



Practice Of Manana

Radiant immortal Atman! Blessed seekers! Vedanta should be properly taken in to be digested. You are familiar with the three steps of the Vedanta Sadhana, the path of knowledge: *shravana*, *manana*, *nididhyasana* (hearing, reflecting and deep meditation). If you listen to Vedanta, soon afterwards you get a feeling that you are *brahma-jnanis*. Your *ajnana* has succeeded in deceiving you. Maya has attained victory. The more you get the superficial super knowledge, *apara vidya*, the deeper becomes your pride and delusion, which means you have gone deeper into the darkness of ignorance and bondage. The display of knowledge makes one vain and pride is increased.

We should know how to listen with a *sattvic* attitude with sincerity, humility, purity. *Jijnasa* implies humility – “I do not know.” Look at the attitude of Arjuna. He eats humble pie. “I do not know what to do; please show me the way.” This humility is the beginning of wisdom. The only your manana will yield fruits. But the vast majority of *vedantic* students do *shravana*, and manana is bypassed. Statements like “*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* | verily all is Brahman” [Ch. Up. 2.14.1] are misunderstood. He himself has manifested as things that are conducive and favourable to your spiritual growth and illumination, as well as conditions and manifestations that are adverse and unfavourable to your spiritual growth. So you must know how to discriminate between this and that manifestation, even though all is Brahman. Certain manifestations of Brahman are to be carefully avoided. Brahman in the un-manifest state is our Principle to be worshipped and also our goal for attainment. Brahman’s manifestation as Maya has given herself as *Vidaya-Maya* and *Avidya-Maya*. As *Vidaya-Maya*, Brahman is manifest as Divine nature. As *Avidya-Maya*, Brahman is manifest through Prakriti as demonical nature.

You must understand the implication and application of *vedantic* teachings and what the Guru says. If you deeply reflect over it a hundred times, then you will be able to assimilate it. Then only *vedantic* indigestion will not ensure. “*Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam* | Yoga is skill in action.” [Gita 2.50] You have to know how to handle Maya. You have to know how to always be in *brahmakara vritti* (thought of Brahman alone). You have to think with *viveka* and *vichara*. God bless you to receive higher teachings! God bless you to know how to apply these truths in your daily life and steadily progress to *Brahma-jnana* and Liberation!

God Bless You All !

■ Swami Chidananda