars who imagine what is not stated in the *śāstra* and misinterpret it. He states:

“Himself deluded, he confounds others; for, he does not have the discipline of right traditions of scriptural knowledge. He is guilty of rejecting what is taught and dogmatically constructing something novel. Hence, one who is thus ignorant of right traditions, even though well versed in all *śāstras*, deserves to be rejected as an ignoramus.”(SB on BG 13.2)

### **Spreading of the Vision**

Śaṅkarācārya sets up four mutts in the four corners of the country at Joṣimath, Sṛṅgeri, Dvārakā and Pūri Jagannāth and places them under the charge of his disciples to spread the vision of Vedānta throughout the country. He establishes the *ṣaṅmatas* (worship of Śiva, Śakti, Gaṇapati, Kumāra, Viṣṇu and Sūrya) on a

proper footing and brings home the point that the same *Īśvara* is worshipped in different forms.

Thus with Śaṅkarācārya, the *sampradāya* becomes extremely alive and very illuminating. Most crucially, he makes the *sampradāya* available in a written form and makes the teaching tradition fool-proof.

### **The *Sampradāya* after Śaṅkarācārya**

Four illustrious disciples of Śaṅkarācārya are well known. They are Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Toṭaka and Hastāmalaka.

#### **Sureśvara**

Sureśvara writes *vārttikas* on the *bhāṣyam* of his *guru* in respect of Taittirīya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads and comes to be called as *vārttikakāra*. In the *vārttikas*, he states that *Īśvara* is also an *ābhāsa* of Brahman like *jīva*. *Ābhāsa* is what resembles the original, though essentially different from it in the status of reality. While the *ābhāsa* of *Īśvara* does not limit it, the *ābhāsa* of *jīva* limits him. Since *Īśvara* resembles consciousness completely, there is only one *Īśvara*. Since *jīva* is the semblance of consciousness in the intellect and since the intellects are manifold, there are many *jīvas*. This is called *ābhāsa-vāda*. As regards the locus of *avidyā*, he says that *ātmā* is the locus. In his Naiṣkarmyasiddhi, he says that *śābda-jñāna* is immediate and that knowledge of Brahman arises directly from the texts of the Upaniṣads. Self is the

most direct and immediate reality and so, there is no mediateness to be removed. A qualified person comprehends the *śruti* text immediately and what is known once through *pramāṇa* does not also need to be known by repeated contemplation.

### **Padmapāda**

Padmapāda is known for his Pañcapādikā, which is his commentary on five *pādas* of the *Sūtra bhāṣya*. He states that *avidyā* rests on Brahman but acts on the *jīvas*. The *jīvas* are *pratibimbās* (reflections) of Brahman in the *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ, which is intellect, mind, memory and I-sense). Consciousness that is present in the *antaḥkaraṇa* is real and is identified with the original consciousness. Only the state of reflection is of indeterminate reality. This is called the *pratibimba-vāda*.

### **Toṭaka**

Toṭaka in his *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇam* states that *jīva* when divested of the erroneous limitations is consciousness. Consciousness is delimited by individuality when it comes to believe that it is a particular being. It thus acquires *ahanta* (I-ness). Then, its experiences limit it. There is also the third limitation when the *jīva* qualified by experiences begins to perceive empirical and personal states. The real self is the eternal witness (*sākṣī*) of all the states.

## Hastāmalaka

Hastāmalaka writes a set of twelve verses called Hastāmalakīyam revealing the vision of non-dual reality as consciousness. The phenomenon of multiplicity is explained with reference to the modes of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *jīva* considers itself to be bound like the observer whose vision of the sun is obstructed by the clouds and imagines that the sun is engulfed. Like the sun, *ātmā* does not suffer the slightest diminution of its natural effulgence. The refrain of all the verses is "*nityopalabdhisvarūpo'ham ātmā* " (I, the *ātmā*, am the eternal awareness).

## Maṇḍanamiśra

Maṇḍanamiśra is one of the earlier *ācāryas* and is perhaps an elder contemporary of Śaṅkarācārya. He is well known as the author of Brahmasiddhi. He holds that *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*. The knowledge we get from Upaniṣads though indubitable (*nirvicikitsā*) is indirect (*parokṣa*) owing to our ingrained habit of seeing falsity. This mediate knowledge cannot destroy the immediate appearance (*avabhāsa*) of the world. Repeated contemplation (*prasāṅkhyāna*) on the meaning of the *mahāvākya* is necessary to attain direct and immediate knowledge (*aparokṣa jñāna*) of Brahman. It is only then that the *avabhāsa* of the world, even when present, would not touch *ātmā*. Vācaspatimiśra follows him in many respects.

## Vācaspatimiśra

Later in the *paramparā*, Vācaspatimiśra in his commentary on *Sūtra bhāṣya* called Bhāmatī says that Brahman appears as *jīva* even as pot limits the infinite *ākāśa* in itself. It is delimitation and not semblance or reflection. This is called *avaccheda-vāda*. He says that Brahman being free from any form cannot have any reflection in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, which is also without any gross form. The difference between *jīva* and *Īśvara* is caused by adventitious conditions such as *avidyā* and *antaḥkaraṇa*. The difference is not real but incidental even as the *ākāśa* in the pot continues to be *ākāśa*, though seemingly delimited by the pot. According to him, *mahavākyas* give only mediate (*parokṣa*) knowledge since what they signify are commingled (*samsṛṣṭa*). Only in the minds prepared by meditation (*bhāvanā*), they can produce immediate correct cognition. He considers that in the *niyama vidhi* consisting of *śravaṇam* (listening to the teaching of the *guru*), *mananam* (removal of doubts) and *nididhyāsanam* (contemplation of the truth), *nididhyāsanam* is more important than *śravaṇam* and *mananam*.

## Prakāśātman

Prakāśātman in his *Vivaraṇa* has commented upon Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda. According to Prakāśātman, the *jīvas* and *Īśvara* are *pratibimbas* or reflections of consciousness. Space, which is formless,



is reflected in water. Similarly, consciousness, which is formless, can have reflection in *avidyā* and in the intellect. The reflection has no reality other than that of the original Brahman. This is their *pratibimba-vāda*. He holds that *jīva* is the locus of *avidyā*.

Prakāśātman holds that Upaniṣad gives rise to immediate knowledge of Brahman. Mind is not a sense organ as it is auxiliary to all *pramāṇas*. Verbal testimony can yield immediate knowledge, if the object of knowledge is immediate. There is nothing more immediate than the self. Therefore, the *mahavākyam* 'Tat-toam-asi' imparts to the competent hearer the direct knowledge of the non-dual self. He also holds that according to the *niyama vidhi* of *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*, *śravaṇam* is the principal one and *nididhyāsanam* plays only an auxiliary role in strengthening *mananam*. As regards the locus of *avidyā*, Prakāśātman maintains that consciousness is both the locus and the content.

### **Different Methods of Explanation do not adversely affect the Central Teaching**

Owing to the emergence of the *vādas*, the question arises as to whether the central teaching gets vitiated by them. Sureśvara in his *vārttika* (534) on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says to the following effect:

“Whatever be the mode of explanation through which people attain the firm knowledge of the

inward self, the knowledge must be treated as valid. But the mode of explanation is (in itself) not valid.”

Each of the explanations is valid in so far as it serves to explain the central teaching by different modes of approach. Differences arise in the course of elucidation from a particular point of view. But taken out of the context of the central teaching, it has no intrinsic validity. Each method of explanation is useful in that it will appeal to some persons and facilitates their understanding. They are all valid as explanations only because all of them to lead to the same understanding of the central teaching.

### **Writings by later *Ācāryas***

Many later *ācāryas* have embellished the Vedantic literature. On the *Sūtra bhāṣya* by Śaṅkarācāryā there are three *tīkāś* – (i) *Bhāmatī* by Vācaspatimiśra, referred to earlier; (ii) *Nyāyanirṇaya* by Ānandagiri; and (iii) *Ratnaprabhā* by Ramānanda. On *Pañcapādikā* of Padmapāda, Prakāśātman has written *Pañcapādikā-vivaraṇa*. There is a gloss on *Pañcapādikā* by Akhaṇḍānanda Muni called *Tattvadīpanam* and *Vidyāraṇya* has summarised it in *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*. The gloss on *Bhāmatī* by Amalānanda is *Kalpataru* and the gloss on *Kalpataru* by Appayya Dīkṣitar is *Parimala*.

There are also a number of works answering the criticisms of Vedānta from *Sāṅkhya*, *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* and the different forms of duality including *bheda-abheda*. They are *Nyāya-makaranda* by Ānandabodha, *Khaṇḍana Khaṇḍa Khādyam* by Śrīharṣa, *Iṣṭasiddhi* by Vimuktātman and *Tattvapradīpikā* by Citsukhācārya. Dharmarāja Adhavarīndra discusses the theory of knowledge in detail in *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*; he also shows that Vedānta can be logically sustained. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in *Advaita Siddhi* refutes the objections raised by the dualistic school. This is followed by a commentary by Brahmānanda titled “*Laghucandrikā*.”

Ānandagiri in his *tīkā* explains the *bhāṣyams* of Śaṅkarācārya on the Upaniṣads and *Gītā*. Vidyāraṇya’s *Pañcadaśī* is a comprehensive text on Vedānta. Appayya Dīkṣitar’s *Siddhāntaleśa-saṅgraha* and *Nyāyarakṣamaṇi* are popular texts. *Vedāntasāra* by Sadānanda provides an easy introduction to Vedānta.

The lineage of Vedānta *ācāryas* and their writings continues. Taṅgasvāmi Śarmā painstakingly lists more than 450 authors and around 2400 works in his valuable *Advaitavedāntasāhityetihāsakośaḥ* (Madras University, 1980).

With this background of the teaching tradition, the next chapter shifts to the present times to deal with

the unique way of the unfolding of the vision of Vedānta by Pujya Swamiji (Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Rishikesh) to the modern mind.

## CHAPTER TWO

# VEDĀNTA IS UNFOLDED BY PUJYA SWAMIJI AS A *pramāṇa*

### I

#### **Vedānta is a means of knowledge or a *pramāṇa***

Pujya Swamiji unfolds the vision of Vedānta as knowledge since Vedānta is a *pramāṇa* and is not a theory or a school of thought. He affirms that Vedānta can never be a school of thought and explains:

“A school of thought is always the contention of a given person or persons. Being what it is, a contention is subject to dispute. The contender’s means of knowledge, such as perception and inference, should find access to the object of any contention. The contender’s self (*svarūpa*), which is the subject matter of Vedānta, is not available for the contender’s means of knowledge. When this is so, then who is the subject who employs the means of knowledge? Suppose I am the subject, how can I be the object about which I have a contention? So the subject matter of Vedānta which is *ātmā* can never be a school of thought.”

“The Upaniṣads themselves make this clear: ‘Understand that to be Brahman (*ātman*) which is not objectified by the mind and because of which the mind knows everything’ –

*Yanmanasā na manute yenāhurmano matam |*  
*Tadeva brahma toaṁ viddhi* (Kena Upaniṣad 1.6).

“Analysing the subject matter of Vedānta in the light of various schools of thought prevalent in his time, Vyāsa presents Vedānta as a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for knowing *Brahmātman* (the self being Brahman) – *Śāstrayonitvāt* (BS 1.1.3). Therefore, to consider Vedānta as another school of thought along with *Sāṅkhya*, *Vaiśeṣika* etc, is not reasonable. There are many books in circulation that discuss the six schools of Indian philosophy and Vedānta is included in these books as one of the schools. This inclusion is not justified because, unlike a school of thought, Vedānta is not within the realm of speculation. The subject matter of the entire Veda is *pramāṇāntara-anadhigatam*, one that the various means of knowledge such as perception, inference have no access to. The Upaniṣads forming the last portion of Veda also have a subject matter, which is not available for sensory perception and inference. Therefore, to label Vedānta as a school of thought only reveals a lack of understanding about the nature of the subject matter. From the nature of its subject

matter, Veda has to be looked upon as an independent means of knowledge (*svataḥ-pramāṇam*)” (Swami Dayananda - The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedānta, p 2).

### **Pujya Swamiji stresses that we must have *pramāṇa-buddhi* towards Vedānta**

Pujya Swamiji stresses that *pramāṇa-buddhi* towards Vedānta is absolutely essential, if we want to benefit by it. He emphasises that Vedānta has no value if we have no *śraddhā* towards it. He says:

“Vedānta can never be the subject matter of academic pursuit because it is based purely on *śraddhā*. Only when Vedānta is looked upon as a *pramāṇa*, a means of knowledge, does it have a value; otherwise, it has none.”(GHS-1, p 490)

As a prelude to the discussion on this subject, the basic facts about *pramāṇa* and the objections raised against Vedānta being a *pramāṇa* are set out below.

### **The conditions that a *pramāṇa* satisfies**

Every *pramāṇa*

- gives the knowledge that can be known only through it and not by any other *pramāṇa* (*anadhigata*);
- conveys what is not opposed to the evidence of any other *pramāṇa* (*abhādita*);

- conveys what is free from doubt (*artha bodhakam*); and
- what is useful (*phalavath*).

Vedānta fulfills all these conditions:

- the knowledge revealed by it is not accessible to the other means of knowledge like perception and inference (*anadhigatam*); so, it cannot be contradicted by the other means of knowledge (*abhāditam*);
- being revealed knowledge, it is not the result of the working of the human intellect (*apauruṣeyam*); so, it is free from human errors;
- it leaves us in no doubt as to what it wants to convey and also supports what it reveals through reasoning (*artha bodhakam*);
- in addition, it is the most useful knowledge, as it removes our ignorance of our true nature of being free from all limitations (*phalavath*).

**Is any *pramāṇa* needed to know *ātmā* which is *nitya aparokṣa*?**

As regards knowing *ātmā*, a fundamental question arises as to whether there is need for any *pramāṇa* to know *ātmā*, since it is always self-evident (*nitya aparokṣa*). The necessity arises, as *ātmā* is neither correctly nor completely known, even though it is self-evident. *Ātmā*'s status, as known now, is both limited and variable. It is limited to the body-mind-sense-complex and is variable as the seer, hearer, doer, *sukhī*, *duḥkhī*, waker, dreamer, sleeper etc. It not



fully known owing to the ignorance of the fact that *ātmā* is the limitless Brahman. These need to be looked into by bringing them on the anvil of enquiry (*vicāra*) through *śāstra pramāṇa* and *ātmā* has to be known as consciousness, which is the same as Brahman.

**Can the *pramāṇa*, functioning through erroneously known *ātmā*, provide valid knowledge about *ātmā*?**

Śaṅkarācārya himself raises a basic objection about the functioning of the *pramāṇa* and answers it. The objection raised is that the *pramāṇa* operates only through the body, the senses and the mind, which are all erroneous notions about *ātmā*. How can that which operates through erroneously known *ātmā* remove all the erroneous notions about *ātmā*?

Śaṅkarācārya clarifies that what gives rise to a valid cognition, which cannot be negated, is a *pramāṇa*. Only when it suffers correction, the cognition becomes invalid. For example, the cognition of a serpent instead of the rope is invalid since it gets negated by subsequent rope-cognition. But the knowledge that Brahman, the only reality, is none other than oneself does not suffer any contradiction. Therefore, Vedānta, which gives rise to this knowledge in the *buddhi*, is a *pramāṇa*.

## **Is not the knowledge revealed by Vedānta negated by *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*?**

The objection is now raised that *Vedānta-pramāṇa* which reveals the oneness of everything (*advaita*) as consciousness (*cit*) and existence (*sat*) is in total conflict with the direct perception (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa*) of the numerous objects in the universe. This is answered by pointing out that the objection is born out of the misunderstanding that Vedānta negates the infinite variety in the universe. What is stated by the *śāstra* is that the manifold objects that we experience are entirely dependent on Brahman for their existence. The various objects have no substantiality of their own despite their different names, forms and functions. In real terms, what exists is only one Brahman, which is the cause of everything. Hence, there is no conflict between the revealed knowledge and the actual experience.

## **Cannot *ātma-jñāna* be gained through reasoning or science?**

The question is also raised as to whether we cannot gain this knowledge through science and reasoning. *Śruti* is very clear that it cannot be so attained. Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.9) says:

*Naiṣā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā proktānyenaiva sujñānāya preṣṭha |*

O dear one! This knowledge cannot be attained by reasoning. Taught by some one else alone, (it comes) to one's comprehension.

The question is now raised as to whether scientific knowledge cannot negate Vedānta. The basic principle of reasoning is that the data that we collect and the conclusions we arrive at will have to be about the same entity. *Hetu* and *sādhyam* have to belong to the same *pakṣa*. If blood is collected from my body, the conclusions of the blood test should relate only to my blood. As regards *ātmā*, science has no data on it since it is not available for observation as an object. Without scientific data, we cannot know *ātmā* through science. As regards the data collected by science about what is other than *ātmā* (*anātmā*), it cannot obviously be applied to *ātmā*. Trying to use science to verify Vedānta would be like trying to verify what is seen by the eyes through the ears. Śāṅkarācārya says: "One should not on strength of mere logic challenge something that has to be known from Veda. For reasoning that has no Vedic foundation and which springs from mere imagination of persons lacks conclusiveness."

### **The scope of reasoning in śāstra**

But reasoning can be based on the facts revealed by the *śāstra*. Thus, *anumāna* (inference) and *arthāpatti* (postulation) based entirely on *śāstra* has *śāstra saṁmata* (approval). Such reasoning is used to provide

logical links within the *śāstra* so that it may be taught systematically. *Vedānta-vicāra* is also done through reasoning. The *śruti* is questioned first. The questioning is methodical so that the very questioning-reasoning called *vicāra* serves to assimilate what the *śruti* says. This is considered very necessary and Śaṅkarācārya says “any one who adopts any view without full inquiry (*vicāra*) will miss his highest goal and incur grievous loss”.

### **Vedānta and science cannot either affirm or negate each other**

It is also well understood that *śāstra* is not the *pramāṇa* in regard to matters that fall within the sphere of other *pramāṇas*. It can neither negate nor affirm them. Science cannot also either negate or affirm Vedānta since it has no data on *ātmā*. Śaṅkarācārya makes it clear in his *bhāṣyam* on Bhagavad-gītā (18-66) that nothing in conflict with valid means of cognition should be imputed to *śruti*:

“Even a hundred statements of *śruti* to the effect that fire is cold and non-luminous would not prove valid. If it does make a statement, its import will have to be interpreted differently. Otherwise, validity would not attach to it. Nothing in conflict with the means of valid cognition or with its own statements may be imputed to *śruti*.”

### ***Puruṣa tantram and vastu tantram***

Pujya Swamiji clarifies the principles of knowing through *puruṣa tantram* and *vastu tantram*. The first is that the knower does not have any choice over knowing. In regard to action, however, whether we act or not, what action we take and for what purpose depends on us. So, our will and judgement have a big role to play in action. This is called *puruṣa tantram*. But in knowing, we cannot exercise any choice either in knowing or in not knowing. If we open our eyes and if there is light, we have no choice but to see what is within our field of vision. We have also no choice except to accept what we see. If we see a buffalo but wish we had seen a cow, we cannot change our knowledge from a buffalo to a cow, however much we may wish. The same position holds good in respect of other sense organs also. Our will has thus no role to play at all either in knowing or in what we know. *Jñānam* is exactly as the object of knowledge and is not open to any option. This is called *vastu tantram*.

### ***Pramāṇa tantram***

In knowing, there is another important intrinsic feature. What we can know is entirely determined by the means of knowledge. Through perception, we can get knowledge only of those, which are within the range of our sense organs. Even in regard to the sense organs, through the eyes, we can see only colour and

form; through the ears, we can hear only sounds; and so on. What we can know is determined by the means of knowledge. This is because knowledge is centered on the means of knowledge. This is called *pramāṇa tantram*. Therefore, we have also no choice at all in regard to the means of knowledge to be used for knowing. The inseparable relationship between the means of knowledge and the object of knowledge is called *pramāṇa-prameya sambandha*.

**The effect of Vedānta being the *pramāṇa-tantram* and the *vastu-tantram***

The two vital conclusions that follow from Vedānta being the *pramāṇa tantram* and the *vastu tantram* are:

- whatever knowledge that Veda reveals, we have no means of knowing it other than through Veda; and
- there is no room for us to sit in judgement on what Veda reveals.

If, in spite of this compelling situation, some validation of Vedānta by an outside source is desired, Pujya Swamiji reiterates that it is totally impossible and illustrates through the following example:

“Let us suppose that a man who was born blind undergoes a new surgical procedure that will enable him to see. The surgery is considered to be a success and the doctors are convinced that the man will see. After removing the bandages, the

doctor says, 'Please open your eyes'. But, keeping his eyes closed tightly, the man says, 'Doctor, I will only open my eyes when you prove that I can see.' What can the doctor do now? He is being asked to prove that the man's eyes are a means of knowledge and that they are capable of sight. But how can he do that? He can only say: 'I think you will be able to see. The surgery went very well and there is no reason why your eyes should not see.' Even if the doctor forces the man's eyes open, the only proof that he will be able to see is the sight registered by the eyes themselves." (GHS-1, p 20)

### **We have to give the *pramāṇa* a chance to prove itself**

Pujya Swamiji emphasises that even as only the eyes can prove whether they are capable of sight or not, only Vedānta can prove whether it works. So, we have to give the *pramāṇa* a chance to prove itself. He says:

"Once a *pramāṇa* is accepted as an independent *pramāṇa*, then it has to prove itself as the means of knowledge. For it to do so, you have to give the *pramāṇa* a chance. If you do not give the *pramāṇa* a chance, you should not talk against it. You cannot establish that a means of knowledge is not a *pramāṇa* just by talking about it. This is an unreasonable position to take. You have not allowed the *pramāṇa* to prove itself to you. A reasonable stance can only be taken after you have

analysed the *pramāṇa* and worked with it. But you can only do this if you accept it as the *pramāṇa* in the first place; and to do this, you require *śraddhā*. Only then, it can prove itself." (GHS-1, p 490)

Pujya Swamiji elaborates further:

"I always ask 'After all, you want to see your face. Why do you look at the mirror to see your face? Don't you have a commitment to the mirror, if you want to see your face?' Self is the cause of the universe (*jagat kāraṇam*). How are you going to look at the cause of the universe? There is no way except the *śāstra*."

"Once it is a means of knowledge, it has to be looked at as a means of knowledge. You cannot look at *śāstra* as a book. Book means you have an attitude - correcting attitude, nodding attitude, yes/no attitude. When you read a book, you are the authority. You review the book. Two *pramātās* (the author of the book and you) are contending. But *pramāṇa* does not operate like that. *Pramāṇa* does not seek your permission, your signature, your approval. It is not reading a book with question marks on the margin. No pencil, no rubber. Means of knowledge is different. It has nothing to do with your approval or disapproval. It has got to be as it is. If it is a flower, it is a flower. You cannot wish it away and decide it to be a mango. Knowledge does not give you that kind of



option. When you use your eyes, your approval or disapproval is not there. You are not there with your sweet will. Will has no role to play. Your wish has no role to play. Your thinking has no role to play. What is it that has a role? You and the means of knowledge. If there is a question, further *vicāra kartavyaḥ*. If what you observe is too small, you bring a magnifying glass, a microscope. It is all seeing. That is what we call *vicāra kartavyaḥ*. It is all operating the means of knowledge. This is what people have to understand.”(A-2005, BS, Lect 5 and 6)

### **We have no way of proving that Vedānta is not a *pramāṇa***

Pujya Swamiji points out that we do not also have any basis to raise any objection:

“When I say Vedānta is a *pramāṇa*, you have no way of proving that is not a *pramāṇa* because one *pramāṇa* cannot be dismissed by another *pramāṇa*. This is because, for a *pramāṇa* to be dismissed by any another *pramāṇa*, it should be within the scope of the other *pramāṇa*. But what a very particular *pramāṇa* makes you know is not available for verification or dismissal by another *pramāṇa*. For example, when I see the object as yellow and it is really blue, only the eyes can disqualify what I saw as wrong. I may still see the object in the same way, but the eyes alone have to say, not the ears,

that it is not yellow and it is blue. No other *pramāṇa* has a scope here.” (GHS-1, p 490)

“If you see that you are Brahman, there is no problem. And if you do not, on what basis can you say that you are not Brahman? Because *ātmā* is not an object to be known by perception or inference, you cannot prove that the self is not Brahman. That is why *śraddhā* in the *śruti* as *pramāṇa* is necessary.” (GHS-1, p 491)

So, whatever validity a scientist gives to perception as the means of knowledge and his eyes as the instrument for his observation, so much validity a seeker has to give to the *śāstra* as the *pramāṇa* and the *guru* who expounds it. A scientist does not begin his analysis by first questioning either his eyes or the data collected by him. He takes them to be true unless otherwise proved.

### **Our attitude to the teacher has to be the same as towards the *pramāṇa***

Referring to the next problem that the seeker usually has, Pujya Swamiji says:

“Often the response is: ‘The book comes with a person, the *guru*. My problem is with the person. I do not want to give up my being in charge. Surrender to the book means surrender to a limited person. With *pramāṇa*, I do not feel threatened. Person is the problem’.”

Pujya Swamiji throws overboard such an attitude by saying:

“May be it is important that your being in charge should be taken away. The world and the whole life say that you are not in charge. As long as you are in charge, your ego is there. Only when you are not in charge, *pramāṇa* is there.” (A-2005-BS, Lect 6)

He then explains:

“You are ready with the eyes for an object to be seen. Towards the eyes, you have got total *śraddhā*; it is automatic. Even if you want to believe something different, you cannot. Your mind immediately strips itself of all notions, customs, thoughts, prejudices etc., as you are operating a means of knowledge.”

“Similarly where the teaching is concerned, you must stand there completely free from all prejudices, all notions because it is the *pramāṇa* that is operating. Then only, the teacher can deliver the goods. That is teaching; that is Vedānta. It is not mere words, school of thought or philosophy. It is like the eyes, which see form and color. The words deliver the goods. Suppose you do not see with your eyes what is there outside. You only rub your eyes and continue to see, or else you bring in a magnifying glass. If you do not see what is there, you only try to correct your eyes. You do not say

that there is nothing to see. Similarly, when you listen to the teaching and you find that there are certain areas where you are not very clear, you do not dismiss the teacher saying that he is not clear. You question yourself to find out whether it is your understanding that is inadequate” (Swami Dayananda – A Verse from Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, p 34).

“That does not mean that you swallow whatever the teacher says; the statements are accepted pending discovery. This is *śraddhā*, the attitude developed by love and reverence for the teacher coupled by a faith in the competence of the teacher. With this attitude, the *buddhi* is, as if, taken over by the teacher. The intellect is no more under the influence of *ahaṅkāra* (I-sense), but under the control of the teacher. With this independent standpoint, the intellect, which is capable of knowledge, conducts the enquiry “(Swami Dayananda, Talks on Upadeśa Sāram, p 100). “That is called surrender. In fact, you do not lose anything really. That is having a proper attitude to *pramāṇa*. You let the *pramāṇa* prove itself”. (A-2005, BS, Lect 6)

### ***Śraddhā* is essential for pursuing the *śāstra***

Pujya Swamiji also cautions that without *śraddhā*, we would give up the *śāstra*. He says:

“*Śraddhā* is an attitude that enables you to say, ‘The words are true; my understanding alone is not proper’. And if *śraddhā* is not there, you will give it up, saying, ‘I have studied so many Upaniṣads and have concluded that Vedānta is just another trip. They are all speculations. The very Upaniṣads themselves are contradictory’. In this way you can dismiss it all because of lack of *śraddhā*” (GHS-1, p 491). “If what the *śruti* says seems contradictory, we should look into it to see if the *śruti* intended some other meaning. That is what they call *śraddhā*. We try to understand what the *śruti* says”.

### **Pujya Swamiji cites his personal experience**

He advises that we should go for the *śāstra* as what it says is eminently desirable and as it works, if we have *śraddhā*:

“The *śruti* is not telling something which you already know; it is telling you something you do not know. It says you are Brahman, which is something desirable. To hear that you are the whole is definitely not undesirable because the whole is exactly what you want to be. Behind all your pursuits is the conclusion that you are small and it is from this conclusion that you seek to be free. The *śruti* tells you that you are already free from being small. When what is said by the *pramāṇa* is desirable, then you have to go for it.

And it works, if you have *śraddhā* in the *śruti* as a *pramāṇa*". (GHS-1, p 491)

Pujya Swamiji is categorical that Vedānta *pramāṇa* works since it is based on his personal experience. Initially, he thought that through study, *yoga* practices, austerities and meditation he could gain self-realisation. After unsuccessfully trying very diligently for two years spending little time in sleep, he became concerned about the pursuit and lost trust in Vedānta. It was when he listened to Swāmi Praṇavānandā of Gudivādā that he made the most crucial discovery that Vedānta works only when it is accepted as the *pramāṇa* and not considered as a theory which is actualised by practice. Pujya Swamiji found that Swāmi Praṇavānandā deftly handled the *śāstra* as the *pramāṇa* and he saw how his teaching neither conditioned the mind nor allowed it to form conclusions but gave direct knowledge to the persons that he was teaching. He accomplished this by disentangling the student's reason from its relative concepts, thereby bringing in the sudden recognition of the *vastu*. In his classes, he discovered this main method of traditional teaching and it resolved all his problems in knowing and in communicating the knowledge.

He says:

"They (some of his disciples) do not know the magnitude of the discovery that Vedānta is a

*pramāṇa*. They did not suffer as I did. My problems with Vedānta had been my mistaken notion that it was a system”.

### **Pujya Swamiji stresses that values, which prepare the mind for self-knowledge are indispensable**

Gītā (13, 7 to 11) specifies the values that prepare the mind for self-knowledge. The values are not *jñāna*, but Gītā raises them to the status of *jñāna*, since living in accordance with these values imparts the fitness to receive knowledge (*jñāna-yogyatā*), Referring to the indispensability of the inculcation of these values, Pujya Swamiji says:

“In this use (in the Gītā), *jñānam* stands for the collection of qualities of the mind in the presence of which (in relative measure) knowledge of the self can take place - and in the substantial absence of which, self-knowledge does not take place, no matter how adequate is the teacher or how authentic is the teaching.” (Swami Dayananda – The Value of Values, p 1.)

The values that are prescribed are: *amānitvam* (absence of self-conceit), *adambitvam* (absence of pretence), *ahimsā* (non-injury), *ārjavam* (straightness), *ācharyopasanam* (service to the teacher), *saucam* (cleanliness), *sthairyam* (steadiness), *ātmavinigrahaḥ* (mastery over the mind), *indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam* (dispassion towards sense-objects), *anañkārah* (absence

of egoism), *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhī-doṣa-darśanam* (reflection on evils of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain), *asaktiḥ* (absence of sense of ownership), *anabhiṣvangaḥ putra-dāra-grahādiṣu* (absence of fast attachment to son, wife, home etc.) *nityam samacittatvam iṣṭa-anīṣṭa-upapattiṣu* (constant even-mindedness in the occurrence of the desirable and undesirable), *mayi ananya-yogena bhaktiḥ avyabhicāriṇi* (unswerving devotion to *Īśvara* characterized by non-separateness from *Īśvara*), *viviktadeśasevitvam* (resorting to a quiet place), *aratiḥ janasamsadi* (absence of craving for the company of people), *adyātma-jnāna-nityatvam* (constant application of the knowledge of the self) and *tattva-jnāna-arthadarśanam* (keeping in view the purpose of the knowledge of the truth).

### **Values have to be assimilated so that they become natural**

In this regard, Pujya Swamiji stresses that the teaching should be aimed at making the seeker understand these values and assimilate them. He says:

“The purpose of the teaching is to reveal, not to advise. Advice is something meant for you to do, like when a doctor advises you to follow a particular treatment. This is purely advice, which you have to follow; in other words, it is *karma*. Whereas, if the same doctor teaches you medicine – how to diagnose a problem, what it is, how it happened, what treatment is to be given, why it is



given, how it may affect the patient and so on – then it is knowledge, meaning that, it is some thing to be understood.” (GHS-2, p 162)

“For example, in the case of speaking of truth, the value of others truthfulness to me is immediately clear and is personal and assimilated. But the value of my truthfulness to others is not immediately clear, as I do not see what I get out of being truthful. The value of my being truthful is only obligatory since my truthfulness oblige my parents, the society and the religious code. It is not personal or assimilated. So I have a split half value.”

“A personal value is spontaneously observed for its own sake; an obligatory value is subject to compromise when it obstructs a highly desired individual end. When a general ethical half value loses the battle, the half value does not fold up and go away. It stays there as an irritant and is never entirely silenced. When I ignore general ethical standard, I create a knower-doer split in myself. I, the knower, is in one position and I, the doer is in another position. By my lie, I create a split, a division between the knower-I and the doer-I. The quality of life always suffers when I become split.”

“Understanding is the key to making the values one’s own personal values. Attitudes, which are accepted because they have been imposed as

advice, counsel, admonition or obligation are not personal values, but are restraint or conditioning. Such imposed obligatory values do not make the mind ready for self-knowledge. Only personal, assimilated values, establish the mental climate for *śravaṇam* (hearing). When I clearly see the value of a value, to me that value becomes my personal value. But even after a value becomes personal for me, for sometime, I may have to be very alert with regard to the particular attitude; otherwise, habit will continue to rule me. However, once understanding is there, making a value personal to me, then, after a period of alertness, a period in which I deliberately take whatever actions will make the value more real for me, the value will become assimilated. An assimilated value is very natural. With alertness, all one's personal values become one's assimilated values, a natural part of oneself, which, without effort or control express themselves spontaneously in one's life. When in relative measure this has happened - when one sees the value to oneself of the *jñāna*-values and to some extent has assimilated these attitudes, one's mind is ready for *śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsana*, hearing-reflection-contemplation, through which one gains the knowledge of oneself, that ultimate *jñeyam*, 'that which is to be known' which reveals the truth of oneself to be time-free, form-free, full and complete existence, awareness that knows no want,

no limitation, no isolation.” (Swami Dayananda –  
The Value of Values, p 6, 9 to 11, 107)

## II

### Only Handled Words Become the *Pramāṇa*

#### The condition under which a word can reveal

Pujya Swamiji’s major insight is that only handled words become the *pramāṇa*, as the words in any language are by themselves not suited to unfold Vedānta. All the words that we know and use in any language are *laukika* or of the world of objects and we have no difficulty in understanding them. For example, when the word “apple” is mentioned, immediately the mind is able to objectify the apple. But when the *alaukika* (non-*laukika*) word “Brahman” is used, nothing particular happens in the mind. This is because word can reveal something only if it refers to what is

- *rūdhi* (commonly known); or
- *jāti* (belonging to a species); or
- *guṇa* (having some quality); or
- *kriyā* (performing some action); or
- *sambandha* (having some relationship).

Brahman does not fulfill any of these conditions, since it is

- not perceivable, being not an object;

- not belonging to any species, being the only one;
- not having any qualities as it has no limitations; and
- not performing any action, as it does not undergo any change; and
- not having any relationship, being the partless whole.

The *śruti* affirms:

*Yato vāco nivartante |  
Aprāpya manasā saha |*

Words along with the mind return without reaching that. (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.4)

Certain things, which cannot be expressed exactly in words like emotions can be known, even though they cannot be communicated by words. So, the question arises as to whether *ātmā* or Brahman can be reached by the mind even though it is beyond the reach of words. “Definitely not”, says the *śruti*:

*Na tatra cakṣurgacchati na vāggacchati no manaḥ |*

The eye does not go there, nor the speech, nor the mind. (Kena Upaniṣad 1.3)

Trying to explain an *alaukika* word through another *alaukika* word is equally futile. If it is said, “*Ātmā* is *satyam*, *nityatvāt*”, when *nityam* itself is not clear, how can it explain “*satyam*” and how can “*satyam*” which is not understood explain *ātmā*? Even when such words

are repeatedly used, they do not communicate anything. They are not understood and do not help in knowing what we want to know. They merely condition the mind with some vague concept creating an obstacle to knowing. Pujya Swamiji highlights this situation in his unique humorous style:

“Veda says, ‘You are Brahman’. I do not know what Brahman is. Now I have a new word ‘Brahman’. It is an unknown word. I come to know that Brahman *is*. Nothing is conveyed by these words. Teaching is meant to make you understand what Brahman is. But the person will say:

Brahman is eternal.

What is eternal?

Eternal is immortal.

What is immortal?

It is limitless.

What is limitless?

Limitless is existence.

What is existence?

It is reality.

What is this reality?

It is divine consciousness.

What is this divine consciousness?

It is supreme consciousness.

What is supreme consciousness?

It is bliss.

What is bliss?

It is B capital Bliss. This is spiritual Bliss, not ordinary bliss.”

