

# GITA CLASS – INTRO TALK

## *Shāstra and Shravaṇa- the scriptures and listening*

We are going to begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, along with the commentary by Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya. In the first śloka of the Gita, Śaṅkara wrote only one line of commentary; ‘*dharmakṣetre iti.*’ Besides that, there is also the commentary in the Preface. Then the commentary continues in the second chapter.

Śaṅkara’s commentary of the Gita is according to the Advaita philosophy. There are a few things here that should be given attention. Here, we can discuss some matters, such as hearing the scriptures (*sāstra śravaṇa*). ‘How does *sāstra śravaṇa* help one attain Self-knowledge?’ What is the primary goal of the Advaita Philosophy? That is called ‘*Mokṣa*,’ Liberation, and is the goal of the *sāstras*. ‘Then how are the scriptures utilized?’ They are used for attaining *Mokṣa*. There are countless practices like mantra japa and meditation that *sādhaks* perform for attaining *Mokṣa*. ‘But how do the scriptures help?’ ‘How does a person benefit from spiritual discussion?’

The scriptures speak about three steps; hearing, reflection, and contemplation. These are *śravaṇa*, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana*. ‘How does a *sādhak* benefit from these?’

The first thing a person entering the scriptures should understand is the importance of the spoken word (*śabda*). In the Sanskrit language, the word for ‘scripture’ is ‘*sāstra.*’ *Śāstra* is composed of *śabda*. What kind of *śabda* is this? These are the instructions of the Guru. That is what is called ‘*sāstra.*’

When we hear the word, ‘*sāstra,*’ a book comes to mind, but a book is not *śabda*. A book is composed of script. In *Sanskrit*, this is called ‘*śabda sanketam*’ – a symbol for the spoken words. What is this *sanketam*, the text? It is not *śabda*, but it reminds us of the *śabda*.

What is the book we see before us? It is a reminder of the spoken words. We aren’t able to see *śabda*; we can only hear it. However, we do see *sāstra*. The *sāstra* that we see is the text. This text is a reminder of the true *śabda*.

What happens when we read a book? There, the text creates remembrance of the spoken words. The sounds join together and form words, creating remembrance of the *śabda*. From the words, we become aware of their meaning. When the meanings of the words are joined together, we become aware of the meaning of the sentences. When we read a book, this is how we understand the meaning.

This awareness of meaning is of two types; the literal meaning (*vāchyārtha*) and the indicated meaning (*lakṣyārtha*). We become aware of the literal meaning of a sentence by grasping the meaning of the words. We can also become aware of the indicated meaning of a sentence, by grasping what it points to. In all subjects besides spirituality, when we study through reading and understanding books, awareness of the literal meaning is enough. Then we can understand; ‘what does this book contain? What is the meaning?’

However, that is not enough in spirituality. There, we grasp the ‘indicated meaning.’ We must leave behind the literal meaning of the words and reach the *lakṣyārtham*, what they indicate.

The spoken word, (*śabda*) has such a capacity. *Śabda* can lead the inner instrument from the literal meaning of the words to what they indicate. That is the capacity of *śabda*.

That is where the importance of hearing (*śravaṇā*) comes. In *śravaṇa*, we don’t understand the meaning through reading a book. Instead, we hear the words. We are hearing, not seeing, so the importance is in *śabda*. That is why the Vedas are called the ‘*śrutis*.’ Another name for *Upaniṣad* is *śruti*. This means, ‘to be heard.’

Further on in the Gita, Lord Krishna says, ‘I instructed this Yoga to *Vivasvan*, the Sun. *Vivasvan* then spoke this to *Manu*. Then *Manu* spoke it to *Ikṣvāku*.’ ‘*Evam param̐parā prāptā*.’ ‘Thus, this has been sustained through lineage.’ This succession of the *śāstra* through lineage occurs through *śabda*, the spoken words. It isn’t through the texts.

The succession of the spiritual lineage isn’t through texts. Instead, it is through *śabda*. The Guru instructs, and the disciple receives. That disciple later instructs, and this continues. In this process, *śabda* is expressed externally. From

where is that? This is from the Guru, the person speaking. This is called the 'vaktā,' the speaker.

