

Samādhī
Part One
Swami Dayananda Saraswati²

The whole *śāstra* can be reduced to one single verse, based on which is the practice of *samādhī* or contemplation. The verse is:

*asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpaṃ nāmacetyamśapañcakam
ādyatrayam brahmarūpaṃ jagd rūpaṃ tato'dvayam*³

asti – [it] exists; *bhāti* – [it] shines; *priyaṃ* – [it is] beloved/pleasing; *rūpaṃ* – form; *nāma ca* – and name; *iti* – thus; *amśa-pañcakam* – five part; *ādyatrayam* – the first three; *brahma-rūpaṃ* – of the nature of Brahman; *dvayam* – the two; *tataḥ* – after that; *jagat-rūpaṃ* of the nature of the world

“It exists; it shines; it is beloved/pleasing; form; and name” is the five-part [world]. The first three are in the form of Brahman; the latter two are in the form of the world

If you understand this, then we can talk of the practice of *samādhī*.

The Invariable

Asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpaṃ nāma—these are five words whose meaning can be found in any object. This is the basis of contemplation. When you say, “I love this flower,” there are five facts here. The flower exists, the flower is: *asti*. To say, “The flower is,” it must be an object of consciousness, *bhāti*, of your consciousness. Otherwise you cannot say that the flower exists. When you say, “I love this flower,” the flower pleases you; it is *priyam*. *Priyam* is love, a source of *ānanda*. So with reference to this flower we have *asti*, *bhāti*, *priyam*, it exists, is an object of consciousness and is pleasing.

Similarly, if you say, “I love this person (a particular person),” the person is (*asti*), the person is an object of consciousness (*bhāti*) and the person is a source of, or the cause of evoking the pleased self (*priyam*). That’s what you have to understand. *Priyam* is that which evokes the pleased self. Then when you say, “I love these mountains,” (or a given mountain), the mountain is, *asti*, the mountain shines in your awareness, *bhāti*, the mountain evokes the pleased self; it is *priyam*. I love the stars. The group of stars *asti*, the group of stars *bhāti*, and that group of stars

¹ Published in the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam 17th Anniversary Souvenir, 2003

² From classes on *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, September 2001., transcribed and edited by Constance DiMartino.

³ *Dṛgdṛśya-viveka* verse 20

is a source which evokes the pleased self, *priyam*. It is the cause, as it were, that evokes the pleased self. It is instrumental, a *nimita*, in evoking the pleased self. Now, when you say, “I love this body,” your own body, there is *asti, bhāti, priyam*. In all these, you see three things that are common: *asti, bhāti, priyam*.

There are also many things which not *priyam (apriyam)*. There are objects which evoke hatred, fear, and so on, which we will look at later. From the examples that we have seen, we can say that all three (*asti, bhāti, priyam*) are common to all those objects which evoke the pleased self in you. They don’t change. Whether it is a flower, or a tree, a person, or a star— *asti, bhāti, priyam*. These three are invariable.

The Variables – Comprised of Non-Variables

Then there are variables. What are they? Each has its own particular form, called *rūpa*, for which we have given a name, *nāma*. A flower has a particular form, but a petal is different; it is not a flower. A petal is part of the flower. You don’t say “petal” and refer to a flower. Otherwise, you wouldn’t call it “petal.” You have another word—petal—because it has its own meaning, distinct from a flower. Now, if the petals are all removed, there is no flower, either. This is what we call a *rūpa*. Every *rūpa* is reduced to many *rūpas*, many things. Therefore, “flower” is only an arbitrary word to indicate a lot of things put together. And every one of them is a non-flower, please understand. Every constituent of the flower is a non-flower.

Now, this petal is a non-flower. It is not a flower, but rather, an object which has a separate word, “petal.” I can’t hold up these petals and say, “Please take this flower.” These are petals, and petals are non-flowers. Suppose I remove all the non-flowers to find out where the flower is. As I remove these petals, one by one, each one of them is a non-flower. And what I am left with, the stamen, is also a non-flower, and so, obviously, is the stem. Can I hold up the stem and say, “Please take this flower”?

What I am trying to show here is that every one of the components of the flower is a non-flower. How can a few things that are non-flower make a flower? How do they do that? If you know, what will you say? You will say, it is *mithyā*. In the same way, a petal is also a non-petal. Don’t think that a petal is a reality. It can be reduced to cells and a cell can be reduced to its own constituents. All the way down you find that every object that you give a name to is reducible to something else. Even a particle, like an electron, etc., has its own constituents, quarks, etc., which in turn have their own constituents. Non-quarks are the cause for quarks.