“So, the words are simply piled up here. This is similar to the following:

What is Brahman?  
Brahman is *thatha-botha*.  
What is *thatha-botha*?  
*Thatha-botha* is *gaga-buga*.  
What is *gaga-buga*?  
*Gaga-buga* is *chacha-bucha*.  
What is *chacha-bucha*?  
*Chacha-bucha* is *loda-loda*.”

“I can go on and on. If somebody talks like that, we dismiss him. But when somebody teaches Brahman as supreme, divine, immortal, consciousness, which is all auspiciousness, purity and Bliss, we say that he talks on a high level!”  
(Swami Dayananda, Exploring Vedānta)

### **Pujya Swamiji indicates the method of handling the words**

Pūjya Swāmiji indicates as to how the words should be used to unfold the vision.

“We have to use known words in such a way that what cannot be released by the words immediately, what cannot be conveyed by the words immediately, can be conveyed by the handling of words, and not by simply using them and throwing

them about. The words can also create concepts, which may be anything but what is intended to be conveyed. Descriptive words do not help; revealing words help. One should understand the limitation of the words and also the magic of words. The words have the content of infinity in them. This knowledge being what it is, the handling of words is not ordinary. Any discipline of knowledge requires to be unfolded by persons who know how to handle words. Here, by the pure handling alone, *ātmā* has to be revealed.” (Swami Dayananda, A Verse from the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, p 27)

“How are the words employed? You create a situation in which the words can no longer have the commonly accepted meanings, but their own content. Suppose I use the word, ‘*satya*’, ‘*satya*’ means ‘*asti*’, is. By the word ‘is’, you know it to be that which exists. Generally, our concept of existence is in terms of time and place. Suppose, we want to convey that Brahman exists. But this existence is unlike our understanding of the word ‘exists’. It is not bound by place or time. Everything else is bound by time and place. It is all *sabda-vācya* (direct meaning of the word). Brahman is not *sabda-vācya*. Brahman is *sabda-lakṣya*, the implied meaning of the word. Hence we retain the root meaning in the word ‘*satya*’, ‘exists’ and remove all the conditioning factors (like time

and place), by using another word 'ananta', limitless, in apposition." (Swami Dayananda, Exploring Vedānta)

"You should not allow anybody to form a conclusion because the true nature of *ātmā* (or Brahman) is not a conclusion drawn by words. The word, eternal, sounds like a known word and therefore the student thinks that he knows *ātmā* (or Brahman); but he has no experience of the eternal. The whole teaching is to make the student understand what is eternity. In fact, the word eternal only means that *ātmā* (or Brahman) is not non-eternal; *ātmā* (or Brahman) is timelessness. By inquiry, the one who is aware of time is revealed to be that very awareness, wherein the concept of time resolves. This awareness, which is the *svarūpa* of time, is, in terms of time, called as eternity. Every word, which talks about *ātmā* (or Brahman), is to be unfolded by the teacher without leaving any misconception in the student's mind."

"Even the meaning of the word 'awareness' has to be unfolded. When one hears the word 'apple' one is aware of the meaning of the word 'apple'. When one hears the word 'awareness', the meaning of the word 'awareness' does not become the object of awareness. That 'awareness' is oneself. The teacher must be conscious of all this while unfolding these words. A proper teacher knows



how to handle these words because of his or her clarity of the vision of Vedānta.” (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedānta, p 15)

### **The teacher should have received knowledge in accordance with the *sampradāya***

The person who can so teach is only the *śrotriya*, that is, the person who has systematically undergone the exposure to the teaching in accordance with the *sampradāya* from his *guru*. He therefore knows how to handle the words and can never put anyone on a wrong track. As he has assimilated the knowledge, he has also the ability to uncover any fallacy the moment that it arises. (*Doṣa darśanam paṇḍita lakṣaṇam*) In the *śāstra*, there is correction of error alone all the way. But if a *śrotriya* is not a *brahma-niṣṭhā* (person established in Brahman) owing to some reason, his words may not always carry conviction.

The best teacher would therefore be the one who is both *śrotriya* and *brahmaniṣṭhā*. Pujya Swamiji found that Parama Pujya Swāmi Taranandagiri at Ṛṣikeś under whom he studied *sūtra-bhāṣyam* to be the embodiment of what he taught. He recalls,

“Whenever he talked of *vastu* (Brahman), I could see that he was the *vastu*... (He) gave me the strength of the roots in the teaching tradition.”

## **Pujya Swamiji reveals as to how to make the *pramāṇa* come alive**

Pujya Swamiji reveals as to how to make the *pramāṇa* come alive. He says:

“Only on the basis of *pramāṇa* I handle my teaching. I had found out a method wherein the *pramāṇa* comes alive. I am gone. Swāmiji is not talking. There is no personality involved, only the *pramāṇa*. The *karaṇam* (sense-organs) is there; no *kartā* (talker). I am only the *karaṇam*. I am not the *kartā*. Only then, it is *pramāṇa*. Through my teaching, you see. For that, I have to obliterate myself, my ideas, my personality. You hear the *śāstra* speaking. That is why I can make people see at the time of teaching itself. It is a marvel. It is a wonder.” (Padma Narasimhan, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, p 62)

He indicates that the *Vedānta-rahasyam* (secret of Vedānta) is that the words should be so used that they do not condition the mind by creating concepts. All concepts are obstructions to recognise the self, as the teaching is not for creation of any new knowledge but to knock off the existing misconceptions about the self. The teaching has also to take care that while dismissing one misconception, it does not create another. In view of this inherent problem, while the word or explanation, which helps to know, is used, Pujya Swamiji also uses another word or explanation

immediately to dispel the misconception that might have been created. In this way, he unfolds the vision with deliberate care. The words are clear, precise and lucid born out the depth of his understanding of the subject. There is gradual, sequential and logical exploration of the subject. He removes the mystique associated with Samskr̥tam texts and imparts the knowledge in the same homely atmosphere in which Uddālaka taught his son Śvetaketu. The exposition is leisurely. He is tireless in his exposition; if one does not seem to work, there is another and yet another. The process of thinking is carefully guided, leading to easy understanding of the subject. He is like a surgeon doing a delicate operation skillfully. He knows what is to be done, knows what he is doing and knows what is happening. Finally, Pujya Swamiji makes the listener see as he sees.

### **Teaching is done in an intimate homely atmosphere**

Pujya Swamiji says that there is a bond of commitment and care with the disciple, like that between the mother and son or the husband and wife. There is total understanding and compassion. Money has no place in such relationship. As their mentor, he says:

‘I watch them, listen to them and no matter what mistakes they commit, I remain non-judgemental’.

His teaching is always addressed to the person. He makes eye contact with each person. In his exposition, no distancing is created by improper use of words. Only "I" and "You" are used with reference to persons. The third person, if ever is used, is used judiciously. The disciple is made to understand that the teacher is committed to make him understand. He demonstrates that he would never give up his efforts. He repeatedly communicates what is not understood by approaching and explaining it from different angles. The disciple is also made to understand that he is privileged to take part in something very special, as he is coming to know exactly that which is to be known to free him from all limitations. The disciple is made eager to find out what the teacher is striving to convey so that the disciple develops love for the learning and makes extra efforts to get over the impediments that he may have in understanding.

### **Maintaining the ambience through humour**

Pujya Swamiji's exposition of the subject is also unique in that it is done in an intimate and homely atmosphere. This follows the tradition in which the *guru* teaches his disciples in his house, the *gurukulam*. His style of language and mode of presentation fully reflect this situation. An integral part of this tonal setting is the humour used by Swamiji to explain the points in the *śāstra*. The Cauveri delta from which he hails is known for its humour; also, the conversation

in the households reflects the knowledge of the *śāstra*. He is, in addition, deeply sensitive to the domestic, social and psychological situations with their implications and can easily find humorous material to enlighten. He never uses word play to extract humour. His narrations are enlivening and every time he repeats a joke relevant to the point that he is explaining, he would be relating it as though he is doing it for the very first time. He is adept in intonating the words suitably, accompanied by body language and enjoying himself thoroughly without any inhibition. The humorous anecdotes effectively clarify the important points and resolve in the main flow.

He usually narrates the following situation to make the point that even after doing *vicāra* (analysis), many have come to erroneous conclusions like “I am a *jīva*”, “I am zero”, “I am momentary”.

A person from the town comes to the village and is about to enter a house in the village. In these houses, the beam of the door is low and one has to bend to save the head from hitting it. This person is made aware of the problem. So, he starts bending even at quite a distance from the door, only to lift his head right at the time of entering the door and bangs his head. People usually get hit accidentally. Some get hit after a lot of *vicāra*. This is called *durvicāra siddha*.

We have to see Puja Swamiji enact the scene! He uses many such episodes to explain and enliven.

### III

#### **What Puja Swamiji Avoids while Handling the *Śāstra***

Puja Swamiji also takes special care to steer clear of expressions and explanations that can mislead. He remarks:

“You do not know what all I have not done (while teaching)”.

Some of them are given below.

#### **Avoiding charts**

Puja Swamiji does not use the chart with Brahman at the top connected below to *Māyā* and then to *Īśvara* and then to the various stages of manifestation, as such depiction would convey the impression of a progressive lineage of the same order of reality from Brahman. The chart cannot communicate the standpoint that Brahman having *sarvajñatvam* (omniscience) is *Māyā*. Nor can it communicate that it is the *sarvajñatvam* of Brahman, which manifests as *jagat* and *jīva* and that nothing is away from Brahman. The student can also get away with the impression that *Māyā* without Brahman is the cause of this world and the world is just *Māyā*. Also, if the student has

this chart in mind, *mithyā*, which is of a different order of reality, would become very difficult to understand and Vedānta may be denied to that person.

### **Avoiding the equation “Brahman + Māyā = Īśvara”**

As for equations, the only equation in Vedānta is between *tat* and *tvam*, that is, between *jīva* and *Īśvara*. But, if the equation like Brahman + *Māyā* = *Īśvara* is presented during the teaching, “+” will misrepresent the *upādhi*. Pujya Swamiji explains as to how *Māyā* should be understood:

“There are no two entities. There is only *satyaṁ jñānamanantaṁ brahma*. Śāstra says *sarvakāraṇam* (total cause) Brahman, *sarvaśakti* Brahman. Then *satyaṁ jñānamanantaṁ brahma* and *sarvakāraṇam, sarvajña, sarvaśakti* Brahman become two standpoints. Whatever that *māyā upādhi* (that which brings about the apparent change) is, it is that which makes Brahman *Parameśvara*. It is *Parameśvara śakti, Īśvara śakti*. When you say *Īśvara* is *sarva śaktimān* (all powerful), *sarvajña* (omniscient), it is because of *māyā*. What we say *Parameśvara śakti* is otherwise called *māyā śakti*.”

“Then you say Brahman + *Māyā*. There is no plus. Why? Clay + pot, what? Clay. Brahman + anything, what? Brahman. Therefore, there is no plus. There is also no minus. The plus is what we say *mithyā*. *Māyā* also is *mithyā*. It is not separate

from Brahman. Much less is it a parallel reality to Brahman. That without which it is not *sarvajñatva sarvakāraṇam brahman*, that *śakti*. From its own standpoint, Brahman is *satyaṃ jñānamanantam brahma*. Other point of view means *upādhi*; from *kāraṇa upādhi* (apparent limitation by being the cause) Brahman is *māyā, Parameśvara śakti*. "

"*Māyā* is not the cause of this world. If they say 'this *jagat* is all *māyā*', we have to tell them (that) *śāstra* does not say '*idaṃ sarvaṃ māyā*' (all this is *māyā*). They write: Śaṅkara says '*idaṃ sarvaṃ māyā*'; and that Śaṅkara is a *māyāvādi*. He does not say anything (like that). *Śāstra* says '*Idaṃ sarvaṃ Brahman* (all this is Brahman).' Śaṅkara understands that. Others do not understand. That is the problem."

"Īśa Upaniṣad begins with *Pūrṇamadaḥ, pūrṇamidam...* What does it say? This is *pūrṇam*, that is *pūrṇam*. *Kāraṇam* (cause) is *pūrṇam*, *kāryam* (effect or product) is *pūrṇam*, *idaṃ jagat pūrṇam*. Nobody says "*Idaṃ sarvaṃ māyā*." (R- 2004, VC, 19.3.04, 1)

### **Avoiding words with physical connotation**

The consciousness owing to which the *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ of *buddhi* etc.) is sentient is referred to as *pratibimbha caitanyam*. This is generally translated as reflected consciousness. This has physical



connotation, which is not what is intended to be communicated. What is explained is the arising of sentience in the insentient through the example of a non-source of light becoming a source by reflecting light. Pujya Swamiji clarifies:

“*Cit svarūpasya pratibimbha* is there in the *antaḥkaraṇa* which is called *pratibimbita caitanyam*. You translate it generally as reflected consciousness - like your body, which my eyes can see, because it is lighted. It is a lighted body. This lighted body shines. Similarly this *antaḥkaraṇa* is lighted, *cit*-lighted. This is called *cit pratibimbha*. Do not go away too much with this *pratibimbha* and all that. This creates lots of other problems. *Pratibimbha* means a medium. They are physical. We begin to think of everything as physical. Physicalised images based on words are obstacles to the knowing of Vedānta. That is why the problem. Nothing else.” (R-2004, VC, 29.3.04-3)

Pujya Swamiji does not also use other words with physical connotation like “sub-stratum”, “superimposition”, “attachment” and “permeating”.

If we say that the body-mind-sense complex is superimposed on *ātmā* (called as *āropa* or *adhyāropa*) and that *ātmā* is the substratum (called as *adhiṣṭāna*) or that *ātmā* is not attached to the body-mind-sense complex or that consciousness permeates the body-

mind-sense complex, we may treat *ātmā* and the body-mind-sense complex as of equal status in reality. For example, if we say that the name and form of wave is superimposed on water and that water is the substratum of the wave, the wave will remain a separate entity and will not be understood as mere water. This explanation does not also help in knowing that water and wave are of different orders of reality, namely *satyam* and *mithyā*; on the other hand, it would be an impediment to such understanding. With his characteristic punch, Pujya Swamiji clarifies as to what is meant by superimposition:

“What is super-imposition? Is the pot super-imposed on clay? Did the pot maker super-impose it by his *buddhi*? Did he think of clay as a pot and you bought that pot? Is it something like the snake charmer getting a snake for his daily earning from that fellow who saw a snake on a rope? No! The pot is *pramāṇa-siddha*, known through perception as a pot. The pot maker shaped the pot. The pot is *vyavahāra yogya*, fit for transaction like carrying of water in it. But does the pot have any substantiality of its own?”

“Clay which is *adhiṣṭāna* is *satyam* and pot which is *āropa* is *mithyā*. *Mithyā* is never independent of the *adhiṣṭāna*. But *mithyā* does not belong to the *adhiṣṭāna*. Potness is not of clay; for, if clay is to

have the attribute of potness, then wherever there is clay, there has to be a pot. Potness cannot also be the attribute of pot, since any attribute can only belong to a substantive and pot is not a substantive, being dependent on clay for its existence. Where will then potness go and join? It cannot join the clay since clay is not always a pot. It cannot also join the pot since it has no substantiality of its own. Where will it be, then? It has to be only in clay but not as an intrinsic attribute of clay. It is a *mithyā* attribute or an *āropa* attribute of clay. This is what is referred to as superimposition of pot on the substratum of clay.” (Based on R-VC, 2004, 29.3.04, 1, A-TU, 2007, 14.5.07, A- BS, 2007, 19.6.07-3)

### **Avoiding words understood in different ways**

Pujya Swamiji does not use words that can be understood in different ways, since they cannot properly communicate. It includes the word “religion”. In its place, he uses “*vaidika dharma*”. He explains:

“I never use the word ‘religion’. Religion means varieties of things. It is another abused word. In *śāstra*, there is only *vaidika dharma*. In modern context, religion is more a faith. Religion is a very vague word. It means something to a Christian, means something to an atheist, something to a politician and something for a Muslim. What it means to each one is something different. Then,

where is communication? How can you use a word when a word is understood in hundred different ways? How are you going to use the word properly? I do not use that word at all.”

The word “God” is not used by him, as everyone thinks of “God” in his own way. So, Bhagavān or *Īśvara* is used. The word “spirit” would by implication make “matter” a parallel reality and is not used. “Soul” has connotations associated with the different faiths; so, it is not used. “Ego” has different significances, popular and psychological; so, *ahaṅkāra* (I-sense), which is self-explanatory, is used. “Faith” might mean belief in an authority and is not used; in its place, *śraddhā*, which is reliance on a valid means of knowledge, is used. “Liberation” is also not generally used as it is different from seeking freedom from what one does not want to be and in its place *mukti* or *mokṣa* is used. “Conviction” is also not used for *niścaya*, since “conviction” does not indicate that it is born out of understanding. All judgmental words like “sin”, “evil”, “good”, “bad” are not used. Depending on the context, the words “appropriate”, “inappropriate”, “proper”, “improper”, “correct” and “incorrect” are used.

### **Avoiding newly coined words**

Pujya Swamiji does not also use the newly coined words “monism” for *advaita*, “pure consciousness” for *nirviśeṣa caitanyam*, “total buddhi” for *sarvajña*,

“transcendental” for *pāramārthika* and “Absolute” for Brahman.

As for “monism” he clarifies as to how it does not at all conform to the *śāstra*:

“The number ‘one’ has no *vyavasthā*, ascertained meaning. You have to say, ‘one of what’. One is a member of a set. One earth many continents, one continent many countries, one country many states, one state many districts, one district many taluks, one taluk many blocks, one block many villages, one village many houses, one house many walls, one wall many bricks, one brick many atoms – this is endless. What do you mean by one? Any one thing you take, it is the same. One body, two hands, one hand five fingers and millions of cells. ‘One’ has no finality in itself; it does not reveal anything. So, you have to mention the set of many members and ‘one’ is a member of a given set. Therefore, our *śāstra* does not say that this *sat* is mono, that it is one. But it says, it is non-dually one. Non-dually one means there is nothing other than that, there is nothing like that, in itself there is no differentiation like hands and legs. *Sat* is free from all differences.” (Swami Dayananda, Mahavakya Vicara, p 24)

In regard to “transcendental reality”, Pujya Swamiji shows that there is no such reality and explains through the example of gold and the ornaments:

“(When you say) ‘O Chain! You are the shining gold. There is no question of your not being a ring or a bangle, because the ring and bangle are also you’, it is not transcendental reality. It is just reality. Whatever you see is gold. So, what do you transcend? Neither you can transcend gold when you recognise chain nor when you recognise gold, do you need to transcend chain. You do not need to transcend anything. When you say ‘Touch wood’, you do not transcend the chair”.

As for “Pure Consciousness”, since the mind thinks in terms of opposites, it creates the concept of “Impure Consciousness”, which does not exist.

There is also no “higher state of consciousness” or “lower state of consciousness”, since consciousness is *nirvikāra* and cannot undergo change into higher or lower. Only mind can have higher or lower states of thought.

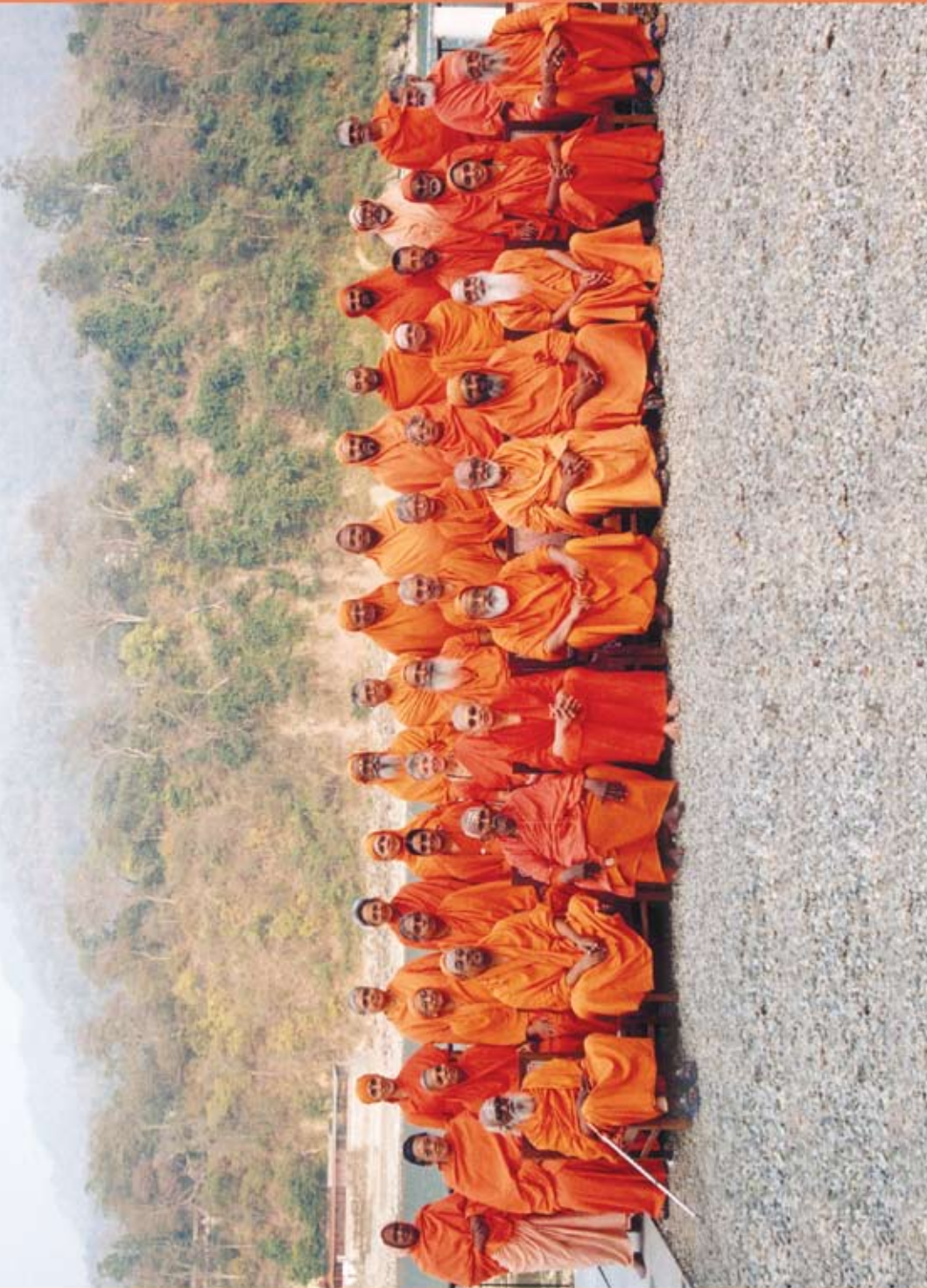
“Total *buddhi*” may convey the impression that it is the total of the individual minds and such a total mind will only be a mind with limited knowledge.

Using the word “Absolute” as a synonym for Brahman is inappropriate, as it is a contextual word from the point of view of the “relative” and is its opposite. Brahman has no opposite, since everything is in Brahman.

In the next chapter, we shall savour some samples of Pujya Swamiji's expositions.







## CHAPTER THREE

# SAMPLES OF PUJYA SWAMIJI'S EXPOSITION

Samples of Pujya Swamiji's systematic and elegant unfolding of the vision are given below.

### I

#### TV Talk on Consciousness

“When one looks at oneself, one thing becomes very obvious that one is unlike everything else. You see me. I am an object of your perception. Anything else that you see, that you hear, that you perceive in terms of smell, taste etc. is unlike you in the sense that you are the one who is seeing, hearing, who is picking up smell, taste and touch. You are the subject and everything else is object. The galaxies are your objects. The light that you recognise, time you appreciate, the distance you recognise, all these are objects, macro or micro. “

“You are the subject; you objectify particles, electrons, neutrons. You objectify time, distance and everything else. You are unlike everything else. This fact nobody can gainsay or deny; one is like oneself and there is no comparison. There is no second subject. The subject is referred to by the

first person 'I'. That is why you cannot place 'I' anywhere else. In all languages there are pronouns – 'he' pronoun, 'she' pronoun, 'it' pronoun. The pronoun 'he' is used in the place of Bhagwan and varieties of persons and even animals. So too, 'she' is used for females, 'it' for neuter nouns. But you cannot use the word 'I' nowhere else except for yourself. You become the locus of 'I'. There is only one 'I'. Everything else is object. And therefore, there is a subject-object division."

"The understanding of the line of division between the subject and the object lies in your understanding of what is 'I'. The problem lies in drawing the line. It is obvious that there is 'I' and the 'not-I'. But it is not that obvious where the line should be drawn. It seems to evade everybody. Where does this (line) run? Generally, the line of this division between 'I' and 'not-I' runs wherever the body ends, that is, the dermis (skin). That is the line. 'Not-I' is anything away from this dermis. It means that 'I' pervades up to the extremities of this anatomy; beyond the extremities of this anatomy begins the 'not-I'."

"The body seems to determine what exactly is the lot of 'I'. The lot of this body is the lot of 'I'. The condition of this body is the condition of 'I'. The age of the body is the age of 'I'. Body sits here; 'I' sit here. Body gets up; 'I' get up. Body is born; 'I'

am born. Naturally, 'I' should know that if the body is gone, 'I' am gone. If the body is dead, 'I' am dead. Therefore, 'I' and body are one."

"A relationship with this body is one thing. But to take 'I' as the body is quite another. There are houses and houses. I say: 'this is my house'. There is a certain legal relationship. There are bodies and bodies and I have got the reason to say that this is my body. Nobody else is related to this body as intimately as I am. But I take the attributes of this body as my attributes. It is not verbal; it is in an intimate sense. There is a reality about it. This creates havoc. Infinite havoc, if you want to quantify it. You cannot imagine how much damage it does. Unimaginable!"

"As you recognise, you are unlike everything else. Not enough, unless you recognise what is this, you, this 'I'. "What is this 'I'?" What can be this 'I'? In all recognition what is involved? When you recognise anything, when you know anything, what is it that is common in all of them? What is common is knowledge – 'is knowledge'. When I say 'I do not know', that I do not know is knowledge. 'I doubt' is knowledge that I doubt. 'I know'; it is knowledge that I know. So in all situations you know. Knowledge is common. In Sanskrit, we say *samvit*. We can use another word for knowledge – consciousness, because in the case

of the word 'knowledge', you always recognise it along with an object. It causes confusion. So, let us use another word that is not often used. We can use that word until it becomes confusing."

"So when you say, 'I know the Swami sitting here', there is Swami-consciousness. When you say that I do not know this language, there is consciousness even in saying that I do not know. When you say you have a doubt, there is doubt-consciousness. When you talk of space, distance, motion and time, there is space-consciousness, distance-consciousness, motion-consciousness and time-consciousness. When you say there is peace, there is peace-consciousness. There is restlessness-consciousness, hunger-consciousness, ignorance-consciousness. What is always common is consciousness. May be what we say, 'I', is it this consciousness? Can there be anything else? Can I be anything else? "

"The meaning of the word, 'I' cannot be anything other than consciousness. I recognise myself as a conscious being. When we use the word 'conscious' as an adjective to 'being', 'being' becomes 'I', conscious becomes an adjective, an attribute. That implies there is such a thing as 'I', enjoying the attribute of being conscious. That means there can be an 'I' without being conscious! When you say 'a blue lily', there can be a lily

without being blue. When I say conscious being, can there be a being without being conscious? Being cannot but be consciousness. The content of being is consciousness. The content of 'I', which is that being is but consciousness, cannot but be consciousness. Everything else is object of consciousness, including all that occurs in my mind, all that I know, my hunger, thirst, every emotion, my memory. All that I know is object of consciousness. Consciousness alone is 'I'."

"It opens up a lot of facts. There are no more questions. It only unfolds more facts. Discovering the self as consciousness opens up the self for us to discover more and more about the self. I said everything is unlike the self. If everything else becomes an object of consciousness can there be anything other than consciousness, the consciousness for which space is the object of consciousness, the consciousness for which time is the object of consciousness?"

"Any object of consciousness can be outside your mind. Is it therefore, outside your consciousness? Is what is outside your mind, outside your consciousness? What is inside or outside your thought, we call inside or outside consciousness, as though there is something inside consciousness or outside consciousness. What is really happening is outside thought, inside thought. What is captured

by thought becomes an object of consciousness for you.”

“The Swami is now inside your thought; is later outside your thought. But can there be anything outside consciousness? What is the distance between thought and consciousness? What is the distance between the wave and the water? That is exactly the distance between thought and consciousness. There are people inside your room and there are people outside your room. But are there people outside space? That is exactly the thing. There can be nothing outside consciousness, as space itself is a concept of consciousness, within consciousness. There is no such thing as consciousness existing as an object in space. Space is an object of consciousness.

Consciousness does not get eclipsed at any time. In dream, there is presence of consciousness. In sleep, there is absence of every thing else but there is presence of consciousness. Then again, in the morning you say: ‘I did not experience anything’. It is due to the presence of consciousness (in sleep also).”

“Consciousness is not bound by space. Between consciousness and any object of consciousness what is the distance? There is no question of space between them. Between space and distance, there is no distance. Between space and object, is there

any distance? No. There is no distance between consciousness and an object, as the object is within consciousness. Between two objects of consciousness, there can be a distance, like your own body and my body. Imagine now some stars in the sky and what is the distance between the imagined star and consciousness? There is no distance. Suppose you happen to see the stars, between stars and the consciousness, there is zero distance.”

“Now just look at yourself. You are seeing my hand. Between your being which is consciousness and that object of consciousness, the hand, what is the distance? The distance is zero between consciousness and object-consciousness. Between space and hand, the distance is zero. Between consciousness and hand in space, there is zero distance. Consciousness is not spatially limited. It is not located in space, understand! In consciousness is located space, is located anything. Anything that you see implies space and time and exists in consciousness. Consciousness is not spatially limited. What is not spatially limited, we say is all- pervasive.”

“Understand now all-pervasive. The word ‘all-pervasive’ does not make any difference in your mind. ‘Swamiji, I know that I am consciousness. OK. And that it is all-pervasive. So what?’ That is



so because one does not understand the implication of this all-pervasiveness. This all-pervasiveness is what you experience whenever you are happy. That is exactly what all-pervasiveness is! ” (2003 - TV talk, 37 and 38)

## II

### **Class in the *Gurukulam* on recognising *Aham* as *Brahman***

While the above is how the vision is unfolded to the general listener, following is a sample of Pujya Swamiji’s exposition to the students in the *gurukulam*:

“Suppose I say, ‘Look at this flower’ (he shows a flower), you have a flower thought. And you relate to the flower thought i.e., the object of the thought. And the object of the thought is flower. That is the object for you and you are the subject. This is the situation here, subject-object situation. Now, until you saw the flower you are not relating to the object. As a subject, you are not relating to it at all. So, until it gets loaded into your *vṛtti* (mental mode), the flower is a remote flower. It is not within your sight. It is not within your *antaḥkaraṇa*, not within your knowledge. Therefore when you see the flower, what happens here? The flower becomes the object of your *vṛtti*. After it becomes *ārūdhā* (ascertained), the flower is no more an unknown flower. Then you keep on looking at the

flower, recognising the flower and the flower is the object of your thought.”

“When I say, ‘rose’, you have what? Rose-object is in your thought. And suppose I say, ‘Cow’, what object is in your thought? Cow. You can visualise the cow. No problem. It does not take time also. I say ‘Chair’, ‘Apple’; ‘Table’, ‘Fan’, ‘Sun’, ‘Moon’. That particular object-thought is there.”

“Suppose I say the word ‘Awareness’. What is the object? What is the object? But still you understand. Don’t you understand? Does no object mean, no understanding? You understand all right even when there is no object. What is that understanding? Would you say ‘Objectless understanding’? That is another problem - little more logical problem. I say: awareness is free from objects. Even when the object is there, consciousness is free from the object. You are not trying to eliminate objects from awareness. When I say ‘awareness’, it has no object in the sense that you do not relate to it as an object. IT IS YOU. And that awareness happens to be Brahman!”

“Then you have to ask, ‘What is Brahman?’ It is *anantam, satyam*. When I say, ‘It is’, ‘Awareness is’. But, it is not ordinary ‘is’. Your concept of ‘is’ is in terms of time. Therefore you knock off the time concept from the existence, that time-conditioned existence. The conditioning every *buddhi* has got is

that the word 'existence' reveals something existing in time. 'It exists' means that it does not cease to exist. That is all that can be in your thinking - it does not cease to exist. Existence is always opposed to non-existence. Therefore, you are thinking always in terms of the opposite. That is the nature of reason. The reason's nature is to move in opposites all the time. Therefore, when I say 'existence' that 'existence' itself distinguishes the object as an existent thing and that it is not one of non-existent things, the other side of the coin. And there, you neither can think of a coin without thinking of the other side nor can you think of 'existence' without thinking of 'non-existence'. But here the concept of 'existence' and the concept of 'non-existence', both concepts exist in which 'existence', that is the 'existence' we are talking about."

"This awareness is not subject to time. It is not subject to absence or incidental presence or the time bound presence – *anantam satyam*. That means it is the very *svarūpa* of the time - the very truth of time. Therefore 'I am mortal' goes."

"Then it is *deśataḥ anantam*. So space-wise also it is not located anywhere. Therefore it has no spatial limitation, no dimension."

“Then it is not a given object enjoying an attribute to distinguish itself from something else, because everything else is this *vastu* also. Therefore, *vastutaḥ anantam.*”

“Therefore, *Tat brahma tvam asi.* This is the *vākyaṃ*. Therefore, when you say *Ahaṃ brahmāsmi*, that *ahaṃ* is what? Pure *sākṣiṇi iṣyate* – it is the witness of everything. That is the *vṛtti* there. All these result in a certain understanding in your mind. That understanding and that cognition is like when I say awareness, there is recognition of the meaning; at the same time, it is not an object. *Ahaṅkāra* is required only when you have to relate to an object. Therefore, you do not require an *antaḥ-karaṇa* of the nature of *ahaṅkāra* as a knower to know Brahman. At the same time, you require the presence of *vṛtti* to knock off the ignorance. (A – Pañcadaśī, 1992, Tape 25)

### III

#### Meditation on Acceptance

Pujya Swamiji regularly conducts meditation sessions for the students of the *gurukulam*. The meditation is in the form of prayer.

As regards prayer, he says:

“Human free will finds its total expression in a quiet voluntary prayer. Therefore, what I feel and say at these prayerful moments is very important. That I can pray is itself a blessing, and how I pray makes prayer meaningful to me.”

“The past seems to have tight hold on each of us. To let go of one’s past is just wishful thinking. It does not happen. If one can have a degree of awareness of this problem, one can discover hope and the solution in a well-directed prayer.”

Here is one of the prayers:

“A prayer is always from an individual. It is never from the self, *ātmā*, but from the individual, *jīva*, who is nothing but *ātmā*, in fact. It is this individual who prays.”

“To whom does the individual pray? I do not pray to another individual. Any other individual also has the limitations that I have as an individual. The powers and knowledge of the one I pray to are free from any limitation.”

“Let there be no confusion about whom the individual is praying to. The self that is now an individual is praying to the self that is *Īśvara*, the total, the Lord.”

“A prayer is always to the Lord. Even the enlightened person who knows the meaning of the sentence, *Tat-tvam-asi*, That Thou Art, can offer a prayer as an individual because the difference between *Īśvara*, the Lord, and *jīva*, the individual is evident, even though there is no difference in fact.”

“Non-difference between the Lord and the individual is a matter for knowledge. That the difference is apparent, *mithyā*, must be recognised. But, now, as an individual, when I see myself helpless, I cannot but pray. So, prayer is not against the teaching. In fact, any form of ritual, which is also a kind of prayer, is not against the teaching. I pray because I seek help. Therefore, prayer is never to the laws themselves, but to the laws as the Lord. Therefore, the prayer is always to the Lord, the maker of the world and its laws. Even a prayer directed to a deity, with reference to a given phenomenon, like sun, water, fire and so on, goes to the Lord.”

“I seek help in order to accept my past. The past is not a villain, nor does it have to be looked upon with contempt. The past makes me what I am. Every experience was an enriching experience. The problem is not that I have a past, but I see myself as a victim of the past because I do not accept it. Let this be clear. I do not hate my past.”

“In hatred there is denial of the past, rejection of the past. I cannot deny my past, much less reject it. The past has happened. It is an already established fact. I cannot do anything to alter the fact. The problem is that when I reject the past, when I resent anything about the past, I do not accept the past. When I criticise myself, I criticise the past. This means I do not accept the past. The more I am able to see how the past cannot change, the more I become free from resentments, anger, remorse, and so on.”

