

**Satsang with Swami Dayananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam**

Path of Knowledge¹

Question:

Swamiji, please explain the meaning of the expression “The path of knowledge is like a razor’s edge”.

Answer:

The term “razor’s edge” is used in the sense of subtlety. A razor’s edge is very subtle in that it has no real dimension. It is a single line with no width. Similarly, the truth is very subtle. Our mind generally moves to extremes. It moves this way and that way. Things can be either black or white. This is how we know what is true and what is false, what exists (*satyam*) and what does not exist (*tuccham*), and what is right and what is wrong.

In fact, everything exists in truth. What we call truth (*satyam*) exists in truth and what we call nonexistent (*tuccham*) also exists in truth. The question then becomes, in what truth do *satyam* and *tuccham* exist? That truth is understood only through paradoxes. It is said in the *kathopaniṣd* that it is smaller than the smallest thing you can see, meaning that it is infinite. Therefore, it is something to be comprehended as a whole.

Comparing this knowledge to a razor’s edge does not mean that it cuts you or hurts you in any way. Knowledge does not hurt anyone. How can it? Knowledge is purely inquiry. Where is the hurt in inquiry? There is no hurt anywhere. Nor is it

result-oriented. We are not producing a result. We are clearing away ignorance, which takes its own time, just as clouds take their own time to clear away. And as they clear, the light of sun or moon is revealed.

Similarly, we are thinning out the clouds of doubts and vagueness. The clouds are there, but they are not as thick and dense as they were before. There is just haziness, meaning that we have a hazy appreciation of the whole. Eventually, whatever clouds are there also goes away, which is what we call clear knowledge. Therefore, there is light all the way and this light is the benefit.

There is no danger of slipping or falling here. It is not like walking on a knife where, if we slip, we may hurt ourselves. It is not tightrope walking! From where would we fall? Can we, as some people say, fall from the truth into *samsāra*, a life of becoming? We are already in *samsāra*. Where, then, is the question of a fall? No one can fall any further. We think that we can fall still deeper, but there is no further fall possible for a *samsāri*, one who takes himself or herself to be a mortal.

The *samsāri* is Brahman in fact. Brahman becomes a *samsāri*, as it were, due to ignorance. There is no further fall than this. Therefore, to say so is all imagination. The saying, “the higher you go, the harder you fall”, may apply to mountain climbing, but certainly not to knowledge. Therefore, the advice, “Be very careful!” is not relevant here and is only given by those who do not know what it is they are seeking.

¹ From “Selected Satsangs with Swami Dayananda” as published in Arsha Vidya Gurukulam 3rd anniversary souvenir, 1989.