

Practising Vedanta

Prabhaata-rashmih

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Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Jai Guru.

I was wondering as to what I should speak today!

*Prathamaa pratima pooja japa-stotrani madhyama
uttama maanasi pooja soham bhaavottamottamaa*

This is a very celebrated verse. *Prathamaa pratima pooja.*

We have to start from some where, so we initiate the people or initiate children particularly to go and stand before an idol either in a temple or a picture at home, fold the hands, close the eyes and then do some prayer. The prayer will be generally give me good marks, make me first, let me pass, let me have good friends... something like that. Whatever is said, the idea is to engage the mind in some way or the other in some devotional exercise bringing God in life.

So that *pratima pooja* is Ok to begin with, *Prathamaa pratima pooja japa-stotraani madhyama*. Then we don't have to go to necessarily a temple or a deity. Sit wherever you want and do the *japa* with your mind or recite the *stotras* - hymns. There, no flower, no material offerings, always the material is generated from your own system in the form of sound and some vibrations. That becomes the next step, the greater, the elevated one.

Uttama maanasi pooja..... Then the still better and the best is *maanasi pooja*. The entire worship is focused on the source that is the mind. Mind is the source of all activity and interaction including speech. Now, take the worship to the mind level. From and with the mind whatever you want to do you do. You can worship saying that I am giving you this, I am giving you that. That is one way of worship. Or say whatever you like to God. It should be an engagement between you and God. That is *maanasi pooja*.

Sohum bhaavottamottama. Go a step further using your intelligence then you will understand that God is all pervading and he alone is there. He penetrates us and he also surrounds us. So

there is no existence besides or different from God. Thinking in that manner whatever I refer to as "I" is in reality God, Godly existence itself. In this way if you can think of the identity with God that is *Sohum bhavottamottama*. It becomes the best of the best.

Why I am saying this? In the *Vedantic* section, the *Upanishadic* section there is a lot of emphasis on the imperishable Soul and the need to realize. Realize the Soul. That emphasis is there. Now, how and who can realize this truth is mentioned no doubt but not so very specifically.

*Satyena labhyastapasaa hya-asha-atma samyag-jnaanena brahmacharyena nityam
antah shareere jyotir mayohi shubhro yam pashyanti yatayaha kshina doshaha*

Mundakopanishad III.i.5

Now this is a verse which has appealed to me a lot.

Satyena labhyastapasa hya-asha-atma This Atma is to be obtained by the power of truthfulness.

samyag-jnaanena: by gaining knowledge, and the knowledge mature you variously

brahmacharyena nityam, by constant Brahmacharya. You have to meditate upon him inwardly as a part-less, as a part-less presence. It is very inspiring. Apparently these are not sufficient.

So when you enter in to some of the *Prakarana Granthas*, I generally speak about only Shankara's *prakarana granthas*, independent texts. There he has described in various ways the qualities and the refinement of the seeker as he progresses in his path. He has also clearly defined the nature, conduct, behavior, speech, interaction of the knower of the truth. There you find a clear description of what should be the elements of *saadhana*. When you come to a text like Srimad Bhaagavatam, even Bhagavadgeeta you will find, the same thing is dealt with there. Who is a *saadhaka*? What are the elements that constitute *Saadhana*?

In the 13th chapter (of Bhagavadgeeta) twenty items are mentioned. I would like to describe them as twenty virtues, qualities or excellences. Now, finally Krishna says all these together make *jnaana* all the rest is *ajnaana* - ignorance. So the *Jnaana* has become these qualities and qualities alone. There is no reference to an individual. Only qualities of the mind. These qualities together make spiritual wisdom the rest is all ignorance he (Krishna) says. If only our people will start reading these relevant portions from our texts and compare and contrast them with themselves I think there will be a world of difference.

In the Uddhava Geeta, Krishna speaks several times about the thought process of a devotee. The thought process of a fulfilled saint and all these are descriptions - words and adjectives - of the human mind and its excellence. Every one of us has a mind. But we are not making it

excellent, excellent. Let us call it mento-intellectual excellence. First of all we should understand that these are all the dimensions before the human. These dimensions are to be cultivated, are to be gained. Trying to gain them is the *saadhana* that we are doing. If you think seriously you will find the entire *saadhana* is mind based and intelligence based. Intelligence is the tool by which it is explained and by which it is grasped. Once it is grasped, that intellectual grasp should constantly orient the mind, to instill into the mind whatever qualities and excellences have been gained as relating to spirituality. So what every one of you has to do is interact, let the intelligence interact with the mind providing the mind with one excellence after the other one quality after the other. In other words your mind has to constantly reflect upon the qualities needed for a seeker, the qualities that anoint a knower

I will tell you a verse which I like very much.

*munih prassanna-gambhiro durvigaahyo duratyaya
agaadhabuddhiih akshobhyah stimitod evarnavah*

Srimad Bhaagavatam 11.8.5

I must have read it many years back. The moment I read it became a part of my life.

munih The man given to truthful introspection.

Prasanna-gambhira he is profoundly cheerful. His cheerfulness is not simply likened with a child who gets a beautiful toffee and child starts smiling. No! *gambhiraa* he has got what is to be had in human life and it is an inner gain and it can never be stolen or bartered for anything.

durvigaahyo it is very, very difficult to measure his worth.

duratyaya he cannot be excelled or exceeded by another.

agaadhabuddhiih He has got very deep intelligence.

akshobhyah - He will not be easily shaken or dislodged or disturbed

stimitod evarnavah - He is full and unshakable like the oceans.

Now these are the qualities which adorn the mind of the seeker as he understands the truth and takes his *saadhana* more and more inward to gain the inner spiritual enrichment and glory.

I am wondering that I heard that somebody here wants to go to learn Vedanta. Learn Vedanta from where? Is Vedanta to be learned or is it to be practised? People who know any language

Vedanta is there. Take one text called *Viveka Choodamani* go on reading it. Even when you go to a Vedantic tuition you will only learn. Why don't you take the book and learn, read? Now out of the 500 and odd verses I should say even if you are able to learn twenty five or fifty verses they are more than sufficient for your whole life time. Why don't you stop this running about?

See, it is a question of interacting the mind with your intelligence and engaging the mind to gain the knowledge of truth. The knowledge of truth is not 'X' to be known by you. The knowledge of truth is actually a refinement, a reformation and an enrichment to be had in your inner personality. You have to rub your mind with these qualities and excellences. So many of them are there.

Kripaluhu akritatdrohaha Sri Krishna explains the qualities or the characteristics of the Mahatma - the high soul, the wise person. Then he also speaks about the qualities of the devotees. And finally he summarizes saying that a man who has left his ego, possessiveness and desire - for him the whole world is blissful. Now what Vedanta are you going to learn beyond this? You want blissfulness. The whole world will become blissful provided he drops ego, desire and possessiveness. And for dropping your ego, desire and possessiveness you go and learn three years Vedanta? Wonderful, Wonderful.

Now dropping the ego, desire and possessiveness has nothing to do with learning. It is a process that has to be at work within your mind. And what knowledge do you want? What text do you want for that? Nothing! You have to know that this is what I have to do and get into your mind find out why it becomes egoistic, what is the thought process by which I can, if at all, avoid it. Think, think and you have any trouble you ask us and we shall tell you. This is all what is required. This is actually *saadhana*. This *saadhana* I would like to call it infusional introspection. Introspect in such a manner that the introspection gets infused into your system. And the half an hour of introspection means proportionately so much of purity and clarity for your mind and intelligence. So the entire *saadhana* is mind based, intelligence based, inner based. I would like you to understand this.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Jai Guru.



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