

Sadhana Panchakam – Class 5

Shankaracharya discussing final stages of Jñāna yoga – sravanam, mananam, nidhithyasanam. Sravanam is nothing but systematic analysis of upaniṣadic statement. It is called vedanta vichara, vedanta mimamsa etc. Through systematic analysis we discover consciousness is the essence of individuals, and existence is the essence of the world; consciousness and existence are one and the same. This we call sat chit atma. Consciousness called sat and existence is called chit. This alone we call jivatma paramatma aikyam. This is sravanam.

Mananam is logically refuting all other systems which are contrary to vedantic teaching. Any knowledge involves two paths; one is seeing the rightness of the right path; second is seeing the wrongness of the wrong path. It is not enough to see the right alone; we also need to see the wrongness of wrong idea; if we don't, one day the wrong idea may appear right. Knowledge is knowledge only when it can't be shaken by anybody. I should know truth as truth and non-truth as non-truth. For opinions we can have variety, but for knowledge we can't have variety. Rope is rope and it is not a snake.

Vedanta makes statement regarding three fundamental things: Jiva, jagat and Eeswara. First it says jiva is infinite and ananda swaroopam. This we are not able to accept. Then it makes the statement about the world that the world is unreal. I am solidly facing the world all the time. How can I dismiss this wonderful solid universe? The third statement says that you are not different than the lord. This I can't accept at all. When we are in such despair, other system will be easily acceptable. Other systems say jivatma is different than paramatma. Paramatma created the universe and jivatma. All other systems are very appealing to intellect. They all claim that they are rational systems based on logic and reasoning. Advaidam is based on sruthi, the vedas and use tarka or logic

as a subservient tool. That is why we say shraddha in sruthi is important. A rational person will not accept faith. Their order is reason and scripture. Our order is scripture and reason. Mananam is where every other system is clearly negated. That can be done only with logic. Acharyas of advaidam have logically pointed out the logical contradictions in other systems.

Shankaracharya establishes that logic can't be used in the discovery of reality because logic has inherent limitations. Logic and modern science etc. are deficient in discovering reality. Sruthi itself has said this limitation. This logical repudiation of other systems and seeing innate deficiency of logic alone increase our faith in vedanta.

If logic is deficient and can't reveal the truth, does it mean logic should be totally given up? Sankarachariyar says logic does not need to be given up totally but used as a tool to extract the meaning of sasthra. Don't use logic to invent a philosophy but use it to bring out the teaching of sasthra. This is called sruthi madha tarkakas. For all our questions and doubts, vedas does not give explicit answer. But at the same time, answers are hidden in vedas. We have to bring out the answer to remove my particular doubt. The method used for this is logic. Logic will be helpful in bringing out implicit answers. Many systems were not there at Sankarachariyar time, so he did not repudiate those systems. Later acharyas repudiate those systems based on vedas, using Shankaracharya's method. Answering all my doubts is mananam. The benefit of mananam is conviction of vedanta. I can say "Aham Brahma Asmi" without any doubt. That is a knowledge with conviction.

The final stage of sadhana is nidhithyasanam. Nidhithyasanam is a process by which the knowledge has to be converted into emotional, mental and psychological strength. Our original disease is ignorance, which is at the intellect, but the symptoms are expressed at mental level in the form of kama,

raga, lōbha etc. All the samsara is emotional but the root cause is at the intellect level. The solution is at the intellectual level. But it is not enough. I am convinced I am brahma asmi, but the symptoms of raga dwesha etc. must be totally rooted out. If not, the knowledge is as good as being ignorant. A vedanta does not help me in gaining calm, compassionate, considerate, generous, charitable mind – for that vedanta is utterly useless. This requires assimilation of the teaching. The knowledge coming at the emotional level as emotional strength, duty and refinement. This is called jivan mukthi. Knowledge is at the intellectual level, but the benefit is at emotional level. Assimilating vedanta requires effort and requires removing each weakness. It is a lifelong painful long process. It is a lifelong process of consciously addressing every emotional weakness. The weakness is different for each person. For one it may be a superiority complex and another it may be inferiority complex. Each of them should be removed. This is nidhithyasanam and it requires time and constant alertness to discover the weakness coming up. For this introspect is required to gain auto suggestions when the weakness appear on day to day life.

We should look at what I am (Brahman) and what I am not (śarīra thrayāṁ). I should be able to see my own body as one of the objects of the world. We should have the same objective attitude towards our body as well as the bodies of the ones we love. Then the knowledge will be steady and firm. Cultivate I am brahman notion and negate I am body notion. This is nidhithyasanam and it requires lifelong commitment.

Sankarachariyar gives instructions on how to live. These instructions assume a person is at the stage of sanyasi. We will modify it to fit everyone:

1. Make sure you don't become arrogant because of this knowledge. Constantly remove the arrogance. Always be

humble.

2. Never argue with wise people.