

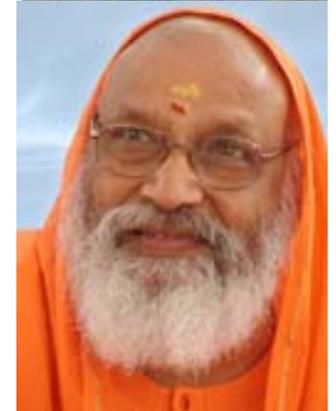
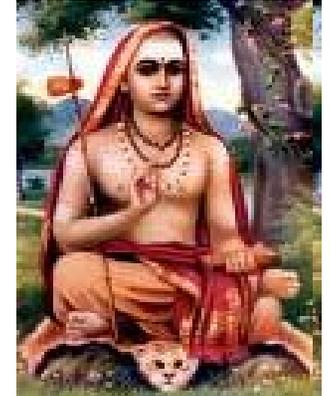
# Meditation

## 12<sup>th</sup> Śānti Lecture

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Bridgewater, NJ



# Meditation - *dhyānam*

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- **Purely a mental activity.**
- **It is an act to spend quality time with oneself.**
- **It is an act to be with oneself, to know more about oneself, to discover the true nature of oneself.**

***You are the source of happiness***

# Human Pursuits

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- ***jantūnām narajanma durlabham*** (*vivekacūḍāmaṇi*)
  - It is a great blessing to be born as a human being with the unique faculties of discrimination and choice (freewill).
- **Mere bodily survival does not make a human being's life.**
- **The human mind is self-aware and self-conscious totally.**
  - Being aware of ourselves, we cannot but be a desirer, a seeker.
- **It means the very essence of our lives is that we are after ends.**
  - No one has to be told that being full and happy is a desirable thing.
  - A human being always wants to change some aspect of his/her situation to be full and complete.
  - Behind each of our pursuits, the end goal is always **HAPPINESS.**

**All desires culminate in the desire for the “PLEASED SELF.”**

# Seeking Happiness Outside

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- We try to maximize/manipulate three things to be happy.
  - *upādhi* > Better body, senses etc
  - *viṣaya* -> Objects
  - *loka*--> Time & place
- In the process, we discover the defects with reference to the above.
  - *duḥkha miśritattvam* -> mixed with sorrow
  - *Atriptikaratvam* -> dissatisfaction (fancy wears out)
  - *Anityatvam* -> not long lasting

**But Seeking Never STOPS!**

# Human Beings Desire Happiness

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- Quest for happiness with no trace of the three defects.
  - *nityānanda suḥkham, suvimalam*
- Happiness is not outside.
- Is it a state of mind?
  - We do not say “This is Happiness,” but say “I am happy.”
- Happiness is not an object.
- Since the quest for happiness is there, there must be a solution.

**Is Happiness Centered on the Self?**

# Vedāntic Message

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- **Natural urge is to be happy.**
  - Common experience is I do not complain being happy
  - What is natural is not a matter for complain
- **If I cannot stand sorrow and agitation, my nature must be happiness and peacefulness.**
- **Problem is one of self-ignorance which can be corrected only by self-knowledge.**

**The nature of the self is happiness.**

# The meaning of SELF

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- **When we talk of self-knowledge, we first have to determine what that “SELF” is, the meaning of ‘I’.**
- **It is ironical that the word ‘I’ which we use constantly and from the standpoint of which we view and judge the world, has no definite object in our mind.**
- **What do we mean when we say ‘I’?**

**Who is this ‘I’?**

# Subject-Object Duality

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- The entire creation can be reduced into two factors; one is the subject, *aham*, and the other, the object, *idam* .
  - Anything objectified by me is the object and I, the one who objectifies, am the subject.
- In an object, I do not have the ‘I’ notion, the ‘I’ sense.
  - An object need not be tangible. There are intangible things I appreciate and know.
  - I am aware of time and space
  - Time and space and things that exist in time & space are objects of my knowledge.

***aham & idam* constitute the creation.**

# Errors With Respect to 'I'

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- Although it is obvious that the subject, the knower of an object, is distinct from the object he/she knows, still I tend to have 'I' notion in the body-mind complex which is objectified by me.
- 'I' sense is erroneously placed in:
  - Body – I am tall, short, fat, white, black, etc
  - Physiological functions – I am hungry, thirsty etc
  - Sense organs – I am blind, deaf, etc
  - Mind – I am loving, angry, etc
  - Intellect – I am knower, hearer, seer, decider etc
- 'I' the subject, am neither of these nor a composite of these.

***'I' is looked upon from a particular stand point which can be objectified.***

# 'I' playing different roles

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- Every situation invokes in me a person relevant to that situation.
- I am in different roles.
  - Son, daughter, father, mother, husband, wife, employee, employer, citizen, and so on.....
- The role is me and I am not the role.
  - As a basic simple conscious person 'I' is free from roles.
- Clarity in self-identity is required.
  - Body is me; but I am not the body.
  - Mind is me; but I am not the mind.
  - Knower is me; but I am not the knower.