Then where is the *śabda* received? That is in the the listener; the 'śrotā.' When the Guru gives instructions, the Guru is the *vaktā*, and the disciple the *śrotā*. The Guru expresses the words externally, and the disciple receives those words. The words spoken by the Guru are called 'śāstra,' and the disciple receives that 'śāstra.' In truth, what happens in this process?

The *antaḥkaraṇa*, or mind, is something that cannot exist apart from the presence of the *Ātman*. The *antaḥkaraṇa* is constantly in the form of *vṛttis*, modifications. The *antaḥkaraṇa* can only exist in transformation. If there is no transformation, then there is no *antaḥkaraṇa*.

The mind is like water. Water is constantly in transformation, either grossly or subtly. That is why it is always in the form of vibrations, or waves. Similarly, the *antaḥkaraṇa* is continuously in transformation. When the Guru gives instruction, his *antaḥkaraṇa* becomes modified in the form of the spoken words. There, the mind assumes the form of *śabda*.

No matter what the subject is, the inner instrument assumes the form of *śabda* to express itself as words. In spirituality, the subject being discussed is the *Ātman*. There, the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the Guru will continuously be modified in the form of the *Ātman*. The disciple then receives those words which are expressed from the inner instrument of the Guru.

What is the specialty of the *antaḥkaraṇa*? That can only exist in the presence of the *Ātman*. When the Guru instructs about the Self, the Guru's *antaḥkaraṇa* will be modified in the form of the Self. This is where the importance of the Guru's instructions comes.

The *antaḥkaraṇa* of the *Guru* is modified in the form of the Self. That is expressed outwardly through the tongue, in the form of words. Then what happens when those words reach the disciple? Those words from the *Guru* are full of the presence of the *Ātman*. That is what is called 'śāstropadeśam,' the instruction of *śāstra*, or instruction of the *Guru*.

If one has maturity, if one is prepared and suitable, then whatever is in the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the speaker will be experienced in the listener. In other words, if the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the speaker is modified in the form of the Self, and in

awareness of the Self, then the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the listener can become modified in the form of the Self, in awareness of the Self, in the same way. That is what is said in the scriptures; ‘*eka śravaṇāṭ.*’ This means, ‘from just one hearing.’ If a person has gained fitness and maturity, he may attain Self-Knowledge through hearing just once. That depends on the suitability of the listener. If the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the listener is *sattvic* and one-pointed, it can happen.

One specialty of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is that it will always be influenced by the three *guṇas*; *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*. It may be in any of one of these, or they may be mixed.

When the *antaḥkaraṇa* becomes modified in the form of the *Ātman*, when it is established in awareness of the Self, then there is another specialty. This is that it can travel. It isn’t limited by place. This means that it is able to go from one place to another. It can travel from the place of the speaker to the place of the listener. It can travel from the place of the *vaktā’s antaḥkaraṇa* to the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the *śrotā*.

‘How is that?’ This is because it is subtle. It is energy (*taijas*). Just like the light of the sun travels from one place to another, all objects composed of energy can travel. The *antaḥkaraṇa* can do this. It can travel from the place of the speaker to the place of the listener. What is the place of the speaker? This is the presence of the *Ātman* within the person giving instruction. That is what is meant by ‘place.’ The ‘place’ of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is the *Ātman*. To say that ‘this travels to the place of the listener’s *antaḥkaraṇa*,’ means that it travels to the presence of the Self within the listener. It can reach there. That is a specialty of the *antaḥkaraṇa*.

In truth, the travel of the *antaḥkaraṇa* cannot be compared with the movement of the wind, or the travel of light. This activity of motion is not necessary there. That is a specialty that belongs to the *antaḥkaraṇa*. ‘Why is that?’

The *Ātman* is all-pervasive, so any kind of motion isn’t necessary for It to travel from one place to another. The *antaḥkaraṇa* is situated closer to the *Ātman* than anything else, and can exist only by the effulgence of the *Ātman*. Therefore, if the *Ātman* is all-pervasive, then the *antaḥkaraṇa* must also be all-pervasive. ‘Then what makes the *antaḥkaraṇa* distinct?’ Those are the numerous modifications within the *antaḥkaraṇa*.

Normally, when the speaker's mind is in one modification, the mind of the listener will be in a different modification. However, if the listener has this suitability, then the same modification that is in the speaker will be experienced in the mind of the listener. When the same modification of mind exists in two places at the same time, then the mind becomes one. Then the *antaḥkaraṇa* doesn't exist as two.