“We spend our time and energy resenting the past. I seek help because it is one thing to understand the past but quite another to be free from resentment and anger towards it. Prayer does something because there is submission. Prayer itself is an action, and its result is called grace. I create the grace. I do not wait for grace to come to me. I invoke it by prayer. That I pray produces a result because there is an acknowledgement of my own helplessness in the submission.”

“If I understand how I cannot change my past, why am I angry? Why do I hate myself? Why do I criticise myself? Well, I am helpless. In that acknowledgement of helplessness and in the capacity to pray is my effort, my will. My will is used prudently in submitting. In submission, it is

the will that is submitted, and to submit my will, I use my will.”

“One has to see the beauty of prayer. There is no meditation, no ritual, without prayer. There is no technique, which can replace prayer because in any technique the will is retained. Here, the will willingly submits. That submission performs the miracle. In the submission itself, there is an acceptance. Understand that in the submission there is acceptance of the past.”

“I do not change the self-criticising mind. I do not want a mind that will not criticise me or anyone else. That is not the issue for me. All that I want is to accept that mind. Let me accept the self-criticising mind. When I accept my past, then I accept the outcome of the past. The outcome is self-criticism. I accept the mind as it is. I am not afraid of this self-judging mind, this self-condemning mind. All that I seek is to totally accept this self-criticising mind.”

“O Lord, help me accept the mind, the self-judging, self-criticising, self-condemning, self-pitying mind. Please help me. I submit my will because I have tried to use my will to change. It did not work. It will never work. And therefore, I give up. I give up not helplessly. I give up prudently and deliver myself, my will, into your hands. I have no reason for despair. All I seek is this acceptance of the past



with its outcome. I am not avoiding self-criticism. I do not want your grace to stop self-criticism. I want your grace to accept self-criticism. Om.”  
(Swami Dayananda, Morning Meditation Prayers, No 8)

In the next chapter, we shall see as to how Pujya Swamiji unfolds the vision about our fundamental problem and its solution.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE UNFOLDING OF THE VISION BY PUJYA SWAMIJI REGARDING OUR FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION

## I

### The Fundamental Problem

**We hanker for the support of the infallible to end our insecurity**

Pujya Swamiji introduces Vedānta with a portrayal of ourselves at our very conception. We, as a foetus, are distinct but are fully connected, taken care of and protected in our mother's womb. From this totally secure state, we become disconnected and totally vulnerable on entering the world. On the positive side, our total helplessness is set off by the total care that we receive from our mother and others who nurture us. We instinctively trust them and feel secure. When we grow up into a child and go to the school, our class teacher takes the place of our mother. But, our sense of security gets compromised when we discover that all of them are not always available, are inconsistent in their behavior, do break their promises and are unable to solve all our problems. Our total trust in them as the infallible gets violated and we get alienated from them.

Despite our experience, the seeking of the infallible for gaining its support continues even when we become adults and keep advancing in age. The safe world continues to be as small as it was in our childhood. We find that in the competitive society, everyone seems to be out for the kill. We always run the risk of being taken advantage of and of being cheated. We feel quite vulnerable and are on the guard all the time. We are ready to defend ourselves and fight.

Right from our childhood, we have been told of the existence of the all powerful and compassionate Bhagwan and various deities and that sincere prayers to them do not go unanswered. When we trust and depend on them, they also let us down and we do not get what we want. We try gurus with extra-ordinary powers as also other means and discover that all of them have their limitations. Eventually we find that there is no one who will give us what we intensely desire or rescue us when we are deeply in trouble. The net result is that the deeply felt innocent child's sense of helplessness stays with us. We continue to want to be cuddled. We continue to want to be worried about and taken care of. We continue to seek the substitute for our loving mom and the big dad for regaining the assured security and happiness of our innocent childhood.

## **Our basic problem is our sense of being a limited entity**

Pujya Swamiji then elucidates that in reality our basic problem is our notion of being a limited entity based on the erroneous notion that we are the body, the mind and the senses. He explains as to how our self-consciousness brings about our sense of limitation. He says:

“This self-consciousness has made us so different. Just look at this situation. A cow is conscious of itself as a cow. I think so, because it identifies another cow. But the black cow does not think: ‘I am black’. The jersey cow does not think: ‘I am a classy cow’. But the mind of a human being is conscious of the self totally and that self-consciousness confers on the human individual a freedom unknown to other living organisms on this earth – the freedom to make judgement about oneself.”

“It is in the nature of the intellect to conclude. When I look within, I discover a sense of incompleteness, a sense of limitation. I have physical limitations. I do not have the advantage of the bird that has wings. Again, I am spatially limited; if I am here, I am not elsewhere. Time wise also, I am limited because there was a time when I was not there. Psychologically, I am always limited. Emotionally, I am not always in the same

poise. I like and I dislike; I love and I hate; I am quiet and I am agitated. My intellectual accomplishments are limited. The more I come to know, the more I discover what all things I have yet to know. Thus at all levels, physical, emotional and intellectual, I am limited.”

“If I see myself as a limited being, a wanting being, naturally I cannot stand myself and therefore I desire to be a different person who is full and complete so that I can be acceptable to myself. This urge is common to all human beings of all times. It is implicit in any action that extends beyond mere instinctual bodily survival. It is, in fact, the desire behind all topical desires, the fundamental desire. This is the mother desire, which gives birth to all desires and motivations. Our desires are different but one thing that does not differ at all is that I desire, that you desire. At the bottom of all the desires there is one desire, that is an unspelt desire, ‘I want..., I want .., I want...’; ‘I want to become a different person’. It is a problem of every human being” (Swami Dayananda, Talks on “Who Am I”, p 5-7 and The Fundamental Problem, p 4-5)

“If in every desire one has, what one really wants is to put an end to the wanting person, it is clear that the wanting person will not go unless the person is already complete, limitless, lacking nothing. Then alone one can say “enough”. Is it realistic and

reasonable to say that I want to be free from want? It is, because what one finds is that no matter what the gain, no matter how rewarding it is for the time being, one does not cease being a seeker, desirer after ends. No end satisfies that urge for completeness.”

“An action can produce a result which is appropriate to that action. So, by the very laws inherent in any action, we find that what we gain in the world is limited, whereas, what we seek is limitless. I am limited and I go after something which is limited through limited means. A finite sum like one and a finite sum like a million are equally away from infinity. One cannot but seek completeness, yet there is nothing available by which one can gain it. All that we find in the world is the limited ends.” (Swami Dayananda, *The Fundamental Problem*, p 7-8)

Our problem therefore lies in the mismatch between the means through which can gain only limited results and the end of becoming completely free from all limitations. So, we convert our life into a ceaseless and unavailing struggle to be totally fulfilled.

## **Freedom from the cycle of birth and death in not our real problem**

Pujya Swamiji also points out in this context that freedom from the cycle of birth and death in not our real problem. He says:

“We are not worried about the cycle (of birth and death) or of putting an end to the cycle. But, we are interested in getting rid of is this ‘becoming’ and the struggle to be different from myself. This attempt to be different from myself is called *samsṛtiḥ*. By death, this problem is not solved. Before death, you need to solve the problem. That means you have to deal with realities of living, not the reality of death and after-death. After death, if there is life, that is also a part of the discussion of the reality of living, after-death living. If there is life in another world, that is also the reality of living elsewhere. It is all a discussion about the reality of living. Life itself is dream-walking. Somnambulism. You get up with a dream and walk. And therefore, this is called *samsṛtiḥ*, a live dream. Reality of living is living to find out whether I am living dealing with realities or dealing with problems of my own making. Reality of living means living alive to reality. That is where we say the problem is.” (R - VC, 2004, 22.3.04, 2)

Pujya Swamiji presents the solution to our problem in two stages:

- Stage 1 addresses our problem of insecurity by revealing *Īśvara's* presence in our life and elsewhere as the infallible order;
- Stage 2 provides the solution to all our problems through the *mahāvākya*, which dispels our notion of being a limited entity by revealing our true nature as the limitless whole.

## II

### Neutralisation of our Problem of Insecurity

**Understanding *Īśvara* neutralises our sense of insecurity**

Pujya Swamiji shows that by understanding *Īśvara*, we can recognize *Īśvara's* presence in us and elsewhere as the infallible order. This knowledge neutralizes our sense of insecurity and enables us to be objective and relaxed. He explains in detail:

“*Śāstra* tells us that the Lord is not only the maker but is also the material cause (*abinnā-nimitta-upādāna-kāraṇam*). The recognition that the maker and the material are identical is the beginning of Vedānta. That makes the almighty, the almighty; that makes the cause, the cause.”



“How can this be assimilated? The example is of dream. You need not borrow from anybody the material necessary for the dream world. You are the one who is capable of creating that dream world, sustaining that dream world and also taking back the dream world when you wake up or again go back to sleep. The whole thing is your projection. In dream, your knowledge of space is space, your knowledge of time is time, your knowledge of mountains is mountains. Your knowledge is manifest in the form of the dream world. In fact, you are the conscious, knowledgeable person manifest in the form of space and time. In space and time, the *jagat* that you see is a manifestation of yourself.”

“The material cause not being separate from you, the manifest *jagat* is pervaded by you because the material always pervades the product. Like even your shirt. Your shirt is born of a material, the fabric. The fabric pervades the shirt. If I take away the fabric, you have no shirt. If the dream is made up of material which is not separate from myself, then the dream world is pervaded by me totally.”

“Thus we find that there is ‘one you’ who pervades the entire dream world, because you are the maker and material cause of the dream world. If this is understood, now think of *Īśvara*, the all knowing conscious being. The material for this world cannot

be separate from that conscious being whose knowledge is manifest in the form of *jagat*.” (Swami Dayananda, *Isvara in one’s life*, p 34 – 37)

“How do I recognise the presence of *Īśvara*? In every form, there is presence – all life forms presence – tree presence, leaf presence, fruit presence, flower presence, fragrance presence, worm presence, reptile presence, elephant presence, human being presence, thought presence, confusion presence, belief presence, knowledge presence, seeing presence, hearing presence, taste presence, touch presence, consciousness presence, in my awareness of all these presence. What ‘is’, is presence. Can I say *idaṁ sarvaṁ*, all this, is one presence? Can I say that the presence is *Īśvara*?” (A- 2007, *Meditation*, 35)

He then brings out the implications of *Īśvara* being the intelligent cause, the *nimitta kāraṇam*. He explains:

“*Jagat* is but a manifestation of knowledge available in the form of order. The order includes all the forces, all the laws, all the geological processes and so on. It is not just the physical universe that forms an order. Besides the inert objects, there are also life forms. All of them together form another order called the biological order. Life is not only here on this planet. Billions and billions of stars are there in our own milky way. Every star is a sun and each one of them can have a system of planets and one

or more of them can have life. The laws are the same for all of them. Physics has proved it. Our *śāstra* says that the law that obtains here on the earth is the law that obtains there in Heaven. So, if there are life forms elsewhere, all these life forms are within the same biological order.”

“In every living organism there is *prāṇa* which is the source of energy for all activities. We call the functions of *prāṇa* including what governs health and ill health as physiological order. Because of the existence of a physiological order, the scientists who are working on various preventive and curative medicines first try them on a rat. Once they work on a rat successfully, the scientists are very sure that they will work on a human being.”

“There is also a psychological order. A dog has certain fidelity; it is dog psychology. There is no unfaithful dog. All animals have their own psychology. Each species behave in the same manner more or less. And human beings have their own psychology. We are anxious, we are prone to fear, anger and so on. All these are not without causes. All responses are memory-based. This is the psychological order.”

“Then we have another order called a cognitive order. It is an order based on which we can say whether a knowledge is valid or not. The epistemological pursuit is a pursuit based on this

order. There is a logical order with which are able to assimilate a statement. We understand all orders because of the cognitive order.”

“There is no distance between one order and the other. It is all one order. One has to understand *Īśvara* as the one who is manifest in the form of one *maha*-order. We cannot even call it a cosmic order, it is just one *maha*-order, one total order. If that is so, then how far are you away from *Īśvara*? Are you away from the physical order? No. Are you away from biological order? No. Are you away from physiological order? No. Are you away from psychological order at any time? No. When you are angry you are not away from *Īśvara*. When you are angry you are with *Īśvara*'s psychological order. *Īśvara* is manifest in the form of psychological order. When you discover something, you are within *Īśvara*'s cognitive order, within *Īśvara* who is manifest in the form of cognitive order.”

“We have one more order to look into. In the human being, the faculty of *buddhi* is so mature and evolved that one becomes self-conscious. The self you are conscious of confers upon you a certain freedom. One has the freedom to explore and know, a freedom to do, a freedom not to do, a freedom to do differently. Wherever there is choice, there is a possibility of a wrong choice and right choice. One must have certain norms for basing

one's choices. The norms must be universal, only then choices can either be right or wrong. We have this reality – everybody seems to know exactly what is right and wrong. Every living organism wants to survive; nobody wants to get hurt. Everybody wants to be free from being a victim of somebody's action. Therefore, the value structure does not require a Song of God, a Messiah or a Prophet to come and tell us because Lord himself is manifest in the form of *dharma*, which we commonly sense and that is why it is universal. It can never be universal otherwise. *Dharma* is a manifestation of *Īśvara*."

"Nobody can rub against a law without being rubbed. Action and reaction are not only equal; they are opposite too. This is the law of *karma* and it is not just a belief. So, when I go against *dharma*, I attract what is called *papa* and when I go with *dharma*, I attract what is called *punya*. There is the order of *dharma* and there is the order of *karma*."

"Now, if I understand this properly, then how can I be away from that order, from the presence of *Īśvara*, from the awareness of *Īśvara*? If I am ignorant of this fact that everything is *Īśvara*, then only, I can be away from the awareness of *Īśvara*. All that you are aware of is *Īśvara*; that means you can relax. You can trust the order, because the order is infallible. I do not say *Īśvara* is infallible, I

say the infallible order is *Īśvara*. The difference is to be understood. *Īśvara* is in the form of the order. That order is infallible. That is why it is called order. That is why you can generalise and understand it. You can conform to and make use of the laws with the knowledge. You can get into a proper slot in a given scheme of things without rubbing anything. The infallible cannot be distrusted. The infallible is very much present in the anatomy, in the physiology, in the biology, in the psychology, in the epistemology, in the *dharma* and in everything. We do not say there is one God. We say there is only God. The difference is to be understood.”

“My body-mind-sense complex is included in the total. So, you are never away from *Īśvara* either in time or in space. So, one’s cognitive change with reference to what is *Īśvara* helps one see the infallible as *Īśvara*. Then one can relax and this is how you can bring *Īśvara* into your life and be cool, and collected.” (Swami Dayananda, *Isvara in One’s Life*, p 50 - 64)

### **Understanding *Īśvara* makes *Īśvara* the super therapist**

Out of the understanding that the very order in creation is *Īśvara* flows the vision of *Īśvara* as the super therapist. Pujya Swamiji unfolds thus:

“When I look at this whole world as a manifestation of *Īśvara*, there will be a great change in my life. This is not a particular attitude born of some kind of superimposition. It is the reality. It is how things are and I look at them as they really are. Things are intelligently put together. It is a manifestation of a cause that has got to be all knowing. In fact, infallible is *Īśvara* – not, *Īśvara*, the infallible.”

“When we are not safe anymore, we have something to fall back upon. How? By our own cognitive change. What is the change? That all that is here is *Īśvara*, including my body, mind-sense complex. My father’s behaviour was in keeping with the psychological order and the cognitive order. His knowledge and his psychology and everyone’s expression are in the same order. Therefore, there is an order pervading me, pervading you. The more I understand the whole thing is in the form order that is *Īśvara*, the more I can relax. I can see that there is nothing wrong with me because I am not outside that order. That is the cognitive change.”

“In *Īśvara*, I have a super therapist; because a validator is the therapist. When he corrects my way of thinking, he validates by telling me why I tend to perceive in particular way. That is validation. He does not blame. He validates by

saying: 'If I were you, I would think that way only.' My fears are totally validated. My anxieties are validated. The free will is part of the same order, because it is given. Therefore, in me as a human being the same *Īśvara* is manifest in the form of my freedom to desire, a freedom to will. I have *Īśvara*, a super-validator in my life. My therapist is available all the time for me." (Swami Dayananda, *Need for Cognitive Change*, p 29- 34)

With this cognitive change, we can now pray to *Īśvara* on the following lines:

"Oh, Lord! I surrender my ego – my likes and dislikes at your feet.

I do not objectify you Lord but I recognise you in the form of a single vast order that pervades my body, senses and the whole universe.

My callous behaviour is within your order, because of my background.

My needs, demands and desires are within your order.

My response to the situations and events in my daily life, sometimes in the form of anger, hatred, jealousy or envy are all due to my background.

If I correct myself, that is within your order.



If I resist your order, even that is within your order.

You are the one who understands me completely.

I never spring any surprise on you, my Lord!

You validate all my actions and reactions.

So, in the eyes of *Īśvara*, I am perfect.

Without being judgmental about others and myself, I just keep watching what is going on in my daily life and see them as an expression of *Īśvara*, as they cannot be outside his order.

I relax in *Īśvara*."

### **The order that is *Īśvara* is the basis for *Karma-yoga***

Pujya Swamiji then explains that the principles of *karma-yoga* flow naturally from the vision of the order as *Īśvara*. He says:

"*Karma* is that which is to be done in a given situation. Who decides what is to be done? *Īśvara*, manifest as *dharma* decides it. Anything appropriate in a given situation is the manifestation of *Īśvara* and that exactly determines *svakarma*. As an intelligent being, I can be in conformity with *dharma*. My life is full of choices, full of decisions, full of doing and if the doing is not in harmony with *Īśvara*, how can I become a complete man? Alienation takes place when what is to be done is

not done. When I go against *dharma*, I am alienated from the whole. I become an orphan. Kṛṣṇa defines *yoga* as *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*. *Kauśalam* is discretion in action, which is doing the right thing at the right time and at the right place. What is to be done in a given situation is nothing but *Īśvara* in the form of *dharma*. When I do the right thing, I am in harmony with *dharma*, in harmony with *Īśvara*. That is why, whenever you do exactly what you have to do, you find satisfaction. Even if it is something you do not want to do, once you do it, you feel great about it, since you are in harmony with *Īśvara*. Since you choose your *karmas* recognising *Īśvara* as *dharma*, your actions become a form of *arcanā* to *Īśvara*. Recognising this you become a *yogi*. It is a life of alertness. This recognition is not an ordinary thing. It is vision.”

He explains that while action in harmony with *dharma* becomes *Īśvarārpita*, an offering to *Īśvara*, proper attitude to the result of the action makes the result *Īśvara- prasāda*:

“There is no question of anyone doing any action at any time without expecting result. Do not have that complex any more. When you say: ‘Swāmiji, I have lot of desires,’ it means that you are active and healthy. Expect results. You should. You will. You cannot but. But accepting the results of action

without *Īśvara* in the picture is nothing more than a pragmatic approach to life. Here we are dealing with a purely *dharmic* approach, which is entirely different because it recognises *Īśvara* as the giver of the results of action, *karma-phala-dātā*. Once the action is done, the results of the action, coming as they do from the laws that are not separate from *Īśvara*, come from *Īśvara*. It is controlled by the order. That means every result of action whether it is equal, less, more or opposite comes from him. It is this recognition of *Īśvara* that converts the simple *samatva* to *karma-yoga*."

"Here you can make use of what has grown upon you. Anything comes from the shrine, from the Lord is called *prasāda*. Once offered to the Lord you put it near the eye; it means it is as sacred as the eyes. You do not look at it any more as a sense object; it has become a *prasāda*. Here is glad acceptance on your part. What made you see the laddoo as *prasāda*? Pure knowledge. The awareness that it comes from *Īśvara* is the cognitive change and it converted the laddoo into a *prasāda*. This attitude of *prasāda* is vedic attitude. If this attitude is there, then, more than equal to my expectation is *prasāda*, equal also is *prasāda*, less is *prasāda*, and opposite is also *prasāda*. We are not swept away. This is not one time; it is for lifetime. For, life is full of these four types of results. Therefore, equal I can accept; more I can accept;

less I can accept; opposite I can accept. ‘*Samatvam yoga ucyate*’- the sameness of the mind with respect to the responses, in the wake of desirable and undesirable situations is *yogaḥ*.” (Swami Dayananda, *Need for Cognitive Change*, p 37-40 and *Isvara in One’s Life*, p 70-75 and *GHS-1*, p 314 and 295)

Finally, he says that the attitude of *karma-yoga* makes us feel the presence of *Īśvara* every moment in our lives:

“Day after day, the present effort and the past *karma* combine themselves to shape different types of situations for you. All situations, all experiences are all shaped by your own actions, as per the law of *karma*, which is *Īśvara*’s order. And therefore, as they come, I receive them cheerfully with an attitude of *prasāda*. Once I develop such an attitude, my life is in harmony with *Īśvara* and every moment I feel the presence of *Īśvara* in my life.” (Swami Dayananda, *Isvara in One’s Life*, p 76)

### III

#### **The Equation between *Jīvā* and *Īśvara* Negates all Limitations**

While the understanding of *Īśvara* makes us dispassionate and objective, the resolution of the

fundamental human problem of being a wanting person, unceasingly struggling to be totally fulfilled, comes only by recognising the truth of the equation between *Īśvara* and *jīvā* contained in the *mahāvākyams*. *Tat-tvam-asi* is one of the *mahāvākyams* that reveal the identity between *ātmā* and Brahman on the one hand and *jīvā* and *Īśvara* on the other. Pujya Swamiji's unfolds this equation in his inimitable manner:

“When we understand *satyam jñānamanantam brahma*, we understand what is the equation between *Īśvara* who says ‘I am *Īśvara*’ and *jīvā* who says ‘I am *jīvā*’. This ‘I am’ is *satyam jñānamanantam brahma* whoever may be the one who says ‘I am’.”

### ***Satyam jñānamanantam brahma***

“Brahman is presented as the cause, *satyam*. The moment you hear the word, ‘cause’, especially clay-like cause, you are going to conclude that it may be inert, insentient. To remove this conclusion, the word *jñānam* is included. What is *satyam* is *jñānam*. *Jñānam* means either the knowledge or knower or known. Then it is limited. So, another very important word *anantam* is there in the sentence to resolve this limitation.”

“The word *anantam* is important to remove the limitations of the word *satyam* also. The word *satyam* is generally understood as what is. When we use the word ‘is’, it refers to the existence of an

object in time. It means 'is now and may not be later'. In your concept, it is time bound. There is no 'is-ness' of the thing in your understanding, without appreciating the existence in time. Because of the word *anantam*, the word *satyam* retains the root meaning of the 'as' *dhatu*, which is existence but not time bound."

"*Anantam satyam* means that which obtains in the same form in all the three periods of time, which does not subject itself to time. Means, it never changes. Every change implies the object subjected to time. At time  $t$ , it is in one form. At time  $t-1$ , it is in a different form. Form implies any type of change. And therefore, *anantam satyam* is the cause that is free from the limitations of time."

"It is a conscious being because it is *anantam jñānam*. It is *jñānam* that is not limited to either knowledge, knower or known. Because of the word *anantam*, the word *jñānam* retains the root meaning of knowledge and gives up the meaning as per our understanding viz., either knower, knowledge or known. If you say 'knower' is the meaning of *jñānam*, then it cannot be *anantam* because knowledge and known become different. If you say it is 'known', then it does not become knower or knowledge. And if you say it is 'knowledge', that cognitive thought, then the knower who owns that thought is different from the very thought itself,

cognition itself, which has an object other than itself. Therefore, it cannot be *anantam*. *Anantam* means that which does not have a limit. So, it has got to be limitless *jñānam*.”

“What is limitless *jñānam*. Knower, known, knowledge all the three have their being in which *satyam*, that *satyam* is *jñānam*. What is *satyam*? The truth of this knower who is invariable in every piece of knowledge and every object that is known is *satyam*. It is the *svarūpa* of a cognition. When you say there is a pot, pot-consciousness is. When you say space is, space-consciousness is. If you say knower of space is, then the knower-consciousness is. If you say knower of *jagat*, the knower of *jagat*-consciousness is. The truth of this knower who is invariable in all consciousness is this *satyam jñānam*. The whole knower is *satyam jñānam* but *satyam jñānam* is not the knower, like the whole pot is clay but clay is not pot. Any piece of knowledge or cognition does not exist apart from this consciousness. No thought, whether it is an emotion or a cognition or a volition or a desire is independent of consciousness. If a wave is like a thought, no wave is independent of water. The whole wave is but water. The whole thought is not separate from *jñānam*, consciousness and the object of thought is non-separate from *satyam*, the cause. Therefore, the whole *jagat* is *satyam* Brahma and that happens to be *jñānam*. *Jñānam* is you. There is

only one source of consciousness and that it you. Everyone can say, I am the *jñānam*. Because, everything else is the object of consciousness. The only source of consciousness is I, the consciousness. That is why it is called *ātmā*. *Ātmā* means that which pervades the knower, known and knowledge and without whom there is no known, knower and knowledge - all the three. In fact, all duality is knower-known duality. That by whom the subject and object are pervaded and in whom they have their being is *satyam jñānāmanantam brahma*."

### ***Tat-tvam-asi***

"When we understand *satyam jñānāmanantam brahma*, we understand what is the equation between *Īśvara* who says "I am *Īśvara*" and *jīvā* who says "I am *jīvā*". This "I am" is *satyam jñānāmanantam brahma* whoever may be the one who says "I am"."

"Take the example of wave and ocean. Suppose the wave has got a human mind and it says, 'I am a poor little wave now. Once upon a time, I was a big wave. I am going to die. I am mortal'. I tell this wave, 'You are not small and mortal. You are the ocean. *Tat-tvam-asi*.' The wave asks, 'How can I be the ocean, ocean is the cause'. I reply, 'Yes, you are the ocean. From the ocean you came, by the ocean



you are sustained, unto the ocean you go back.  
That ocean thou art.”

“Now we have to resolve the statement, ‘You are the ocean’. Let us look into the wave. What is the wave? Wave is *mithyā*. Why? I cannot think of wave without thinking of water. When you think of water, it does not include wave. Wave’s reality is only water. Reality means your understanding of the truth of the wave. There is no reality without understanding. Wave is *mithyā* (as wave has no reality of its own). Water is *satyam*.”

“Now let us think of the ocean. Can you think of the ocean without thinking of water? No, it is all water everywhere. You cannot think of the ocean without thinking of water. So, water is *satyam*. Ocean is *mithyā*. The *mithyā* ocean includes the *mithyā* wave and both the ocean and the wave have their being in water, the *satyam*. Wave understands: ‘I am water’. When it says ‘I am water’, immediately it is connected. It is connected to every wave, every wavelet, every breaker, every surf and the entire ocean. It can also say to another informed wave, ‘I am ocean’. Because the ocean and the wave alone are connected (both being *mithyā*), wave and water are not connected (since water is *satyam* and wave is *mithyā*). Equation is not between wave and water; equation is between wave and ocean both of which are *mithyā*.”

“Between the two *mithyās*, there is an equation, because they have one *satyam*. Here also, the individual and the total have their common being in Brahman who is *satyaṃ jñānāmanantam*. When we understand this *satyaṃ jñānāmanantam*, the difference between *Īśvara* and the *jīvā* becomes very clear. What accounts for the difference between the two is to be known clearly. Then non-difference becomes a reality and stays all the time. The difference between wave and ocean is clearly known to be due to *nāma-rūpa* (name and form).

“The *nāma-rūpa* called ocean includes every *nāma-rūpa*. The wave can worship the ocean and get the grace of the ocean, the almighty ocean, the all-pervasive ocean, the all-depth ocean. That is why *ācāryas* who talk of difference between *jīvā* and *Īśvara* are correct at that level. Finally, the wave will understand that I am the ocean because I am water. As water, I am the ocean, which includes every wave. I am *sarvātmā* – I am every wave, every wavelet. The wave can say ‘I am every wave’ only when it understands ‘I am the ocean’ for which it has to know ‘I am the water’. Otherwise, it can never say, ‘I am the ocean’. The contradiction is very clear. And the non-contradiction is the truth. In terms of *satyam* alone, there is non-contradiction.”

“A cause can assume another form without giving up its nature (like the colourless crystal appearing as coloured because of the adjacent red flower). Similarly, *satyam jñānāmanatam brahma* without giving up its nature with the extraordinary power called *māyā*, which itself is *mithyā* ontologically, becomes the universe. Therefore, through *māyā* alone Brahman has changed into *jagat*. Change of Brahman into the world is ‘as though’. Therefore, we have an ‘as though *jīvā*’ and ‘as though *Īśvara*’. The wave is an ‘as though wave’ related to whom there is an ‘as though ocean’. But the wave thinks, ‘I am a mortal wave, separate from the cause, the ocean’. Therefore, there is smallness, mortality, comparison, complexes and so on.”

“That wave is told, ‘You are the ocean. Your wave form is *mithyā*. You are but water all the way. There is nothing but water. The whole ocean, the cause of all waves, is also but water’.”

“If the wave understands, ‘I am ocean as water’, then, the contradiction between wave and ocean is resolved. The contradiction is only in forms, which is *mithyā*. So the contradiction is *mithyā*. The difference is *mithyā*. Between a wave and a wave, there is difference. Wave is *mithyā* and the difference between a wave and a wave is also *mithyā*. Between wave and ocean, the difference is *mithyā*, because the ocean is also *mithyā*.”

“Equation is not between wave and water, equation is between wave and ocean, both of which are *mithyā*.”

“All that is here is one limitless consciousness. I think of time, consciousness is. I think of space, consciousness is. This limitless consciousness alone is *Īśvara*, is also *jīvā*. Therefore, the difference is purely apparent like the difference between wave and ocean. Non-difference is the truth. This knowledge liberates one from the sense of limitation born out of sheer self-ignorance, due to one not knowing what one is. And the whole teaching is not a theory. It is purely seeing what is. The teaching has to be so. Because, the teaching is a means of knowledge.” (Swami Dayananda, Mahāvākya Vicāra, p 37 - 41, 45)

Pujya Swamiji sums up:

“The vision of Vedānta is an equation of the identity between the *jīvā* and *Īśvara*. This vision of oneness (*aikya*) is not available for perception or inference. Nor is the oneness that is unfolded by Vedānta contradicted by perception or inference. Therefore, oneness is purely in terms of understanding the equation. Vedānta does not promise a salvation to the ‘soul’. In its vision, the ‘soul’ is already free from any limitation. Freedom from limitation (*mokṣa*) is a fact and the release of the individual from this sense of limitation is the

outcome of understanding the equation. Therefore, the entire teaching of Vedānta can be expressed in one sentence, *tat-tvam-asi* (that thou art). All other sentences in the Upaniṣads are only meant to prove this equation." (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedānta, p 3)

### **Living intelligently as a simple conscious being**

Arising out of this knowledge, Pujya Swamiji indicates as to how we can relate intelligently with others as a simple conscious being, who is playing different roles. He says:

"The intelligent way of relating is to discover the space within, even while relating to the world of people, our elders, our children, and our spouse. These are inevitable relationships. The reality of the relationship is that the object or person I relate to is variable. While what you are relating to is subject to variation, you are the constant, the invariable. You assume a different status in each relationship. When you make a list of all your problems, you will find that all the problems fall under different roles. So, what is my basic problem? I am the basic person and I do not have problems. All problems are restricted to my roles."

"If the problems of the roles are my problems, it means that the role and the person are rolled into one. I want people to resolve the roles, anxieties

and issues to get to the basic person who is playing all the roles. The basic person is not a cosmic one but the one who is not alienated from the cosmic. Alienation is not possible. In a child, you can see this. The child does not need the physical presence of the mother. In its awareness, mother must be there. Now and then, it will have a doubt. It will go and see the mother and come back.”

“Vedānta teaches that this simple conscious being is the whole. It is a big thing indeed that this being is the cause of everything. There is much to learn from it. At the very minimum, I would say that if you have the awareness of this space, you have leisure and compassion, compassion towards yourself and towards others. When there is compassion, when there is space, caring becomes easy. I shed all roles and just be a simple conscious person who assumes different roles every day. It is important that I understand that I am the playing a role. Otherwise, the problem of the roles becomes my problems.” (Swami Dayananda, *Living versus Getting On*, p 34 - 39 and A – Satsaṅg, 2007)

Pujya Swamiji explains the vital difference between the basic person and the person who is playing a role through the example of the person acting as a beggar:

“Consider an actor A, who is on stage playing the role of a beggar B. According to the story, B undergoes the severe privations of a beggarly life.

In the play, B has problems leading to sadness and tears. In spite of B's problems, A remains unaffected, free of the problems of the beggar. Why? Is there a physical distance between B and A such that B's problems cannot contact and affect A? Not at all. B's physical body depends entirely on A's physical body; where B stands, A also stands. Therefore B is definitely A. If that is so, then B's problems should also be A's problems; but we find that this is not the case. Even though B is A, A is not B. There is a difference between B and A, but not a physical one. A knows that he is not B but that he has assumed the role of B. A remembers himself as A and plays the role of B according to the script, regardless of whether the script calls for pleasant or unpleasant situations to arise. A does not lose himself."

"Suppose that A does forgets himself while playing the role. When the villain slaps A in the play, A is supposed to invite another slap. But A forgets the script and gets so angry that he strikes back. The director pulls the curtain down and asks A: 'What is the matter?' A answers: 'He slapped me. Do you think I am going to allow him to get way with that?' A's problem is that there is a confusion between himself (A) and the role (B). There is no longer action on A's part; there is only reaction. A is no more an actor but a reactor because he has no self-awareness. There is no role-playing on his

part. If you have problems as father, son, husband or wife, you must know that there is confusion between yourself and the role. If the role is taken as you, there is no problem. But if you take yourself as the role, then definitely there is a self-confusion leading to sadness and despair.”

“You must know that the “I” is free from all situations and roles, free from the mind itself. Only with this understanding of the ways of the mind will you become the master of your mind, using it as an instrument and taking advantage of it to learn, to appreciate, to love. This is purely what the mind is meant to do. The knowledge of the invariable “I”, which resolves the universal confusion about yourself, constitutes the subject matter of Vedānta.” (Swami Dayananda, Freedom, p 3-6)

In the next chapter, we shall see as to how Pujya Swamiji handles the *prakriyās* (teaching methods) which makes us recognise the invariable "I".



## CHAPTER FIVE

# HANDLING OF THE *PRAKRIYĀS* BY PUJYA SWAMIJI

The *sāstra* uses teaching models or *prakriyās* to communicate its vision. The main models are (i) *ṣṛṣṭi prakriyā* (manifestation model) or *kāraṇa-kārya prakriyā* (cause-effect model) to establish that nothing exists other than Brahman; (ii) *pañca-kosa prakriyā* (analysis and negation of the five levels our misunderstanding about ourselves); (iii) *avathā-traya prakriyā* (analysis of the three states of our experience for arriving at our true nature) (iv) *dṛg-dṛṣya-viveka prakriyā* which, through reasoning, separates the subject-I from the objects and proceeds to reveal the true-I.

Pujya Swamiji's handling of them is given below.

### I

#### *Kāraṇa-kārya-prakriyā*

Among the teaching models used by the *sāstra*, the main one is the *kāraṇa-kārya-prakriyā* (the cause-effect model), which is also called as the *ṣṛṣṭi prakriyā* (manifestation model). In Chāndogya Upaniṣad, sage Uddālaka tells his son, Śvetaketu, that before the manifestation of this world, there was only one thing. It is *sat*, existence, *advitīya*, non-dual and there is nothing except that. (*Sad-eva somya-idam-agra āsīt-*

*ekam-eva-advitīyam* | 6.2.1) *Advitīya* because there is no other *sat-vastu* like itself or unlike itself and without any parts in itself. In other words, it is free from all the three kinds of possible differences - *sajātīya-bheda* (difference within the same species), *vi-jātīya-bheda* (belonging to a different species) and *svagata-bheda* (difference within itself).

Uddālaka talks of the manifestation of the elemental world from this *sat-vastu* and explains the lack of essential reality of the manifestation through the clay-pot example. He tells his son that clay, which is the material cause of pot, pan etc. is real, whereas its modifications (*vikāras*) such as pot have as their substantiality only their name expressed in speech (*vacārambhaṇārṇi vikāro nāmadheyārṇi..* 6.1.4). The *vikāras*, which are the effect of the cause, are not real. What is real is only the cause, which is clay (*mṛttiketyeva satyam* 6.1.4). Finally, sage Uddālaka tells Śvetaketu: ‘the *sat-vastu* is *ātmā* and you are that’ (6.8.7).

