

CONTEMPLATION OF VEDANTIC TEACHING

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SURRENDER: *Sastra* is the irrefutable *pramana* that gives rise to the knowledge “**I am Brahman**”. In the vision of the *Sastra*, subject and object are the same. Here, the surrender surrenders. The alienating *Ahankara* has given up by itself. This is possible only when one surrenders to the *Sastra* and *Guru as pramana*. There is no other *pramana* that can negate what the *Sruti* says. “**O Wave! You are the ocean!**” is the **teaching**. This teaching makes the word surrender redundant. **That is surrender.**

UNDERSTANDING ISVARA: Understanding of *Ishvara* does not happen at once. It is gradual. The main obstacle is mistaken orientation of the self. This mistaken orientation is from the current life time as well as prior births. The self is mistakenly identified at various levels, the body, *prana*, mind and intellect. Each of these levels have to be surrendered to *Ishvara*. At every level there is *Ishvara*. Both internal and external contradictions in understanding the vision of Vedanta need to be resolved. **For proper understanding, one requires the blessings of *Sastra, Guru and Atma*. More the blessing, clearer the understanding.**

ATMA ANUGRAHA: When one begins to analyze and tries to address the problem that the change has to be from one's own side, it is *Anugraha*. Only through *Ishvara anugraha*, does one get even an inclination towards *advaita*. If one is lucky, he will meet the right teacher in the first instance. To stay with the teaching, one requires *atma anugraha*. Then he will have commitment, dedication and unflinching capacity to know. **Self-confidence, self-trust, self-effort, will, commitment and *shradda* are *atma anugraha*.**

MINDFULNES: The mind has habitual ways of thinking, creating undesirable emotions and complaining about oneself and others. One

should change the habitual ways of thinking by creating desirable emotions. **One should create new channels of thinking.** One should recognize his core being as wellness and love. **One should have certainty that *Ishvara's* order does not fail.** One should gracefully accept the grace, the order and let *Ishvara* flow through. "*Anugrahitoham puna punaha*". Mindfulness can be achieved by repeated practice.

VEDANTA: The one sentence subject matter of Vedanta is "*Tat tvam asi*". The relationship should be properly understood. There is no by-passing of *Ishvara*. **I am *Ishvara* in the form of order.** That is knowledge. **One should repeatedly bring to focus the presence of *Ishvara* as *abhinna nimitta upadana karanam*.** Looking for experience makes one conclude that *pramana* does not work.

CONTEMPLATIVE MIND: When a topic does not imply anxiety, but triggers a process of thinking, one has a contemplative mind at this time. **When an event triggers beyond common thinking, common knowledge, wonder about something beyond all this, there is contemplativeness.** A contemplative mind is suitable for Vedanta study. A simple object like a flower can trigger contemplation on the invisible hands that arranged its petals, the order, *Ishvara*, his *svarupa*, until the contemplator and the object of contemplation become one.

A contemplative mind is inhibited by *antahkarana asuddhi*. Neutralizing likes and dislikes by **performing *svakarma* with an attitude of *karma yoga* produces a mind that is conducive for contemplation.** Meditation is sitting with yourself or sitting with *Ishvara*.

COGNITIVE UNDERSTANDING: The same faculty functions as intellect, mind and memory. Sometimes there may be cognitive understanding but behavior does not align. It seems like someone else is pulling the strings. Likes and dislikes pressurize the mind and therefore rational mind is unavailable. One can de-throne likes and dislikes through satsanga.

Satsanga is *sastric* way of changing one self. Another way is to teach, to bring out what one has already understood.

JAPA: *Om Namah Sivayah* and *Om Namo Narayanaya* are popular *vedic mantras*. These mantras can be chanted mentally. The whole mind is occupied by the mantra. If mind moves away from this given task, it is brought back to the chant. There is a commitment to repeat the chant. It is not a mechanical activity but a conscious occupation. Chain thinking is broken. *Japa* is an important form of meditation, which is a prayer at the same time. It serves as a means to have a say over the ways of one's thinking. An awareful mind is made available after *japa*, using which initially, the *lakshana* of *Isvara* can be contemplated upon and later the *svarupa* of *Isvara*.

DISCOVERING THE MEDITATOR: The sixth chapter of Bhagavad Gita talks about the meditator. Mental time should be available for meditation. All roles have to be suspended. They should resolve into the basic person. By chanting, the mind gains absorption and the meditator is available. One needs to invoke the meditator, invoking the total. Meditation does not bring about the meditator. Meditator brings about meditation.