When the *antaḥkaraṇa* of the listener experiences the same form as that of the speaker's *antaḥkaraṇa*, in the *Ātman*, then the *antaḥkaraṇa* is no longer two. It becomes one. That is why we said that the *antaḥkaraṇa* travels from one place to another.

When the Guru speaks, being established in Self-Awareness, those words will be full of that Awareness (*Ātma Bodha*). When the mature listener receives those words, that knowledge will likewise shine within him. That is the meaning of what I said. Then both modifications happen in the same time and place. That is why it is said that a single hearing is enough; '*eka śravaṇāt.*'

When the Guru gives instruction about the Self, that alone is enough for a fully suitable disciple. In the same way that *Ātma Bodha* shines within the Guru, it will shine within the disciple. This is an explanation that is based on the *śāstras*. This is a matter we should understand through contemplation.

'What happens in the Guru's instruction?' The *antaḥkaraṇa* of the Guru and disciple, the speaker and listener, are able to become one. This means that both attain the same substratum, the same form.

In all of this, the *Ātman* doesn't experience any kind of change. The *Ātman* is constantly detached, in the same condition. There is neither bondage nor Liberation there. 'Then where does all this occur?'

This happens in the *antaḥkaraṇa*, when it becomes pure and based in *sattva*. Along with the distinction between Guru and disciple, this process takes place in the inner instrument of the jiva. *Śabda* is something that aids in this as well. That is what we started to discuss; the importance of *śabda*.

The importance of *śabda* is equal to the importance of *śāstra* (scripture). When we accept the aid of *śāstra*, grasping the meaning, it aids in attaining *Jñāna* (Self-knowledge), and later, Liberation from *Samsāra*. 'And what if we have the wrong attitude?' Then *śāstra* will become a big burden and bondage. There is a

side of utility in the *śāstras*, and a side of bondage. This is something that is agreed on by *Āchāryas* and Gurus.

The important thing we should understand about *śāstra* is that it is the Guru's instruction. It is composed of *śabda*, the spoken words. It is the external effulgence of the Guru's inner instrument, which is in the form of the Self. Truly, that is *śāstra*. It is the Guru's experience in the form of *śabda*, which helps lead the disciple to *Ātma Bodha* (Self-awareness). *Śāstra* is experience.

Once this experience is expressed outwardly from the Guru, it attains the form of *śāstra*. The instruction of today's Guru will become tomorrow's *śāstra*. Therefore, if anyone thinks that hearing *śāstra* is a waste of time, that person must be the greatest fool in spiritual life. One should never think like that. If a person thinks, 'I don't need *śāstra*,' then he refutes the Guru. A person trying to move forward in spiritual life while refuting the Guru is like trying to see an object without the aid of light.

*Śabda* helps us through the medium of the Guru. This *śabda* comes as the outward expression of the Guru's mental modification, and becomes *śāstra*. When hearing *śāstra*, the most important thing to practice is *antarmukhata*, introspection. For any kind of subject, our mind must turn towards it to grasp it. Then the words will effulge as meaning within. Only then do we grasp a subject. When we hear about a subject, the meaning shines within the mind.

When a sentence is heard, the effulgence or awareness of its meaning is experienced within us. Here, it is the Self that is being expressed through the words, so the Self is the meaning. The *śabda* here doesn't create awareness of an external object. When one practices *śravaṇa* and grasps this *Ātma Vidyā*, the *antaḥkaraṇa* is devoid of external objects. At the same time, it is full of meaning, in relation to the Atman. In the hearing and reflection of *śāstra*, the *antaḥkaraṇa* continuously grasps the *Ātman*, which is being expressed through the words. That is what is called *antarmukhata*, introspection.

This isn't a separate object. When we hear words normally, they create awareness of external objects. 'And what about when we grasp *Ātma Vidyā*, when we are discussing about the *Ātman*?' There, the meaning and awareness are of the *Ātman*. However, there is a slight difference. Here, the '*artham*' or

meaning is not the literal meaning of the words (*vāchyārtha*). Instead, it is the '*lakṣyārtha*,' that which is indicated by the words.