### **The Clay-Pot Example**

In unfolding this vision, Pujya Swamiji revels in the explanation of the clay-pot example. He says:

“Just look at this; (he is holding a pot in his hand). You say: ‘This is a pot’. Suppose I ask you: ‘What is in my hand? You say: ‘It is a pot’. I ask you: ‘What is the weight of the pot?’ Whatever you say,

it is the weight of clay. Therefore, you have a pot, which has no weight. The touch of pot is the touch of clay. You have a pot that I cannot touch as what I touch is clay. What I hold is clay.

Tell me: 'Where is your pot?'

"Swāmiji! The pot is on the clay."

"How can it be on the clay? If it is on the clay, then I should be able to remove it like this flower which I keep on the pot."

"No, Swāmiji! It is in the clay."

"No! In the clay, there is only clay. So, it is not in the clay. It can't be off the clay either. So, where is the pot?"

"This is ṛṣi's magic; hold the pot and dismiss the pot! Even though there is no object for the 'pot', still there is something that holds water. You cannot dismiss the pot totally. Therefore, we have to say: 'The pot exists'. But it is not a substantive (*mithyā*). It is a *nama-rūpa* – a name and form. Pot is not an object as such. Pot is only a form."(Swami Dayananda, Exploring Vedanta)

**'The sat-vastu is ātmā and you are that'**

Pujya Swamiji explains further:

“Brahman, the cause of the world is *satyam*. The world (*jagat*), presented in the *śruti* in the form of five basic subtle and gross elements, is the effect (*kārya*) of *satyam* (*kaṛaṇa*). *Jagat* being *kārya* is *mithyā* as revealed by the famous *vacārambhaṇam-śruti* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.1.4). The *śruti* presents the *kārya* as neither *satyam*, that which exists nor *tuccham*, that which does not exist, but as *mithyā*, that which has a dependent existence. The *jīva*’s physical body, mind and senses are all within the *kārya* and therefore, *mithyā*; but the *jīva* (as distinct from the body, mind and senses) is not manifested and its nature (*svarūpa*) is *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam*, the limitless awareness that is the reality of everything.”

“If a product (*kārya*) is non-separate from the material cause (*kaṛaṇa*), then the cause and effect are not two separate things. The effect is not separate from the cause and the cause, being what it is, is independent of the effect. Therefore, the *kārya* is essentially the *kaṛaṇa*. One or more clay pots is but clay. While there can be plurality for the *kārya*, there is only one clay from the standpoint of the cause. If the elemental *jagat*, which includes my physical body, *prāṇa*, senses and the mind is from the non-dual Brahman, then that *jagat* being an effect, is non-separate from the cause, Brahman. Brahman is the uncreated ‘*tvam*’ (you, the self) which is *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam*. The recognition

of this fact that I am that *satyam* Brahma and that this *jagat* is non-separate from me, while I am independent of the *jagat*, is the result of the teaching Vedānta. That recognition of oneself as *sarvātma* (as the whole) is, in other words, the removal of ignorance, which is the ultimate end called *mokṣa*." (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 4 - 5.)

### **Pujya Swamiji demystifies *mithyā***

Proper understanding of *mithyā* is essential for recognising our true nature. Pujya Swamiji takes special care in this regard. He first corrects the common notion that it means an illusion by stressing that it defines the reality status, which does not negate either the experiencability or the usefulness of what is *mithyā*. In terms of reality, the transactional reality is *mithyā*. Śaṅkarācārya calls it the *vaiṣṇavī śakti* of *Īśvara*. Bhagavad-gītā considers the *jagat*, which is *mithyā*, as the *vibhūti* of *Īśvara*. Pujya Swamiji brings home the point that *kāryam*, which is *mithyā*, cannot be present without its *kāraṇam*, which is *satyam*. If *jagat* is all the way *mithyā*, it is also a pointer all the way to recognise *satyam* since *mithyā* should have *satyam* as the *adhiṣṭāna* (basis). He explains that in every cognition, there are two components – the ‘is’ cognition, which is, *sat-buddhi* and the name and form cognition, which is *asat* or *mithyā* cognition. He says:

“When we see a pot, there is pot-*buddhi* or pot cognition and we say, ‘the pot is’. When another object is seen, that *buddhi* whose object is the pot undergoes a change similar to the changing frame in a moving film. It is this changing *buddhi* that is called *asat-buddhi* (or *mithyā-buddhi*). That which does not undergo a change is called *sat-buddhi*. Suppose a tree replaces the pot you are looking at, the pot is gone and the tree is there in its place. Previously we said ‘the pot is’, now we say ‘the tree is’. If we analyse these two cognitions, we can see that the ‘is-*buddhi*’ never goes. The pot goes because it is *asat* (or *mithyā*) and *sat* that is always there is now with the tree. When the ‘tree *buddhi*’ goes, ‘branch-*buddhi*’ may be there. When this *buddhi* goes, whatever *buddhi* that is left will still be there.”

“What is it that remains? *Sat*, that ‘is’ is always there. ‘Is’ is always is. Therefore, it is called *sat*, that which does not change, whereas the object whose *buddhi* changes is called *asat* (or *mithyā*). The object is *asat* (or *mithyā*) because the *buddhi* keeps changing and we recognise it differently each time it changes. In every perception, then there are two *buddhis* – the ‘object-*buddhi*’ and the ‘is-*buddhi*’.”  
 “(GHS-1, p 194-5)

Thus, the *jagat* is object-*buddhi* and is *mithyā* while Brahman is is-*buddhi* and is *satyam*.

## ***Satyam* and *Mithyā* 'connection' is: B can be A; but A is not B**

The teaching of Vedānta is that while, as *satyam* Brahman, I am independent of the body-mind-sense-complex and the *jagat*, the body-mind-sense-complex and the *jagat* are not separate from me. Students generally find it difficult to grasp this fact. Pujya Swamiji ingeniously makes 'the connection' between *satyam* and *mithyā* simple through the statement "B can be A; but A is not B" (which we had seen earlier in a different context). He explains:

"The physical body can be I, but I am not the physical body. See the truth of this - B can be A but A need not be B. Consider an actor A, who takes on the role of the beggar B now. Where the beggar stands, the actor stands; at the same time, as he stands, there is a distance. The distance is not physical. B's problems and privations are not A's problems. He congratulates himself on doing a good job - shedding real tears. Others too congratulate him. The congratulations are all because there was a distance between B and A. What is the distance? B is A. But A is not B. That is the distance caused by the knowledge of *svarūpa*. A is A all the way. A can identify with the role B, can write new scripts etc. He can make up for the missing lines of the fellow who is cast with him in the drama. At the same time, he never misses out

A. This is a very important thing, because all this is Vedānta. ‘*Matsthāni sarvabhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣvavasthitaḥ* - Everything is me but I am not anyone of them’ (Gīta 9.4).”

“Our problem is that B is A; and A is B. Suppose the actor thinks he is the beggar, we say the fellow has gone mad. If there is a visitor from another planet where everyone is enlightened, where B is A and A is not B, he will think that this entire planet is a mental asylum. We do not sympathise with ourselves in the same way because all the others too are in the same boat. All of us in fact deserve sympathy. We have our own norms of normality and decide that we are normal. From the standpoint of the Upaniṣad, we are all abnormal. There is only one who is normal – the one who knows himself. All the others are abnormal.” (Swami Dayananda - A Verse from the Mundaka Upaniṣad, p 25)

## II

### *Pañca-kośa-prakriyā*

Another well known *prakriyā* is the the *pañca-kośa-prakriyā*, which is presented in Taittirīya Upaniṣad. Even though the Upaniṣad does not use the word “*kośa*”, the *sampradāya* has added this word to it. One of the meanings of *kośa* is a cover or a sheath. *Ātmā* is invariable in all situations and cannot be covered. But



here, by implication, it means the cause (*nimitta*) for each erroneous notion about *ātmā*. I am mortal, I am tall, I am male – all these notions are imputed to *ātmā* with reference to the physical body. So, the physical body (*annamaya*) becomes a *kośa* inasmuch as it is wrongly taken to be *ātmā*. When one says, “Í am hungry, thirsty and tired”, *ātmā* is wrongly taken to be subject to hunger and thirst and tiredness. Thus, *prāṇamaya* becomes the *kośa*. The notions that “Í am sad, happy, agitated or calm” are due to the mind wrongly being taken as *ātmā* giving rise to *manomaya-kośa*. The wrong notion that “*ātmā* is the doer” gives rise to *vijñānamaya-kośa*. The sense of enjoyership wrongly attributed to *ātmā* gives rise to the *ānandamaya-kośa*.

The Upaniṣad negates *ātmā* being each one of them through the *sthūla-arundhatī-nyāya*, that is, proceeding from the most easily seen to the most difficultly discerned. During the marriage ceremony, the star *Arundhatī* who is the ideal wife of *Vasiṣṭha* has to be seen by the bride as an example to be emulated by her. *Vasiṣṭha* also exists as a star by the side of *Arundhatī*. *Arundhatī* is so tiny that it is difficult to see. Even *Vasiṣṭha* is difficult to locate. So, first you show her something big, *sthūla*, and easily seen like the moon. Then you take her from the moon to the easily seen star which is in the direction of *Arundhatī*, then to a smaller one nearer *Arundhatī* and then to the

small star *Vasiṣṭha* which is the closest to *Arundhatī* and finally to *Arundhatī* itself, which is barely seen.

Similarly, the Upaniṣad first presents the fully known *sthūla-deha*, the physical body, which is *annamaya* and negates *ātmā* as *annamaya* by revealing that *annamaya* is filled by *prāṇa*, meaning thereby that its substantiality is provided by *prāṇa*. Then it negates *ātmā* as *prāṇa*, by revealing that *prāṇa* is filled by *manas*. Then *ātmā* is negated as *manas* by revealing that *manas* is filled by *buddhi* or *vijñāna*. Then *ātmā* is negated as *vijñāna* by revealing that *vijñāna* is filled by *kāraṇa-śarīra* or *ānanda*. Then *ātmā* is negated as *kāraṇa-śarīra* or *ānanda* by revealing that *ānanda*'s basis (*pratiṣṭhā*) is *ātmā*. Thus, we have one *satyam ātmā*; the rest are *mithyā*. This is how the Upaniṣad reveals *ātmā* through revealing 'not this', 'not this' (*neti, neti*) of the *anātmās*.

Since *ātmā* and *anātmā* are lumped together, we require this type of *viveka* or discriminative enquiry, where not only one is discerned as different from the other but their mutual relationship is also learnt. Only if one is independent of the other, we have two different things. Here all *kośas* are dependent on *ātmā* for their existence and are *mithyā*; only *ātmā*, which self-existing is *satyam*. While the presence of *ātmā* is there in all the five *kośas*, *satyam ātmā* itself is free from the *mithyā kośas*.

While unfolding the vision, the picture both in respect of the individual (*vyāṣṭi*) as well as the total (*samaṣṭi*) is presented. When the *annamaya* of the individual *jīva* is resolved into the *praṇamaya* of the individual *jīva*, the *annamaya* of the total *Īśvara* is also resolved into the *prāṇamaya* of the total *Īśvara*. Similarly, the resolution of *prāṇamaya* into the *manomaya* and the *manomaya* into the *vijñānamaya* and the *vijñānamaya* into the *ānandamaya* and the *ānandamaya* into *ātmā*/Brahman is done both for the *jīva* and *Īśvara*. (As we are aware, the whole from the standpoint of *jīva* is called *ātmā* and from the standpoint of *jagat* is called Brahman.) It is after the resolution of both the *jīva* and *Īśvara* as *ātmā*/Brahman, that one recognises that the attributes of both the *jīva* from *Īśvara* are dependent on *ātmā*/Brahman and are both equally *mithyā*. Since what distinguishes *jīva* from *Īśvara* is only *mithyā*, they are intrinsically one and the same. It is through this presentation that the *jīva-Īśvara-aikyam* is made easily understandable.

While dealing with the *prakriyā*, Pujya Swamiji makes it clear that the intention of the Upaniṣads is not to reveal the details of the manifestation. While Chāndogya Upaniṣad speaks of only of the visible *agni*, *āpaḥ* and *pṛthivī* as the elementals from which the *jagat* is formed, Taittirīya Upaniṣad reveals the invisible *ākāśa* and *vāyu* also among the elementals. While Chāndogya Upaniṣad speaks of the

grossification of the three elementals into elements, the *sampradāya* extends grossification to all the five elementals. While discussing grossification, Pujya Swamiji intentionally uses no diagrams to explain as to how it is brought about. Firstly, what is revealed by the *śruti* is only a model and it should not become the basis for theories. Most importantly, the intention of the *śruti* is not to dwell on the effect but to shift the attention through the effect to the cause, that is, from the *jagat* to Brahman and from the body-mind-sense complex to *ātmā*.

In regard to handling of this *prakriyā*, Pujya Swamiji clarifies as to what should be done and as to what should be avoided:

“A teacher has to show that while the *kośas* are *ātmā*, *ātmā* is always free of the *kośas*, being unconnected (*asaṅga*). *Ātmā* is to be unfolded following the *sthūla- arundhatī-nyāya*. Here the *ātmā* is not to be taken as something hidden, as it is frequently interpreted in modern Vedānta, where the *kośas* are considered to cover *ātmā*. Modern Vedānta talks about some kind of transcendental experience obtaining beyond all these *kośas*. This is a typical example of how a *prakriyā* is taken as a system and the subsequent inconsistencies are left unexplained.” (Swami Dayananda, Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 6.)

### III

#### *Avasthā-traya-prakriyā*

Another important *prakriyā* employed is *avasthā-traya-prakriyā* or the analysis of the three states of experience, namely, waking, dreaming and sleeping. This *prakriyā* is used in the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad. Pujya Swamiji explains it as follows:

“In this analysis, the *śāstra* employs *anvaya-vyatireka* reasoning to arrive at the true nature of oneself. (One is, the other is; this is *anvaya* or invariable co-existence. One is not, the other is not. This is *vyatireka* or invariable co-absence.) The waker and the waking world are absent in both dream and sleep. The dreamer and the dream world are absent in both waking and sleep. In sleep, the status of the dreamer and the waker is absent.”

“If the status of the subject is real, one cannot give up this status at any time. What is intrinsic to an object should be present in the object as long as the object exists. If not present, then it is an incidental attribute.”

“An example often cited in this context is the crystal assuming a color in the presence of a colored object. If the color is intrinsic to the crystal, it will be present therein as long as the crystal exists. But when the colored object is taken away,

the color which was seen in the crystal disappears. Therefore, the color assumed by the crystal is incidental (*upādhi-kṛta*). In the sleep experience where there is absence of subject-object relationship, there is no status of oneself as the subject. Analysing these experiences, the *sāstra* presents *ātmā* as free from all attributes imputed to it. Any attributes are purely incidental and not intrinsic. *Sāstra* describes *ātmā* as *jyotiḥ*, *jnānam*, *sākṣī*, *cetā* and so on. All these words mean the content of the subject, the knower, which we may call awareness."

"Awareness is invariable in all the states of experience, while awareness itself is free from any attribute. Therefore, when the *sāstra* uses the word attribute free *ātmā* (*nirviśesa-ātmā*), it means the *svarūpa* of *ātmā* as pure awareness. All attributes such as doership and enjoyership are purely incidental."(Swami Dayananda, Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 5.)

### **Analysis of the waking state is sufficient to know the true nature of *ātmā***

Pujya Swamiji indicates that the analysis of the waking state is sufficient to know that I, *ātmā*, am awareness.

"It is in the waking state that there is the total freedom to enquire and understand and it is in the

waking state there is enough to understand. The whole day, I see forms and hear sounds. What is invariably present in all of them is only consciousness.”

## IV

### *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*

Another reasoning used to arrive at the true nature of *ātmā* is that the subject and the object have to be different from each other. We find that like the way we know the condition of any object outside, we are aware of our skin, eyes, ears, nose, mind and intellect. They are all objects of our knowledge. According to the *dṛg-dṛśya-viveka* (discrimination between the seer and the seen), the seer-subject has necessarily to be different from the seen-object. On this reasoning, the *prakarana* work, *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*, concludes that we can only be that which is never seen as an object. It says:

“The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. The eye is perceived and mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modification is perceived and the witness (the self) is verily the perceiver. But it (witness) is not perceived by any other.”

We thus arrive at the fact that we cannot be the body-mind-sense-complex, which is the object of our

perception. We can only be the *saksi-caitanya*, which is ever the witness and never the object.

It would be seen that this *prakriyā* of discrimination between the subject and object does not deal with the oneness of *ātmā* and Brahman and with the non-duality of existence. Pujya Swamiji, therefore, sounds a word of caution:

“This *prakriyā* has a limited scope. It taken a lot of people for a ride. You do not get caught up in one *prakriyā*”

## V

### Handling of the *Prakriyās*

Pujya Swamiji stresses that the *prakriyās* must be handled only for the purpose for which they are meant and should not become the basis for the formulation of any concept. He means to the effect that they are like the scaffolding erected to construct the building. Once the building is constructed, there is no further use for scaffolding and it has to be removed. Once the *prakriyās* have served their purpose, they are no longer relevant. He gives an example and then explains:

“You want to indicate a certain house and do so by saying it is the house on which the crow is sitting. The crow is not a part of the house even though it helps you to recognise the house. The next time



you have to identify that house you need not wait for the crow to come and sit on it.” (GHS - 2, p 451)

“The *prakriyās* adopted by the Upaniṣad are meant to reveal the truth of oneself being the attribute-free, limitless Brahman. Since Brahman-*ātmā* does not undergo any change whatsoever, the *kāraṇa-kārya-prakriyā* is only meant to unfold the fact that the self is limitless and the world is non-separate from it. The vision of Vedānta is not so much in presenting a cause-effect relationship between Brahman and the *jagat* as it is in unfolding the *jagat* as non-separate from Brahman. This *sarvātmabhāva* is the recognition of oneself as the whole and it is the vision (*tātparyā*).”

“The *avasthā-traya-prakriyā* is not for presenting a fourth state of experience (as distinct from the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping states) but only to point out that the invariable awareness in all the three states is Brahman, the *adhiṣṭāna* of the entire world.”

“The *pañca-kośa-prakriyā* does not present a hidden *ātmā* but only points out a universal mistake committed at the each of the five levels of experience.”

“The attributes of *kāraṇa*, *avasthā*, *kośa* and others initially mentioned for Brahman are later negated in the *prakriyās*. By this negation (*apavāda*), the

attributes are seen only as 'super-imposition' (*adhyāropa*) on Brahman. The way in which the *prakriyās* are handled, utilising this method of *adhyāropa-apavāda* is important to understand." (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 6-7)

Having dealt with the unfolding of the vision by Pujya Swamiji, the following chapter deals with the present deviations from the *sampradāya* and as to how he establishes the *siddhānta*.

## CHAPTER SIX

# CORRECTION OF THE CURRENT DEVIATIONS FROM THE SAMPRADĀYA BY PUJYA SWAMIJI

### I

#### Is Śaṅkara the founder of *advaita*?

A great misconception is that *Advaita* is the brainchild of Śaṅkarācārya and that he is the founder of the ‘*Advaita* philosophy’. Such a view is entirely unsustainable as

- it negates the entire *sampradāya* before Śaṅkarācārya; and
- it converts the vision of Vedānta, which is the truth, into a system of philosophy.

Pujya Swamiji explains:

“Śaṅkara is only an *ācārya* in the *sampradāya*. Śaṅkarācārya says that one who does not know the method of teaching or the meaning of the *śāstra* according to the *sampradāya* has to be kept away like a fool. So, it means he received the *sampradāya*. And he says that Kṛṣṇa himself is a *sampradāya pravartaka*.”

“Śaṅkara, the founder of *Advaita*! That is the last disservice you can do to Śaṅkara. He never said he

founded. He was not a Kant or anyone who wrote a philosophy. He did not write 'Philosophy of Śaṅkara'. In fact, the problem with the modern philosophers is whether to include Śaṅkara among philosophers, as he is only a commentator. That is what Will Durant writes about Śaṅkara. 'Even though I would like including Śaṅkara, he was a commentator of religious scriptures. Therefore I am not including him'. He is apologetic about it. And I thank him for omitting him. He (Śaṅkarācārya) was only an ācārya. He humbly says he is a *sampradāya vit.*"

"There were written books. There was Gauḍapādācārya with a book. He (Śaṅkarācārya) had to write at that time because there were a few more objections coming and because there was a *sampradāya*, he had to cover them. Śaṅkara did not found any religion or anything. Because he looked upon *śāstra* as *pramāṇa*, he knew that there is no speculation here and he knew that the whole problem is the problem of knowing. Therefore, he was very clear about it. So, all that he did was only to present the tradition in the form of a commentary. The *sampradāya* is what we find in his commentary." (Swami Dayananda in a *satsaṅgh*)

## II

### “Modern Vedānta”

Speaking about “Modern Vedānta” during a *satsaṅg*, Pujya Swamiji pinpoints as to what is wrong with it:

“I was introduced to Vedānta by a few people and books and in the beginning it was all OK. I did not have any ideas about Vedānta. So, I was a novice with some *śraddhā* in our *śāstra*-tradition, but without having any knowledge about what it is. As long as I was not having any insight, it was OK. Later when I decided to know very clearly what it is all about, then I found the books as something wrong and inadequate; I found them as false, erroneous and misleading. All these I began discovering as I went on, as I had a very clear commitment. Even in the first two years, one thing that I found out was a great disappointment for me. When I read a book on self-realisation, then, a book on meditation and some other book, I found the same material in all the three, bodily lifted with different titles. This was a very big revelation to me that it is the same material. That is the first time I began doubting. Till then I was not suspicious of anything and I was swallowing whatever that was said.”

“And then I began seeing slowly with time the difference between advice and fact. A fact unfolded is different from an advice given. So, this was my first discovery after my book reading. In this modern Vedānta, there is non-appreciation between an advice and the fact that is unfolded. ‘*Satyam vada*’. What is *satyam*? What it takes to tell a lie? What do I lose when I tell a lie? Saying that is entirely different from saying ‘Do not tell a lie, speak the truth’. And I find these books full of advices, unwarranted advices.”

### **What is Wrong with Modern Vedānta?**

“Slowly I began to see as to what is Vedānta. I found that in modern Vedānta there is no appreciation of -

- what is Vedānta;
- what is knowledge; and
- what exactly is necessary for that knowledge.

These three things are not there at all. These are totally absent.”

“What is Vedānta? If it is a means of knowledge, then you have to handle it as a means of knowledge. So, you cannot speculate because Vedānta is a means of knowledge. The means of knowledge is purely in the form of *śabda*, in the form of words. It is a means of knowledge like I open my eyes and see. Similarly, the words of

Vedānta are the words in which I have to see what is to be seen unfolded by those words. Therefore the words should serve as a mirror for the person to see, if they are a means of knowledge.”

“Care for use of words will naturally come to a person only when a person looks upon these words of the *śāstra* as the means of knowledge, even if it is in English. It does not mean it should be in Sanskrit or any language, for the matter of that. You need not quote one Sanskrit sentence. Still it can be Vedānta because what you are talking is Vedānta. In whichever language you unfold, the facts must be proper; the words must serve as a mirror. If the words serve as a mirror then the person can see because it is not *parokṣa*. Now if the object that is unfolded by the words of Vedānta is *parokṣa*, then you can simply just say that it is what is said; you please realise. *Ātmā* is not *parokṣa*. It is *nitya-aparokṣa*. *Nitya-aparokṣa ātmā* who is now feeling that he is subject to *sukha*, *duḥkha* etc., and who is subject to limitations etc. The same *ātmā* is told that it is not so and these limitations are superimpositions and that they are *adhyāropita*. Then negation must take place. And therefore, the whole process is a method. There is nothing more than a method in Vedānta, because *vastu* is already there. It is only a method of unfolding. The fact when it is there, then you have got only a mode of teaching.”

“Understand now.  $1 + 1 = 2$ . I want to make the boy understand. I know the fact. And I must be able to make the boy understand and create a situation from where he cannot but see the fact that  $1 + 1 = 2$ . That is what I have to do. Therefore, Vedānta not only has got a message to give and also it is the means. It is a means in the form of words so that it reveals the fact. Therefore, it is a means of knowledge. For knowing that *ātmā* is Brahman, *sarvātmā*, there is no other means of knowledge. And therefore, handling is very important. First, we should know that it is a means of knowledge. Secondly, having known, it should be handled.”

“Firstly, it is not known as the means of knowledge. What does modern Vedānta say with reference to this? Modern Vedānta will say that *ṛṣis* were ‘subjective scientists’ and their field of research was within. As for outside, other scientists are working. *Ṛṣis* looked at themselves and came up with the facts. Vedānta is a science. So it is presented as a science, as a theory of the *ṛṣis* about *ātmā*.”

“This is not knowing Vedānta. If ‘(subjective) scientists’ looked into themselves and came up with some thing, you can also look into yourself and come up with something else. Which is right and which is wrong? That is because Vedānta is



not understood as a *pramāṇa*, its nature as *apauruṣeya* and how the *pramāṇa* works. That it is an epistemological problem is not understood; 'means of knowledge Vedānta' is not understood."

"Once you have got a theory about *ātmā*, you have to do what? You have to practice. What is the practice? There are many paths. You can reach the same goal, like the temple on the top can be reached by many ways. All religions lead to the same goal. This is modern Vedānta."

### III

#### **Do not all religions lead to the same goal?**

Discussing the widespread notion that all religions have a common goal, Pujya Swamiji says that what is common in them is only the common sense born ethics and not the vision. He says:

"If all religions have a well defined common goal, the difference would be purely cultural. Difference of culture is totally acceptable to any thinking person. The goal of various religions being the same, there will be no religious issue necessitating any discussion."

"If ethical values constitute the goal of religion, certainly there is a single goal adopted by all religions, the ethical values being universal. Should any person be religious to be ethical? Is

there a necessity to be educated by religious scriptures to know what is ethical and what is not? Is it not true that any normal human being is well informed about the universal values? An aborigine in the outback of Australia as even a pundit from Benares has the same value in not getting hurt at the hands of another. That others do not want to get hurt from him or her is also very well known to the person. Other values like non-stealing, compassion, sharing and so on are equally well known facts. In fact, they form the moral infrastructure for human interaction with one another and also with other living organisms in the world. This value-knowledge is born of human commonsense. Without religious masters and religions and religious scriptures preaching about right and wrong, one is very well informed about them. One can be ethical without being in anyway religious. Therefore, ethical values cannot constitute the goal of any religion. ”

“On the other hand, some religions take away the universality of these common-sense born values by giving sanction to killing of those who do not conform to their beliefs and who articulate their non-conformity. That the common-sense-born ethics are better off without interference of religion is a really a cause for sadness. In fact religion should confirm the universal values, as most of them do.”

"Theology differs from religion to religion. The concept of reality of God, world and you is again thought of differently. More often, God is looked upon as a judgmental person located in a place yonder. Reaching that place and living with him is the goal. Neither the Vedic religion nor Buddhism will accept this as a goal. Much less, a devout Christian is going to accept a goal other than reaching heaven promised by his scripture. Then what does the statement that all religions lead to the same goal mean?" (Arsha Vidya Bharati, April 1998 issue)

Pujya Swamiji also makes it clear that instead of believing in God, we have to understand God:

"Let us say billions of years ago, there *was* a conscious being, who was all knowledge, who was almighty. It is just as the painting continues to be here even though the artist may not be there. Similarly, the world continues to be here while the maker may not be there. This can be true if he were different from what is made. But suppose, he is not different!"

"This is where we need to change our concept of God. If he is someone different from the world that we see, he had created a world out of something else. Most of the religions believe so. They say that God sitting in the heaven created this world. This is because they have not really understood

what is God. If God in heaven created the world, who created the heaven? You have to say: 'God'. You cannot say somebody created the heaven, appointed and sent God to heaven and asked him to create the world. Then that somebody becomes God, he is even 'Godder than God'! Therefore, you have to say that God created the heaven. If God created the heaven, where was he before he created the heaven? "

"The space itself is a part of this *jagat*. If that is so, there is no place for God. He has to create the space. God cannot be outside space to create it because there is no such thing as outside space. May be space itself is not separate from God. That would change the entire perspective!"

"There is another theological concept that God created the world out of nothing. But really, nothing comes out of nothing. Something cannot come out of nothing. Why not we put it this way? Out of *nothing else*, he created the world; because God cannot go and borrow from anybody."

"God is all-knowing, almighty and so on, they say; we can accept that. But the material necessary for creation has to be found not outside that God. So there is only one possibility. That possibility is what Veda says: *svayam akuruta* and *svayam abhavat*, he made and he became. He is not only the maker but also the material for the creation."

“To assimilate this concept, there is a model. When you dream, it is a different reality altogether. It is a reality created by yourself. You thought of the stars, the stars are there; you thought of the moon, moon is there and you thought of people, the people are there. You experience everything in dream created by yourself alone. Your memory formed the material. The material cause did not come outside of yourself; you are the maker and the material.”

“If that is so, tell me now, is that dream *jagat* separate from the material? No! Is there any product that is independent of material? Is your shirt independent of the fabric? If you are the material cause and the maker, you pervade the entire space-time *jagat*. Everything is pervaded by you. What kind of ‘you’? It is the ‘knowledgeable you’, one who knows what he has created. Your knowledge is manifest in the form of *jagat*. Can we say that God the maker is dead? No! He is manifest in the form of *jagat*. This dream model is the basis for you to understand what Vedānta *śāstra* says. Vedānta tells you that all that was, all that is, are non-separate from *Īśvara*, the maker; he is the maker and the material cause. Some times we use the word ‘he’ and sometimes ‘she’ – from the material standpoint ‘she’ and from the maker standpoint ‘he’. Or we simply say ‘she’ in which the ‘he’ is there. Therefore, there is no maker

without the material; there is no material without the maker. Thus, it is one conscious being, all-knowing, all knowledge, all *śakti* who is manifest in the form of *jagat*, space, time that is here and all the laws known and unknown.”

“If that is so, then the earth, all life forms, your body, your mind, the senses, all that is given is the giver. Giver may be without the ‘given’ because it can be withdrawn. It can collapse. But the given cannot be without the giver. If this is so, God is not a matter of belief for us. It is a matter for understanding. This is where we have to change our thinking and where understanding is involved. That is what Vedānta is. It is a teaching tradition. There is no mysticism about it. We have a live teaching tradition; because for us, God is to be understood. All that is here is God. Given is not separate from the giver. This, I say, is pure pragmatism. This knowledge is going to transform our attitude.” (Swami Dayananda, *Need for Cognitive Change*, p 18 - 21)

## IV

### **Do not all *yogas* lead to *mokṣa*?**

Another grave mis-conception of the present day is that different *yogas* are available as the direct and independent ways to *mokṣa*. Each ‘path for *mokṣa*’ is called a *yoga* and we have *jñāna-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*,

*karma-yoga* and *haṭha-yoga*. The supporting logic is that people are of different temperaments and each one can follow what suits his temperament. *Jñāna-yoga* will suit the intellectual, *karma-yoga* will suit the extrovert and action-oriented, *bhakti-yoga* will suit the emotional; and *haṭha-yoga* will suit those who are body-oriented. An assortment of *yogas* or 'integrated' *yoga* has also been put together based on the reasoning that only a combination of *yogas* would suit this complicated *kali-yuga*.

The fallacy of the entire concept lies in the misunderstanding that *mokṣa* can be gained through a means other than *jñāna*. What are overlooked are:

- it is through knowledge of the self that *mokṣa* is gained, as all our problems arise out of the erroneous notion that we are limited to the body-mind-sense complex;
- any knowledge can be gained only through a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and not by any other means;
- the appropriate means to gain the knowledge about the self is Vedānta.

The seeker of *mokṣa* has thus no way except to gain knowledge through the *pramāṇa* of Vedānta. The choice that he has is only in regard to the life style while pursuing Vedānta. Pujya Swamiji elaborates:

“The *śāstra* presents two committed life-styles (*niṣṭhās*) for *mokṣa*. One is a life of *sannyāsa*, a commitment to the pursuit of self-knowledge to the exclusion of any other pursuit. The very Veda, which enjoins obligatory duties releases a *sannyāsī* from those obligatory duties and lets him pursue knowledge. This is *jñāna-yoga*. The other life style also involves a commitment of the pursuit of knowledge, but along with *karma* as *yoga*. A *karma-yogi* is equally a *mumukṣu* (seeker of freedom) but he pursues knowledge along with his obligatory duties.”

“If there is a third person called a *bhakti-yogi*, does he have obligatory duties or not? If he has, he is a *karma-yogi*. Is there a *karma-yogi* without *bhakti*? Is there even a *sannyāsī* without *bhakti*? And what does a *bhakti-yogi* do? If he does daily *pūjās*, it is *kāyikarṅkarma* (action through the body). If he does *kīrtana*, it is *vācikaṅkarma* (action through the mouth). If he does meditation invoking the grace of Bhagavān, then it is *mānasarṅkarma* (action through the mind). In fact, he is only a *karma-yogi*. Similarly, *haṭha-yoga* may be pursued as a discipline by a *sannyāsī* as well as by a *karma-yogi* or even by one who is not a *mumukṣu*. That is why Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa says in the third chapter of *Gītā*: *loke'smindivividhā niṣṭhā* (3.3) - there are only two committed life-styles for *mokṣa*. One is a life of



*sannyāsa* and the other is of *karma-yoga*. Both the *sannyāsī* and the *karma-yogi* pursue knowledge.”

“One may argue that in the *Gītā* there is a separate chapter entitled, *Bhakti-yoga*. Each chapter in *Gītā* is given a title, based on the predominant topic therein. And each one is called a *yoga*. The word *yoga* is used in the sense of topic. The word *saṅgati* (topic) is a synonym for *yoga*. The topic of twelfth chapter is *bhakti*. It is not *bhakti-yoga*.”

“Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa’s statement that there are only two *niṣṭhās* is, therefore, nowhere contradicted in *Gītā*. That is why Śaṅkara, introducing the *Gītā*, mentions two life-styles (*mārgas*), *pravṛtti* (involving *karma*) and *nivṛtti* (excluding *karma*). The problem being ignorance and error, the solution is knowledge alone; in this, there is no choice. If at all there is a choice, it is only in terms of the appropriate life-style. The contention that there are many paths to gain *mokṣa* is false. An integral approach involving all ways is also meaningless because there are not four in the first place to be integrated.”

“When the *śāstra* says that knowledge alone is *mokṣa*, it does not amount to fanaticism. If I say eyes alone see colors, I am not a fanatic. There is fanaticism only when I propagate a belief, which is subject to negation, as the only truth, or hold on to

one means as true while there are many equally valid options.”

“When the self is mistaken for a limited being (*saṁsārī*), nothing other than knowledge can save the person. There can be different forms of prayer because prayer is an action (*karma*) and action is always open to choice. There can also be a choice of a life of *sannyāsa* and that of *karma-yoga*. But there is only one way of correcting the *saṁsāritva* (the life of becoming) of *ātmā* and that is by self-knowledge for which we require a means of knowledge. That is why the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.5) states that *ātmā* has to be known for which one has to do *śāstra-vicāra* (*ātmā vā are dṛṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*).” (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita, p 9 - 11)

## V

### **Does not self-realisation mean self-experiencing?**

Lack of *pramāṇa-buddhi* towards Vedānta has led to the serious mistake that knowledge of the *nitya-aparokṣa vastu* is a theory calling for practice for its ‘realisation’. Pujya Swamiji explains that the knowledge revealed about the ever self-evident *ātmā* is direct knowledge:

“Another confusing word used in modern Vedānta is realisation, often replacing the word knowledge. What is the difference between self-knowledge and self-realisation? According to modern Vedānta, self-knowledge is intellectual while self-realisation is experiential and because of the difference, the study of *śāstra* is meant for self-knowledge while something else becomes the means for self-realisation.”

“When the *śruti* is the means of knowledge to recognise the self which is always present (*nitya-aparokṣa*), how can there be an indirect knowledge of *ātmā*, which has to be converted into direct realisation by some unique method? *Śravaṇam*, *mananam*, *nididhyāsanam* are prescribed in the *śruti* only for self-knowledge. The confusion of making a distinction between knowledge and realisation is caused by not recognising the invariable presence (*aparokṣatvam*) of *ātmā* in all situations and by not understanding the *śruti* as the means of knowledge to recognise the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*. That is the reason why we often hear that what we gather from the *śruti* is only intellectual knowledge. All forms of knowledge happen in the intellect. There is no such thing as intellectual knowledge. There can be two types of knowledge, one is direct and the other indirect. When *ātmā* is invariably present, the knowledge of *ātmā* can only be direct.” (Swami

Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 9)

“For *ātmā* there is a known status through *pramāṇa*, the *śāstra*. Then does *ātmā* become an object for the knower, *jñātā*? No! No! The knower has to drop the ‘not-knowingness’. ‘I do not know myself’- this particular ignorance has to drop. This confusion has to drop. Knower cannot know *ātmā* by himself because of his ignorance. But *śabda* can create that *ṛtti* and destroy the ignorance of the self-evident *ātmā*. Because *ātmā* is self-evident, the knower has anyway no role to play in this. If it is an object, knower will take it as *pramāṇa phalam*. It is not an object. Knowledge is there; ignorance is gone. This is how knowledge takes place. Pure knowledge means no object involved, no *kaṛaṇa* (instrument). It is *satyam* of *jñānam* which is not *jñātā*, *jñeyam* or *jñānam* (knower, known, knowledge).”

