Satsang with Swami Dayananda Saraswati in Saylorsburg

August 22, 2007

Radha: Swamiji, can we continue on with the teaching methodology. I wanted to give you a few questions, Swamiji, that maybe you can work with those questions and with whatever else Swamiji has to say.

One is when we say that Advaita Vedanta is a śabda-pramāṇa [a means of knowledge born of the use of words]. How does that śabda-pramāṇa actually work? How does it take place? How does knowledge take place in the antaḥkaraṇa, in the mind? And what is the relationship between knowledge and experience and the self-evident nature of the self and experience? Because all of these things need to be understood in order to see how knowledge takes place, Swamiji, with the śabda-pramāṇa. And there is a lot of confusion over looking for something to happen as opposed to recognizing the self-evident nature of yourself. So that is the reason, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Yah. Let us look at the self-evidence question first. An experience, whether it is a direct perception, it is an experience. Or, it’s just an imagination, a fancy, is an experience. A recollection is an experience. Or a deliberate resolve—that’s an experience. Or inquiry. Every persistent, consistent inquiry into a topic, any topic, is also an experience. If I dream, it’s an experience. If I sleep, that’s another experience. And if there is a twilight zone, neither dream nor waking—that’s also an experience. Therefore, there is nothing outside experience. In this, whatever I experience is not self-evident; it is evident to the self. Whatever I experience—a dream experience—is evident to the self. I don’t experience is also evident to the self. I know this object is also evident to the self—experience is another word. It is all evident to the self, to I, which is self-evident being. What is self-evident is what is invariable in all evidence. In all evidence, the object is not invariable. The experience is invariable. When I say “self—evident,” it is self-experienced, it is in the form of anubhuti-svarūpaḥ [it’s nature is experience]. Anubhuti, experience. Otherwise we can say, in every experience there is object consciousness.

Put it the other way. So the experience has got an object. There is an object consciousness, sleep consciousness, dream consciousness, waking consciousness,
which is form consciousness, color consciousness, sound consciousness. It’s all one consciousness. The consciousness that reveals, itself is self-evident. Consciousness reveals an object and it is self-evident. This is what we say, self-evident, which is experience. In other words we can say, it is experience, itself. It is not experience of something. It is experience, itself. So, we are not talking about a non-experience when we say, “ātmā” [the Self]. We are talking about what we experience all the time. That which is in the form of experience. Then, when I say, whatever I experience is because of ātmā, ātmā is invariable, and therefore, we are not presenting ātmā as something to be experienced, because every experience is ātmā. That is our bread and butter. If every experience is ātmā, then the experiencer is ātmā, the experienced is ātmā, the experience also is ātmā. For that, you need Vedanta. You need it. To prove the experience is the ātmā, you have to understand Īśvara [the Lord] properly. Without understanding Īśvara, there is no question of understanding what you experience and experiencer—both of them—are one ātmā. Because our orientation is, suppose somebody tells, “You are only witness of everything.” That is only dissociation. That is a problem of dissociation. That creates a problem of dissociation. Then mano-buddhi-ahaṅkāra- cittāni nāham [I am not the mind, the intellect, the ego, nor the memory.]—“I am not the mind; I am not the buddhi [intellect]; I am not the cittam [memory]”—that causes a problem of dissociation. Or, if I say that Īśvara is somewhere in Golaka Vrindavan [a heavenly abode], again, I am talking about my being nobody. That is not worthwhile talk. There is nothing to pursue in terms of knowledge; it is purely some kind of a wrong belief, mistaken belief. First, we say Īśvara, and then we give that person a location, and give a body, etcetera—it sounds just ridiculous, childish. Therefore, the self-evident nature implies only one thing—that I don’t need a means of knowledge to prove my existence. That’s all self-evident? I don’t need to see whether I am there or not. I don’t need to objectify, because I am already there to objectify—who will objectify. If I say the self, I, exists, and this has to be proven by some evidence, then there should be another self to which the existence of this self becomes evident, that self must be self-evident. Otherwise, you won’t have the self because it goes to regression, infinite. One thing should be self-evident, and everything else becomes evident.