In other words, spoken words can directly make one aware of separate objects. When someone says the word, 'book,' then the meaning of the word effulges within the mind. This creates knowledge of the meaning. The spoken word has this capacity. However, our mind cannot be made aware of the *Ātman* in that way. This is because the *Ātman* is not an object of the mind like that. 'Why doesn't that happen?'

No matter what it may be, the mind can only grasp an object that is external and separate. The mind can grasp an object through the literal meaning of words, only if that object is separate from the mind. The mind is unable to grasp the *Ātman* in that way. Nor are we able to grasp the *Ātman* through the the literal meaning of *śabda*.

Why is that? It is because the *Ātman* is the true nature of the mind and of *śabda*. Nothing grasp its own true nature as an object. For example, we cannot touch the tip of our finger with the same finger. We cannot see our own eye directly, without the aid of a mirror. We cannot touch our nose with our nose.

'Why is that?' It is because nothing can function in relation to its true nature. The mind and *śabda* are unable to act within their own true nature, the *Ātman*. Because of that, the mind and *śabda* are unable to reveal the *Ātman* as their own object. That is the difference between the grasping of an object and grasping the Self.

The *śāstra*, or the Guru's instruction, cannot directly reveal the *Ātman*. Instead, how do they reveal the Self? We said before that the inner instrument of the Guru, which is modified in the form of the *Ātman*, comes out as sound, and enters the inner instrument of the listener. 'Once it reaches there, what does it do?' It makes the listener's *antaḥkaraṇa* modified in the form of the *Ātman*.

However, the *antaḥkaraṇa*, which is modified in the form of the Self, is unable to reveal the Self. 'Then what happens?' It has the capacity to remove all of the *Māyā* in the disciple that obstructs Self-knowledge. That is all it is able to do. It doesn't reveal the *Ātman*; instead, it destroys the darkness of Self-ignorance. That is what it can do.

The *Ātman* is constantly situated in its pure nature, being self-luminous. Having removed darkness, light remains in its pure natural state. That is all that happens. That is the limitation and the endless possibility of *śabda*. That is the limitation and the endless possibility of *śāstra*. What is the limitation of *śāstra*? Since that is composed of *śabda*, it can never directly reveal the *Ātman*. And what is the possibility? That can destroy everything that stands as an obstacle to the light of the Self. That is the importance of *śāstra*, or of *śabda*.

All of these matters are hints to be reflected on with one-pointedness. These aren't detailed explanations. These are matters to be imbibed, reflected on and grasped. That is why I said before; 'the most important aspect of hearing *śāstra* is introspection.' This proper hearing of *śāstra* isn't possible for those who are extroverted and worldly. This refers to ordinary *jīvas*.

Some people, even *sādhaks*, become disinterested in hearing *śāstra*. The primary reason for that is the accumulation of *rajas* and *tamas* in the *antaḥkaraṇa*. When these *guṇas* accumulate more and more, a person turns away from the *śāstras*. One won't have any interest in hearing *śāstra*, and if one does hear for some reason, he'll fall asleep. He's not to blame. That is a particular condition the *jīva* brought with him when he came here.

In that *antaḥkaraṇa*, the ability of *śabda* to carry *śakti* will be less. If the listener's *antaḥkaraṇa* isn't ready to accept the *śabda* coming from the Guru or *śāstra*, which contains the Light of the Self, then the disciple becomes disinterested. His mind turns away. This process fails.

Instead, if the disciple's inner instrument has more of a *sattvic* quality, and if there is more one-pointedness, then he will surely grasp this *śabda* of the Guru's instruction. Otherwise, even if the meaning behind the *śabda* isn't fully revealed that instant, it will become revealed over time. If we aren't able to fully grasp the meaning in the actual hearing due to our lack of maturity, then through time, the meaning will shine forth and be experienced. Sometimes, we are only able to grasp the things the Guru tells us after a period of time. Then we think, 'this is what the Guru meant!' The meaning shines within according to the maturity of the disciple.

In *śāstra*, the benefit we derive is according to how much introspection we have when we hear and grasp the words. In *Śaṅkarāchārya's* Preface, he says,

‘*Ātma niṣṭhā*,’ the discipline of Self-knowledge. In this *Ātma niṣṭhā*, an important part is performing *śravaṇa* with introspection, without the mind becoming involved in external dealings. What are the dealings of the mind? When we speak about the external dealings of the mind, we should know that we aren’t thinking about any separate object, while hearing the *śāstra*.