“Consciousness (which is *ātmā* or Brahman) is a technical word used in Vedānta for which object is not there and subject is not there. The subject is not there because you cannot have the subject unless you objectify. Consciousness, you do not objectify. Therefore, there is no subject with reference to consciousness. There is no object with reference to consciousness. If there is no subject or object, then it does not exist? This is what Buddhists said! There is nothing more *prakatīkṛta* (evident) than this

*ātmā*. Nothing is more self-revealing of its existence than this *caitanya-ātma-jñapti*.”

“Understand this. The meaning of the word consciousness is not displaced by the word ‘flower’. ‘Flower’ will be displaced by the word ‘book’ but ‘flower’ does not displace consciousness; ‘book’ does not displace consciousness. Cognition of anything does not displace consciousness, *śabdāṃ vā, sparśāṃ vā, rūpāṃ vā, rasāṃ vā, gandharīṃ vā* because the *vr̥tti* is *avabhāsyā*, that is, the sound, touch, form, taste or smell do not displace consciousness since these *vr̥ttis* are lighted by consciousness. It looks as though consciousness undergoes change. That is why ‘social consciousness, this consciousness, that consciousness; you have to improve consciousness; we have to heighten the consciousness’. This is all talk of those yet to develop *viveka*.”

“There is nothing as self-evident as *ātmā*. In fact, there is nothing self-evident except *ātmā*. Everything else becomes evident to the self. When it becomes evident to the self, the self is not displaced. In fact, self makes all this *kārya*, *vr̥ttyātmaka-kārya* to take place; lends its being, lends its *satta*. It lends its existence to *vr̥tti*. Its nature, which is *jñapti* (consciousness), is lent to that. And also it lights up the *jñātā, jñāna, jñeyam*

(knower, knowledge, known), all these are bathed in one consciousness alone, like the dream.”

“The dreamer-*jñātā*, the dreamer’s *vṛtti*, *vṛtti*’s objects, all the three are totally replaced by the waker’s waking-*antahkaraṇa*. What was there at that time which is not replaced? That is the same consciousness,  *jyoti*, as said in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. What is not replaced is consciousness. That is why he says ‘I dreamt’. Dream was consciousness; dream’s object was consciousness; and what was, is consciousness even now. For consciousness, there is no was.” (A – Taittirīya Upaniṣad, 2003, 21.6.03 and 23.6.03)

Pujya Swamiji also points out that Kena Upaniṣad (2.4) makes it clear that Brahman, which is *ātmanā*, is recognised in every thought (*pratibodha-viditam matam*) and explains:

“To know a pot, you require a thought, a *vṛtti*. But any random thought will not do; you must have a particular thought, a pot-thought. Brahman, on the other hand, being the whole and excluding nothing, does not need to be distinguished from anything else. Therefore, a particular thought is not required to know Brahman. Instead, this verse says that Brahman is known in every (*prati*) thought (*bodham*), in every piece of knowledge. Brahman is the awareness because of which every thought is recognised by

you. It is the mind of the mind, the thought of the thought. It is not a particular object of thought; it is manifest in each and every thought as consciousness.”

“Brahman is not an object of thought; it is the awareness present in every thought. Similarly, Brahman is present in every perception. When you see a pot, a pot-thought arises. If you remove the pot’s name and form from the pot-thought, what remains is awareness. Brahman is recognised in this way – as the awareness manifest in every thought and perception.” (Swami Dayananda, Kena Upaniṣad, p 52 - 54)

As for the knowledge of *advaita* (non-dual), Pujya Swamiji also makes it clear that the problem of the human being is not the lack of experience of *advaita* but the definite knowledge that self is *advaita*. He says:

“The problem is not of the lack of the knowledge of *advaita*. When I go to sleep, there is total *advaita*. Is there any *dvaita* in sleep? A mahārāja sleeps in the palace and a beggar sleeps on the pavement outside the palace. Until they fall asleep the mahārāja was a mahārāja, the beggar was a beggar. But once the rajā sleeps inside the palace given to all comforts and luxuries and the beggar sleeps outside the compound given to all vagaries of elements, *deśa*, the space disappears, *kāla*, the time

disappears. All their memories, all their problems disappear. Everything disappears. In fact, a second thing is not there and what is there is only the non-dual experience. There is no *dvaita*. Seeker-sought *dvaita* is not there. Even a perceptual *dvaita* like seer-seen, hearer-heard *dvaita* is not there. In sleep, it is known experientially. What is required is only a certain knowledge, a definite knowledge of the self, which according to the Upaniṣads is non-dual, *advaita*. (Swami Dayananda, Talks on Who Am I? p 12-13 and 17)

## VI

### **Does not *ātmanubhava* mean experiencing of *atma*?**

The *śāstra*, however, speaks of *ātma-anubhava*. Does not the translation of *anubhava* into ‘experience’ validate the seeking of experience of *ātmā*? Puja Swamiji clears this confusion:

“The word ‘*anubhava*’ is translated into English as ‘experience’ by a number of people writing on Vedānta. The English word leaves a lot to be desired. The word *anubhava* means *pratyakṣa* or *aparokṣa jñāna*, direct knowledge in certain contexts. The word ‘experience’ does not convey the same sense. Any experience is inconclusive in terms of knowing. One may gain a certitude of knowledge



from experience but experience itself does not constitute knowledge.”

“Any mental condition caused by a sense perception or memory can be called experience but one need not have knowledge of what is experienced. Emotional pain is one’s experience but the knowledge of it implies its origin also. Therefore, it needs a certain process of reasoning leading to understanding. I may see an object outside without knowing what it is. Seeing is no doubt an experience but knowing is entirely different.”

“We often come across the expression *ātmānubhava* in the literature of Vedānta whose meaning is direct self-knowledge. *Ātmā* is consciousness and its presence is never lost in any form of experience. In seeing, hearing, thinking, the presence of consciousness is never missed. The *svarūpa* of *ātmā* is this *anubhūti*, the content of every experience. Consciousness, the content of experience, is recognised as Brahman, the limitless, which fact the *śāstra* reveals in sentences such as ‘*Tat-tvam-asi*’.

“Now the compound *ātmānubhava* is translated as self-experience. Does the translation convey self-knowledge? Certainly, it does not. It is also said by many that the self is to be experienced. That means the self is not within the ken of one’s experience and it has to be experienced by some

special means. If the self is consciousness, can the experience be independent of consciousness? The experiencer is but the self while the self is not the experiencer. So too, the experienced object is again consciousness and the experience thereof is not outside consciousness either. This ever-present consciousness, the self, is (mistakenly) taken to be only the experiencer, different from the object of experience. This duality is certainly a superimposition upon the self, the consciousness. Vedānta negates this superimposition and makes one recognise the self as being free from this duality. This recognition is *ātmanubhava* or *ātmajñāna*. While the word 'experience' (in *ātmanubhava*) fails convey the meaning of self-knowledge, it misguides one to the pursuit of gaining the experience of the self." (Arsha Vidya Bharati, December 1997, p 1-2)

## VII

### The Cleansing Confusion

Apart from the "realisation confusion", there is the "cleansing confusion". The thinking is that *ātma* has lost its original status through accumulation of pollutions and that it has to be brought back to its original status through cleansing. One system concerns itself with cleansing whatever is considered by them to have accumulated over *ātma* in all the

previous *janmas* called as *vāsanās*. The other, which considers the five *kośas* to be five covers for *ātmā*, wants to cleanse the *kośas* so that they do not adversely affect *ātmā*. Pujya Swamiji deals with both of them.

### ***Vāsanā*-cleansing Confusion**

As regards *vāsanā*-cleansing, he says:

“There is a new and popular concept that *ātmā* becomes *jīva* due to *vāsanās* (past impressions) which are often equated to *karma-phala*, like *puṇya* and *pāpa*. The exhaustion of *vāsanās* through any of the four *yogas* amounts to self-realisation.”

“The problems caused by this modern *prakriyā* are numerous. If *vāsanās* cause the *ātmā* to become a *jīva*, *vāsanās* become a parallel reality to *ātmā*. Then *ātmā* ceases to be non-dual and anyone who takes it as non-dual will suffer from an error. If *vāsanās* are not an independent reality, then they are *mithyā*, depending as they do for their existence upon *ātmā*. What is *mithyā* has to be understood as such and, therefore, exhaustion of *vāsanās* is not necessary. Nor it is possible for anyone in a given incarnation to exhaust the *vāsanās* collected in an infinite number of births. In fact, they can be exhausted only in an infinite number of incarnations. So, *vāsanā*-exhaustion itself is a dream. Even if the impossible *vāsanā*-exhaustion were achieved, the

possibility of being a *jīvanmukta* is nil. When all the *vāsanās* are exhausted, the *jīva* ceases to be. What is left out is *ātmā* who is *asaṅgaḥ*, who is unaffected by and unconnected to anything. There is no way the *asaṅga-ātmā* will attract anything from *samaṣṭi-prārabdha*. Only if the nucleus (*jīva*) exists, then there are *vāsanās* to exhaust.”

“The *śāstra* mentions *vāsanā*-exhaustion, but it is purely with reference to the preparedness of the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi*). The *vāsanās* that the later *ācāryas* talk about are *viśaya-vāsanā*, *deha-vāsanā* and *śāstra-vāsanā*. The fascination for an object (*viśaya*), thinking that it can give me security and happiness, is a super-imposition called *śobhanādhyāsa*. By *vicāra*, one has to remove this super-imposition to become the *adhikarī* for self-knowledge. So too, the ‘I-am-this-body-*vāsanā*’ has to be removed by inquiry and contemplation. A craving for the study of *śāstra* other than Vedānta (*śāstra-vāsanā*) can destroy a person in the pursuit. One has to tackle this craving by commitment to Vedānta-*vicāra*. This three-fold *vāsanā* is not presented by *ācāryas* as a cause for the *ātmā* to become a *jīva*. The truth to be emphasised here is that *ātmā* has never become a *jīva*. *Jīvatva* (the notion of individuality) is a superimposition upon *ātmā* due to ignorance. The pursuit is therefore to understand that the *svarūpa* of *ātmā* is free from

*jīvatva.*" (Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 13)

### ***Pañcakośas-cleansing Confusion***

While proper handling of *prakriyā* is helpful to understand the subject, improper handling leads to serious misunderstanding. The *śāstra* speaks of *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya* as those that are mistaken to be *ātmā*. The word *kośa* has been appended by the *sampradāya* to all these. *Kośa* has two meanings, *pracūrya* and *mayat*. *Pracūrya* means predominance or saturation and *mayat* means *vikāra*, or modification. When it is wrongly taken to be the former meaning, *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya* etc. become literally *anna*, *prāṇa* etc. and when the word *kośa* is appended to them, it makes them into coverings of *ātmā* consisting of *anna*, *prāṇa* etc.

This misunderstanding has led to the *sādhana* of *kośa* cleansing. The thinking is that even if one cannot remove the covers, one can clean all of them so that they do not pollute *ātmā*. Cleansing of *annamayakośa* is to be achieved through physical cleanliness and taking clean *sātvic* food, of *prāṇamayakośa* through regulation of breath, of *manomayakośa* through elimination of negative emotions like *rāga*, *dveṣa* and cultivation of positive emotions through *bhakti*, of *vijñānamayakośa* through *japa* of *mantras* like *Gāyatrī*

and through *upāsanā*, of *ānandamayakośa* by submission to *Īśvara*.

The basic misunderstanding is that the *kośas* cover *ātmā* and affect *ātmā*. Even if the *kośas* were covers, they cannot cover the limitless *ātmā*. The wave does not cover the water. *Ātmā* is the only thing that cannot hide, much less disappear. It is always present. Since ignorance can cover anything, *ātmā* can be covered only by ignorance. Being the *nimitta* (cause) for error, all the *kośas* can be taken to be only as covers of ignorance at these five different levels. These notional errors can be removed only through self-knowledge.

Pujya Swamiji points out the serious implications of this confusion:

“*Ātmā* does not have a *kośa*. *Ātmā* cannot have a *kośa*. (Even) *sarvavyāpi ākāśa* you cannot clothe. But the *svarūpa* of *ātmā* is, as though, covered. There is no ‘food sheath’. *Annarasa* is what is assimilated by the body of the food that you have sent in - *annarasamaya*. This is taken for oneself and oneself is taken for this. That is the confusion. Therefore, it becomes a *kośa* and this confusion is universal. *Ātmā* is very much there in all the *kośas*. And *ātmā* is not any of them. But *ātmā* is taken to be all of them. This is one of the most confusing topics in *Vedānta-śāstra* and *Yoga*. They have created a philosophy out of *kośa*. *Kośa* is the basic philosophy. They talk also: ‘I am correcting the

*annamaya*; and he is at the *prāṇa* level'; or, 'this fellow is caught in this level'. Level wise they treat. People are very serious."

"The Upaniṣad does not use the word *kośa*. It only says '*annamaya, prāṇamaya, manomaya*' etc. The *sampradāya* uses the word, '*kośa*', because of the confusion being there. And by doing this, the *sampradāya* has undermined itself. *Sampradāya* never thought that there would be an *āśram* built on *kośa*. There are diagrams also. So many clothes, winter clothes, *pañcakośas*. Remove everything. Afterwards: "*trrrring*". *Ātmā* is inside. Poor emaciated *ātmā*. All the *kośas* are covering, giving it some kind of a girth. This type of thinking is very serious. The mind creates images. You have to be careful. Immediately you think, 'I have to cross all this to get to this *ātmā*'. Permanently, this fellow is booked. In this *janma*, he has no chance." (R-VC, 2004, 20.3.04 -1)

## VIII

### ***Mano-naśa* or Thought-free-mind Confusion**

There is also a widespread contention among the adherents of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* that the truth of the self is covered by *vṛttis* (thought-forms) and it has to be uncovered by stoppage of thoughts (*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*). Pujya Swamiji clarifies that thought is not the problem. He says:

“The confusion comes from the statement that *ātmā* is undivided (*nirvikalpa*). The vision of the *śāstra* is that while the knower, known, and knowledge are not separate from *ātmā*, *ātmā* is independent of all of them. In Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad and in the *kārikā*, the dreamer is cited as proof that there is no real division (*vikalpa*) such as dreamer, dream and dreamt, even though during the dream, the division was taken to be real. The purpose of the dream example is to make us see that the waker’s experience of duality is not any different. In the *jyotir-brāhmaṇam* of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.3. 1-6), the invariable *ātmā* in dream and waking is presented as the light of awareness (*jyotis-svarūpaḥ*). It is obvious that *ātmā* is always *nirvikalpa*, in spite of the apparent division. That is what is said in Kena Upaniṣad, ‘in every form of knowledge, *ātmā* is understood by the discriminative as the invariable’ (2.4). Therefore, the knowledge is that I am thoughtfree (*nirvikalpa*) in spite of the experience of *vikalpa*. This is entirely different from a state wherein there is absence of thoughts.”

“In *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, the *aṅgī* (the main thing to be achieved) is *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, a state wherein there is the absence of subject-object relationship. Even though it is a desirable accomplishment, the state itself is *jada* (inert) inasmuch as there is no thought (*vṛtti*) that can destroy ignorance. In



*samādhi* (a mental state of absorption) and also when there are thoughts, what obtains as invariable is the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*, which is *nirvikalpa*. Again, the notion that when there is no more thought, then there is enlightenment implies a duality such as *ātmā* and thought; when thought is, *ātmā* is not; when *ātmā* is, thought is not. Both become equally real because one exists in the absence of the other. But that is not true. Does thought deny *ātmā*? Is there a thinker without *ātmā*? Is there a thought without *ātmā*? In fact, thought is *ātmā*. But *ātmā* is not just a thought. *Ātmā* is *satyam*, being present in all situations. The situations are *mithyā*, dependent as they are for their existence upon *ātmā*.”

“Thoughts are natural and they will always return. So, you have to do *nirodha* all the time to see *ātmā*. Even if you see *ātmā* in *samādhi*, *ātmā* becomes objectified and is reduced to the level of any other object in the creation. If *ātmā* is the object, who is the subject? Assuming you see *ātmā* in *samādhi*, can there be fulfillment in terms of knowledge or of fullness? You continue to be a *sarṁsārī*. According to this, if you settle for *ātmā*, you miss the world and *vice versa*. So, a *yogi* is always tense, afraid of the world.”

“Elimination of thoughts is not knowledge; it is not self-discovery. Thoughts do not cover *ātmā*. Thoughts come, I am. Thoughts go, I am.

Compare this with: snake is, rope is; snake is not, rope is. So, there is the mistake of equating thoughts (which comes and goes) with I (which is always there). If I do not know who I am, this original mistake is never corrected by removing the thoughts. Vedānta does not accept thoughts as the cause for sorrow. The mistake of taking thoughts for *ātmā* is the cause of sorrow. This is entirely different from what the modern Vedānta and *Yoga* say.”

“Sorrow is a result of a mix up between the real and the apparent. A wave is not separate from or independent of water while water does not depend upon the wave. So too a thought is not independent of *ātmā*, I, awareness, while *ātmā* is independent. The mistake of taking the thought as *ātmā* is obviously the cause of sorrow. Even if thought is a problem, the solution, ‘Get rid of the thoughts’ is wrong. The thought, ‘I am small’ is a problem. Mistaking the thought for I is the problem and the solution is the knowledge, ‘I am real, thoughts are apparent’.”

“The reality given to the mind is to be destroyed by knowing the invariable *ātmā* manifest in all thoughts. *Ātmā* is not covered by thoughts. Wave does not cover water; in wave itself, we see water. The wave need not subside for us to see the water; in wave itself, we see water. There is no covering

at all. *Ātmā* cannot be covered by anything except by ignorance. It is always manifest. I am awareness, always free from thoughts, in spite of thinking. This is the *darśana* of the one self. What is real is always one, one alone is real. This knowledge destroys the old silly mind that stood against me. Thinking continues but it is known as *mithyā*, apparent and so, it is as good as nonexistent. One's shadow is not a problem. *Mithyā* is not a problem - it is useful; mind is useful and that is all there is to it." (Swami Dayananda, Talks on Upadesa Saram, p 78-80 and The Teaching Tradition of Vedanta, p 11-12)

## IX

### **Can the enquiry, "Who am I?", reveal *ātmā*?**

The devotees of Ramana Maharishi of Tiruvaṅṅāmalai consider that the inquiry "Who am I?" conducted by a person will negate the *ahaṅkāra*, which is mistaken to be the real I and reveal the real I. Pujya Swamiji teaches Maharishi's Upadeśa Sāram to his students as a text of Vedānta. He also says: "In those days when I was struggling to find the ground under my feet, Ramana was my hope as well as the ground". As regards the "Who Am I Enquiry", he does not consider it to be the message of Maharishi's teaching, as the true 'I' can be known only by using the *pramāṇa*. He explains:

“All the *vṛttis* can be divided into two groups: (i) *idam*, This; and (ii) *aham*, I. Both are thought-forms. ‘This’ comes and goes. ‘This’ keeps on changing as objects change: flower, table, chair, man, woman or even without any object, my own thought can change, as they do in a dream. But this knower ‘I’ having its own attributes is taken to be separate from everything else. This is the I- notion.”

“The following illustration explains the I-thought versus This-thought. There are two types of employees in an organisation. Some are on daily wages; they are hired and fired everyday. The other person is a supervisor, a permanent employee. This person is comparable to the ego and has *punya* and *pāpa* credited to him. Even though he is a permanent employee, he can be fired because he is not the employer. Similarly *ahaṅkāra* is neither the awareness ‘I’ nor the object ‘This’. It is a thought - doer, enjoyer, happy, unhappy. One who says ‘I am weak’ has I-notion and there is suffering. Body does not say, ‘I am weak’. The *ahaṅkāra* takes the body’s weakness on oneself. Otherwise, he cannot suffer from it. It takes on a form that does not belong to I. Similarly, with reference to memories, there is I-notion. Without itself having any existence, this *ahaṅkāra* fashions itself, due to ignorance, into a self-rejecting status of *saṁsārī*.”

“Consider the snake which is rope-awareness plus ignorance. In the conclusion, ‘Here is a snake’, there is rope-awareness, which together with rope-ignorance gives rise to snake-awareness. The rope is covered by ignorance. Ignorance is not on the rope but on rope-awareness, because ignorance cannot stay anywhere else. So, rope-awareness plus ignorance-born mistake is snake-knowledge. Similarly, I is *sat-cit-ānanda* but this self-evident-I with the ignorance (of self-evident-I) is *ahaṅkāra*, the I-notion. The I that is known namely, ‘I am fat’, the I with memory, biography, history etc. is not the real I.

Are there two ‘I’s? No. There is only one I. The second I is not there. There is only one thing viz., rope and not two viz., rope and snake. There is only one I, but it appears to be two because of two different visions. When I jump looking at the snake, I see only the snake; rope is not there for me. How do we get two objects? The man, who sees a snake, does not think of any rope. The problem arises only when someone else says that it is a rope. Then there appears to be two different objects. Here, either both or one of them should be wrong. If both are wrong, there is a third object! If one is wrong, it can be either rope or snake but not both. So, investigation is necessary to determine who is right. Bring a flashlight of enquiry and the snake disappears. The rope remains.”

“There is only one I. You cannot posit another I. It is not that the snake is underneath the rope or above the rope. The snake is nothing but the rope. There is only one I that is real; the other is an imposter. This imposter is nothing but the real-I covered with ignorance just as the snake is rope covered with ignorance. The ignorance-born-I is a thought and its content is awareness. The I-notion is not real but merely a concept and nothing but a thought. It is different from all other thoughts. This-thought keeps on changing but I-thought keeps on gathering new notions. This-thought is always centered on the I-thought. When This-thought is absent, the mind is peaceful, but the I-thought remains.”

“The I-thought will not go in spite your doing anything. ‘I am a *yogi*’, ‘I am a renunciate; ‘I am charitable’. You do something; it gathers new qualification to remain there. ‘I am spiritual’, he says. He uses a new diction. ‘This is coming’ instead of ‘I am coming’. He picks up new words and language and becomes a spiritual snob. The imposter simply does not quit. The I-thought does not die, no matter what you do. There is no way to destroy it except through enquiry. An imposter cannot stand enquiry. The snake cannot stand enquiry and on enquiry, it will resolve into rope.”

“But the ego itself cannot conduct the enquiry; it must be dealt with from another base, the teaching, the *guru*. Otherwise the notion, ‘I am an enquirer’, will persist and the I-thought will get a new lease of life. You cannot tackle him because one who tackles is *ahaṅkāra*! He is an imposter; he is not real. How can he destroy himself?”

“We should surrender to the Lord.” All right, so I surrender. In the name of surrender, *ahaṅkāra* is there very much. Every day he surrenders while singing, ‘The body, mind, wealth – everything is yours!’ You cannot surrender everyday. If I remain separate from the Lord, there cannot be surrender. ‘The Lord alone is’. That is surrender. ‘The Lord alone is’, is a statement of fact but the fact must be clear. If the fact is clear, surrender is spontaneous; no time is involved.”

“Teaching ‘Thou art that’ is *brahmāstra* and it works when the *guru* uses it and not when *ahaṅkāra* uses it. Teaching alone can fix up the I-thought. When it is exposed to teaching, the notion-I disappears. The enlightened subject remains. Memory, thinking, perception, response, everything remains but the notional I goes away. When we say *mano-nāśa*, the destruction of the mind, we mean the destruction of this I-notion, of ignorance, in the wake of knowledge. (Swami Dayananda – Talks on Upadesa Saram of Ramana Maharshi, p 95 -98)”

## X

### Confusion relating to *Ānanda*

The word "*ānanda*" in the expression *Sat-cit-ānanda* when translated, as "bliss" invariably causes confusion. *Sat-cit-ānanda*, which is Brahman, is presented by Taittirīya Upaniṣad as *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam*. These three words are equivalent to *sat*, *cit*, *ānanda*. The meaning of the word *ānanda* is *ananta* (limitless). But when the word *ānanda* used in connection with Brahman, which is *ātmanā*, is translated as "bliss" instead of "limitless", the seeker is led to believe that *ātmanā* being "bliss", there is a special bliss that he has not hitherto experienced. In addition, as the mind generally understands in terms of the opposites, he takes the "bliss" to be the opposite of *duḥkha* (*duḥkha-pratīyogī*) and seeks to experience this special bliss to get rid of his *duḥkha*. He also considers that the experience of this bliss is the proof for 'realisation'.

Pujya Swamiji clears this confusion in the following manner:

"The meaning of the word *ānanda* is *anantam* (limitless). The word *satyam*, which is generally an attribute to a thing existent in time, is in apposition with the word *anantam*. Because of the qualifying word *anantam*, *satyam* is released from the three-fold limitations of space, time and object. (*Deśa-*



*kāla-vastu-aparicchinnam anantam*). At the same time, being the cause of everything, that *satyam* is the truth of everything, as everything is dependent upon it. And *satyam* is also *jñānam*, which, as a word, can mean the knower or the knowledge or even the known. But with the word *anantam*, the limited meaning of *jñānam* is removed and *jñānam*, the invariable conscious presence in all these three (knower, knowledge, known), becomes its meaning. The invariable content of knower and known and knowledge is awareness, which is *satyam*. This *satyam*, *jñānam*, *anantam*, the awareness that is *ātmā*, is predicated to Brahman, which is the cause of the entire *jaḡat*. Later in Taittirīya Upaniṣad and elsewhere in the Upaniṣads, the word *ānanda* is used in the place of *anantam* which is the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*.”

“Here the word *ānanda* can be translated as bliss if *ānanda* is experiential. But when it is a word unfolding the *svarūpa* of *ātmā*, its translation can never be bliss. A special bliss experienced is not going to announce, “I am *ātmā*-bliss” so that it can be recognised as unlike any other bliss experienced before. Even if there is an experience of bliss, as modern Vedānta promises, the experience is only as good as one interprets it. And the interpretation is again only as good as one’s knowledge.”

“Then what is the necessity for using the experiential word *ānanda*? The word serves two purposes:

- (i) it shows that the knowledge of *ātmā* is desirable because *ātmā* is *ānanda-svarūpa*. In fact, *śāstra* says that any form of *ānanda* is nothing but *svarūpānanda*;
- (ii) it shows that the source of all forms of *ānanda* is nothing but the limitlessness of *ātmā*.”

“The word *ānanda* is therefore meant to draw the attention of the seeker to oneself as the source of all *ānanda*. That means that the seeker is limitlessness, fullness, which is experienced as happiness in a conducive state of mind. The recognition of this fact removes the error of seeing myself as unhappy, ignorant and mortal. So the meaning of the words *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* is important in helping the seeker recognise the self as free from all attributes.”  
(Swami Dayananda, The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 7-8)

Pujya Swamiji also explains as to why he does not usually dwell on the *ānanda* aspect of *ātmā* during his teaching:

“But I never use the word ‘happiness’ for bringing people to Vedānta, because happiness is a wrong pursuit. Happiness pursuit is ‘*eee*’ (wide grin)

pursuit. My pursuit is 'ūūū' (*pūrṇa*) pursuit - freedom from sense of limitation, freedom from being insignificant, freedom from being insecure, freedom from being wanting, freedom from being inadequate. The whole Vedānta world will say: 'We are all seeking happiness. Happiness does not stay outside. We think it is outside. It is inside somewhere.' It is experiential talk. They will be waiting for that experience. Therefore, I cut the whole blessed thing (pursuit of happiness) out of the teaching. Even though there is nothing wrong with it, it gives a wrong direction to the pursuit. Vedānta is a pursuit of knowledge while this hooks people to experience. Even though it is to be discussed at one point or the other - we do that - but you do not try to get them interested in Vedānta *śāstra* by talking about happiness. No! There are better ways of getting them interested in the pursuit of adequacy and the pursuit of self-acceptance so that it all stays with knowledge and does not end in experience." (A – Taittrīya Upaniṣad, 2004, 18.1.04)

## XI

### **Confusion about *Karma-yoga***

Another area of great confusion is *karma-yoga*. Referring to it, Pujya Swamiji says:

“There is a great deal of confusion about *karma-yoga*. One definition of *karma-yoga* says that it is performing action without expecting results. Another says *karma-yoga* is doing selfless service. Another definition of *karma-yoga* is skill in action.

In fact, one of the most misunderstood topics is *karma-yoga*. The whole life of a Hindu is supposed to be one of *karma-yoga*. The *varṇāśrama-dharma* (vedic scheme of life) is nothing but *karma-yoga*. When one does *nitya-naimittika-karma* for the sake of *antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi*, it is considered *karma-yoga*. That person is a *mumukṣu*, whereas the person who is interested in *artha* and *kāma* and for that purpose performs the same prayers or rituals is not a *karma-yogi*.”

Pujya Swamiji also clarifies that serving a cause is not necessarily *karma-yoga* as the cause may be nothing but an expression of a group ego which is as false as one’s own I-sense. As regards performing action without expecting results, he says:

“No one can perform action without expecting a result. When one’s likes and dislikes (*rāga-dveṣas*) subserve *dharma*, one performs one’s duties. That person is not carried away by his likes and dislikes and does not go against the *dharma*. Fulfilling one’s *rāga-dveṣas* at the cost of *dharma* is called attachment to the fruits of action (*phala-āśakti*). As long as one performs an action in keeping with

*dharma*, whether one likes the action or not, one is a *karma-yogi*.”

“Even if one performs action for the sake of fulfilling one’s own *rāga-dveṣas*, as long as it is not against the *sāmānya dharma* (universal values) one can still be a *karma-yogi*, if one takes the result of action as *prasāda* coming from the Lord. This attitude is present in the lives of Hindus even today. Building a house is fulfilling a *rāga*. One can build a house without going against any *dharma*. But still, the house (*karma-phala*) can be offered to the Lord at the time *gṛha-praveśa*, and then it can be taken as *prasāda*. If that attitude is genuine and is maintained through out one’s life with reference to all achievements, one is a *karma yogi*. A life of *karma-yoga*, which is a *yoga* of attitude with reference to action and its results, will free one from the hold of *rāga-dveṣas*. One becomes ready for self-knowledge as well as *niṣṭhā* therein.” (Swami Dayananda – The Teaching Tradition of Advaita Vedanta, p 14)

*Karma-yoga* is also wrongly taken as being skillful in action. This misunderstanding has arisen from the translation of the expression ‘*yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*’ occurring in *Gītā* (2.50), as ‘*yoga* is skill in action’. Pujya Swamiji gives its correct meaning as ‘*yoga* is discretion in action’. He says:

“In this verse, we are told that with reference to our actions, we must use our discretion, *kauśalam*. What is not to be done is avoided and what is to be done is done properly. And action we do is done with the attitude that it is our offering to the Lord, *Īśvara-arpaṇa-buddhyā*. This is *yoga*. Discretion then, is with reference to the choices involved in action and involves one’s appreciation of *Īśvara* as well.” (GHS -1, p 318)

## XII

### **Is there a separate *yoga* called *Bhakti-yoga*?**

Pujya Swamiji also makes it clear that there is no *yoga* called the *bhakti-yoga*, as the *śāstra* makes it clear that there are only two *yogas*, *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. As for *bhakti*, it is common to both *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. The daily *pūjās* that ‘*bhakti-yogi*’ does is *kāyikaṁkarma* (action through the body), the *kīrtana* that he sings is *vācikaṁkarma* (action through the mouth) and the meditation that he does is *mānasikaṁkarma* (action through the mind). In fact, this *bhakta* is only a *karma-yogi*. As for the *jñāna-yogi*, on gaining the knowledge that *Īśvara* is the maker and material of the manifestation, which includes himself, he comes to be naturally reverential and devotional. His recognition of everything as *Īśvara* constitutes *bhakti*. Pujya Swamiji clarifies:

“*Bhakti* is the recognition of *Īśvara* and any *karma* done for the sake of recognising *Īśvara* is *yoga*. Even if you meditate mentally, it is *bhakti* because the Lord is involved. It is also a *karma* because you are doing it with your will. Any action that comes of your will and is invoking someone is a *yajña*, a *karma*. Therefore the expression *bhakti-yoga* is to be taken as *karma-yoga*, *bhakti* being a common element.”

“When there is commitment to *Īśvara*, everything becomes a *yoga*, a means. There is no discipline or activity that we can say is not *yoga*, if the Lord is involved. Who is doing it, the person’s attitude, the purpose for which an activity is being done – all these make any activity a *sādhana*, a *yoga*. It is important to understand, then, that although *yoga* has been divided into many different types, the *śāstra* makes it clear that there are only two in fact, *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*.”

“For the *jñāna-yogi* or *sannyāsī*, knowledge alone is *yoga* because the person is absolved from all duties. It is not that *jñāna-yogi* does not do any *karma* whatsoever. It is just that the person is absolved of all obligatory duties. Thus there are only two *yogas* and *bhakti* is common to both of them.” (GHS – 1, p 422-423)

## XIII

### Confusion regarding Desires

The advice often given to the seeker is that worldly desires should not be entertained and for that purpose, he should stay away from sense objects. This advice is based on the understanding that desire, by itself, is an obstacle. Even if it were so, this method is not a solution since the *rasa* (taste) of the desire remaining in the mind will have its hold on him until the *rasa* is resolved. Pujya Swamiji clears this common misconception about the need for elimination of desires and says that it is not wrong either to desire or to fulfill the desire. Discrimination lies in knowing what desires one can entertain and fulfill and what desires one should not yield to. He brings clarity to this subject by discussing them as non-binding and binding desires.

Binding desires arise from the sense of want that we entertain. Judging ourselves as incomplete, inadequate and insecure, we desire to become complete persons through our actions. The 'becoming-process' that arise out of such desires binds us, since the completeness sought is never attained. In addition, the results of our actions affect our equanimity. Actions that do not arise from this 'becoming' urge do not bind us since we are not



obliged to continue our efforts and since the results of such actions do not affect us. Puja Swamiji explains:

“*Rāga-dveṣas* are of two types – binding and non-binding. Whenever the *śāstra* talks about *kāma* in the form of *rāga* or *dveṣa*, it is talking only about those, which are binding. Therefore, one gives up all desires arising in one’s mind which are binding in nature - the desire to be secure, to be happy, to be somebody, and so on. A person who is secure with himself or herself gives up such desires naturally.” (GHS – 1, p 332, 334)

## XIV

### What it takes to be Enlightened

Puja Swamiji, having cleared the confusions that exist, elucidates as to what it takes to be enlightened through the dictum in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.5) that *ātmā* should be known i.e., should be heard of, reflected on and contemplated (*ātmā vā are dṛṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsītavyo maitreyi*).

“The hearing or *śravaṇam* includes inquiry into and analysis of the meaning of *mahāvākyas* (*Tat-tvam-asi* and statements of the same purport) in order to arrive at clear, ascertained knowledge of precisely what the sentences say. Concurrent with hearing and secondary to hearing are reflection (*mananam*) and contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*). It is through

‘hearing’ and ‘hearing’ alone that knowledge is gained; but as needed, reflection and contemplation are aids to ‘hearing’. Even though the meaning of what is being heard is understood, the questioning intellect may raise doubts; or, habit-born obstacles may cloud understanding. Valid knowledge must be definite and clear. If doubts, vagueness or interfering habits of thoughts are present, reflection and contemplation will help.”

“Reflection is use of reasoning to eliminate the doubts raised by the intellect challenging the knowledge of oneself gained through Vedānta. Vedānta says that there is one but what I see are many. My perception stands against the knowledge unfolded by Vedānta; and my reasoning, based on perceptual data, deals only with duality. So, what can the intellect do when confronted with the knowledge of Vedānta – the fact of non-duality? It can use its duality-based logic to establish the fallacy of duality. The ordinary perceptual means of knowledge cannot reveal non-duality but the ‘knowledge’ of duality revealed by these means is negatable by the reasoning intellect itself. So, in *mananam* the doubts that arise because of perceived duality are eliminated by analysis, which reveals the fallacy of the thinking process that poses the doubt. Through

reason's negation of duality, the doubts challenging the knowledge of non-duality go."

