



ĪSVARA & RELIGIOUS DISCIPLINE

PŪRNA VIDYĀ VEDIC HERITAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME

VALUES
TRUTHFULNESS

SATYA or Truthfulness

- Is a universal value - no one wants to be lied to!
- This basic value, which seems to be uncultivated, does not change over time
- This basic value does not vary from person to person

SATYA or Truthfulness

- When a child asks a question he/she expects that it will be answered truthfully – until at some point he/she detects inconsistencies in what is being told to him/her
- When the child witnesses this behavior from elders around him/her, then he/she might think that it is OK to tell a lie
- If this is unchecked, then the child may begin to tell lies to get out of unpleasant situations or to avoid punishment

Why is a person untruthful?

- To draw attention to oneself
- Because it might get a more desirable outcome than by telling the truth
- Has not assimilated the value of Satya in his/her personality

SATYA – Ādi Śaṅkara

- In his commentary on Gita 16.2, Ādi Śaṅkara defines truthfulness as:

“apriya-anṛtavarjitam yathābhūtārtha vacanam”

- Speech that is in keeping with what is
- Speech that is free from hurt
- Speech that is free from falsehood

SATYA – Ādi Śaṅkara

- To be truthful
 - What one says must be aligned with one's thoughts
 - What one thinks must also be correct
- Sometimes we can say what is aligned with our thoughts but our thinking itself might be incorrect!
- Can you think of some situations?

SATYA – Ādi Śaṅkara

“apriya-anṛtavarjitam yathābhūtārtha vacanam”

- *satya* refers to one’s understanding of truthfulness
- *ṛta* refers to one’s assimilation of truthfulness in keeping with what is true (e.g., seeing things “as they are” and not “what we want them to be”)

SATYA – Ādi Śaṅkara

- Sometimes in the name of being truthful, one feels justified in speaking harsh words irrespective of the effect on others. How one speaks is as important as what one says!
- How does this relate to the value of ahimsa?
- The value of *satya* includes sensitivity towards others
- What one says must also be useful to that person

SATYA – Vak tapas

- We can think of three filters when we speak
 - Is what we are saying in keeping with what actually is?
 - Is what we are saying useful to the other person?
 - Is what we are saying causing pain to the other person?
- If anything we say does not pass these three filters - it is not worth saying!

Value for the value of SATYA

- Speaking is an action and the speaker is the doer
- At the same time one is a knower also! The knower knows what one is saying
- If the doer routinely ignores the knower, then the doer will begin to think that he/she is incapable of following through on decisions
- If there is such a split between the doer and the knower, conflict will arise in the mind and agitate him/her



Discussion

- How can we protect ourselves from falling into this doer-knower trap?
- What should we do if we are able to recognize that we have already fallen into the trap?
- Can we help others who have fallen into this trap?
- Story of Yudhiṣṭhira in the Mahabharata war
- Examples in the news



Homework

- Reflect on the following:
 - Why should I speak the truth?
 - Why should I speak the truth when other are not speaking the truth and getting away with it?
- Write down an instance (in your Journal) of how speaking the truth cost you some short-term loss in the last few weeks. Did speaking the truth make you feel better?

Concluding Śānti Mantra

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

- Om pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam pūrṇātpurṇamudacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate ॥
Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

That is fullness, this is fullness. From that fullness this fullness came. From that fullness (when) this fullness (is) removed, what remains is fullness. Om peace, peace, peace