***'I' is unqualified consciousness, unrelated to anyone or anything. It is self-evident existence.***

# Vedāntic Teaching

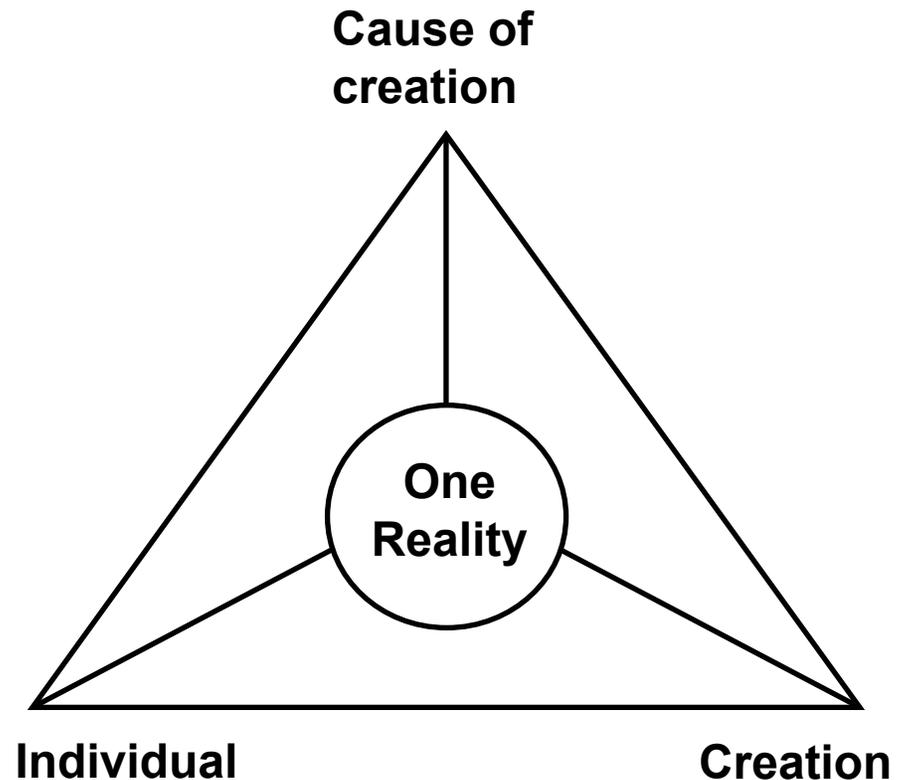
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- **Self is of the nature of *ānanda*, which means fullness.**
- **It is free from all limitations. It is the very happiness that I seek.**
- **I am always that happiness but because of self-ignorance I take myself to be other than what I am.**
- **In moments of happiness, mind is resolved.**
  - Mind stops projecting
- **Subject – Object duality resolution.**
  - The reality of the subject and the object is one, indivisible, limitless reality which is the meaning of ‘I’.

***Self-knowledge gives us the end  
that we are seeking in all our pursuits.***

# One Indivisible Reality

- **Upaniṣads** reveal the nature of the self as:
  - **Sat** – Existence that can never be negated
  - **Cit** – Consciousness
  - **Ānanda** – fullness, without any limit
- The gain of any knowledge necessarily takes place in the mind.
- A prepared mind is a prerequisite for knowing the self.



Meditation is one of the steps  
to achieve a prepared mind;  
gives one pointedness of the mind

# Prerequisites

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- ***Samatva*** - Relative poise during day to day life
- ***Vairāgya*** – Being objective and clear about priorities
- ***Ātma viśvāsa*** – self esteem/self-confidence

*These are the qualifications for meditation.*

# Preparation for meditation –(1)

## Physical preparation

- Choosing the place; at a minimum a quite place
- **Āsana**, the seating; neither too soft nor too hard but firm and comfortable - ***sthira sukha āsanam***
- Body should be kept straight – ***samam kāyaśirogrīvam***
- Keep the exhalation and inhalation equal - ***prāṇāpānau samau krtvā***
- Eyes totally closed or partially closed – i.e. they do not concentrate on anything external



# Preparation for meditation –(2)

## Mental preparation

- **Withdraw the mind from all external objects.**
- **Give up the guilt regarding the past and worry regarding the future.**
- **Temporarily surrender all your interests at the feet of the Lord and dwell in the present.**



# Process of meditation

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- A constant flow of similar thoughts centered on the object of meditation and undistracted by dissimilar thoughts - *vijātiya pratyaya anantarita sajātiya pratyaya pravāha*.
- When the mind moves away from the object of meditation, one simply brings it back to that object and this bringing the mind back is also an integral part of meditation.
- *Dhāraṇa, dhyāna* and *samādhi* -> *samyama*
  - *Dhāraṇa* -> holding the mind on the object of meditation
  - *Dhyāna* -> attempt to retain the mind on the focussed object
  - *Samādhi* -> Absorption of the mind in the object of meditation

# Object of meditation

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- The object of meditation can be either **saguṇa** **Īśvara** or **nirguṇa Īśvara**
  - **Saguṇa Īśvara** -> The Lord with attributes
  - **Nirguṇa Īśvara** -> **Brahman**
- **Saguṇa Īśvara dhyānam** -> is called **upāsana**
- **Nididhyāsana** -> is called **ātma dhyānam**
  - The object of meditation becomes the subject itself.
  - One needs to have a clear understanding of ātma, the self, as taught by the Upaniṣads.
  - Thus, it is done after **Vedānta vicāra**.

# Obstacles to meditation

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- **Nidrā** -> **Sleep**
  - Deficit in sleep -> **nidrāśeṣa**
  - Too much food -> **bahu aśana**
  - Tiredness of the body -> **śrama**
- **Vikṣepa** -> **wandering of the mind**
  - Inactivity or overactivity -> due to **tamoguṇa** or **rajoguṇa**

• Avoid the causes of sleep

• Bring the wandering mind back to the object of meditation

• Sheer practice -> **abhyāsa**

# Benefits of meditation

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- **Relative serenity and equipoise of the mind.**
- **Prepares the mind for self-knowledge.**
  - One pointedness of the mind -> *citta ekāgrata*
- **Committed Self inquiry (i.e. Vedānta vicāra) for a continuous period of time leads to self-knowledge thereby to the discovery that one is of the nature of fullness.**

**You are the source of happiness!**

# Meditation Practice