You can see that as far as a human mind can go, everything is based upon what it is not, and without which, it doesn't exist. What is the basic reality of all these forms for which we have different names, like flower, stamen, petal, stalk? That non-flower, non-mountain, non-star, non-tree, non-person (meaning the body-mind-sense complex) is what we say is the truth of the flower, the mountain, the star, the tree, the person. And therefore, if a non-flower, which is also a non-mountain, which is also a non-petal, which is also non-everything, that one is present in the flower, because that is the truth. It inheres in the petal, the flower, the mountain, the star, the tree, the person, and therefore, we can say that this is what is called “*asti*.” The non-flower *asti*. Everything can be reduced to *asti*, without which there is no existent thing. In fact, the *asti* is what is, and it joins anything about which you say “It is.” That “is” joins it. When you say that space “is” that is *asti* “is” plus the *nāma-rūpa* called space. If you say that time “is” then what is, is now in the form of time. So, time becomes *nāma-rūpa*, name/form. We must understand what name/form is. It is not a reality by itself, but still, it has a role to play, just as a flower has its own something, even though it is not a being. Because of this difference in reality, the relationship between the non-flower and the flower cannot be that of a substantive and attribute. Similarly, when you understand that an object is a clay pot, you also understand clay, but the pot is not an attribute of the clay. When you think of clay, your understanding of clay doesn't include potness. Clay can be anything—it can be in any form. There is a form, a Tanjore doll, that is also clay. This is a very peculiar fellow. He's the one who says, “Never say die,” because if you put him down, he will get up. He will wobble, but get back up, ready for more. This doll is solid clay, nothing else. But your understanding of clay doesn't include any of these forms. Therefore, potness, etc., is not an intrinsic attribute to clay. Yet your understanding of pot has no meaning if you don't understand its reality. In your understanding of clay there is no pot, but the pot doesn't exist without being clay or some other substance. Therefore, you cannot even imagine a pot without thinking of something else. This is true with every object. The basic “something else” which doesn't depend upon something else, is called *satyam*; this is *asti*. Since everything else is like the pot, in that it is not an intrinsic attribute, but at the same time, doesn't exist independently of the clay, we have to say the potness is a *nāma/rūpa*, an attribute. What kind of an attribute? It is an incidental attribute, which is not part of clay. Therefore, the clay is transcendental. It transcends the pot. This has nothing to do with transcendental meditation. There is no doing in this; it is pure cognition. The pot is not an attribute of clay, and at the same time, it is like an attribute because it doesn't have a being of its own. Clay, in a particular form, we call a pot. Therefore, the pot becomes a kind of attribute without being intrinsic to clay. It is a superimposition, a superimposed or incidental attribute to clay.

The word “pot” is considered to be a substantive, in language. Grammatically, it is a noun, a substantive. Really speaking, however, it is not a substantive, nor is it even an intrinsic attribute, an incidental attribute, to clay. You can only use “pot” as an adjective to clay, not as a substantive. That being so, we should say “potty clay.” Clay is in the form of pot, and therefore we can say, “potty clay.” So, when you say, “potty clay,” there is some truth in it. However, not only do we not say this, we say the opposite. We say “clay pot.” In that way, linguistically, clay becomes an adjective. We say “golden chain,” but, in fact, in reality, it is ‘chainy’ gold. There is ‘bangle’ gold and ‘ringey’ gold. but we say “golden bangle,” “golden ring,” “golden chain.” So not only do we not say “potty clay,” but, on the contrary, we use the substantive as an attribute and make the incidental attribute the substantive. You can understand our confusion. We have to work with this confusion. This is how we all grew up, so this is a very deeply entrenched confusion. Not only is language meant for communication, it is meant for confusion also! And we have to use that same language in order to resolve the confusion. It is the language we have, in which a noun, an adjective, etc., are all defined. Although the use of language in itself is a big subject, this limited discussion is enough for our purposes here.

What I am saying is that in all the clay objects the clay is a substantive. It is the name and form that divide it (*nāma-rūpe bidyete*). If you have five clay pots and count clay, how many clays are there? There are five pieces of earthenware, but how many clays? If you say there are five clays, I will say there are six clays! If you don’t understand that, you are confirming what I say. So, when I say, “Count the clay,” the number disappears. The variables do not really count, because the variables do not exist independently of the one. That is what is called *mithyā*. *Mithyā* is not delusion. Because there is this *mithyā* reality, you have what we call the practice of *samādhi*, if necessary. If you understand totally, you don’t need this practice. If there is no confusion regarding *mithyā*, then no practice is required. No practice will help you either, if you don’t understand. And therefore, only as a part of this understanding do we have this *samādhi*-practice.

Dialogue of Two Pots

Suppose this small pot has a human mind. Being smaller than the others, it has a very deep complex. It comes to me and says, “I am very sad.” I asked, “Why are you sad?”

