

Discussion Summary, October 11, 2015

Continuing his recap from last week of Mantra 6 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us that we have to know Brahman as Aham Brahma Asmi. He reminded us that the human being present in Manusha loka provides the best opportunity for us to gain this knowledge. Animals, he says, have only a Bhoga Shariram and do everything by instinct. We are lucky to have this human birth and he recommends we make the best use of this birth to obtain this great knowledge. Discussing Atma /Anatma , unless we understand that the “I” is the witness principle or Sakshi Chaitanya, we are still in Samsara and as such finite.

Tat Tvam Asi is only possible when one separates himself from this body mind complex. Swamiji reminds us that the body and mind are subject to arrival and departure while the “I” is constant and unchanging.

Mantra # 7:

Swamiji now presented another method of Atma / Anatma discrimination. He calls it the essence of Vedanta.

Refreshing our memory on the Pancha Koshas, Swamiji says we have to withdraw from each one of them. The Pancha Koshas are:

- 1) Annamaya kosha, “foodstuff” sheath (Anna),
- 2) Pranamaya kosha, “energy” sheath, (Prana /apana);
- 3) Manomaya kosha “mind-stuff” sheath (Manas),
- 4) Vijñanamaya kosha, “wisdom” sheath (*Vijnana*) and lastly
- 5) Anandamaya kosha, “bliss” sheath (*Ananda*)

This method sensitizes our mind, as it withdraws from gross to the subtle. Describing this process, Swamiji says, sense organs are controlled by the mind, which is subtler, stronger and more powerful. Superior to mind is the intellect, or Buddhi. Mind is the doubting faculty, while Buddhi is rationalizing capacity that removes doubts. Mind is given to emotion, Buddhi is not, and hence it is stronger. Thus, Buddhi is the Vijnanamaya Kosha. Describing adjectives we give ourselves such as: I am Tamilian> I am Indian> I am Asian> I am human> I am a Living Being (all beings)> and finally I am a "Being". Swamiji says we need to drop all adjectives. He says they all belong to Anatma. We have to realize I am a "Being". This is called Samashti Buddhi. Individual does not exist separate from Total. Micro does not exist separate from Macro.

Taking us to a different plane, Swamiji now says, "I am" Hiranyagarbha. Superior to Hiranyagarbha is the Avyakatam, the Total Karana Shariram. Karana Shariram is the state of blankness. In this blank state everything thing is in its potential state. He says blankness is not "nothing" rather it is in the Potential state or a state of Singularity. Learn to identify with Avyaktam. I am Turiyaha, the final state, state of Samashti Karana Sharira.

How to reach this state is now described.

Mantra # 8:

When all sensory operations are suspended we experience blankness. This state is called Avyaktam. Subtler than this blankness is Atma or Consciousness. So, where do we find Atma? Swamiji says Atma cannot be objectified. The One who is aware, the awareness, of the blankness , the Experienter, is the Atma. There is nothing other than "my" self declares Swamiji. The unobjectifiable "I" is the Atma while the Blankness is the Anandamaya Kosha.

He says Purusha is also the Atma.

So, what type of consciousness is this? He says, it “all pervading” consciousness. So, like the wave we have a choice to identify with the small wave or the eternal water. Once we identify with the all pervading Atma, we will be removed from all suffering.

I am Nirguna Chaitanyam without any Linga attributes. As long as I identify with body, I am mortal. This small I needs to know the immortal I. Once I know it, I will be relieved of all “notion of mortality”, as I do not identify with this body anymore. I can own up to my “natural” immortality. That is why, says Swamiji, Samsara is an intellectual problem.

Mantra # 9:

We have to use our human birth, our viveka shakthi. Atma / Anatma viveka should dawn on us.

Swamiji says for Viveka, a deep and complete mind is to be available for this teaching. A tremendous listening skill is required. A special mind, deep and total is required. We normally do not listen totally. If we can do this, the mahavakya sravanam can penetrate this state. Do we have a mind that is absorbed in the teaching? In such a person, knowledge dawns. It is called sukshma buddhi. This buddhi is required as the subject matter is very subtle.

Physical organs cannot perceive Brahman. Eyes cannot see him. So, how is he to be known?

He can only be known through Guru’s teachings of Shastra. This is the Shastra mirror. I should also have the proper eyes to see in the mirror. The inner eye, Buddhi, should be qualified for this teaching. The nature of this Buddhi is a prepared intellect, subtle, deep and total. Only such an intellect can know the Brahman. The intellect is in our heart says Swamiji. The right understanding, provided by a qualified Teacher, received by a qualified man, results in knowledge.

Suggested Practice

To obtain the full benefit of the teaching of a great teacher we all need to come to Vedanta class with a very focused mind. Do not let Samsara get in the way of this great knowledge.