"The inquiry and analysis of *mananam* also examine and dismiss the contentions of the various schools of thought which object to the knowledge of Vedānta. It is for the sake of one's own clarity that these schools must be dismissed, the fallacies in their contentions seen, the defects in their logic revealed by logic, all questions answered, all shades of meaning analysed. So, in *mananam*, one looks at all possible questions and answers them – both the questions of one's own inquiring intellect and the arguments raised by contending schools of thought. One answers all questions until the intellect can no longer raise any objections, because knowledge does not brook any doubt. There is no co-existence between knowledge and doubt, between knowledge and vagueness."

"It is the function of reflection (*mananam*) to free the very process of thinking. Free thinking – thinking which is not stifled or chained – prepares one for the discovery of one's essential freedom by clearing away (through use of logic itself) all obstructive fallacies entertained by the intellect. It is through the free thinking of reflection that any distortion of reason introduced by charismatic conditioning can be recognised and eliminated. Knowledge, not conclusions or beliefs advocated by some

charismatic personality, is the subject matter of Vedānta. If we mix personality and the subject matter of knowledge, both are spoiled.”

“*Śravaṇam* eliminates doubts about what Vedānta means and *mananam* eliminates the doubts about which is correct – knowledge from Vedānta or data from some other means or source. With all doubts gone, the intellect no longer poses a problem. The knowledge, ‘*Tat-tvam-asi*’, ‘*Aham brahmāsmi*’ is accepted by the intellect. When the intellect does not pose a problem what problem can there be? There can be one remaining problem; something called ‘habitual thinking’ can interfere with what is known. ‘Habitual thinking’ is a repetitive thought process, which, although it may have had some logic behind it initially, has become ‘fixed’ as a habit, no longer linked to logic. A habit of thought is not logical, it just happens; like a mood, one just gets into it.”

“The kind of ‘habitual thinking’, which is a problem for knowledge, is sometimes called *vīparīta-bhāvanā*, which means ‘opposite attitude’. *Vīparīta-bhāvanā* is an attitude opposite to the fact revealed by the knowledge of Vedānta, an attitude reflected by habitual thinking such as: ‘There is security for me in these things. There is happiness for me in this situation’.”

“A great *vairāgī* (a wise person of great dispassion) with well assimilated values requires only ‘hearing’ Vedānta scripture for clear, steady knowledge; or, if some doubt is there, reflection finishes the doubt. Afterward, nothing more is required for knowledge to be firm and clear. But for whom dispassion is not so well established, notwithstanding *śravaṇam* and *mananam*, there may be some problem with habitual thinking. When habit-born thoughts oppose the fact of oneself – the knowledge of Vedānta – contemplation (*nididhyāsanam*) is useful. To eliminate opposite thinking, contemplate. Contemplate on what you know to be the fact of yourself. See the fact that you are fullness that knows no lack. The more familiar one becomes with the fact of oneself, the less will come the opposite attitude.”

“Nothing new is gained from contemplation. The erroneous notion of opposite thinking is habitual rather than conclusive. Before *śravaṇam* and *mananam*, such notions were conclusive. Before the knowledge of myself, it was my conclusion that, ‘I am the body. Various things in the world, separate from me, make me secure, bring me happiness’. After knowledge, I know that I, limitless, am the only secure thing. I know that I, the non-dual reality of creator, creation and individual, am time-free existence, am form-free awareness, am absolute fullness. But even though weakened by

knowledge, some of the old thinking, born of habit may continue. And, until such habitual thinking goes, the knowledge gained remains knowledge with certain obstructions. Knowledge may be there but, stifled by obstructions, the fruit of knowledge is not enjoyed.

What causes the old thought habits to go? Seeing the fact of myself. The more I see myself, the less will be the hold of old thought processes. Continued *śravaṇam*, continued hearing the fact of myself unfolded by teacher and scripture, helps me become more familiar with seeing myself. In addition, in contemplation, I highlight with I have seen and heard. The meaning of certain words, which I have come to know through the unfolding of the scripture – words that tell the fact of my nature – I try, in contemplation, to see without any thinking process. With the help of a word or a sound, I just try to see the fact of what I have heard. This simple ‘seeing’ is called contemplation, *nididhyāsanam*.” (Swami Dayananda, The Value of Values, p 101 - 105)

Thus, it is only by these three means, *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam* that there is constancy in the knowledge centered on self (*adhyātma-jñānānityatvam*).

## XV

### Conclusion

The unfolding of the vision of Vedānta by Pujya Swamiji set out in this and the earlier chapters reveals that he is a teacher *par excellence*. As one deeply rooted in the knowledge of the *sampradāya*, he is able to communicate the vision of Vedānta with natural felicity and consummate ease. While teaching, he is the *pramāṇa* personified and if we, as qualified students, are fully open to the exposition of the *pramāṇa*, the teaching is instantaneously efficacious. As Swami Paramarthananda says, “it is nectar and can make everyone immortal”. As in the *sahasranāma* of Bhagavān, which presents his glory through myriad perspectives, Pujya Swamiji’s teaching can be viewed from many angles and described differently like simple, clear, direct and easily understood or as lucid, laced with humor and fascinating or as intelligent, ingenious, thorough and illuminating. Pujya Swamiji’s exposition on any subject does not leave anyone untouched. People find a lot of things happening to them by listening to him. Those, who see as he sees, consider his exposition a marvel, a wonder. Invariably, his teaching is considered a blessing. Unique is the single word that describes what it is.

Swāmini Pramānanda, one of his disciples, puts it very aptly thus:

“If only Pujya Swamiji had lived in *Dvāpara Yuga*, Bhagavān would have said in the tenth chapter of Gītā: “*Gurūṇām Dayānandosmi*”. Humanity could not see his name in Gītā because he has been left behind by the Lord to be in our midst so that we could enjoy the benefit of his presence and teaching”.

So, let us revel in his presence and his teaching!

In the following chapter, we move on to the comprehensive action taken by Pujya Swamiji in nurturing and spreading this vision.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# NURTURING AND SPREADING OF THE VISION BY PUJYA SWAMIJI

## I

### The Scenario

Traditionally, Veda is taught by the *ācārya* to his *śiṣyas* in the *gurukulam*. The *śiṣyas* are the boys who after investiture (*upanayanam*) enter a life of learning Veda in the *gurukulam*. As *brahmacarīs*, they live with the *guru*, serve him and learn the *śāstra* from him. After completing their education, the *śiṣya* either takes to *sannyāsa* or becomes a householder, *gṛhastha*. As a *sannyāsī*, he moves around, teaching. Sometimes a *gurukulam* gets established for him and he teaches there. The *gṛhastha* also teaches in his residence or elsewhere. These supplement the teaching done by *ācāryas* in the various mutts and *veda pātaśālas*. The teaching is in accordance with the teaching methods that have come down from the *ācāryas*. Such teaching constitutes the *sampradāya* and the succession of the *gurus* and *śiṣyas* (*guru-śiṣya paramparā*) has ensured the transmission of the knowledge from one generation to the next without distortion or attenuation.

The situation underwent a drastic change with the advent of the British rule. New schools with changed curricula were opened and English supplanted

*samskṛtam*. This resulted in a sharp decline in the learning of *samskṛtam* and the pursuit of the *śāstra*. As Macaulay, who brought about this change, wrote to his father on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 1836, “no Hindu who has received an English education ever remains sincerely attached to his religion”. As a result, the institution of the *gurukulam* and the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā* suffered a great set back. The renaissance, which took place from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Rai, no doubt brought about changes but it did not address the enfeeblement of the *paramparā* as a major problem. It was concerned with countering the severe and sustained ridiculing of the social, cultural and religious practices by the English and the Church. It eliminated many of the offending practices and tried to establish parallels with other major religions and defend the religious tenets. It also tried to present the *śāstra* on rational grounds so that it may gain ‘scientific respectability’. It also interpreted the culture in terms of the all-encompassing vision of the Upaniṣads of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* for wider acceptability. However, the enfeeblement of the *paramparā* continued as before.

A redeeming fact, however, has been that some institutions, of which the Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda is significant, have been publishing very moderately priced but attractive editions of the major Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-gītā, Brahmasūtra and a number of *prakaraṇa-granthas* with

English translation. Swāmī Gambhirānandā of the Mission has also translated the *Śāṅkarabhāṣyam* on the *prasthāna-traya* presenting the entire *sampradāya* in English. Commendably, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, has been making well-produced editions, at low prices, of the Upaniṣads and Gītā along with *bhāṣyam* with explanatory comments in Hindi and other regional languages. Many others have also been engaged in keeping the major texts of the *śāstra* available to the people. But, the teaching of the *śāstra* in accordance with the *sampradāya* continued to be in the doldrums.

## II

### Swami Chinmayananda's Momentous Role

In this scenario, it was Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda who brought about a sea change in the situation by personally teaching the text of Vedānta in English to all the people in public. Inducted into *sannyāsa* by Swami Sivananda of Rṣikeś, he learnt Vedānta from Sri Swami Tapovan Maharaj at Uttar Kāśi. Enlightened, he started his historic mission in 1950. He was a visionary endowed with the zeal of a missionary and he roared down from the heights of the Himalayas like the very Gaṅgā to make available the unique teaching of Vedānta to everyone. He taught the actual text of the scriptures instead of merely publishing them or speaking about them. He taught them in English. And he publicly taught

everyone regardless of the person's religion, caste, age or sex. He appropriately called it the *jñāna-yajña*. It was only through him that many, including Pujya Swamiji, came to know of the existence of the Upaniṣads. Setting out his objective, Gurudev said, "Our mission is to give all seekers a dynamic philosophy of life, an insight into our scriptures and to make the individual and national life meaningful and happy. We want hardworking missionaries and not lazy erudite scholars. Without an organisation, the Hindu will be wiped out from the face of the country. Carry the lamp of knowledge, not for your self-realisation, but for the benefit of others".

### ***Jñāna-yajñas* by Pujya Swamiji**

True to the command of his *guru*, Pujya Swamiji has been carrying the lamp of knowledge for the benefit of others. His first exposure to the Upaniṣads was in the *jñāna-yajña* that Pūjya Gurudev conducted at Madras in 1952. He became totally involved in the conduct of *yajñas* and was the first to become his full time *sevak*. After learning Vedānta, he started assiduously conducting *jñāna-yajñas* in various towns.

In the *jñāna-yajñas*, Pujya Swamiji teaches the major Upaniṣads, Bhagavad-gītā, Brahma Sūtra and explanatory texts like Upadeśa-Sāhasrī, Vivekacūdāmaṇi, Pañcadaśī, Dṛg-dṛṣya-viveka, Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotram, Advaita-makaranda, Tattva-bodha, Ātma-bodha, Vedānta-sāra and Upadeśa-sāra.

He also deals with topics tailored to the audience like, “Essence of the Gītā”, “Wisdom of the Upaniṣads”, “Gītā for day-to-day Living”, “Gītā and Stress in Modern Life”, “Values and Conflicts”, “The Quest to be Happy”, “Vedāntic Way of Life”, “Art and Science of Meditation”, “Hindu Culture for Self Growth” and “Psychology has no Solution”. Regardless of the forum, the audience and the topic, his purpose and commitment remains one and the same, namely, teaching. He says:

“For me it has always been a life of teaching. Whether I teach a book or I teach from the book, whether I teach the public or a group of serious, committed students, I always take the audience seriously and teach. Even the public talk for me is a kind of teaching.”

### III

#### **Revival of the Institution of *Gurukulam* and the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā***

While the teaching of Vedānta is consistent and systematic in the *yajñas*, the imparting of knowledge is for short periods of time. It is a far cry from the teaching in the *gurukulam* where for years the *guru* makes the resident *śiṣyas* imbibe not only the knowledge but also the values and the way of life of a committed seeker. Consequently, Pujya Gurudev Chinmayananda wanted that the teaching tradition

should be revived through the institution of *gurukulam* and made a beginning in 1963 by starting the Sandeepany Sadhanalaya at Powai, Bombay. Pujya Swamiji was involved in the setting up and running of this institution and the publication of the new monthly journal of the Mission, Tapovan Prasad. Later in 1965, he left for Rṣikeś to meticulously learn Vedānta. Having done so, by studying under Parama Pujya Swami Taranandagiri, he returned in 1968 to Bombay to conduct *jñāna-yajñas*.

### **Formulation and conduct of residential long term courses**

Meanwhile, Sadhanalaya had been in a state of flux and handing over the institution to others was also among the options being considered. It was the vision of Pujya Gurudev that Sadhanalaya would be a place of advanced learning in Vedānta so that its students could in their turn, train more students and thus set in motion a self-accelerating process to spread the knowledge of Vedānta among the people. At this juncture and at the instance of the trustees, Pujya Swamiji took upon himself the task of planning and executing a teaching program to fulfill Gurudev's vision.

As no comprehensive, time bound residential teaching programme of Vedānta was available anywhere, Pujya Swamiji evolved the curriculum on the basis of his experience in learning the *śāstra*. This

course was advertised and after screening the applications and interviewing the candidates, Pujya Swamiji selected 50 of them. Gurudev had selected 10 foreign students. With these students, the course was started on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1972.

Pujya Swamiji began the course with Tattva-bodha, which defines the important terms used in Vedānta. Then he exposed the students to *pūjā*, *japa* and *cintanam* and taught them Upadeśa-sāram of Ramana Maharishi. Among the Upaniṣads, he first taught Kena Upaniṣad, since it is relatively easy to grasp. Then to give some reinforcement to the methodology, he taught them the first chapter of Pañcadaśī. He also dealt with the *jñāna*-values detailed in the Bhagavad-gītā. During *satsaṅg* in the temple, he dealt with simple texts like Dṛg-Drśya-Viveka, Aparokṣa-anubhūti and Nārada Bhakti Sūtram. In the regular classes, he taught Bhagavad-gītā, Ātmabodha, Praśna Upaniṣad and Aitareya Upaniṣad. While teaching Kaṭha Upaniṣad, he introduced Śaṅkara *bhāṣyam*. After teaching Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad and one more chapter of Pañcadaśī, he took up Taittirīya Upaniṣad, which deals with Brahman both as it really is (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*) and as it appears to be (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*). After Taittirīya, he taught Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad along with the *kārikā* of Gauḍapāda, which establishes that Vedānta is beyond argument and contradiction. Finally, he taught them the first four *sūtras* of Brahmasūtra. This was how he progressively exposed

the vision of the *śāstra* to the students. As for Gurudev, he inspired the students through his teaching and presence whenever he was at Sadhanalaya.

The understanding of the subject by the students was appraised from the notes that they submitted and their doubts were cleared during *satsaṅgh*. There were special language classes for persons weak in *Saṁskṛtam* and English. The students were also trained in talking to the group by first narrating their own life or that of any saint and then by unfolding verses in Bhagavad-gītā. They were shown as to how *jñāna-yajñas* are conducted. They were also taken to Ṛṣikeś to familiarise them with the *sādhu* way of life.

On admission into the course, the students of both sexes including the foreigners were given *brahmacārī/brahmacāriṇi dīkṣā* with *Gāyatrī-mantra-upadeśa*. Towards the end, those who chose it were given the status of *caitanya brahmacārīs/brahmacāriṇīs*. The course concluded in April 1975. As the students were now qualified to teach, they were helped to select places where they could teach Vedānta, according to the *sampradāya*. The *śiṣya* becomes the *guru* and the *paramparā* continues.

With the successful completion of the first course, Pujya Swamiji conducted the second course from January 1976 to July 1978 with 70 students of which 30 were ladies and 25 were foreigners.



## Assessment of the course

Pujya Swamiji, as the *ācārya*, says of the course:

“At Sandeepany, the teaching is traditional and rigorous. What would take a *sādhu* in the Himalayas nine years to learn, the *brahmacārīs* in Sandeepany learnt in two and a half years.”

Swami Paramarthananda, who was a student of the second course, recalls feelingly:

“The highest role played by a wise man is that of a teacher. For, as a teacher he transfers his complete personality, which is not a personality but completeness itself, to the next generation. By the grace of Gurudev we were fortunate to come under the tutelage of such a teacher, Swami Dayanandaji.”

“In Vedānta, the methodology or tradition (*sampradāya*) of teaching is as important as the content itself. If this is not followed, scholarship alone will be transferred to the student and not the vision. Swāmiji had the task of doing this job in a totally different language - English. Yet, Swāmiji achieved it in such a spectacular manner that the tradition was uncompromisingly and rigorously maintained.”

“Swamiji’s teaching was direct. As he observes, Vedānta is the analysis of facts and appreciating them as they are. It is not talking about anything mysterious. He never points out to liberation as a future possibility but struggles to make the student appreciate it as the ever-attained fact. The student, who has lots of notions regarding knowledge and liberation, may find it difficult to appreciate the teaching initially. But soon, as the mind becomes more open, the teaching becomes instantaneously efficacious.”

“Again, Swamiji’s teaching of the values is another unique feature. Swāmiji is an embodiment of such values, that we learnt more from observing his lifestyle than from his teaching. In fact, they were complementary. And I consider that this is the greatest blessing of living with the teacher during the course of study.”

“When Vedānta comes from such a master, it is needless to say that it is nectar, which can make everyone immortal. One must be indeed blessed to get an opportunity to be exposed to such a divine teaching.”

### **Establishment of other *Gurukulams* and conduct of courses**

Pūjya Gurudev was scheduled to conduct Vedānta Camps at New York and at other places in July 1976.

Since he could not go abroad, Pujya Swamiji went in his place and conducted the camps. When the campers expressed the desire to learn the *śāstra* further, Pujya Swamiji asked them to look for a place where a Sadhanalaya could be set up. By June 1979, his disciples had bought and converted a hotel into a *gurukulam* at Piercy, set amidst red wood trees, on the banks of Eel River, 200 miles away from San Francisco. In November 1979, after pouring the water brought from Ganga into the Eel River, Pujya Swamiji started the long term residential course with 55 students and completed it in July 1982.

After the completion of the course at Piercy, Pujya Swamiji was not attached to any organisation. Swamiji's disciples on the east coast set up facilities to start a *gurukulam* on the slope of Ponoco Mountains, amidst the pine trees in Saylorsburg in Pennsylvania. Forthwith Pujya Swamiji conducted a long-term course there from January 1987 to December 1989 and taught 45 students.

Back home, in October 1990, a *gurukulam* was set up at Anaikatti in a forest setting, 25 kilometers away from Coimbatore. In this *gurukulam*, four long-term courses have been conducted so far, from November 1990 to May 1994 with 60 students, from January 1995 to July 1998 with 60 students, from May 2002 to July 2005 with 42 students and from April, 2010 to October

2013 with 75 students. A new course has started in April 2014 with 70 students.

At the *āśram* at R̥ṣikeś, a residential three-year course was conducted from June 2003. Several short-term courses are conducted in the *āśram*.

A *vedapātaśāla* has been functioning, thanks to Dr. Jichkar, at Vedapuri, which is located in the forest near Nagpur. Here, the first long-term residential course was conducted from June 2004 to July 2007. The second one is now under way.

With the establishment of these *gurukulams*, which teach Vedānta according to the *sampradāya*, the ancient institution of *gurukulam* and the *guru-śiṣya paramparā* stand properly revived. At present, around 400 of Swamiji's disciples teach Vedānta in India and other countries, true to the tradition.

## IV

### **Bringing the Teaching of Gītā into the Home**

Only a limited number can attend the courses at the *gurukulam*. While more can attend the public classes, they are conducted only in towns. Thus, only some persons can derive the benefit of the *śāstra*. Pujya Swamiji remedied this situation by bringing the text of Bhagavad-gītā home study program into the very household. The text of the Home Study is the transcription of the regular classes conducted by

Pujya Swamiji in the long-term course. The teaching is based on the *Śāṅkarabhāṣyam*. The unfolding of the vision is conversational and direct. As Pujya Swamiji says in the foreword:

“The material is presented to the reader as a program for self-study. If this is borne in mind while reading, one can enjoy the same attitude of a student in the class listening to the whole process of unfoldment of the contents of the words of Bhagavān. The study will then prove to be as rewarding as directly listening to the teacher. This attitude would prove to be *ātmakṛpā*. Once this *kṛpā* is there, the other two, *sāstrakṛpā* and *Īśvarakṛpā* would follow.”

As regards his choice of Bhagavad-gītā, he explains:

“Gītā gives a plan of living. It is not a book of techniques. It is a book that revolutionises your thinking. It makes you change your vision. The vision of the Gītā is that you are the whole. You are happy not because of any reason. You are happy because you cannot be otherwise. And the vision of Bhagavad-gītā, I would say, is a way of living for you to own up your own fullness, your own happiness, your own joy. Your whole life can be a *yoga*. All that you need is a change of attitude. A change of attitude takes place in the wake of certain understanding.”

“There is no short cut for understanding. One requires to have a certain preparedness for understanding. Understanding of the Gītā requires a prepared person in life - emotionally mature, spontaneously proper. He should be the one who is able to do not only what is right but also what is appropriate. All these are dealt with in Bhagavad-gītā.”

“From the childhood onwards we have been looking for the infallible. This is the basic problem of a human being. One has to discover the infallible. Lord Krishna says *Īśvara* is infallible. Do you know why? Because, he is in the form of order - physical, physiological, biological, psychological order; and the cognitive order because of which I can know all other forms of order. All that (order) is *Īśvara*, the infallible. I can never be away from him. This has to be discovered. The more *Īśvara* there is in your life, there would be spiritual and religious pragmatism.”

“To live intelligently is just to come to realities, reduce subjectivity and look at realities. That is intelligent living according to me. That is the vision and the way of life in the Bhagavad-gītā” (Arsha Vidya Bharati, Sep 1999, p 8 -10)

## **Bhagavad Gītā home study groups**

Pujya Swamiji recommends the formation of Gītā Home Study Groups. He says:

“Form a small group of 8 to 10 people, which we call as Gītā Vicāra Group, with a commitment to meet at a regular interval, like once in a week, and study together. One person can play the role of a facilitator and the group members can choose to take turns playing this role. Each member in the group reads a couple of pages loudly and then it can be discussed. The group becomes a support group and will help you stay with the *satsaṅga* through thick and thin. If the group is unable to find answers, you can note down the questions and have them addressed by one of the teachers in the Gurukulam.”

“It is an ideal way of imbibing the vision. It not only provides the content but also acts as a support group for *satsaṅga*. For beginners, *satsaṅga* is very important. It is so easy for the initial interest to fade away. So, for people to stay in touch, a Gītā Vicāra Group is very useful.”

Besides numerous such Bhagavad Gītā Home Study groups in India, such groups are also functioning in 23 states in the United States and in Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Japan, Malayasia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The Gītā Home Study Programme is in 4116 pages, divided into nine volumes. Translation of the text is now available in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Gujarati and Hindi. Chapter 2 is available in Japanese and some of the chapters are available in Spanish.

## V

### **Teaching the Children the Heritage of the Vedas**

#### **Origin of the programme**

The culture, which pervades every aspect of our life, is connected to the vision of the Vedas. In the Vedic vision, nothing is separate from *Īśvara* and the way of living has evolved out of that vision. Under normal circumstances, the way of living would continue to be rooted in the vision even with the passage of time. But when one leaves the country and lives abroad where the vision is entirely different with very different goals, values, culture and life style, disconnection with the Vedic moorings and their cultural expression takes place. Also, the children who grow up there learn misinterpreted versions of their *dharma*, culture and traditions from their teachers, textbooks, TV and the Internet. The little knowledge they have about their tradition becomes distorted and they tend to be totally alienated from their roots.



Unfortunately, in India too, the situation has been fast changing on similar lines. Children had earlier been brought up in joint families which had a number of elders rooted in the culture. In the neighbourhood, there were discourses and plays based on scriptures conducted round the year. The temples were humming with such activity. There was at least one *sādhu* in every village. But now, in the nuclear families, of which the elders are not a part, the working parents have little time to spare for their children. The books prescribed in the schools are fully excised of their Vedic content. The film and the TV have displaced the entertainment based on the tradition. Thus, what was earlier imbibed naturally from parents and grandparents, the school and within one's own community is no longer available to the children. In its place, what is influencing them is the western psyche where man is the ultimate master who controls others and the environment for his own benefit and where it is natural and right for the fittest and the strongest to survive. This contra-culture denies them the entire benefit of their heritage.

Pujya Swamiji addressed this problem when he was in USA by initiating a teaching program so that the children may be given a meaningful exposure to their culture. He had in Kumari Sunita Ramaswamy (now Swamini Pramananda) and Sri Sundar Ramaswamy (now Sri Dhira Caitanya) the persons well suited to develop this program. They started conducting

classes in New York and New Jersey to teach Vedic heritage to Indian children and Vedānta to adults. Based on their learning and a decade of teaching experience, they developed the Vedic heritage teaching program for children, under the guidance of Pujya Swamiji. This is now named as *Pūrṇa Vidyā*.

### **Perspective and scope of the *Pūrṇa Vidyā* programme**

Pujya Swamiji explains in detail the perspective and scope of this programme.

#### **Inculcating the spirit of the cultural forms**

"The spirit of the cultural forms these forms is what is to be taught. It has to be inculcated. A form without spirit is a dead body. It will disappear. Forms are essential. We have certain forms *vaṇakkam, namaste*, how to talk respectfully etc. We address people in certain way. What is respect grows upon you through forms alone. Thus, forms are very important. Without forms, the spirit will disappear. The form brings in the spirit. And a spirit without form is a ghost. You cannot deal with it."

"People have been ridiculing forms. They are the neutralised Hindus in this country. Because they were ridiculed, the forms too were ridiculed in the schools. Forms are given up and with the forms go the spirit too. What do you have for yourself as a

person? What value do you have? If the forms of your parents, of your grandparents, of your great grandparents, do not command any respect from you, then you are devaluing yourself. That is the truth, the psychological truth.”

“Sometimes forms can undergo certain changes because they are liable to change. There is nothing wrong. But you must have the forms. The spirit remains always the same. Forms change; spirit does not change. How you show respect may change, but there should be a form and the spirit of respect is always the same. In this programme we have a discussion about forms and their spirit.”

“The various cultural forms that we follow, such as *namaste*, wearing a *tilakam* on the forehead, drawing the *kolam* or the *raṅgoli*, is cultural as well as religious too. For an Indian woman, wearing ornaments are neither mere cosmetic alone nor it is sheer jewellery but is the symbol of *Lakṣmī*. A woman herself is *Lakṣmī*. She is *Gṛhalakṣmī*. The classical Indian dancer salutes the stage, salutes the teacher, salutes the accompaniments, salutes an altar and then begins to dance. At the end of the programme, again the dancer salutes the stage. Dance is cultural and religious. The Indian classical music concert will always begin with a prayer and end with *maṅgalam*, which is a prayer

again. The themes of the songs are connected to religion.”

“Thus, if you look at our culture you find that it is highly connected to the religion of its land. Our attitude towards money and knowledge is an attitude born of a certain religious awareness. You cannot, however rich you are, step on a rupee note. To step on something is considered to be an act of desecration. That is cultural. If you unwittingly step upon a rupee, being born and brought up in this culture, you will ask for pardon. A rupee note is not just a piece of paper that buys things. It is *Dhanalakṣmī*. Therefore, your attitude towards that money is cultural and religious. Even a *sannyāsī*, who does not have anything to do with money, will not desecrate *Lakṣmī*.”

“If you take our attitude towards marriage, it is again religious and cultural. In India, we strive hard to bring the people together because coming in between a husband and a wife is considered a *pāpa*. Similarly, one does not go walking between a teacher and student because it is something sacred. One cannot walk in between husband and wife because there is *Varalakṣmī*; between a teacher and student because there is *Sarasvatī*. You cannot step on a rupee, because it is *Dhanalakṣmī*.”

“And so too, you cannot step on any book whether it is Indian history or microbiology or geography or

metallurgy, because, that is our culture expressing our attitude and that attitude is a very beautiful attitude. Any form or discipline of knowledge is sacred to us. It is knowledge, which is a part of 'all knowledge', which we call *Īśvara*, which we invoke in the form of *Sarasvatī*, who is not separate from *Īśvara*. So, all knowledge is viewed as goddess of knowledge. Her knowledge does not exclude any knowledge. Therefore stepping upon a book again is considered to be a sacrilege and an act of desecration. If you happen to step on a book you ask for pardon."

"Cultural forms are an expression of our attitude and this attitude comes from spiritual wisdom. How you look upon things gives you the attitude. Attitude is always consequential to our understanding. Therefore, all our forms of expressions have a religious connotation and that religious connotation is an attitude born of our understanding. This is our heritage."

### **Growing up with self esteem**

"Now we find some of the children go to schools run by various missionaries. Hindu children go to these schools without *pottu* or a *tilakam* on their forehead. They are told that is for the sake of uniformity that they should not have *pottu*. Why does not everybody wear *pottu* and make it uniform? Is it not shocking that in our own country

you cannot wear an important thing like *pottu*? It is not an ordinary thing that is happening.”

“The body is a temple for us; the *pottu* is an act of offering worship to the Lord within. Even *snānam*, i.e. daily bath is also an act of ritual. The flower you wear is again an offering to the Lord inside. It is purely ritual. It is a daily worship. When you go to a temple and if there is a ritual being conducted, people are sitting, and you cannot go round the temple, then what do you do? You go round yourself three times. Please understand that this is possible only in this country. Nowhere else in the world it is possible. Think of that! What a self-esteem you will have when you look upon yourself as a seat for the Lord! This body is a temple, the *buddhi*, your heart is the seat, the main shrine, where the Lord is seated. What kind of self-esteem you will have? Can you say, ‘I have a low self-esteem’? It is amazing and this is how we look upon ourselves. That is why we cannot condemn anybody. That becomes an advantage for people. Our goodness becomes an advantage for others “

“Every child should know the native cultural forms. The parents themselves may not know anything about their religious beliefs etc. They are probably neutralised because of exposure to various other things and even though they might not have changed their religion, their conviction is

always very weak. The forms themselves have got eroded. What is handed over is almost nothing. Even when the parents do something without being convinced of what they are doing, then what kind of a value will the child have? What kind of value will I have for my mother and father? This is what they say the problem of roots. Therefore, you have to make sure that the child grows with certain self-esteem."

### **Growing up among different value systems**

"Children growing up in the modern society are exposed to different cultures, different value systems. Value systems mean simple social values, cultural values. Other values are universal. There is nothing cultural about a universal value. That I should not hurt others and that I do not want to get hurt also is universal. I am talking of the jeans, wearing jeans with patches and holes and strings flowing as though it is very old. And the colour is off here and there. It is considered a cool thing to do it. Along with that costume and get-up goes a certain attitude, an attitude towards life itself, towards people, towards culture, towards tradition, towards elders, towards the parents and so on. The whole person goes along with the jeans."

"It is important that we understand the pressures behind our choices. Do you succumb to the

pressures? A person yielding to pressures is not going to stand up when the situation demands him to stand up. He will yield. Therefore, one has to train oneself to stand up to one's own convictions. And for that, one has to have convictions. All this implies a lot of learning and a lot of thinking."

"We stimulate the people's thinking. We need not give conclusions. Certain things we have to say, this is what it is - one plus one is two, it is not three or four. You have to make the child understand that. There are certain things, which we need not conclude. But we have to help them to think, to make appropriate choices. That is also a programme of discussion, which we have initiated at the end for the teenagers. We have initiated a programme of discussion, wherein each one finds a capacity to analyse the issues and come to one's own conclusions."

"Life is becoming more and more complex because there are more and more choices. Earlier, life was simple because choices were not many. Therefore, you knew exactly what you were going to be when you grew up. Our country had a culture, which was highly structured, a culture that assured a structured life. Earlier, even before the son or a daughter is born, definitely the parents knew what the child was going to be. There was no choice. Father was a priest, son is born a priest even as a



child. He is going to be a priest and will marry a daughter of a priest. Similarly, a carpenter's son was a carpenter. Goldsmith's son was a goldsmith. Think of that. Only in this country! We did not have any competition. We had a society of the least competition. Therefore, we had time to work into ourselves. We could do this inner work of growing inside as a person and at the same time, master the craft that we were engaged in."

"Our modern life has given us a society which is full of choices, which is a drastic change from our earlier cultural pattern, where there were no choices to make. We do not even have a culture for competition. Thus, it is all the more important that we nurture our children with an in-built cognitive structure, which will help them to make choices, and make them more responsible. Therefore, you have to teach the children so that they have a basis to make the right choices in life. A child should know that to be a complete person, he or she must be in charge of its life. This is Vedic heritage."

### **The value of values**

"Why a value is so important? What is the value of a value? Is it just because my dad told? Dad says, 'Speak truth'. The boy says, 'Why should I? If I tell a lie, I can make more money. Why should I speak truth, if I can make money by telling lies?' Then the father says, 'No no, when you tell lies, you will lose

your credibility'. The boy says, 'I don't care for credibility. I will be careful. And even if I lose credibility I don't care'. The topic ends there. What are you going to do? So, arguments don't really address the issue."

"Why should anybody speak truth? What is it that the person loses when he does not speak the truth? What is the necessity for conforming oneself to speaking the truth? There should be some reason. That reason should be in itself and not be external. These aspects are discussed and addressed in this teaching programme."

### **Spiritual life**

"A religious life is not a spiritual life. A spiritual life implies religious life, moral life, ethical life and so on. Religious life does not assure a spiritual life whereas spiritual life does imply religious life. One can be religious and still be angry, selfish and self centered. Religious life does not address all problems. Therefore, what is spiritual life? It is here when you address certain problems that your spiritual life begins. We should know how to address our problems and look at ourselves without blaming others. What upsets you? What makes you to get so easily swept away by situations? We must look into ourselves. We have that kind of a programme."

## The significance of Gītā

“Then finally, what is the significance of Gītā? It is important for us to have at least one book that expounds the vision of life and culture that is easily accessible to everyone. A Christian can say, ‘I have a Bible’. If you are asked about your book, you cannot say ‘The four Vedas’. This may be true, but the Vedas are too vast to relate and understand. Our problem is a problem of too many riches. Everything is huge. Therefore, we need one book to relate to. Bhagavad-gītā, given by *Vyāsa*, comprising of eighteen chapters is a single book, which we can say as our scripture. It has a vision and a way of life too. It talks about healthy attitudes and how to make your life itself as a growing process.”

“It is not enough that you physically grow into an adult. Growing into an adult physically will take place whether you like it or not, if you survive for a few years. But there is an inner growth involved. That has to come from your own initiative. Unless you know there is something to grow into, where is the initiative? You should see the possibility. The children should be given the possibility. Thus we have at the end a discussion about Gītā which gives those possibilities.”

## The structure and content of *Pūrṇa Vidyā*

The teaching programme is structured into

- Text Book for the student;
- Book on Pūjā and Prayers with audiocassette and
- Guidelines for Teaching for the teacher.

The text consists of 12 volumes suited for the children from the age of six to seventeen and is taught from class three to twelve. Each volume is taught in one academic year in thirty-two classes, each of forty to ninety minute's duration. Guidelines are provided to the teacher and teachers training camps are also held.

The twelve volumes of *Pūrṇa Vidyā* deal with:

1. Pañcatantra for the Young;
2. Puraṇic Tales for the Young;
3. Ramāyaṇa;
4. Bhāgavata Purāṇa;
5. Mahābhārata;
6. Values;
7. Īśvara and Religious Disciplines;
8. Religious Culture;
9. Sanātana Dharma;
10. Human Development and Spiritual Growth;
11. Vedic Knowledge; and
12. Introduction to Bhagavad-gītā.

Parts 4 to 12 are accompanied by the Guidelines for Teaching.

The entire programme is now available in English, Hindi, Tamil and Gujarati. Versions in other languages are to follow.

### **Need for teaching *Pūrṇa Vidyā* in the school**

Pujya Swamiji wants the school managements to introduce *Pūrṇa Vidyā* in their schools for teaching. He gives the reasons therefor:

“Running a school is not running a business. The child has come to you to learn. It has got a right to grow as a human being. You have taken up the responsibility of making the child. So, it has everything to do with the child who is growing, who needs to be taught, and who needs to have a solid basis with total confidence in itself, with self-respect and self-esteem. It has got a right to grow and therefore you are supposed to be the custodian of that growth. And this growth is initiated by validating our culture, our parentage. Everything should be validated and validation comes from finding the meaning. You have to give meaning to what your parents have been doing, what your forefathers have been doing. There is a meaning in it and when that meaning is given, you are validated. That is why I stress that the management has no choice but to adopt and teach this Vedic heritage programme.”

## ***Pūrṇa Vidyā* and secularism**

Generally, there is resistance to teach *Pūrṇa Vidyā* in the schools on the ground that it is inconsistent with secularism. Pujya Swamiji analysed this contention in detail while releasing the revised edition of this teaching program at Chennai. He established that the teaching of *Pūrṇa Vidyā* to children in the schools is fully justified on the following grounds:

- We have to teach our children the wisdom of their tradition, as it constitutes their core personality. Denying them this wisdom will render them rootless and it would amount to a crime.
- Our culture is both unique and rich. It inculcates a reverential attitude towards everyone and everything, including the air and the earth. Every inhabitant of this country should know it, as it would provide him with the understanding that is necessary for living harmoniously with everyone.
- Our culture is connected to our religion and our religion is connected to our spiritual wisdom. Our culture has to be understood the way it is.