The ‘external dealings of the mind’ refer to when the mind becomes influenced by likes and dislikes. That is what prompts us to think of external objects. This is either ‘*rāga*,’ attachment, or ‘*dveṣa*,’ aversion. The ‘extroverted nature of the mind’ primarily means likes and dislikes. This also indicates the other similar emotions. That is *bahirmukhata*, the extroverted nature of mind.

What is purity of mind? It is the absence of likes and dislikes. If the mind must become introspective, then the likes and dislikes must diminish. Only then is it possible. That is the only way to make the mind introspective.

We can easily understand about the purity and detachment of the Ātman, because the *Ātman* is the embodiment of those qualities. It’s not that the Self is joined together with those qualities. However, the purity and detachment of the mind aren’t like that; these refer to the absence of likes and dislikes. In the third chapter, the Lord says to Arjuna, ‘*Kāmaḥ eṣaḥ Krodhaḥ eṣaḥ.*’ This is where Arjuna says to Krishna, ‘I am unable to control the mind. It has no one-pointedness, no freedom.’ Like this, Arjuna gives many complaints, and then asks, ‘what causes this?’ Krishna says, ‘the causes of this are likes and dislikes.’

The amount of likes and dislikes in the mind determine how extroverted the mind is. Suppose we withdraw from all external activities, and sit alone in a cave or a room, practicing meditation. From that situation alone, it’s not possible to say that the mind is introspective. There may be likes and dislikes within the mind, even there. Even if these aren’t manifest in the gross level, the seed of these exists within the mind. Therefore, the mind is not introspective.

Suppose we constantly engage in external actions, with our mind and sense-organs. We hear sound and we act with the body – if likes and dislikes aren’t manifested in that time, we can say that the mind is introspective.

Therefore, our introspection isn’t determined by our external actions. That is important. The Gita discusses about *karma tyāga* and *karma yoga*. Our understanding of both of these must be based on this principle.

The ordinary thinking of people is, 'When our sense-organs are active and engaged in external actions, we become extroverted. If we restrain the senses forcefully from their objects, without any external activity, we become introspective.' That isn't what the Gita teaches. '*Indriyāṇi indriyārtheṣu vartante iti dhāraṇa.*' There are proofs to what I am saying in each section of the Gita. If I have to quote ślokas for each point, it will take a lot of time. All of these points are based on scriptural authority, and contained within the Gita. '*Indriyāṇi indriyārtheṣu vartante iti dhāraṇa.*' The senses act among their objects, but along with that is a *dhāraṇa*, a determination. This is, 'the Self is detached from activity.' The Gita says that one who acts along with this determination is introspective.

That is the kind of introspection we are discussing. When hear the *śāstra*, or *Vedānta*, we may suddenly think, 'I am awake now, and my ears are active. Then how can there be introspection? Am I not constantly listening?' There, we have the doubt that this introspection means to close the ears and eyes and meditate on some particular form or sound.

I'm not saying that a person can't become introspective by withdrawing from all objects and concentrating on a single ideal.. That is possible. However, an ordinary person will still have likes and dislikes in the mind, even when he practices this kind of introspection. That is the point of what I said.

Here, in *śāstra śravaṇa*, some lose interest in this when they misjudge the greatness of their spiritual practice. A *sādhak* may think, 'this *śāstra* isn't needed.' That is a huge mistake, and this person is a great fool. I'm saying this as a reminder.

The beginning of *sādhana* is *śāstra*, and the end is *śāstra*. If one leaves this, there is no *sādhana*. The reason I am saying this strongly is because *śāstra* is the instruction of the Guru. Don't ever forget that. The start of spiritual practice is the Guru's instruction, and the end is the Guru's instruction. Then how can a person discard the *śāstra*, if he realizes its importance? This is because some think, 'I am spending a lot of time practicing *japa*. This isn't necessary for me. Why should I hear *śāstra*?' However, in truth, it isn't like that. This is something we can never reject. One thing we can never reject in spiritual life, or spiritual

practice, is the Guru's instruction. That is why we are not able to reject *śāstra*. That must be heard with *antarmukhata*, introspection.

Because the subject of *śāstra* is the *Ātman*, when you hear *śāstra*, you must think of the *Ātman* as being unseparable from you. That which you practice reflection on is not an object that is separate. 'That is my true nature.' The listener must sustain this awareness at all times. That is another specialty of *antarmukhata*.