“I don’t like myself.”

“Why don’t you like yourself?”

“Well, look at me. Everybody calls me ‘midget.’”

“Oh, you are a midget?”

“Yes, I am a midget.”
 “Do you accept that?”
 “Yeah.”
 “Why don’t you enjoy being a midget? A midget can get in anywhere. Between two people, you can just scoot in without a problem. It’s wonderful. No ceiling will hit your head.” This is called positive thinking. Then I convinced the pot how advantageous it is to be a midget, and it was happy. “Thank you, I feel good!” The therapy session is over. Then it happened to see a larger pot. And the bigger pot said to it, “Midget! Why did you come here?” All positive thinking disappears for the small pot. “I am a midget!” Again he tells me, “I am sad. I don’t like myself.” I ask, “From where did you come?”
 “From India.”
 “Why did you come here?”
 “I thought I could make it in America.”
 “Then what did you do in America?”
 “Nothing.”
 “Are you not in America?”
 “Yes, I am in America. In the Gurukulam, under the table. Around me are all these big fellows who go on teasing me. I have no respect.” Then I told this pot, “Hey, you are not from India.”
 “Oh, from where? I have an Indian passport with a photo.”
 “You are not from India.”
 “Then from where?”
 “You are from clay.”
 “What?!”
 “From clay.”
 “From clay I came? No, from India I came.”
 “No, you are from clay.”
 “Oh, I came from a place called clay?”
 “No. When I say you came from clay, I mean you came from clay, you are clay, and are sustained by clay.”
 “I am sustained by clay?”
 “Yes. The weight of you is the weight of clay.”
 “Oh, I have a weight?”
 “Yes, you have a weight. The weight of clay is your weight.”
 “So that means I have no weight?”
 “Yes, you have no weight.”
 “My God! I thought I was a midget, weighing a few ounces, but you have taken away those ounces also! So I am a weightless pot?”
 “In fact, you are not a pot.”
 “I’m not a pot? What are you talking about? I don’t understand you.”
 “You will understand better. Now, listen, what is this?”
 “That’s a big pot, a very proud pot.”
 “Where did it come from? From India?”
 “No.”
 “Oh, from clay?”
 “Yes, it came from clay. Sustained by what?”
 “By clay. Then you mean to say the weight of pot is the weight of clay?”
 “Yes. It is the weight of clay.”
 “So it’s not a big pot?”
 “It is clay.”
 “Oh, it has more clay and I have less clay!”

The complex doesn't go. It is very difficult. My god, it is a job I have here to make this fellow understand.

“There are two clays. One clay is big, more clay, and I am less clay.”

“No. There are not two clays. There is only one clay.”

“There is only one clay?”

“Yes.”

“If I count clay, I cannot count two?”

“You cannot.”

“Why not? There's clay there and clay here.”

“But both are clay.”

“Oh, that seems to be true. There is one clay. Then I'm clay?”

“Yes, you are clay.”

“I am clay and the other fellow, the big guy, is also clay? All are clay?”

“Yes, all are clay.”

“Then I won't die?”

“You won't die.”

“Really? I'm not a midget!!” Then he came back to me the next day, and said, “I could understand it yesterday, but today, I feel bad.”

“You have to practice *samādhi*.”

“Oh, what is that?”

“You have to think, ‘I am clay.’”

“How?”

“I will teach you how to do that, and you keep doing it.”

“It looks very funny.”

“Why?”

“I am a little clay.”

“Yes.”

“So why should I think I am clay?”

“You need not.”

“But I don't feel like I am clay.”

“Then you have to think.”

“Oh, that is what this meditation is about?”

“Yes.”

Asti bhāti priyaṃ rūpam nāmacety aṃśapañcakam. First, we talk about *asti*. *Asti* is self-existent. Space, time, and everything else, is an incidental attribute of this *asti*, which is *sat*, existence. Therefore, flower “is,” the mountain “is,” and in all these, “is,” the *sat* is common. The mountain has a form and it has a name. Yet there is no such thing as “mountain.” If you remove the rocks, where is the mountain? In Bombay there was a big hill. Years ago, I had seen that hill, and now it is gone. They used the rock for roads, etc., and finished off the whole hill. They say they did not finish off the hill, but only removed the rock. And this is the truth of everything. There is no room, no wall, no ceiling, no light. Everything is dependent upon something else. And what is, therefore, self-existent, is called *satyam* Brahman.

You cannot arrive at this self-existent Brahman; you cannot arrive at any existent thing. You can only arrive at things that are objects of consciousness. A flower “is” because it shines (*bhāti*) as an object of consciousness. It doesn’t have the capacity to shine on its own. It does not exist by itself nor does it reveal itself. It has to be revealed. It is an object of consciousness. When you say, “The flower is,” the flower shines as an object of consciousness. The mountain shines as an object of consciousness. The stars shine as objects of consciousness. Space, time—all of them—shine as objects of consciousness. And, therefore, they are neither self-existent nor are they self-evident.