Relevant extracts from this speech are given below.

**The Hindu psyche – “Practicing my religion hurts others”**

“We create problems and try our best to solve them. *Pūrṇa Vidyā* is an attempt to solve the problem we have created. The problem we have created is a very serious one. In the name of secularism, we have created a very dangerous situation. We have created *śatrus* (enemies) to ourselves. If we are non-interfering in religious affairs in a country where there are different religious traditions, we can say there is secularism. The State does not interfere in religions. The State creates a situation where people following different religions feel safe to pursue their religions. They do not feel persecuted because they happen to pursue a given religious tradition. Then, the State is doing a good job of practicing secularism.

But we have somehow come to feel that the pursuit of a given religion and openly declaring that I pursue this religion by wearing a *tilakam* are not correct. Others can pursue openly. If I pursue my religion and I make it known to people that this is my religion, somehow I have come to feel, I am perhaps made to feel, that I am doing a wrong thing, that I am hurting the feeling of others. Understand this well. The whole Hindu psyche has

this feeling that to practice my religion amounts to hurting others.”

### **The State also feels that way**

“And it is not only the Hindus who feel that way; the State begins to feel that way. That is the problem. Why should a secular State feel that way? How will I educate my child in my culture without telling a few things that happen to be connected to my attitude and behaviour patterns, which are cultural? Should I feel guilty that I say ‘*namaste*’? This is cultural. It is the culture of this country where Hindus happen to be unfortunately the majority and they do not have any other country to go to also. I am made to feel guilty about this. How am I going to teach my child a culture, which is inseparable from this attitude? How am I going to teach my child my culture without giving the background behind my attitude towards money, my attitude towards wisdom, towards knowledge, towards elders, towards country, towards the elements – my attitude towards all these? ”

### **Attempts afoot to negate native culture and Bhārat**

“In this land there is a native culture, even though modern historians of Jawaharlal Nehru University are struggling hard to prove that there is no native culture. They are struggling hard. They attempt



very methodically through the media to prove that there was no entity called Indian nation. There was no Bhārat. But the *saṅkalpa* is '*bhārata varṣe bhāratakhaṇḍe*'. But they want to prove that there was no country because communism does not believe in nationalism. But poor nationalism is connected to our culture, our culture is connected to our religion, our religion is connected to our spiritual wisdom; it is one whole *Pūrṇa Vidyā*."

### **Denying core personality to children is a crime**

"I tell you: there is no (other) way in which you can teach your children your culture. And, not to teach your children the culture is a crime because they will have no core personality. The core personality, the core person consists of that security in terms of culture, in terms of mooring, in terms of heritage. It is wrong to deny their culture, their roots. I read a book entitled 'Roots' written by an American black. Two centuries ago, they were brought to America as slaves. If you see their lives, they are better off even if you go to Harlem. They call it a New York slum. In fact, it is better than some of our Sion and Matunga flats. They have a cooking range, gas stove and air-conditioning. They are better off, but they are still adjusting themselves, uprooted from their culture. When you uproot a person from his or her own culture, for that person, the children that are born in the new environment,

neither can they identify with these people nor have the parents really reconciled to the new culture. That is handed over to the children and the children grow in a society where they need to adjust themselves all the time. Therefore, what happens now? In the people, after two centuries there is no emotional stability. It is really a broken society. Why I say this, because after two centuries of this uprooting from their culture, neither they have the new culture in the core person nor they have their own native culture to give that stability to the core person. They are totally destroyed people emotionally.

### **Our culture has to be understood the way it is**

“Indian culture is a gold mine. It has its own uniqueness. Every culture has its uniqueness. But in this uniqueness, there are riches. Vegetarianism is uniqueness in our culture and there is a certain richness about it. Our dance is unique, our music is unique, our attitude towards wealth etc. is unique, our looking at the world is unique and in that uniqueness, there is truth – not only there is wealth, there is truth. And the truth gives its wealth. Truth because it is *abādhitam* – it cannot be negated. It is never negated, and it is not possible for you to shake it because all the way I can back it up. It is amazing. It has no internal contradictions and no external contradictions. There is no

contradiction at all between a cultural form and the wisdom that we have. We can explain all the way. Therefore our culture happens to be religious, happens to be spiritual and naturally therefore, it has got to be understood that way. We can only avoid some *pūjā vidhi*. But what is *Īśvara*, I cannot avoid. Why? This cultural attitude I cannot explain without explaining *Īśvara*. I have to explain what is this goddess of knowledge, how that knowledge is sacred. I have to explain *Īśvara* for all that – how we have the reverential attitude towards air, earth, everything. This is our culture. Without talking about *Īśvara*, this is all not possible.”

**Hinduism, which requires to be protected, is being discriminated against**

“Understand secularism properly. We need to educate the whole Indian press. They do not want to be educated anyway. We need to go on emphasising: ‘Hey! Secularism is to be impartial to all religions. Secularism is not to feel guilty to be a Hindu. You are not doing a favour if you are doing something to protect Hindu religion, because the Hindus need to be protected and everybody else is to be protected. It is a non-aggressive religion. It does not want to destroy other cultures and traditions. It has got to be protected. But we have reverse discrimination. Only Hindu temples are

controlled. Only Hindu religious customs etc. are eroded and the State interferes in all of them.”

### **Knowledge of native culture is essential for every Indian**

“Every Indian whether he is a Christian or a Muslim, has to know the native culture of this country. He has to live in harmony with us. He should respect us. In order to respect the forms he should know and understand the forms. Otherwise, he will feel estranged from the mainstream. He is a part of us. He is not separate from us. Suppose a branch of a tamarind tree says, “I don't like this tamarind tree at all. It produces sour fruits. And I don't like this. I am not a part to this”. But still it is the part of the tree. It has to learn how to live with the other branches of the tree. So, every Indian in this country, whether a Hindu, Parsi, Muslim, or a Christian, should know the forms which are prevalent here.”

“Fear comes from ignorance. The fear is always of the unknown. Really speaking, if people understand the various religious traditions and the cultural forms in the world, then fears and prejudices may go away. They may at least discover and probably appreciate the commitment on the part of people to their own cultural forms and religious traditions. Then the approach towards other religious traditions becomes more

human. One may not accept what the other believes, but one can discover respect for the other person's freedom to pursue what the other person wishes to pursue. That is very human and therefore it is very important to have the Vedic heritage teaching programme.”

## VI

### **Other Initiatives relating to the *Dharma***

#### **Conference on Saraswati River and the Hindu civilization**

Recent research perspectives from a number of disciplines have pointed to the importance of River Saraswati as the fountain head of Hindu civilization. (Saraswati was the third river that joined Ganga and Jamuna at Sangam, which is now called Allahabad.) To get to the true story of ancient India, Pujya Swamiji convened an International Conference on the subject at New Delhi in 2008 in which over fifty **well-known scholars** in the disciplines of glaciology, geology, remote sensing, earth sciences, life-sciences, archaeology, ancient texts and literature, civilization studies, hydrology and water management participated.

The proceedings of the Conference revealed that the civilization associated with the River Sarasvati stand vindicated by the extensive research on the subject. The research establishes that the Sarasvati civilization

is highly evolved and that the vast civilization represented by the early Hakra-ware communities, followed by the early, middle and mature Harappan phases of development are one and the same.

In view of these research findings, the Conference recommended the constitution of the Saravati River Basin Development Authority and several follow-up measures.

This is a major breakthrough in this highly contentious subject.

### **Digital Library Project to preserve ancient manuscripts**

For preservation of ancient manuscripts that are on the verge of getting lost, Pujya Swamiji has established a Digital Library at the Gurukulam at Anaikatti. The library has digital images of palm leaf manuscripts and paper manuscripts of about 6 lakh pages and video documentation of rituals of more than 100 hours.

A Research Council of scholars has also been formed to promote research based on these documents.

### **Preservation of Vedas and Agamas**

Several Veda *sakhas* are becoming fast extinct due to lack of infrastructure for learning. To arrest this trend, Pujya Swamiji has, so far, established the following Veda *pātasālas* -

- for the Maitrāyani *śākhā* of Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda at Manjakudi;
- for Kaṇva *śākhā* of Śukla Yajur Veda at Manjakudi;
- for the Rānāyaṇa *śākhā* of Sāma Veda in North Karnataka, at Vadakkupattu and at Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu;
- for Jaimini *śākhā* of Sāma Veda at Kodluntarapatti near Palghat; and
- for the Pippalāda *śākhā* of Atharva Veda at Bangalore.

At Manjakudi, a *pātasāla* has been set up for Vaikhānasa Āgama for training the priests of Viṣṇu temples.

### **Oduvar Project**

There has been a downward decline of the ancient Saiva tradition of singing in temples of Thevarams composed by three Saiva Saints, Appar, Sambhandar and Sundarar of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. To revive this tradition to its original glory, Pujya Swamiji launched the Oduvar Support Program in 2005. Under this, Oduvars are appointed in Saiva temples and senior Oduvars are honoured with a title and cash award of Rs. 20,000. The aim is to achieve the goal of one Oduvar in every temple visited by these composer saints. Towards this end, a Thevara *pātasāla* has been started at Tiruvidaimaruthur.

## **Bringing back to life the famous Brhadeesvarar Temple at Tanjore**

Pujya Swamiji has instituted proper daily *pūjā* with *mahā naivedyam* commensurate with the size of the temple. With this, there is an admirable increase in the number of devotees visiting the temple daily with devotion and fervour.

The *Aṣṭa Dik Pālakas* in the temple have also been reconstructed.

## **The Tiruvidaimaruthur Chariot Project**

Among the temple chariots, those at Tiruvidaimaruthur are very famous. Unfortunately, these were left to deteriorate and there had been no chariot festival for the last 74 years. On Pujya Swamiji's initiative, two of the five chariots have been constructed so far and the chariot festival has been revived.

The construction of the chariots has also resuscitated the declining fine art of wooden and granite sculptures and allied folk arts.

## **Preservation of art and music**

Pujya Swamiji has also established the Arsha Kala Rangam to promote classical Carnatic Music and instituted the "Arsha Kala Bhushanam" award. The award goes with a citation and a purse. Every year, senior musicians, both vocal and instrumental, are



given awards. Upto 2010, nineteen awards have been given.

## VII

### Composition of *Kritis*

Pujya Swamiji is known to his audiences as a teacher *par excellence*. But not many know of his considerable talents as a composer of songs. Those in the classroom or in *satsaṅg* who have heard him sing do not know that some of what he sings are his own compositions. Though Swamiji has not had any systematic training in music, his songs, which are in the style of one of the Carnatic Trinities, Sri Muthusami Diksitar, follow all the rules of composition. They are included in the repertoire of carnatic musicians and are sung in the concerts. “*Bho śambo! Śiva śambo!*” in the Revati rāgam and Ādi tālam is widely rendered. The theme song of the Aim for Sevā, *Bhārata deśa hitāya, kuru sevā tvam* in the Rāgā Deś is also his composition.

Pujya Swamiji has also composed *veṅbās* (poems) in Tamil.

All of them are euphonic and elegant and have a direct appeal.

## VIII

### The Cumulative Effect of Pujya Swamiji's Efforts

To conclude, fifty years ago, if a person were interested in learning Vedānta, he would have had great difficulty in finding a competent *guru* who can teach the *śāstra* systematically in accordance with the *sampradāya*. Not many, therefore, succeeded in getting taught fully and properly.

Now, thanks to Pujya Swamiji's multi-pronged efforts, there is a sea change in the situation. For the seeker who desires to be totally devoted to Vedānta, the residential long-term course is available in the *gurukulams*. For those who can find only some weeks at a stretch, short-term courses are conducted in the *gurukulams*. For those who can spare only some hours in the week days, Swamiji's *śiṣyas* who have attended the long-term course are conducting evening and morning classes at various places. For those who cannot attend any class, Gītā Home Study Volumes are available for study at home. As for the children, the Vedic heritage teaching (*Pūrṇa Vidyā*) books and chanting cassettes are available and are also taught in some schools.

Also, one can access the classroom and public lecture tapes, CDs and books by ordering them from

- the *Gurukulams*; or
- Sastraprakasika Trust, Chennai-600004, Phone 044-28475009, e-mail info@Sastraprakasika.org.  
or
- Arsha Vidya Research and Publication Centre, 32/4 'Sri Nidhi' Apts, III floor, Sir Desika Road, Mylapore, Chennai – 600004, Telephone 044-24997023/24997131, email: avrandpc@dataone.in; or
- [www.avgsatsangh.org](http://www.avgsatsangh.org) ; or
- [www.vedantavidyarthisingha.org](http://www.vedantavidyarthisingha.org).

Thus, if anyone wants to learn Vedānta systematically according to the *sampradāya* from anywhere in any life situation, the facility is now available for him to learn it. This is the stupendous change that Pujya Swamiji has brought about.

Having outlined the nurturing of the *Sanātana Dharma* by Pujya Swamiji, the next chapter deals with his initiatives towards the protection of the *dharma*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# PROTECTION OF THE SANĀTANA DHARMA BY PUJYA SWAMIJI

## I

### The Converting Religions

The ground reality confronting the continuance of the *Sanātana Dharma* is not understood and the gravity of the problem is not recognised. There are two distinct religious traditions in the world. One does not believe in conversion and the other does. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Shinto, Tao, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and the indigenous religious groups all over the world belong to the former category. The diversity of religious persuasions does not intimidate them. As such, they do not bother others. Live and let live is their way of life.

Christianity and Islam are, however, converting religions. Christian and Islamic societies have been homogenous by the very nature of their religion. They cannot accept anything other than their God or their path. Non-followers of their faith are called as 'heathens' by Christians and as 'kafirs' by Muslims. They are so labelled so that they can do whatever they want in regard to them without any sense of guilt. Once you call a dog a street dog, you can even kill it. They feel that the most humane thing that can be done

to the non-followers of their religion is to convert them to their religion, after destroying their cultures.

Both destruction of indigenous cultures and conversion of their followers have been assiduously followed over the centuries and are evidenced by the predominant Christian and Muslim belts of the world today. The ancient religions and culture of Europe, North and South America, Africa and Australia have been almost totally supplanted by them. In Greece, Egypt and elsewhere, what we find is not even a whiff of the original culture or civilisation but only their magnificent ruins.

This tradition continues unabated in the modern times also. Thus, in 1999 when the Pope came to India on an official visit, he said that they had planted the cross in Europe in the first millennium, in the North and South Americas in the second millennium and were going to plant it in Asia in the third millennium. In May 2003 Pope John Paul II in his address at Vatican to the bishops of India exhorted them to “courageously proclaim the Gospel” reminding them of their mandate to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:20). With Pope’s blessings, the target of 100 million conversions to Christian faith of Hindus has been set for achievement in 15 years. Money and manpower are no constraints for the project.

True to Pope's vision, in India, an organized and powerful machinery with priests and nuns are targeting the economically and emotionally vulnerable sections through charity work, mostly in the fields of education and health-care. According to an estimate, 145 billion US\$ are already being spent towards achieving religious conversions. Propaganda material has been printed in 300 languages on 800 topics.

A part of the program in India is to develop a database for every PIN code in India with precision and detail for use by the decision-makers in US to accomplish their mission. To mount the pressure, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom in its 2003 report identified India as a "country of particular concern" (CPC) on the basis of the "continued institutionalisation of Hindutva" and the passing of anti-conversion bills. The report maintains that these bills limit the religious freedom. As a CPC, India is potentially subject to sanctions by the United States for infringements on religious freedom.

Christian activities in India have not only the support of USA but also of other countries belonging to the World Council of Churches like Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Switzerland and other European countries making Christianity a very powerful force

in India, entirely disproportionate to their population of 2.5 %.

### **Subversion of Religion and Culture**

The Christian and Muslim orthodoxy and the Communists are averse to national identity rooted in culture. As for the Indian Communists, who did not join the mainstream freedom struggle in India and who hoped for the emergence of a number of independent states in the sub-continent, religious and cultural identity are impediments to spread their ideology. Thus, to all of them, their target stands easily identified.

A very comprehensive scheme to achieve their ends has been quietly under successful implementation for a long time now. One aspect of it lies in the seduction of the intellectual, the elite, the media persons and the youth from their cultural moorings into theirs. Persons of some mettle in the academic, political and professional fields who can provide leadership are weaned away from the traditional roots. The bright ones and the media persons are offered scholarships, fellowships and remunerative positions. The business and economic elite on the look out for partnership or networks with western trade or business leaders are also drawn in. As for the growing children, this work is taken care of by the network of Christian educational institutions. The cultural identity of all

the persons who come within their sphere of influence gets subtly effaced.

Cultural subversion is taking place by giving Christianity a Hindu package. The converts, especially persons in high office and prominent public men, continue to have their Hindu names; the media on their part do not ever mention their Christian names. Hindu religious terminology like *veda* is used for Christian texts; *munḍan*, *vidyārambham*, *deepa pūjā*, *arcanā*, *abhiṣeka* are performed and *candanam*, *kuṅkumam* and *vibhūti* are dispensed in churches. The church itself is called a “koil” (temple). Many priests also wear saffron clothes, and some have Hindu *sannyasī* names like Parama Arubi Ananda, Swami Abhishiktananda, and Swami Silanananda!

Simultaneously, cultural practices are also being changed by celebration of Valentine Day and the like. Women who have been the bastion of culture are being led into western dress and values through the fashion lane by selection of Indians as Miss Universe, Miss World and through increasing conduct of fashion shows with wide coverage on the Indian TV and magazines. This ploy has been quite successful. Already in almost all the private TV channels, the lady anchor and the ladies in the dance sequences wear scanty clothes in the western style. Through the TV advertisements, the need based spending culture is also fast being changed into consumerist culture



displacing the ethical and spiritual values by making money, possessions and pleasure as the primary goals of living.

At the cognitive level, a section of the western as also the communist intellectuals and think tanks have been devaluing Indian nationalism, religion and culture. Some academics, particularly in some American Universities and in some Indian Universities have been publishing articles, PhD theses and books putting out ill-informed or purposely distorted analysis of Hinduism. They also negate the coherence in the society, its common roots and the unique religious traditions by fraudulent versions of the history, religion and culture. These find their way as recommended readings in schools and colleges and are even included in the textbooks prescribed for study. In most educational institutions, little space is available for any substantial Hindu religious studies, as it is not permitted through wanton misinterpretation of the principle of secularism.

The other techniques that are used are to discredit the religion by denigration of its religious leaders and institutions and by the withholding of all information about the good things done by them. As regards those practices and principles, which cannot be attacked since they are widely acknowledged to be valuable, the technique is to either to detach them from their Hindu identity or totally misappropriate them by

renaming them. At the day-to-day level, disconnection with the heritage is done by ridiculing the identification of oneself as a Hindu as being retrograde and as being a fundamentalist. Such disconnection is also made as the norm of broadmindedness, secularism and public acceptability.

The result achieved through these multi-pronged attacks is the enfeeblement and the invalidation of the Hindu-consciousness in the Hindu. Pujya Swamiji calls such a person as the “neutralised Hindu”. The perception of the neutralised Hindus of what constitutes national interest gets so perverted that in the guise of national interest they can easily ignore the sentiments and interests of the majority of the population. Secularism implemented as reverse discrimination and the open application of pressure by powerful foreign countries towards that end appear quite legitimate to them. That the nation rooted in vedic culture is being converted into a non-descript country and that the country’s very integrity is being eroded are totally lost on them. They are apathetic and apologetic about their religion. The over all success already achieved by such efforts is there for all to see in the effective neutralisation of the Hindus and in the public men, the policy maker and the media being either unsympathetic or unfriendly to the religion of the majority. Pujya Swamiji points out:

“When we refer to someone by the word ‘Christian’ or ‘Muslim’, we notice that there is no pejorative sense for those terms. But no sooner than we say the word ‘Hindu’, does the epithet of ‘fundamentalism’ gets tacked on.”

This position has been brought about in the country in which more than 80% of its inhabitants are Hindus!

### **The demographic situation**

The demographic profile of India is also changing to the detriment of the Hindus. The percentage of Hindus has declined by 4.5% in the 50 years since Independence. In 1951, Hindus comprised 85% of the population, 83.5% in 1961, 82.7% in 1971, 82.6% in 1981, 82.0% in 1991 and 80.5% in 2001. In contrast, the percentage of Muslims has increased. They constituted 9.9% of the population in 1951 were 10.7% in 1961, 11.2% in 1971, 11.4% in 1981, 12.1% in 1991 and 13.4% in 2001. In absolute numbers Muslims have grown from 3.5 crores to 13.7 crores in these decades. During the period 1991 to 2001, the Muslim growth rate was first revealed as 36% and later adjusted to 29.3%.

Statewise in Kerala, Muslims comprised 17.9 % in 1961 and grew to 24.7% in 2001. In Assam, Muslims comprised 23% in 1961 but were 30.9% in 2001. In West Bengal, Muslims rose from 20% in 1961 to 25.2% in 2001. In Maharashtra, they grew from 7.7% in 1961

to 10.6% in 2001. Correspondingly, the proportion of Hindus has declined.

As regards Christians, in Tripura, there were no Christians at the time of Independence; now, they number 1.2 lacs. In Arunachal Pradesh, there were 1770 Christians in 1921; now they are 12 lacs.

The demographic change since Independence in neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh is in sharp contrast. In Pakistan, the minorities have been almost totally wiped out. In 1941, Hindus and Sikhs constituted 19% of present-day Pakistan. In 2001, it is around 1%! In Bangladesh, the decline of the Hindus is very sharp. The Hindus who were 29% of present day Bangladesh in 1941 have become less than 8% in 2001. Thus, while Pakistan is totally islamised, Bangladesh is fast approaching that situation. Apart from the depletion of the Hindus in Bangladesh, that country has also offloaded at least 20 million Muslims to India. (Even the official figure of illegal immigrants in India given to Parliament as early as May 1997 by Sri Indrajit Gupta the Union Home Minister belonging to the Communist Party was about 10 million.)

The higher rate of growth of the Muslim population together with the mass migration from Bangladesh have made Kishanganj district of Bihar and the border districts of West Bengal and Assam into districts with

Muslim majority. These demographic developments can have security implications.

## II

### The Response

The serious situation outlined above has not evoked any meaningful response in the country. Parties who swear by “secularism” to get the minority votes to tilt the balance in their favour and those who win by the votes of ‘migrant turned voters’ would not take even the elementary steps to remedy the situation or allow it to be taken. Conversion and migration continue unabated. A proper legislation in the place of the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 is still to come. As for the neutralised Hindu, he is either blissfully unaware of the gravity and implications of the problem or does not want to take cognisance of the fact that the carpet is being pulled from under his feet.

A commentator sums up the position thus:

“Hinduism does not have a godfather to protect its interest. Even in the country of its birth, Hinduism has been marginalised and is not the state religion. Hinduism is practically an orphaned religion – orphaned in the country of its origin.”

“Hindus are faced with a monumental crisis – the crisis of lack of leadership. Hindu religious leaders

are deeply divided among themselves, hamstrung by denominational identities. Hindu organisations are not co-coordinating their efforts to achieve common goals. They are divided by different perceptions on priorities - what we need to do first, second and so on. Hindu society, to the extent its social, political and religious leadership remains fragmented, is also fragmented. If the leadership were to close the ranks, the followers and cadres will fall in line automatically. The leadership as always is letting Hindu society down. Only, this time it is letting up in the war for survival.”

### **Pujya Swamiji’s response**

Pujya Swamiji’s response to these threats is objective and comprehensive. It consists of

- the well-reasoned assertion that induced conversion constitutes violence and that it cannot be justified as a part of religious freedom;
- the reiteration of the fact that religious freedom includes the freedom to protect the religion and that induced conversion requires to be legally banned;
- the highlighting of the fact that the Government is engaged in reverse discrimination against the Hindus instead of protecting them;

- the constitution of the apex body of the Hindus so that it can authoritatively speak for the entire Hindu community and act in unison;
- the initiation of the all India caring program under the auspices of this apex body to bring a sense of belonging among all the sections of the society;
- giving indigenous religions of the world a collective voice in all matters concerning their well being and to protect and preserve their existing religious traditions and culture; and
- the carrying on of a dialogue with the world religions for preservation of religious diversity and equal respect to all religions.

### III

## Conversion is Violence

Pujya Swamiji affirms that conversion is violence. He explains as to how it is so:

“Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1948 holds in Article 18 that ‘Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief.’ While the article endorses each person’s right to change his or her religion, it does not in any way allow for another person to change a given person’s religion. On the contrary, any systematic coercive effort to impose one’s religion on another by ‘use of

force or by allurements or by any fraudulent means' is a clear violation of this basic human right. Further, Article 5 states that no one shall be subjected to degrading treatment. No conversion is possible without denigrating the religion and the religious practices of the target person. This denigration hurts the family members and the community of the converted person. He or she has to disown his or her parents, all of their family, denouncing them as wrong, while he or she alone is right. If this does not hurt a person, I wonder what else can cause hurt. The denigration of one's religion and the humiliation that accompanies the conversion experience are violations of the dignity ensured to every human being. And this denigration is against the human rights that are there in the Bill of Rights."

"Article 26(2) of the Declaration of Human Rights requires that education 'shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups.' Religious conversion is anathema to this. It promotes discord, intolerance and enmity, and as such, is an act of violence. I again say that conversion is an act of violence because it hurts deeply, not only the members of the family of the converted, but his or her entire community."



“Article 19 (of the Indian Constitution) grants every person the freedom to hold opinions and matters of belief. Article 22 ensures that everyone is entitled to the cultural rights indispensable for his or her dignity. Everyone who is a convert from a non-Christian tradition suffers an irreparable alienation from one’s culture and, tragically, from one’s own family. The family, in turn, is alienated from the community. With the conversion experience, come shame, isolation, deep personal conflict and ultimately, the seeds for discord. History testifies to the devastating loss of rich and diverse culture, gone forever in the aftermath of religious conversion.”

### **Destroying another culture is the rankest form of violence**

“The religious person is the core person. Even if you say that you are not religious, that is your religion. One plays many roles in the course of a lifetime – son, daughter, brother, sister, parent, etc. Each role comes with different scripts. I am a son to parents, and a parent to my son. Who is the person that inhabits these roles? The basic person is one who is related to the whole, to the one called God or Allah. When confronted with the threat of conversion, that basic person is hurt, and the hurt is not shallow. It is a very deep hurt, when someone talks against that particular person, or his

or her religion, or beliefs. It is rank violence. There are many shades of violence. For us, non-violence, *ahimsā*, is not just physical. It is absence of all shades of violence; and destroying another culture is the rankest form of violence.” (Swami Dayananda, Welcome the Tamil Nadu Ordinance, New Indian Express, 21.10.2002, Plenary Address in Montreal Conference on World Religions after 9/11 and NT Bureau, Chennai despatch of December 2, 2003)

## IV

### **Double Standard in Religious Freedom**

Pujya Swamiji also highlights as to how vicious the double standard adopted in the concept of religious freedom is. For the converting religions, freedom to convert others is expression of their religious freedom. And any resistance to conversion done by unfair means constitutes infringement of the converting religion’s religious freedom! In effect, the non-converting religions do not have any right to safeguard themselves from conversions through allurements, fraudulent means or force! Pujya Swamiji explains the problem to show that the converting religions have created problems for the humanity:

“Conversion is not only sanctioned in their theologies but is practiced by their followers. One who does not believe in their religion is anti-God as if God has given only their religion to follow. If he does not follow them, he is an enemy to God, an infidel and deserves to be killed. The values are not common. This is the double standard. For followers there is one set of values, for non-followers there is another set of values. Killing gets a sanction in their religion. That is why these are all dangerous religions. And I say all converting religions are dangerous. They have created problems to the humanity. It is like somebody wanting freedom to destroy me. If I do not give this freedom, I become a fundamentalist. If I give them the freedom to destroy me, then I am liberal; my religion is a free religion. That’s it. This very concept of freedom itself has to be questioned, examined and told to the people.” (Address to Parliament of World Religions, Barcelona, July 2004)

**Religious freedom includes the freedom to protect the religion**

“Religious freedom includes not just the right to choose, practice and propagate one’s religion, but the very important right to have those freedoms protected from an unsolicited attempt, especially a coercive attempt, to supplant one’s religion. And

this may involve implementing protective measures. While the right to propagate applies equally to all religions, in India, where the historically non-aggressive, pluralistic tradition is confronted by an aggressive, proselytising religion with a highly organised well-funded (including foreign funding) network that is established in political and educational institutions as well as the media, the equality is like giving wolves and the sheep the 'equal' liberty to eat one another. It is necessary, therefore, to examine our understanding of religious freedom and include in it the freedom not to have one's religion targeted for destruction."

**The story of the Native Americans is a cautionary tale**

"And we need to examine, understand and see the wisdom in the conversion bills. If there had been such bills in the Americas 400 years ago, today we would have a living Native American culture, instead of a broken people withering away on reservations, trying to piece together fragments of lost traditions. For Hindus in India today, the story of the Native Americans is a cautionary tale." (Swami Dayananda, In the Name of Religious Freedom, Daily Pioneer, March 2, 2007)

## V

### **Reverse Discrimination by Government**

One of the key challenges that Hindus face is the Governmental control of and interference in the management of temples, which is robbing the temples not only of their lands and funds but also of their cultural and religious vitality. Though the Government is a trustee and not the owner of temple lands, they sell, transfer, gift and alienate temple-owned lands under different pretexts. The hundi collections which are appropriated by the Government are used as sources of patronage and are also diverted through the budget mechanism to non-temple and non-Hindu purposes. Though India is officially a secular democracy, the State Governments appoint people (including non-Hindus) to run temple committees and operations, control religious matters like the appointment of priests, regulation of religious routines and the performance of the *pūjās*. They have been doing so since 1951 all over India.

Only Hindu temples are singled out for this blatant violation of secularism and religious freedom. In sharp contrast, the Government does not interfere in the affairs of any place of worship of non-Hindus. This is gross discrimination against the Hindus, as only Hindus are considered to be not capable of managing their places of worship and their funds.

These are being perpetrated through Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1951 and through specific legislations. Under these legal covers, the Hindu temples are being systematically impoverished and the Hindu religious practices are being seriously compromised.

## VI

### **Organizing of the Apex body for the Hindus and its Activation**

#### **Giving the *Dharma* a single voice through the Hindu Acharya Sabha**

In this grave situation, there has been no single voice that could claim to speak for the entire Hindu society. There has been no particular body that has been recognised to represent the oldest religious and spiritual tradition in the world. And most of the attacks that Hinduism has come under are because Hindus are perceived to be an amorphous body which can be taken for granted, slighted with impunity and attacked without any fear of consequences. The inclusive nature of the *Sanātana Dharma*, which accommodates several concepts in human efforts to understand the relation between divinity, human being and the universe, has been misunderstood as lack of unity. This all-embracing approach is being taken advantage of by the organised, aggressive religious traditions. Since it

was high time for Hinduism to demonstrate that its plurality and all-encompassing acceptance is not a sign of disparateness or disunity and that Hindu consciousness is one, Pujya Swamiji resolved that -

“Where there is an organized attempt to destroy the culture, this religion, we need to come together. And, when the State is joining forces, we have no choice. We need to be together. Hindu *Dharma* requires one single voice. We need an Acharya Sabha. We have to see in our own lifetime that this *Dharma* is not in danger in the near future. Later generations will take care of what they need to take care of. But in our lifetime, we need to make sure that this *Dharma* is protected; not only it is protected, it is handed over in tact without any damage to the generations to come”

The apex Hindu body composed of the Śaṅkarācāryas, Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas, Mādhva Ācāryas, heads of Liṅgāyat Mutts in Karnāṭaka, Ādhīnams of Tamil Nadu, Mahā-Maṇḍaleśvars from North India and heads of other *sampradāyas* from the different parts of India has accordingly been formed and is named “Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha”. It could be achieved only through Swamiji’s numerous, tireless visits to each Acharya. Never in the known history of this religion has such a body been formed.

The Sabha is fully representational and its present strength is 140. It met in Chennai in November 2003,

at Mumbai in October 2005, at Shri Adi Chunchungiri near Bangalore in February 2008, at Hyderabad in January 2010 and at Ahemedabad in November, 2012. In these meets, it formulated its common vision and action plans on the issues concerning Hindu *Dharma*.

Following are the major thrusts of its action.

### **Induced religious conversion should be banned by law**

The Acharya Sabha stressed that religious freedom does not include the right to denigrate any other religion, to mislead an individual or a community, or to use subtle or blatant, implicit or explicit, aggressive means to bring people, singly or in group into one's own religious fold. It rejected the plea that people are not converted but convert themselves out of conviction. Religious conversion is violence committed against the person's psyche, family, community, culture and religion. Conversion is an organised campaign to surround, attach and significantly reduce the number of followers of the *Sanātana Dharma*. Therefore, the State Governments should ban through legislation such religious conversions by force, fraud or allurements, overt or covert, and enforce the law vigorously.

*Ācāryas*, for their part, are to bestow more attention in their tours to raise the Hindu self-esteem, preserve the indigenous religious faith, discourage discriminatory



practices, reinitiate persons who have come back to their religion with adequate documentation, ensure their proper acceptance by valuing their gesture and check conversion. *Ācāryas* will specifically strengthen the spirit of caring.

*Hindu Dharma Rakṣaṇa Samitis* are to be set up at district, taluk and village levels to spread the awareness of the richness of Vedic culture especially among the least empowered people and to take recourse to legal action in specific cases to protect the Hindu interest.

### **Common Civil Code should be enacted and religious minority privileges should be ended**

The Directive Principles of the Constitution call for the enactment of a Common Civil Code. No Government has so far heeded this directive and enacted it. In this regard, Pujya Swamiji urged as follows:

‘In the world, there are privileges given to ethnically minority people. They get second privilege. Nowhere in this world, except in this country, there is religious minority privilege for the religious minority. Because of this, the common personal law that was the promise of the Constitution is yet to be enacted. Promise always remains in storage. It has not become a reality. The promise is not fulfilled in the last 60 years. The

consequence of this deficiency, the non-fulfillment of this particular promise, is far reaching and we have too many problems because of this. Common personal law is something that Acharya Sabha should insist and force the Government to pass this common law. And this is not going to happen unless we have the Government which has commitment to the country, to the people, to the culture, to the tradition.”

Thereupon, the Fifth Acharya Sabha (November 2012), called upon the Government to enact the Common Civil Code and also decided to simultaneously take the issue to the people. It also demanded removal of all religious minority privileges and the abolition of the Minorities Commission.

### **Discriminatory control over temples should be ended**

The Acharya Sabha urged that the secular State should not interfere in the affairs of any religion. Discriminatory control over temples offends secularism. Concerted legal action is called for at the States and at the Central level to end it. Accordingly, a case has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the Religious Endowment Act.

Temple committees, as part of the *Dharma Rakṣaṇa Samiti*, are to be set up for management of temple affairs with transparency and accountability and for establishing their credibility as efficient managers of the temples.

The State was called upon to help in retrieval of ancient temples, in rebuilding destroyed temples and in preserving ancient and sacred sites of Hindu heritage. Governments are also being prevailed upon not to promote tourism at the cost of the sanctity of temples.

### **Countering the disinformation on Hinduism and denigration of *Ācāryas***

In the context of the campaign of disinformation directed against Hinduism, the Acharya Sabha decided that *Ācāryas* may buy time-slots in TV channels for telecasting expertly designed programs on Hinduism and debates on Hindu concerns and issues and counter the propaganda against Hindu *dharma*. Besides mounting the efforts to install curricula of religious studies in educational institutions, individuals should be identified for higher studies on the subject and supported.

Considering the calculated humiliation of Kānci *Ācārya* through a criminal case which according to the Supreme Court has “no worthwhile *prima facie* evidence”, the Sabha called for a suitable law to

ensure that respected spiritual and religious heads are given due respect and protection against any hurtful treatment. (The Ācārya has since been acquitted of the charges.)

### **The resounding affirmation of the Hindu unity at Tirupati**

In 2006, the Government of Andhra Pradesh attempted to restrict the jurisdiction of the Tirumala temple into 4 sq. miles around the temple, thus excluding five of the seven hills. There were also brazen evangelical activities at Tirumala and Tirupati. In addition, plans were afoot to convert Tirumala into a luxury tourist spot. The reaction to these high-handed attempts deeply offending the religious sentiments was vehement. Ultimately, the Tirumala Tirupati Samrakṣaṇa Samiti met and in a public meeting held on July 2006 adopted the Tirupati Declaration of Hindu Unity. It is the most categorical statement made on behalf of the Hindus and reads as follows:

“We, Hindus, assembled here declare that we do not support, directly or indirectly, any group, institution, religion, media or political force, which preaches, practices or works against Hindu Dharma in this country.