This isn't like sitting in a class for Physics or Chemistry. This is *Ātma Tattva Śravaṇa*, hearing the principle of the *Ātman*. What does our mind try to do? It tries to fit inside an external and separate object. The mind attains plurality. There, the mind is in numerous different modifications. There, a one-pointed transformation of mind doesn't take place. Why is that? It is because the mind has accepted external and separate objects.

The hearing of the *Ātma Tattva*, the Principle of the Self, isn't like that. There, the subject is only one. That is one's own true nature. The hearing, reflection, contemplation, and meditation, are all on your own true nature. This kind of determination should not leave the listener at any time.

If it leaves, then it will become an effort to attain the *Ātman* as a separate object. This means that the hearing, reflection, and everything become extroverted. They become useless. The *śāstras* will become a burden to us, as if we are imposing something on ourselves. This means that it will become another bondage; the bondage of *śāstra*. We thus go from one kind of bondage to another. That becomes a waste.

Therefore, there is another danger in hearing the *śāstras*. From the influence of our other fields of study, some think that studying the *śāstras* is for making them a part of the memory, by using our thinking power. Then the mind places *ślokas*, words, and sentences in the memory. One will remember them without the text. However, hearing and reflection are never this kind of memorization. We do this for tests in school. There, we put a subject in the realm of our memory, and store it there. Then we bring it forth again and use it. Here, this studying *śāstra* is never like that.

If we simply memorize the text, it may help us to tell it to others, or to give speeches. When the Guru instructs, those matters are never things that were

memorized. However, we use these things that we have memorized when we give speeches. That is the difference. We study this in order to present before others, so we study *śāstra* to memorize it. It's not that this memorization doesn't benefit us at all. The hearing and speaking will all help, but this benefit is only a small piece. This will produce a *samskāra*, a mental impression.

Therefore, the hearing of the *śāstras* is never something to be memorized. This isn't for us to store the words and meanings in the memory. Instead, I said in the beginning that *śāstra* is the Guru's instruction. The words of the Guru, or the instruction of the Guru, are the shining forth of the Guru's experience. So, hearing of *śāstra* is the *ACCEPTANCE OF THAT EXPERIENCE* by the listener. That isn't to be memorized.

The great rishi *Vyaskar* describes *paṇḍits* who merely memorize the scriptures and teach others as 'donkey *Brahmaṇas*.' For them, what does it mean to perform *śravaṇa*? The Guru chants, the disciple hears, and makes it firm through the tongue. Then no particular change takes place in the mind. The person chanting and the one hearing both remain as donkeys. They both die as donkeys. Such people are called 'donkey *Brahmaṇas*.'

So, our hearing of the *śāstra* must not be like that. We must not be donkeys. You must not listen to donkeys, and you should not hear like donkeys. Then there will be no use. Then what is said? In the language of *śāstra*, this is the transferal of experience, '*anubhūti saṁkramanam*.' This is the transferal from the place of one *antaḥkaraṇa* to the place of another *antaḥkaraṇa*. In that, there is no motion, no action. Instead, what happens?

In both places, there is an identical flow of *vṛttis*, mental modification. Whatever *vṛtti* is in the speaker's mind will be experienced the same way in the disciple's. That is the acceptance of *Ātmānubhāvam*, the experience of the Self. That takes place through this introspection. This is the awareness, 'I and the subject being heard and grasped are not separate.' Having this inner awareness, without forgetting is true hearing of *śāstra*. That is necessary; *antarmukhata*.

Along with that, another important quality is *ekāgrata*, one-pointedness of mind. Only a one-pointed mind has the capacity to accept this modification of the Guru's *antaḥkaraṇa*, in the form of the Self. Along with introspection, this one-pointedness is necessary. When we hear *śāstra* normally, we may lose our one-

pointedness. We said before, that the diminishing of likes and dislikes aid in attaining introspection. Similarly, it is a decrease in the mental impurity of *rajas* and *tamas*, the causes of likes and dislikes, that brings about one-pointedness.