Therefore, I would say, there are two things which exist. One is pramāṇa-siddha [evident/known by a means of knowledge] The other is svatas-siddha [self-evident]. What is pramāṇa-siddha is that which becomes evident through a means
of knowledge. \textit{Svatas-siddha} is what is self-evident. This \textit{pramāṇa} [means of knowledge] is, there is a witness perception—sākṣi \textit{pratyakṣa} [directly perceived by the witness], \textit{indriya pratyakṣa} [directly perceived through sense perception], then \textit{anumāṇa} [inference], \textit{arthāpattityādi} [postulation, etc.]. Therefore, without \textit{pramāṇa} [means of knowledge], only one thing that is \textit{siddha} [evident], that is \textit{ātmā} [the Self]—\textit{svatas-siddha} [self-evident]. Because \textit{ātmā} is \textit{svatas-siddhi}, then \textit{ātmā} can become a \textit{pramāṇa} [knower]. And in the vision of Vedanta, as we will be seeing, it is both \textit{pramāṇa}, \textit{prameya}, and \textit{pramā}. It is the subject, it is the object, it is the very cognition, \textit{pramā}, knowledge. Knower, known, knowledge. That is what we have to discover. That is called \textit{advaita} [nondual]. Knower, known, knowledge is only one thing. There is no second thing. Then, if there is \textit{Īśvara}, it has to be known—means all that is known is \textit{Īśvara}. The knower also is \textit{Īśvara}. And all possibilities are \textit{Īśvara}. Even knowledge is non-separate from \textit{Īśvara}. That is why, \textit{abādhitam jñānam} [knowledge which can’t be negated]. Because you can’t negate \textit{Īśvara}. Knowledge is \textit{Īśvara}. What cannot be negated is \textit{jñānam} [knowledge], and that is \textit{Īśvara}. Therefore, we need to see how this is arrived at, this knowledge. The \textit{upadeśa}, the teaching, is using a \textit{prakriyā}, a method. A \textit{prakriyā} is \textit{adhyāropa-apavāda-prakriyā}. \textit{Adhyāropa-apavādābhāyāṁ nisprapancāṁ prapancate}. \textit{Adhyāropa} is superimposition, \textit{apavāda} is negation. \textit{Adhyāropa-apavādābhāyāṁ nisprapaṇcaṁ prapaṇcate}. You will find this \textit{adhyāropa-apavāda} method—\textit{adhyāropa} is superimposition, \textit{apavāda} is negation—you will find this method employed in all \textit{prakriyās} [methods]. This is the common basis for all \textit{prakriyās}. No matter what type of \textit{prakriyā} you use, this \textit{adhyāropa-apavāda} [superimposition/negation] method has to be employed.

Let us look at one method, the \textit{kāraṇa-kārya} [cause/effect] method. So, \textit{sadvastu} [the reality which is existence] sadeva saumya idamagra āsīt [Dear one, in the beginning this was existence alone]. \textit{Idaṁ ādyaḥ agrā āsīt.} \textit{Idaṁ jagat}—this entire jagat—was there, \textit{sṛṣṭeh prāk}, before the creation, as \textit{sat, sadvastu}. \textit{Idaṁ jagat sadeva āsīt.} [this world was existence, alone]. Like this tree was there in the seed. So, this tree was there in the seed. Look at this. This tree was there in the seed. That seed is such a small, little thing. How can this huge tree be there in that seed, that orange seed? This orange tree. How could this tree abide in that seed? How can you say this tree was in the seed? Now you tell me where it was? If it was not in the seed, why do you sow the seed? Why do you sow the seed? You sow the seed for what? For the tree to come, the orange tree to come. If you want the orange tree, then you should use, sow orange seed. So, that
means, you knew the orange tree will come. A non-existent orange tree, from
the seed, how will it come? Why, if it can come, then any tree can come from any
seed. If non-existent orange tree can come from any seed, non-existent orange
tree comes from the seed, then in a mango seed, also, there is non-existent orange
tree, correct? Being non-existent, it should be everywhere. So, if a non-existent
orange tree comes from some seed, from any one seed, then any tree can come
from any seed. “No, no, no no.” Only from orange seed orange tree can come.
That means what? There is the connection between one and the other. What is
the one? It is an orange. Orange seed comes as a rule. Even the time and place,
from the seed. If it’s a Florida orange, a Florida orange—big. And if it is our
Manipuri orange, small. We used to go the tree. Therefore, from that state only,
that tree comes. So, I should assume there is a connection between the cause and
effect.