We appeal to all the Hindus in this country and elsewhere to subscribe to and support this declaration, the Tirupati Declaration.

We want all the Hindu Religious endowments to be managed by Hindu bodies, and not by the Government. We want the secular Government to release all religious endowments from its hold”

### **Action in regard to the *Ram-setu***

In 2004, the Government of India revived the Sethusamudram Project and formally inaugurated it in 2005. It is for creating a channel for the ships to pass through the Sethusamudram by cutting across the *Ram-setu* near Rameswaram. The ostensible reason is economic but it deeply hurt the Hindu sentiments, as the *setu* facing destruction has been built by Lord Rama to cross over to Lanka. When the Acharya Sabha presented its concern in a written petition to both the Central and State Governments, they assured it that they would not do anything that would hurt the religious sentiments. Even so, the dredging continued. Legal remedy had to be sought and the Supreme Court, in their interim order of August 2007, halted further construction and in their order of April 2010, the Court decided to wait for the report of the feasibility of the alternative route *via* Dhanuskodi instead of across *Ram-setu*.

## **Preventing the raising of the height of Tehri Dam**

Another action by the Government that showed gross insensitivity to Hindu religious sentiments was the proposal to raise the height of Tehri Dam which would have considerably reduced the flow of water in Ganga, a dip in whose waters is of great spiritual significance for the Hindus. Fortunately, due to intervention of the Acharya Sabha, the proposal to raise the height of the dam has been dropped and the sacred Ganga continues to flow as before.

## **Preservation of the *Dharma* in the United States**

As in India, Pujya Swamiji has brought together in a single forum the heads of the *dharmic* institutions in North America. There, the legacy of *dharmic* traditions is being maintained through the 700 Hindu temples, 250 Sikh gurudwaras and 100 Jain temples that the Indians built. Under Pujya Swamiji's guidance, *Dharma* Summits have been co-ordinated bringing together heads of all *Devālayas* and spiritual institutions so that they can effectively counter the wanton distortion of the *dharma* being done there and to impart proper spiritual and cultural education to the younger generation.

## VII

### Swamiji's Prescription for the Protection of the *Dharma*

Pujya Swamiji's message to everyone is that we can no longer assume that the *Dharma* is strong enough to protect itself. It is actually in urgent need of being saved from further harm. We can sustain the *Dharma* only

- by knowing our religion and culture and living them; and
- by protecting the *dharmī* (follower of *Dharma*), who is engaged in protecting the *Dharma*.

He exhorts:

“In the current situation, the intrinsic value of our *Dharma* is not adequate to protect itself. Contemporary Hindus have been totally neutralised to the extent that they are unable to take a definite stand about their religion or culture. Strength is nothing but knowing your religion and culture and living it. Ignorant of your culture and religious tradition, you are nobody. You are just an assemblage of flesh and bones that somehow manages to make some money. Recognise the profundity of your culture. Be grateful for being a recipient of this great tradition. It is our duty to preserve this sacred culture.”

“To protect the *Dharma*, the *dharmī* has to be protected. A person who does not give freedom to the other to attack him is branded a fundamentalist. Protecting the *dharmī*, involves protecting him from the confused, neutralised and non-committal people who think that they are broad minded and who brand people engaged in the protection work as Hindu fundamentalist. Protect your tradition and hand it over to the next generation.” (Swami Dayananda, Meeting of *Dharma Samsthās*, Hyderabad, December 4, 2002)

## VIII

### **Launching of the All India Movement for Sevā**

Even before the first formal meeting of the Acharya Sabha, the Sabha had instituted the All India Movement for Seva in November 2000 at New Delhi. This was done out of recognition of the ground reality that there are areas where people are economically and emotionally vulnerable and are required to be cared for. It sought to revalidate them and their culture through free flow of care to them and to inspire all Indians to contribute their mite for bridging this gap between the people.

#### **The vision of society where people care for people**

The basic problem is that even though *sevā* (caring), *tyāga* (sacrifice) and *manuṣya-yajña* (care of the



humans) are part of our culture, the society that we now live in is very competitive and tends to promote the acquiring tendency. The aim is, therefore, not only to do caring work, but also to bring about a change in peoples' attitude, so that they can care for others despite the competitive atmosphere and build a society where people care for people. AIM for Seva is trying to achieve this through programs of public awareness and by starting of various caring programs that are implemented by the people in cities, towns and villages.

### **Caring is our culture, not consumerism**

Pujya Swamiji explains that this movement is in consonance with our culture, which values caring, and not consumerism. He says:

“Everyone is a born consumer. Everybody, as a child, is a consumer and does not contribute anything. As an adult, you are not only a consumer but also a contributor. The Western society is indulging in consumerism. This is not our culture. We earn, we save, we cut our coat according to the cloth and we try to slim, not to grow (fat). Therefore, our culture is entirely different. Even economically, they are learning now. Consumerism has brought in problems after problems. The economics of Hindu society are much more precious for the world to learn.”

“Growth lies in your contribution. This is our culture. You contribute more than what you consume. You are then a grown up person. Gandhiji was a great leader in our country because he tried to contribute more than what he consumed. We worship cows not just because we take its milk etc. Not only that. It consumes simple grass and afterwards gives life-saving, nourishing milk. And therefore, we say that it is a symbol of our culture. We have a sentiment for that. You need to be a contributor. You need to grow and you will grow into the status of a contributor only when you do not grumble and come to know about yourself and your culture.”

“When I look into the system of human values, what stands out for me as a thing to be cultivated deliberately and consciously is compassion. It evokes the bigness in you, the wholeness in you, the love, the giving and the understanding in you.”

“You rise above the psyche of a survivor when you contribute something to the world. Unrelated, you can at best be alive. In being so, you are a mere survivor and not a contributor. Just getting by is not really living. To be live is to be a positive contributor. *Sevā* work provides an avenue, an occasion, an opportunity for people to care for others. In doing so, you care for yourself. Something happens to a person when he or she is

able to do something for someone else. It is not pride. It is something neutral, an inner expansion that is an indication of growth because the essential nature of a human being is fullness, wholeness.”  
(Swami Dayananda, Living vs. Getting On)

### **Call to his disciples to do *Sevā* in addition to teaching**

Pujya Swamiji, who had been asking his students of Vedānta to teach and not to get involved in anything else, is now calling upon them to do *sevā* in addition to teaching. He says: “Now I feel there is a certain need. We have to pay attention to this”. He also indicates as to how *sevā* helps in assimilation of Vedānta. While talking to the students at the *Gurukulam* at Anaikatti, he said:

“I know that Vedānta works. It works in a two-fold manner:

- (i) I can let in only that much as I let out; and
- (ii) the love for *ātmā* must be there.

Vedānta does not work unless you love yourself. And unless you clear the unconscious inhibitions, you cannot love yourself. The more you run away from the world, the more you run away from yourself. Self-love is as good as the love you have for others. So, first I taught Vedānta and then I started the Aim for Seva. It all has to do with the love for *ātmā*.”

“In these few months, you have to learn how to work in the society. Everything you have to give. The more you give, the more you love. The more you love yourself, the more you understand what is going on. The work involves sharing of this knowledge and doing things that will open up the heart. *Sevā* and care involves whatever you can do to your own people. Make them recognise that *Īśvara* is everything. *Śāstra* is essential.”

“If you can make the person feel happy, you can make the person grow. You have to make the person feel cared. You can do *sevā* on your own, but we have a movement already in place in which you can learn and make use of the structure.”  
(Arsha Vidya Newsletter, December 2004, p 15-16)

### **Caring starts with the children**

In the implementation of the program, firstly, children have been selected as the focus. Pujya Swamiji explains:

“Real caring starts with the children. In our work, validation of children is the key. We need to validate their existence, and their culture. In validating the culture of the children, the parental culture is automatically validated. The entire community is strengthened. No one can then enter and disrupt the social fabric. Home for children is the answer.”

The infrastructure for the care of children is the Student Home or *cātrālaya* which provides shelter, food, health-care and quality education to children from the less fortunate sections of the society.

It is also trains women in the methods to gain economic self-sufficiency and provides education in hygiene and health care.

One hundred *cātrālayas* are now functioning in 14 states of the country.

### **Other activities of the Aim for Seva**

Besides Student Homes, Aim for Seva has set up 18 educational institutions, 270 evening tuition centres called *sandhyā gurukulams*, a number of pre-schools for children of 3-6 years called *bālwādis*, schools for mentally challenged children, and *veda pāṭhaśālās*.

In all, it serves 35,000 students, making a positive impact on 80,000 families in 2,500 villages. AIM for Seva has been granted special consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

## **IX**

### **Pujya Swamiji's International Initiatives**

#### **Participation in International Forums**

It is not only Hinduism that faces the threat from the aggressive converting religions but also every

surviving indigenous tradition throughout the world. Pujya Swamiji has, therefore, made a common cause with them towards the protection of all of them and makes full use of the international forums to voice their concerns. The recent international forums in which he effectively participated are given below:

- United Nations 50th Anniversary Celebration, 1995;
- The UNESCO Seoul Global Convention on 'Tolerance, Restoration of Morality and Humanity', 1995;
- International Conference of Great Religions of Asia, 1999;
- Millennium World Peace Summit, 2000;
- International Conference on the Global Preservation of Sacred Sites, 2001;
- International Congress for the Preservation of Religious Diversity in Delhi, 2001;
- World Youth Peace Summit, Kyoto, 2002;
- World Council of Churches: Hindu-Christian dialogue, Geneva, 2002;
- Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders, Geneva, 2002;
- World Council of Religious Leaders, Bangkok, 2002;
- World Youth Peace Summit, Kyoto, 2003;
- Parliament of World Religions, Barcelona, 2004;
- World Youth Peace Summit, Taipei, 2004;
- Asia-Pacific Youth Peace Summit, Bangkok, 2004;
- Parliament of World Religions, Monserrat, 2004;

- From Inner Heart to Global Vision World Conference, Taiwan, 2005;
- Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, New Delhi, 2007;
- International Inter-religious Encounter, Monterrey, 2007;
- World Religions after 9/11 Conference, Montreal, 2008;
- Global Peace Initiative of Women, Jaipur, 2008;
- Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, Jerusalem, 2008;
- Parliament of World Religions, Madrid, 2008;
- Faith in Human Rights Conference, The Hague, 2008;
- Hindu-Buddhist Meet, Phnom Penh, 2009;
- Hindu-Jewish Leadership Summit, New York & Washington DC, 2009; and
- Hindu-Buddhist Meet, Sri Lanka, 2010.

The significant points made by Pujya Swamiji in selected meets are given below.

### **Highlighting the harsh truth in the Millennium Peace Summit, 2000**

In the Millennium Peace Summit organised by the United Nations, Pujya Swamiji asserted in unequivocal terms the following:

- Live cultures and religions have been mindlessly destroyed for centuries and it continues to go on;
- The theologies have to be looked into to see whether the theology themselves have led to these destruction of cultures and religions; and

- No one has the right to destroy any religion or culture.

During the session on “Reconciliation and Forgiveness” he vivified these points by saying:

“Who am I to forgive for the cultures that got wiped out in Egypt, in Greece, in Africa, in South America? Who am I to forgive whom? I cannot forgive, because I am not in a position to forgive. Not that I don’t want to forgive. I have no powers to forgive. I need to be forgiven, being a part of the humanity that mindlessly destroyed the cultures, live cultures.”

“What was the culture which made all those pyramids? What was that religion that moved the people to create such wondrous monuments of human endeavour, human ingenuity, human genius? And we have the legacy of the people who have destroyed those live cultures.”

“We have today live cultures. Let us not make monuments of these. One pertinent suggestion was – look into your theology, see whether you have something, which disturbs people, which moves people to disturb, which has destroyed cultures.”

“I want to have religious freedom. You must have the freedom. Everybody has got the right to be free. If I want to be free, well, you should let me.



Otherwise, I can't be free. Or I have to resist you. Here starts the violence."

"And therefore, I say, look into the theology. Your practice of freedom of religion definitely is only to live your religion. You cannot destroy any other religion. You have no right. It is violence against other religious sentiments; it is violence against cultures; violence against religions; and this violence has been going on for centuries. And it continues to go on."

"We forgive ourselves, OK. Who should I forgive? We forgive ourselves for our follies, for our mistakes."

"But one thing - to err is human; to keep committing the same error, I don't know what it is. I know that it is not angelic."

### **International Congress for Preservation of Religious Diversity, 2001 (or The Conference of the Endangered Species)**

During the Millennium Summit of the UN, Pujya Swamiji envisaged the idea of bringing together representatives from all the world's religions to work together to find ways to protect and preserve the existing religions traditions that have survived despite great odds, so that they can be handed down as the legacy for future generations. The idea materialised in November 2001 when the World

Congress for the Preservation of Religious Diversity met at New Delhi. More than 200 delegates from most of the prevalent religious traditions including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, B'hai, Confucianism, African American and the indigenous traditions of Africa, Europe, and North and South America attended the Congress.

They deliberated for three days on the meaning of religious freedom, preservation of religious diversity in an era of globalisation and the strategies for promoting mutual understanding and respect among various religions. The delegates spoke of the emotional trauma of enforced conversion, slavery and torture and growing up without roots, ancestors and even own names or language.

The religious leaders acknowledged that colonialism and increased missionary activity were primarily responsible for their present state. In view of the continuing threat that they face from the aggressive religions, they urged that concerted action should be quickly taken.

**Induced conversion offends Human Rights and Religious Freedom and is a grave threat to peace and harmony**

In the resolutions formulated after the deliberations, the World Congress took note of the fact that in spite of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the

Human Rights Covenants and the Declaration on Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination adopted the UN General Assembly, some religious traditions continue to believe that they are scripturally mandated to proselytise the practitioners of other religious traditions through highly organised and acutely targeted conversion. Their proselytising activities have already destroyed numerous cultures and considerably impoverished the cultural heritage and wisdom of the human race.

It underlined the fact that induced conversions besides offending the human rights and religious freedom are a grave threat to peace and harmony not only within the nations but may also precipitate clashes of civilisations.

Therefore, it resolved and declared that -

- the freedom of religion means only the freedom to practice one's own religion without interference from the State or any other person or group; and that
- defending one's religious tradition against proselytisation is a legitimate exercise of religious freedom of individuals and groups; and that
- through appropriate legislation, it is imperative to preserve religious tradition as also to foster mutual and equal respect for all religions.

## **Assertion of the basic issues in the Parliament of World Religions, Barcelona, 2004**

In the meet of the Parliament of World Religions held at Barcelona, Spain in July 2004, Pujya Swamiji highlighted the basic issues. He said:

### **Hurt caused by conversion cannot be healed and secularism lies in the State protecting people from this hurt**

“Conversion is violence. It deeply hurts the entire community of the converted person. It destroys the religio-cultural roots of the person. The converted person can never be at home with himself/herself having been estranged from his/her religio-cultural roots. It is now a well known psychological fact that the emotional damage done by alienation from one’s root is not at all repairable.”

“Hurt is born of many sources. But the worst hurt, I would say, is the hurt of a religious person. Basically, first and last, I am a religious person, if I am one. That religious person is the basic person not related to anything empirical. He is related, of course, to a force beyond – whatever that force may be. That person is not an empirical person in the sense he is the father or the son or the daughter. He is the basic person. The hurt of a basic person is going to be a hurt, which is deep and true. There is no healing power, which can heal that hurt.

That is the reason why any religious sentiment, if it is violated in anyway, will produce a martyr. And thus, the religious sentiment seems to be the most sensitive. Whatever that the person believes has a basis or not, each one is free to follow his or her religion. That is human freedom. The State has got the responsibility to protect religious sentiment of all people. That I consider is secularism.”

### **Converting religions are incapacitated to concede religious freedom to others**

“I want to be clear about what I mean by ‘evangelise and convert’. I do not mean that one should not have the freedom to ‘manifest one’s religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance’ as stipulated in Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is an inalienable right, a sacred right, of all human beings that is to be cherished and protected. However, one, who considers oneself subject to a religious mandate to convert people of other religions to one one’s own, has a world-view that does not permit religious freedom. His/her inner religious landscape does not have any legitimate place for the practice of religions other than his/her own. Thus, as a person, one does not have the inner space to grant freedom to people to pursue other religions. It is not possible, either religiously or psychologically.”

## **Trying to combine evangelisation with freedom of religion amounts to fundamentalism**

“When the practice of one’s religion involves evangelising in order to bring outsiders into one’s fold, one is bound to become blind to a certain truth. One cannot, under these circumstances, recognise that one is intruding into the sanctity of the inner religious space of others. The blindness is evident when, in the same address, one can make a passionate appeal for evangelisation and also for ‘respect for religious freedom, for this is the right which touches on the individual’s most private and sovereign interior freedom’ (reference is to the address of Pope John Paul II to the Ambassador of India on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2002). While recognising an individual’s religious freedom as ‘the most private and sovereign’, there is, at the same time, an exhortation to invade this private, sacred space or in other words, to trample upon the very freedom one allegedly wishes to preserve. This contradiction reveals obtuseness in the extreme, a double standard, or a form of religious arrogance that is commonly known as fundamentalism.”

## **The call for conversion makes the call for inter-faith dialogue meaningless**

“The inter-faith dialogue that the Pope had advocated is meaningless in the light of the call for

conversion. A dialogue is meaningful only when the people involved are open to shift their stands in the wake of better wisdom. With a closed mind committed to certain non-verifiable beliefs, any dialogue is only meant to keep the people of these traditions in good humour so that the conversion work can continue without any serious opposition. How can the Church grant freedom to other religions when it looks upon them as targets for a harvest? This is a wishful and convenient interpretation of freedom. In the name of religious freedom, the church has wiped out the native religions in all other continents. Now it wants to do the same thing in Asia."

**If the Church is interested in peoples' welfare, let it allow people to follow their traditions**

"If the Church is interested in the welfare of the people, let it allow people to follow their traditions. If they want to help the poor with schools and hospitals, let them do so by appointing professionals. Why should they have priests and nuns there? There are a number of non-Christian charitable institutions all over the country run by professionals, paid workers and volunteers. Will the church undertake charitable activities without priests and nuns? Such charitable activities on the part of the Church would evoke admiration from all Hindus. Otherwise, it is a medium for

conversion. It is meant to make people think that what is done is charity even though the prime motive is to convert.”

**Protest against abuse of religious freedom is not a violation of any kind of human right**

“If Pope John Paul II could heed his own words in his address to the Bishops of India on their *ad limina* visit to the Vatican, the interests of peaceful coexistence of religions and of people of good will everywhere would be well served. On that occasion, the Pontiff said to the Bishops of India, ‘To love the least among us without expecting anything in return is truly to love Christ’. In the current climate, this appears to be a tall order for evangelising religions. Hindus in India, on the other hand, have been accommodating religions of all stripes with extraordinary grace for centuries, and if allowed, will continue to do so for centuries to come. This in no way, however, should be construed as a license for abuses such as those prohibited. Nor should a protest against such abuses be construed by decent people anywhere as a violation of any kind of human right.” (Arsha Vidya Newsletter, June 2004)

**Summit of the Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders of the World, Geneva, 2002**

The women leaders attending the Millennium Peace Summit convened in New York in 2000 constituted



less than ten per cent of those attending. Therefore, the necessity for convening a special meeting of the women religious leaders was felt. Pujya Swamiji played a crucial role in making it happen and in providing the guidelines for the conduct of the conference. He pointed out that the presentation of women as victims has significantly impeded their empowerment by further alienating them from the access to political and social resources and suggested that it may be avoided. Since religion can provide positive role models for women, the active role that women can play in religion and spirituality should be stressed. In this context, it is noteworthy that the indigenous religious and spiritual traditions have no gender bias. As for the modern religious traditions, they have little or nothing to offer to the women in this direction.

### **God is both Man and Woman**

In the summit, which was held at Geneva in October 2002, Pujya Swamiji had a bronze idol of *Ardhanarīśvara* (*Īśvara* who is half man and half woman) exhibited to bring home the point that *Īśvara* comprises both male and female principle in the *Sanātana Dharma*. In his keynote address, he pointed out that in the Hindu tradition, *Īśvara* is both the maker and material of the universe, forming respectively, the male and female principle. The tradition does not just pay lip service to women.

Goddess Lakṣmī manifests as wealth, power, progeny, marital harmony and overall prosperity and Goddess Sarasvatī manifests as all forms of knowledge.

Pujya Swamiji also pointed out that the concept of God as father, propounded by most modern religions has been detrimental to people in general and to women's empowerment in particular. The source of security to the child is the mother and for the child, mother is everything. The mother is the goddess. As the child grows, it slowly learns that the mother, as also the father, is not infallible and has limitations in meeting its needs. The alienation that started at its birth when it got separated from the mother's body gets exacerbated. It can be resolved only through the proper understanding of *Īśvara* as the source of all creation and as both the father and the mother.

### **The outcome of the meet**

The meet underlined the fact that religions have often legitimized intolerance, discrimination and violence, resulting in communal conflict, mass migration and ethnic cleansing. The most adversely affected in these are women and children. It also took note of the fact that governments have denied the visible, active participation of religious and spiritual leaders and particularly women in prevention, resolution and healing of conflict and elimination of violence and injustice.

The meet called upon the world community to outlaw all forms of violence committed against women whether in the name of religion, custom or tradition or otherwise.

It also called upon the United Nations and national governments to include an equitable representation of women in peace negotiations, in conflict resolution and post conflict peace and reconciliation efforts.

It sought peace education as a mandatory component of peace negotiations and economic assistance.

It urged that specific steps should be taken to encourage teaching of spiritual values such as mutual respect, love and compassion for all people and life forms. (Arsha Vidya Newsletter, December 2002, p 8 - 12)

### **Faith in Human Rights Conference, The Hague, 2008**

At the the meeting of the representatives of the Faith in Human Rights Conference, The Hague, 2008, Pujya Swamiji insisted through his deputies (Ms. Martha Doherty and Prof.Vaidyanathan) that freedom of religion can be only freedom to practice one's religion and cannot mean proselytization either by force or inducement nor could it mean putting down other's religion. The declaration issued after discussions reflected these concerns. It stated:

“We note with serious concern the increase of intolerance in matters relating to religion or belief, of cases of incitement to religious hatred, overt or covert. We consider the freedom to have, to retain and to adopt a religion or belief of one’s personal choice, without coercion or inducement, to be an undeniable right.”

While addressing the delegates, as one of the signatories, Pujya Swamiji said:

“Signing a statement of universal values implies absence of double standard such as one set of values for believers of a given religion and another for non-believers of that religion. Moreover, mutual respect implies acceptance of others as they are, without an attempt to change them.”

Since Pujya Swamiji has succeeded in getting the critical points included in the document, they can be taken forward.

## X

### **Inter-faith Dialogues**

#### **Pujya Swamiji’s experience in some inter-faith dialogues**

The position taken by the converting religions greatly limits the scope for productive inter-faith dialogues. Pujya Swamiji recounts his experience in this regard:

“Recently we had a conference of world religious leaders who made some resolutions. I was responsible for drafting this resolution. In one resolution I wrote, ‘we should all live together with mutual respect’. They could not sign! They removed the words ‘mutual respect’. They do not want mutual respect, because, if it is mutual respect then I have to respect you. If I have to respect your religion, then I must accept your religion. I cannot accept your religion, because you are wrong. Therefore, they removed the phrase ‘mutual respect’. They say it is respect for religious freedom so that they can do whatever they want. This is what is happening. They have fears, all because of the refusal to know.”

Pujya Swamiji relates another experience with the religious leaders:

“When I sat with all these religious leaders, I said, ‘Can you name a few values that are acceptable to all of us? Before forming the council of world religions, let us identify some universal values’. They said, ‘Let us move to the next item’. This is because they cannot identify one thing common to all.”

“When I asked them, ‘Can you accept *ahimsā*, not hurting? There were leaders from Jewish tradition; they accepted. Parsi leaders accepted it. So too, some other leaders of small groups of people

accepted. But the leaders of two aggressive traditions did not accept it. Catholics did not accept, Protestants did not accept and Muslims did not accept. None of them accepted the universal value of *ahimsā*. It was startling to me.”

“Then I tried another thing. ‘Will you accept mutual respect of religions?’ I asked, because we are sitting in a world council, we are sitting on the same table. And they said, ‘We respect freedom of religions’. Think of that. Freedom of religion means freedom to destroy me; that is the freedom. ‘We respect freedom of religion, but not mutual respect of religion’! For them there is no universal value called *Sāmānya Dharma*.” (Arsha Vidya Newsletter, November 2003, p 6 - 7)

The fact, however, remains that accommodation, tolerance and acceptance can come only through the understanding generated by the inter-faith dialogues. Fortunately, in every faith there are persons who have an open mind and are open to conviction. In Christianity itself while most feel that it is their duty to convert, there are also some who do not want to convert. For instance, in the Meet on Preservation of Religious Diversity held in November 2001, Rev. Father Gregory Comella, Professor of Theology, Berkeley University explained at length that the church has alternative scriptural images, which do not involve religious conversion. Father Comella also

asked: "What it would be like for the church missionaries to be learners before they speak, and to allow people to whom we are sent, to be their teachers? Jesus requires this spirit." Dr. Hans Ucko, head of the Committee on Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation of the World Council of Churches also said: "There are Christian theologians who feel the conversion of others is not any more the business of the church" (Interview for Rediff India Abroad in December 2007). Among the Muslims also, there are open-minded persons. All of them have to be brought together with those with strong opinions to talk to each other.

Pujya Swamiji continues to make the attempts. In December 2003, he was among the religious leaders who met at Jerusalem to find a solution to Arab-Jew problems. He says:

"I know it is not possible, but I cannot give up an attempt to make it possible. Only Hindu religion can make it possible. Others are all contending forces. The unifying force is only Hindu religion."

### **Hindu - Jewish Dialogue Removes Misconceptions**

A redeeming fact is that the inter-religious dialogue between Hindu and Jewish religions, representing the two oldest traditions in the world led to a landmark declaration in February 2008, which establishes that honest and bold dialogue can completely reverse

wrong views and erroneous perceptions held over millennia. Hinduism has been perceived as idol worshippers of many gods by the Jewish and other Abrahamic traditions and the Hindus have for centuries experienced the extremely violent consequences of this wrong perception. After the inter-faith meets, this wrong notion has been set at rest. The declaration reads:

“It is recognised that one supreme being in its formless and manifest aspects has been worshipped by Hindus over the millennia. The Hindu relates to only one supreme being when he/she prays to a particular manifestation. This does not mean that Hindus worship ‘gods’ and ‘idols’.”

On the sensitive issue of *svastika* also, the participants recognised that this symbol of auspiciousness is and has been for millennia sacred to Hindus long before its misappropriation and misuse.

### **Hindu - Buddhist Meets, 2009 and 2010**

Pujya Swamiji led a delegation of Hindu leaders to Phnom Penh, Cambodia in February, 2009 to make common cause with the Buddhists, since both Hindus and Buddhists are being targeted and converted into Christianity. Around one hundred Hindu and Buddhist delegates from India, Sri Lanka, Japan and Cambodia shared their concerns over the threat that



their religions face from the aggressive, converting traditions. Swamiji suggested that they need to develop programs to teach their youth their rich spiritual heritage so that they do not fall a prey to unethical conversion practices.

Pujya Swamiji also participated in the second Hindu-Buddhist Meet convened by the Mahabodhi society, Sri Lanka in June 2010. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and some of his Cabinet colleagues also interacted with the delegates. Pujya Swamiji suggested to them that steps may be taken to rebuild places of Hindu and Buddhist places of worship destroyed during the conflict. A joint declaration that was issued reflected these concerns:

“The leaders of the two traditions agree that necessary steps should be taken to promote mutual trust and confidence between Hindus and Buddhists and also to enhance harmony among the the two religious communities. The value of unprejudiced fair play must be upheld. Required steps should be taken to renovate Buddhist and Hindu places of worship at the North and the East of Sri Lanka, which were destroyed during the period of conflict.”

Thus the common bond between the two great, advanced religious traditions born in India with a mighty following of nearly one fifth of the world population was formalized.

## **Dialogue rooted in scriptures and addressing tough issues is necessary**

In regard to the inter-faith dialogues, Pujya Swamiji stresses the importance of the proper genre of such interactions:

“The only means to conflict avoidance and resolution is dialogue among different religions. Dialogue is the ancient Hindu model for promoting mutual understanding of religious truth and avoiding or resolving conflicts between faiths. To ferret out what is common in our traditions and agree that we have common ground is not enough. It is not enough to skirt around tough issues and ‘agree to disagree’. No! To be beneficial to all, to foster enrichment rather than impoverishment of our religious traditions, dialogue must be conducted on the points of intersection of our conflicts with ruthless honesty. We should have the courage to probe, question, listen and even agonise, if we have to, but never shirk. Above all, the dialogue must be rooted in the deepest and the most comprehensive grasp of the scripture of the respective faiths.” (Arsha Vidya Newsletter, March 2008, p 18 - 21)

## XI

### **Action should not be Impulsive but Deliberate**

Finally, Pujya Swamiji makes clear as to what the mature response to the entire situation would be and its basis. He says:

“Before doing something, I should learn how to keep my composure. I can lose myself. That is where I need to have something within myself, *ātmabalam*, a certain strength, which make me act properly; and, at the same time, retain my sanity.”

“There should be only deliberate action. When I decide to do something, I must appreciate the other person. The other person has a background. He thinks he is doing the right thing. He is not immoral; he is amoral. Therefore, we have to address the background. If you appreciate the background of the person, then you can act deliberately. Time has come when the Hindus should bring this message of Bhagavad-gītā that to act dispassionately, you have to discover in yourself the leisure, the space to appreciate the other person’s background. You need not know the details of the background. That there is a background itself will give you that space, and then it will empower you with a freedom to act as the situation warrants. I am not asking you to

condone. There is nothing to condone here. Act deliberately. Stop the person deliberately, which does not imply violence, which implies objectivity, which implies dispassion, which implies wisdom. That is how the sane people have to behave. We need to grow into that person. Each one of us should grow into that person who has the leisure to look at the person's background and act upon that knowledge. If we should allow ourselves to be guided by that knowledge of the background, the action would be more compassionate, more dispassionate and more objective."

"Therefore, one step response is not a human response; that is a donkey response. We need to act deliberately, properly. We have to act prudently, without losing our sanity. Enjoying this capacity to deliberately act, we need to act properly. There can be no impulsive action. There should be only deliberate action." (Arsha Vidya Newsletter, December 2005, p 11-14)

And now to *maṅgalam*.

## MAṄGALAM

In the *Vedānta Sampradāya*, which is the tradition of the teaching of Vedānta, the place occupied by Śaṅkarācārya is very special. During the Śaṅkara Jayanti, Pujya Swamiji explained the reasons therefor:

“There are teachers and teachers. Why is Śaṅkarācārya so important? Śaṅkara is singled out as he left behind the legacy of *sampradāya* captured in the written form. He is totally identified with the *sampradāya* and gives the *sampradāya*. *Asampradāyavit mūrkhavadeva upekṣaṇīyaḥ* (the non-follower of *sampradāya* has to be avoided exactly like an ignorant person), he says. But for his commentaries, we will never know the *sampradāya*.”

“In communication, there is entropy, that is, dissipation. To make sure that there is no verbal entropy, you have to safeguard and ensure safe transmission. There are *prakriyās*, methods. You have to follow them and feel free like music. He is very thorough, brilliant and intellectually very honest. He is sagacious and his way of looking at the *śāstra* is profound. There is never any sagging of intellect. Nothing is redundant. There is consistency. He is methodical, leisurely. His commentary provides the very method of teaching. His commentaries are so complete that nothing

more can be said, and at the same time, anything less will be incomplete, leaving room for doubts. Studying his *bhāṣyam* is adequate to gain knowledge. You do not need anything else. The vision of Śaṅkara is the vision of Vedānta. If Upaniṣad is the *pramāṇa*, his *bhāṣyam* is the *sampradāya*”

“Greatness lies in his tireless way of arguing without any malice. His wisdom resolves all the differences by accommodating them. That is why Śaṅkarācārya is the very grace of humanity.”

“The founding of a tradition to systematically teach the Vedānta texts has ensured a whole lineage of *ācāryas* of a curriculum that cannot be improved upon.”

“No one left a legacy of that calibre and magnitude.”

“Śaṅkara was there. Therefore, we are here.”

Reverting to the place of Pujya Swamiji in the *Vedānta-Sampradāya*, we dealt with his achievements in detail in the previous pages. These are amazing when viewed in the context of the prevalent conditions in the country. For a prolonged period in our history, owing to the rule of the Moghuls and the British, the teaching of the *sāstra* has been suffering a great setback. The situation continues to be same even after

Independence, since there is reverse discrimination against Hinduism by our own Government on the specious ground of secularism. As for the teaching that has been available despite these odds, the *ācāryas* do not necessarily have *pramāṇa-buddhi* in Veda or *sampradāya-buddhi* in *Śāṅkara-bhāṣyam*.

As regards *Sanātana Dharma* itself, unlike the time of Śāṅkarācārya, the threat that it now faces is from forces both within the country and outside it. The external powers that are confronting it are stupendous and they have prodigious political influence and provide enormous money and comprehensive media support to supplant the Vedic culture and convert the Hindus. They are both powerful and aggressive and are able to easily obstruct enactment of law to prevent induced conversion and to prevent the sustained inflow of Muslims to India from Bangladesh. They also unabashedly use the outfits of international organisations to serve their design.

The Government in India, on the other hand, instead of protecting the beleaguered *Sanātana Dharma*, is systematically discriminating against it. The contemporary Hindus of the country are neutralized and are non-committal on matters adversely affecting the Hindus and rationalize their spineless conduct as being liberal and broadminded. As for the gullible and vulnerable, they are being converted. Men in public life are hesitant to take a stand for protection of

*Sanātana Dharma* for fear of being dubbed as communalists. As for the politician, the Hindus do not constitute a solid vote bank and it does not make sense to most of them to support the Hindu cause at the cost of the readily available vote banks. The powerful media has been rendered partisan and they reinforce and add edge to this dismal trend.

Owing to this situation, Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda had sounded the warning that without an organization, the Hindu will be wiped out from the face of this country. In this regard, Pujya Swamiji's master stroke is the formation, for the first time in the history of the religion, of a single collective voice for Hinduism in the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha constituted of the heads of all *sampradāyas* of the entire country. This has enabled the raising of an unified voice to safeguard the Hindu interests.

Simultaneously, he has brought the religious leaders of the world together to address the protection of all endangered indigenous traditions and religion. He is the convincing and hardhitting spokesperson of these traditions in the international forums and in the inter-faith dialogues, effectively putting forth the serious concerns. He is confronting the international community with the fact that converting religions have wiped out of existence native religions and cultures leaving only their monuments and that they continue to indulge in those very acts. It is he who



could tell the naked truth that religious conversion is violence and that religious conversion and religious freedom can never co-exist.

At home, he has brought into being the outfit Aim for Seva, which is at the helm of the movement where people care for people through programs of cultural validation, education and healthcare in those areas that need those most.

Children in the country are being denied the wisdom of their tradition owing to a variety of reasons. Without the knowledge of their religion and culture, these children are growing up as rootless persons. For preventing this emotional damage to them and for providing them security through mooring in their cultural tradition, Pujya Swamiji has got graded texts on Vedic heritage prepared for being taught to children from classes three to twelve. Schools are gradually adopting this scheme of teaching.

Pujya Swamiji's greatest legacy is that the *sampradāya* made available in the *bhāṣyam* of Śaṅkarācārya is being taught in English in its pristine glory. For this purpose, he has devised the residential long term three and a half year's course and established *gurukulams* for teaching them. Through them, he has re-established the *guru-śiṣya-paramparā* by creating more than 400 qualified teachers of Vedānta. In addition, through classes held outside the *gurukulams* and through public lectures, he is spreading the

teaching of Vedānta not only in India but also all over the world. For those who cannot attend any class or lecture, Gītā Home Study Volumes based on his class room lectures have been prepared for study at home. In addition, he has ensured the availability of the knowledge to every seeker through books, compact discs and web-sites. It is verily the Ganga of knowledge that is perennially flowing everywhere.

Truly, the range, magnitude and calibre of his contributions in the protection and nurturing of the vision of Vedānta and *Sanātana Dharma* are all unparalleled in recent times.

He is singular and unique like Śaṅkarācārya.

*Sadāśivo samārambhām śaṅkarācārya madhyamām |*  
*Asmadācāryaparyanthām vande guruparamparām | |*

*Om Tat Sat*