VEDANTIC MEDITATION: The subject matter taught in the class is highlighted in meditation. There are two types of meditation: Regular *Saguna Brahma dhyanam*, *japa*, etc and resolving *jiva* in the vision of *Isvara*. The qualifications for this knowledge is capacity of focus on the topic, brought about by a life of *karma yoga* and staying capacity brought about by *Upasana*. One has to be full to say "I am Fullness". To start with, one should have relative fullness, by being compassionate, etc. *Sravanam* is the primary *sadhana*. *Nididhyasanam* is highlighting what one has learnt from *sravanam*.

In the beginning, the meditation may be on *Saguna Brahman*. Later it can move to *Nirguna Brahman*. Seeing the meaning of the teaching of Vedanta mentally is *nididhyasanam*.

Nididhyasanam is a natural disposition of the mind to meditate. It is brought about by repeated *sraavanam*. There is no thinking involved. One just sees the meaning of the words/ objects of thoughts as they arise.

Themes of Meditation:

***Shabdanuvidda*:** One repeats the words like *poornoham*, *dhanyoham*, *asangoham*, *triptoham*, *anugrahitoham*, *sivoham*, *satchitanandoham*, *nithyoham*, *mukthoham* and keep seeing the meaning as one self. Each word is to neutralize a specific wrong orientation.

***Drshyanuvidda*:** Any object that arises in the mind becomes the locus for contemplation. The unchanging awareness is recognized through all the thoughts, leading finally to the nature of the self.

Unloading people: One unloads the people and objects who are likely to be inside our mind. Unloading involves visualizing the person/ object, recognizing them as external and accepting that this is how the person is, in my perception. However, there is recognition that I may be wrong. Objectivity is recognizing that all that is here is *Isvara*. Regular unloading frees one from concerns and anxieties.

***Japa dhyanam*:** One repeats the mantra until *japa* occupies the whole of the *antahkarana*. You are one with the *japa* and the *japa* becomes you. *Japa* spirits away mechanical thinking. After *japa*, the absorption helps one to be in touch oneself as a conscious being. Being familiar with the conscious being is itself self-healing, self-transforming. The teaching takes care of everything else.

HUMAN PURSUITS: *Moksha* is the ultimate pursuit of choosing the limitless. **When one chooses limitless, what he leaves is nothing.** This is called *vairagyam*. He finds dispassion for *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. **Happiness is to be replaced by fullness, satisfaction and wholeness.** Reorientation of old notions takes place by constant exposure to the vedantic teaching for a length of time. Then there is clarity and reconditioning.

GETTING RID OF BAD HABITS: One should **first accept that he has no control over the bad habit. He should ask for help** for getting rid of the habit. Cognitively he should understand the damage caused by the habit. **Prayer and *Satsangh* helps** to get rid of bad habits.

BEING JUDGMENTAL: Seeing the response of a person in a particular situation and concluding that he is foolish is judgmental. **Seeing a small thing and concluding about the whole person is not correct.** One role does not make the person. One does not become a driver by playing that role. He has other roles to play as a father, son, neighbour, etc.

SAMSARA: One is self conscious and self judgmental and has dissatisfaction centered on oneself. He attempts to change the job, house, spouse, etc. **He wants to become different either by getting something or getting rid of something.** This is called *samsara* or a life of becoming. **Freedom from life of becoming is *moksha*.**

SAMSKARA: One has a disposition towards something naturally. This is called *samskara* or *vasana*. It is because of *karma* of earlier births. As a *jiva* has countless *karma* it is not possible to exhaust all the *vasanas*. **The solution lies in Vedanta by understanding that *Jiva* is a non-doer and *karma* is *mithya*.**

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SRUTI AS PRAMANA: One has total acceptance regarding one's eyes for knowing the colour of an object. He does not require the support of any other means of knowledge. Similarly one should understand that for knowing about Brahman, Sruti is the only pramana. Words that reveal the self give rise to direct knowledge. Words of the Sruti come alive when revealed by a Guru.

OMISSIONS & COMMISSIONS: Where there is choice to do an action, there is omission and commission. Where there is no choice, there is Isvara. When what is to be done is not done there is omission and when

what is not to be done is done there is commission. Omissions and commissions make one guilty.

AVIDYA: Absence of knowledge of Brahman is avidya. Ignorance is the cause for one's perception of duality as real. Duality is mithya. Maya has two powers. Avarana covers the reality. Viksepa projects the duality as real. In Brahma Sutra adyasabhasya, Sankara says that seeing what is not real as real is the cause for samsara. Samasti is Isvara. All that is here is Isvara, who is the efficient and material cause of the universe.

REALITY: One having daily prayers and Gita study will have his priorities clear. When priorities are clear decision making is easy. When one changes his priorities, he changes himself. His response to situations change. One tries to reduce subjectivity and increase objectivity. Reality of the world is Isvara. All that is here is Isvara. You are non dual Brahman. Nothing more. Nothing less. One can see Isvara's presence in all situations.

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