The Śāstra tells, the effect was there in the cause. It cannot be in the physical
form as it is, in a different shape and form. Nirvikalpam āsit [It was
undifferentiated], correct? Nirvikalpam āsit. Bījasyaṃtarivarākuro jagadidān
prāṇnirvikalpam. [“Like the sprout inside the seed, this universe was
undifferentiated before (creation)” from Śrī Dakṣināmūrti Stotram, verse 2].
Before, prāk srṣṭeḥ prāk —before creation, nirvikalpam āsit, Undifferentiated, this
entire jagat [world]. Like even a tree in a seed. This is what we say, unmanifest.
Unmanifest tree means pure jñānam [knowledge]. Tree also is jñānam. That’s
another topic altogether. You can ask another question and I will talk. That’s
another…You can ask a question, you said, it is all jñānam, you said, what is that
that jñānam. You please ask me and I will tell you. This is for a book. So,
nirvikalpam āsit [It is unmanifest].

This is what we say, manifest knowledge is what we see as a tree. Unmanifest
knowledge is the cause. If this is true, the unmanifest jagat is the cause,
unmanifest knowledge of the jagat is the cause. Manifest knowledge is the jagat,
knowledge of the jagat is jagat. So, from near unmanifest/manifest we go, we
add one more word: unmanifest knowledge to manifest knowledge. There is
nothing more. Unmanifest knowledge to manifest knowledge. Unmanifest
knowledge is Īśvara. Manifest knowledge is but Īśvara. In the manifest
knowledge, my body is included, my mind is included, my senses are included,
means of knowledge that is involved is included, buddhi is included, cittam is
included, memory is included—everything is included. This is called manifest
knowledge. Therefore, when I say “This is a book,” for a change, we will do it. “This is a book” -- this is also okay. When we say, “this is a book.” “This is a book.” If we say, now, this book is manifest knowledge. One of the things, that’s all we think. If it is a whole, any one thing is whole.

If it is a whole, if the space in which this is there that is also Īśvara, this is also Īśvara, the one who holds, that also is also Īśvara—then what is it that makes an object separate from Īśvara? The beauty is that we can understand this discreetly, as an object. That’s something. That is where we have got pramāṇa [means of knowledge]. Otherwise, you don’t need a pramāṇa. Īśvara’s knowledge is all knowledge. If it is, no pramāṇa is required. It is all knowledge, Īśvara, that’s all, there is no pramāṇa. If Īśvara has to employ a means of knowing, then Īśvara will have ignorance. Because he has the means of knowing. If there is means of knowing, there is not knowing. If there is not knowing, there is ignorance. If there is ignorance, he cannot be all knowledge. Therefore, Īśvara to be all knowing, there should be no necessity for means of knowing. Then only Īśvara is all knowledge. So, all knowledge Īśvara is understood discretely by me as an individual with a means of seeing, knowing, which includes senses, my mind and the pramātā, the knower. The knower, known, knowledge. This is Īśvara. And people want to know Īśvara, other than knower-known-knowledge. Correct? Like you see the book and you will see something else. You see something else. You see something else. I hope I don’t invoke anything! (laughter) You see something else. By seeing different things, we understand one thing we see.

