

INTRODUCTION TO VEDANTA, cont.

Today's focus:

- Using previous concepts to put together an overall vision
- Conceptual combinations of things we've seen before. Understanding how *Prāptasya Prāptih* can change our lives, at least our attitudes toward everything.

3 Stages of effect of Prāptasya Prāptih

Stage 1: I don't know where my source of joy is.

- Credit card is not in Vijayji's wallet and he has anxiety!

State 2: I am *convinced* that the source/object is somewhere around me (but I still have not found it).

- Vijayji's wife says "I took your CC to make an Amazon purchase, and I think it's in the other room."

Stage 3: I found it! I'm done!

- Vijayji found his wallet.

Anxiety; Uncertainty; Problems	Relief But limited positive joy; Lack of problems	Total Joy
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3

Manas vs. Buddhi

Manas: doubtful thinking (Did I lock the door?)

Buddhi: knowledge

Q: How will I reach Stage 2, where I am convinced about the source of joy?
When/how does Stage 2 occur?

A: When I have proof, *pramāṇa*.

Pramā jñānaka pramāṇa: The one who generates knowledge.

In most cases, our eyes are the *pramāṇa*. Rarely they might need augmentation: Example: Fruit sitting in front of you, made of stone. Your eyes tell you it's fruit, but when you pick it up, you realize it's not real fruit (too heavy, doesn't smell like fruit).

6 pramāṇas (means of knowledge; proof) accepted in Vedanta (and other schools of thought):

1. **Pratyakṣa**. Sensory perception

EXAMPLE: I know that student was in class today, because... I saw him with my own eyes.

2. **Anumāṇa.** Inference based on validity of sense organs. You don't see directly, but you can infer it's the case. Depends on previous experience.

EXAMPLE: you see black smoke arising from wooded area. *Pramāṇam*: there is fire over there—even if you don't see actual fire.

3. **Arthāpatti.** Postulation (multi-level inferences)

EXAMPLE: offer food to obese sadhu in temple but he declines, saying he fasts during the day. You assume he must be eating a lot at night.

EXAMPLE: Pilot flying plane makes a lot of inferences: dials are accurate instrument readings correspond to actual altitude/temperature, etc.

4. **Upamāna.** Comparison. See something that matches the description.

EXAMPLE: Swamiji was told a certain African animal looks like a cow, but no udders. He was on vacation, sees an animal fitting that description, and determines it must be that animal.

5. **Abhāva/Anupalabdi.** Absence.

EXAMPLE: You know you're not holding fruit, because... it's not in your hand!

6. ***Shābda Pramāṇa.** The words of a trustworthy person.
*Most important one for our study.

EXAMPLE. Person in class is visible to you and asks a question. You see/hear him. Vijayji then says, "This is my brother." Your understanding will change completely--you now see him as Vijayji's brother, not just any student.

EXAMPLE. Swamiji traveling in India on train and sits next to man from Australia. Making small talk, then Swamiji asks him where he's going. Discovers they're both going to Rishikesh—the man wants to meet a certain swami - Dayananda. He doesn't know he's talking to Swami Dayananda until he introduces himself!

- Even though you may have the other *pramāṇas*, you still don't understand because the eyes do not say who the person is, etc.
- Kālidāsa wrote poem: If I see two people in front of me—one is God incarnate and the other one is my guru—I will do *Namaste, Namaskāra* to the guru first before going to God. Guru is more important than the God—if it was not for

my guru, I would not be introduced to God. [Source of joy is close to me, but I don't know it—until I am convinced by the words of a trustworthy person.]

Elements of Shābda Pramāṇa

- Discovering authentic teaching. It's your own previous *karma* that brings you to the teaching.
- Teaching must be ancient, perennial and well preserved. Any religion started by somebody is false. There is no reason to start a religion—it is already there. *Sanātana Dharma*.
- Trust in the teacher. Teacher must be well taught by the teachings. Ask who they learned from, where, how long.
- Staying with the teaching until you are convinced. Have faith in yourself.
- Ability to glimpse the truth
EXAMPLE: like a flash of lightning in the dark. A man was on a business trip and arrived late at night, so didn't know his surroundings. But when the lightning flashed, he got a quick glimpse of trees and realized he was in the forest. He will be able to examine more fully when the sun comes up (i.e. under steady light).
- Journey from Stage 2 to Stage 3 requires one important thing:

View everything through the eyeglasses of *prāptasya prāpti*.

- Change your attitude: from “if” → “how.” *How* is it possible?
- You become more sensitive to your role in life in becoming a trustee, rather than an owner
- Things occur according to an order. There is no injustice in this world, just “justice delayed.”

Learn to be a trustee and recognize the presence/role of the owner

- Use all your energies in:
 - Courage to change what you can
 - Accept what you cannot change
 - Develop a wisdom to know the difference

We have limited physical/emotional energies in life. May I use those energies to make things better for myself/others. Don't criticize or worry. If I need to fix things, I fix things. Let someone else (*Īśvara*) do the worry.

EXAMPLE: Man says, “I hate my boss. He's making my life miserable.” Swamiji says, “Go to a florist and order 30 red roses. Present one rose to boss every morning. After 15 days, you'll be laughing together and no need for the last 15 roses.” Stop worrying and put all of your energies into making a contribution.

Turn a fan off, but it takes a while slowing down before it stops. Same with worry. The process of not worrying takes a while. Gradually develop trust, love and forgiving acceptance of yourself as a person.

The more you forgive/accept yourself, the greater chance you'll see you are the ultimate source of joy. Like electricity flowing through the appliance—you think you're all mixed up together, that you're electricity and appliance. You need to discover you're the appliance, separate from yourself. Have faith that this is the truth, and drive your life slowly so you can go from Stage 2 to Stage 3. See through eyes of *prāptasya prāpti*.

Reaching of the 3rd Stage

Develop distinction between binding desires and non-binding desires. Vedanta is all about *viveka*: ability to distinguish between 2 things that look alike, but that aren't.

Binding desires: your attitude is "I really want/don't want this to happen." You put a rope around yourself and hand it to someone else. You allow the world to jerk you, tug at you.

Non-binding desire: you have desires, but you turn them into *preferences*.

EXAMPLE: You like coffee (vs. tea) in the morning (your preference). One day, coffee is not available, just tea. You get upset and the coffee is tugging at you. It's better to say, "I prefer coffee, but tea is OK." It's a conscious choice you have to make. You set yourself free.

Effect of having non-binding desires: understanding that I am intrinsically free from all these desires. I am the electricity.

Q&A To go from Stage 2 to Stage 3

Īśvara is presented in 2 ways:

Saguṇa Brahman: the created world of *Īśvara*; one who is present w/all of its qualities

Nirguṇa Brahman: the one who is the basis of all the *guṇas*, but itself does not change (water in the ocean is *nirguṇa*; the wave, iceberg, etc. can change)

You have to go through *Saguṇa Brahman* first to get to *Nirguṇa Brahman*. You have to have some faith (*śraddhā* in *Saguṇa Brahman*/order) in order to relax your anxieties. See that *Īśvara* is the owner and relax in the presence of *Īśvara* a bit. *Nirguṇa Brahman* is you. You are the same water that is in the whole ocean.

Not understanding the trusteeship is the problem: I think I am the owner and assume responsibilities I don't need to take on.

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2 ways of reaching me, says Krishna, the God incarnate: *karma yoga* (understand order of Universe and have *śraddhā*) and *jñāna yoga* (realizing I am already full). *Karma yoga* is done first.