What is self-evident? Only that which is self-existent can be self-evident. And only what is self-evident can be self-existent. The self alone is self-evident. Everything else is evident to the self. Therefore, when you say, “is,” “is,” “is”—that self-evident consciousness alone is what we call self-existent. Thus, *sat*, existence, which is *cit*, consciousness is invariable. That is the truth of everything. *Sat-cit*, being the invariable of everything, is *ananta*—limitless spatially and time-wise. Therefore, consciousness is; consciousness (*cit*) is (*sat*) and it is limitless, *ananta* or *ānanda*—*sat cit ānanda*.

Now, it is this limitlessness that makes your happiness the most desirable thing. When you are pleased by the flower, you say, “I love the flower.” Why? It just removes the displeased person. It keeps the displeased person, for the time being, suspended, and the pleased person comes out. You love to be that pleased person, because that is what you are. You are the limitless alone, which includes this flower, too. The seer, seen—both of them—are non-separate from consciousness which is limitless. This wholeness, in any degree, in an experience is what we call happiness, pleasure, joy, bliss, ecstasy. It is the mental element that accounts for the degrees.

What about the object that displeases you? Objects that displease you are also not outside limitless consciousness. But why should they displease me? Because you have your own scales of value, likes and dislikes. You don’t look at the object as it is, but as an object that is useless or despicable and consequently, something that evokes the displeased self. Through the goggles of your likes and dislikes, the object gets distorted, and you despise the object. What makes the object despised? Your own likes and dislikes. Thus, if an Indian cannot handle the presence of bleu cheese anywhere around, that doesn’t mean bleu cheese has something that has to be despised. Objectively, it will be there. Some people like it. If the bleu cheese has more fungus and more holes, it is considered to be a better cheese. It’s a cultivated taste. Somebody

likes it. So, certain things displease you. But the same things please others. Therefore, you should know that there are objects that you look at in a certain way, and because of that, they evoke in you the displeased person. And you don't like the displeased person. Why? Because you are the truth of the pleased person. Even there, indirectly, you are what you love. Your love (*priyam*) comes out. What is loved? The pleased person. You love the pleased person; you don't love the displeased person. In other words, you want to be yourself. The truth of the pleased person is this limitlessness. That is the truth of the pleased person. And that is what you experience in a moment of joy. The wholeness has nothing to do with the world. The world is *nāma-rūpa*, and you are *sat cit ānanda—asti bhāti priyam*. All three are you, and all 'three' are one thing. It is limitless. It is, and it is consciousness. Three words point out one thing that is self-evident, self-existent—the invariable in all situations.

Therefore, what is the world (*jagat*)? What is a thought? Now you tell me the definition of a thought. *Sat cit ānanda*—plus *nāma-rūpa*. Similarly, the object of thought, that is 'out there', is *sat cit ānanda* plus *nāma-rūpa*. When this is the fact, what will contemplation be? What you have to do if you miss that fact. Any estrangement is only because a given *nāma-rūpa* (such as mind, etc.) is taken to be a reality, and it has to deal with other *nāma-rūpas* that are equally real. Just like the pot which takes itself to be small and therefore has a complex which it has to deal with. Then, I have to tell the pot, "Contemplate upon the truth of all the pots, which is you. This is clay." In the example of the clay pots, there is a space between the pots in which the pots don't exist. The example is limited in that way. Here, however, we are talking about limitless consciousness. There is nothing that is away from it.

Therefore, we can contemplate now upon this fact, this reality behind every name and form. It is not even "behind." It is like the water being "behind" the wave. You don't look behind the wave to see if there is water there or not. It is not "behind," really speaking; it is a change of vision. I call this particular vision of things a "touch wood" perception. If I touch the desk that is covered by a cloth, I am touching wood. I transcend the table, the desk, and what do I do? I touch wood. If you are sitting on a chair and the arm of the chair is wooden and you say, "touch wood," as you touch the arm, you don't bother about the chair or anything else there; you only see wood. Or, if it is a table, you touch wood, and you don't see a table there. You transcend table in your recognition of wood.

Seeing this "touch wood" is the 'practice' of *savikalpa-samādhi*. Anything that "is", that exists, is Brahman, which is just you, *ātma*. That "is" is Brahman. Even the absence of

something that “is” is Brahman. It is self-existent, not ‘underneath’, so you need not dive deep. It is something like diving deep into the wave in order to find the water. Therefore, whether you open or close your eyes, you can meditate, because what you are meditating upon is neither underneath nor remote in any way.