But now we want to see Īśvara, we want to experience Īśvara. We want to experience the whole. Ātmā cannot be experienced, already I have told you. Ātmā is experience. Now Īśvara cannot be experienced, either. Īśvara cannot be an object. If Īśvara is one object, then out of mind, out of sight. Suppose you enclose Īśvara in a thought. Then Īśvara becomes enclosed in prayer. And you are in Īśvara. You objectify Īśvara. Īśvara has to wait for your obliging. You have to say, “Oh, I can’t think about you now, I have to think about various other things. I am thinking about the flea market and what to buy.” Therefore, if you think of the flea, or flea market, Īśvara is out. Correct? Poor Īśvara. Therefore, how can Īśvara be an object of experience. If there is Īśvara, every object of experience is Īśvara. Every time you experience whatever you experience, any place, anywhere, whether here or elsewhere, it is all Īśvara. Every experience is Īśvara. So, you cannot get out of Īśvara. That is how Īśvara is to be understood.
Therefore, neither Īśvara is a matter of experience, nor ātma is a matter of experience and the equation between the ātma and Īśvara—how is it going to be experienced separately? How that will be an experience? Neither object of experience is Īśvara nor ātma is an object of experience. It is experience. And every experience is experienced? All these are one and the same.

If all these subject/object experiences—all of this is one and the same—we need to understand pada [word]. And vākya [sentence]. Today I am going to talk there; there is one particular in this song. [Swamiji sings] Pada-vākya-prameyam [the word and sentence are to be known]. First padārtha [meaning of the word] we should know what is Īśvara, what is ķēva. Vedanta is: Īśvara is ķēva. Ayam ātma Brahma. [This Self is Brahman.] Or ahān Brahma. [I am Brahman] In the direct speech, you say that tattvamasi. [You are that.] In second person, you say, you are, in the upadesā [teaching], that Brahma tvam asi [You are Brahman]. Satyam tvamasi [you are existence.]. Satyam brahma ekamevadvatéya brahma tvamasi. [Existence is Brahman, you are the one nondual Brahman alone.] So, what is Īśvara, we have to know. What is ķēva, also, we have to know.

Here, the ķēva has got adhyāropā-apavāda [superimposition-negation]. There is adhyāropā-apavāda here also, is the ķēva. In the Īśvara, also, there is adhyāropā-apavāda. So, what is adhyāropitam [superimposed]? What is the locus of adhyārop[a superimposition]? Whether the ķēva is adhyāropita or ķēvatvam is adhyāropita. If the entire ķēva is adhyāropita, then something else is ātma. If the ķēvat, when you say, then there is a being involved, ķēva, being, involved. That being is the locus and tsuperimposition is what makes the being a ķēva. ķēvatvam is adhyāropitam.

[The following is a grammatical analysis of the word, Īśvarah.] When Īśvarah, when you say, the pratyaya [affix] takes a being, the prakṛti substantive] tells what being. The pratyaya tells one being—singular pratyaya. “Su”. That su is Īśvara + saḥ. Īśvaras. And then sakāra becomes [Swamiji quotes some Pāṇini-śūtras] Īśvarah. That Īśvarah, that, there, you know, a being who is singular. That being, singular, is pratyaya. Who is that being, singular in Īśvarah? prakṛti. Here also, being, singular, is there. Who is that being? ķēvah.

Therefore, ķēvatvam adhyāropitam [the state of being a limited individual is superimposed]. Īśvaratvam adhyāropitam [the state of being the Lord is
superimposed]. That being is locus. This is called pada [a word]. This pada is very important. Without the pada-vicāra [analysis of the word], there is no vākya-vicāra [analysis of the sentence]. Vedanta is a means of knowledge only through vākya [sentence], not by a word. By a sentence. That is why I always say it’s an equation. So, it’s a sentence meaning, it’s not word meaning. Difference is very big. Therefore, understanding of Īśvara is inevitable. Understanding of jīva is also inevitable. That’s all what is there in this world. Therefore, understanding the whole is exactly what is involved. That is why so much is to be talked about. The jīvatvam is adhyāropitam and Īśvaratvam is adhyāropitam. Then the prakriyā [method] is, tell us why it is called adhyāropitam [superimposed]? Means, not that we decided to superimpose anything. It is not our adhyāsa [superimposition]. This is empirically true. So what it is all about, next session, okay?

Radha: Thank you, Swamiji.

Swamiji: Thank you.