If the mind is full of *rajas* and *tamas*, one's one-pointedness will diminish. When that one-pointedness diminishes, the wakefulness of the mind gets destroyed. When that wakefulness is destroyed, we unknowingly doze off and go to sleep. Whenever this wakefulness is lost, this happens. If that sleep must be destroyed, the speaker must tell a joke.

When a joke is told, our mind will become awake. Why is that? Let me say with pity, that this mind is not suitable for this. The mind that can remain wakeful without any joke is the most suitable. If a joke is told, the mind will awaken. That is what ordinary storytellers do. Because of this, some people will think, 'that other Swami's class was better than this.'

Who is this Swami? 'This Swami only speaks pure *Vedānta*.' This makes us doze off. 'The other Swami tells some jokes, and has fun.' That is correct. I fully agree with this. This Swami isn't the right Swami for us. However, there is a matter in this. It isn't the Swami's fault that they doze off. It is the *rajas* and *tamas* of the mind. When these accumulate more, the mind won't get one-pointedness. The mind won't remain wakeful. If one loses wakefulness, he will naturally doze off and fall asleep. If that mind must be awoken, what happens? Then, it isn't possible to awaken the mind with *sattvic Ātma Vidyā*. Instead, something *rajasic* is needed. That can awaken the mind. That is why some tell jokes and anecdotes.

That isn't an action of *sattva*. It is an action of *rajas*. When the modification of *rajas* reaches the mind, the mind accepts that. If it is a modification of *sattva*, the mind won't accept it, because there is no one-pointedness there. *Tamas* and *rajas* become predominant.

There is this specialty of the *antaḥkaraṇa*. This is that it is '*kṣaṇī pariṇāmi*,' it transforms in each moment. It continuously transforms moment to moment. In the *Sāṃkhya Śāstras*, this is explained. At every moment, the influence of the gunas and their predominance is transforming. This is *pratīkṣaṇam*, moment to moment. In other words, if the mind is predominated by *sattva* in this moment, it may be *tamas* in the next moment, or in the next, *rajas*. The mind transforms

like this constantly. Then what do we call a *sattvic antaḥkaraṇa*? An *antaḥkaraṇa* that is predominated by *sattva* in more moments is called a *sattvic antaḥkaraṇa*.

An *antaḥkaraṇa* in which the *rajas guṇa* predominates in most moments is called a *rajasic antaḥkaraṇa*. A *tamasic antaḥkaraṇa* is that in which the *tamas guṇa* is modified in most moments. So, we can take the time when we are hearing *satsang* as an example. We practice hearing *Vedānta Śāstra* for one hour. For that one hour, if the mind is performing for most of the time in *sattva*, then it must be a *sattvic antaḥkaraṇa*. One-pointedness will be in that mind. With that, we will be able to sustain that wakefulness from the beginning to end, without a break.

Instead, if the *antaḥkaraṇa* is performing within *tamas* or *rajas*, or in a mix of these two, there will be one-pointedness, but it will be lost. It will come and again go. The person wakes up, but dozes off again. This will continuously happen. That is why after a short time, our wakefulness is lost, and we go to sleep. The external causes may be numerous, but the internal cause is only one; the transformation of the *guṇas*. That is the cause. A mind with one-pointedness will be constantly ready to receive the modification of *sattva*.

This is like electricity. There are ‘good conductors’ and ‘bad conductors.’ Some things can fully receive electricity, while some can receive a little, and others cannot receive anything. What happens here is like that. Some *antaḥkaraṇas* fully receive this *sattvic Ātma Vidyā*. The *antaḥkaraṇa* will constantly perform in the *sattva guṇa*. That mind will be modified with one-pointedness.

Some people aren’t able to do that. Sometimes, the mind will be one-pointed, and other times, it won’t. Sometimes the mind will be *sattvic*, and sometimes it will be in *rajasic* and *tamasic bhāvas*. That is the nature of the *Jiva*. Therefore, the *sattvic* modification of the *antaḥkaraṇa* in hearing *śāstra* is absolutely necessary. Then some may ask, ‘what should we do to gain this *sattvic bhāva* of the mind?’

All of our spiritual practices have this same aim. Even this hearing of *śāstra* will aid in that. Other practices, such as *japa*, meditation, and *Karma Yoga* are all practiced for gaining this *sattvic* modification of mind. Accordingly, when the individual has matured, the mind becomes modified in *sattva*. When that

happens, the mind becomes one-pointed and introspective. Then, when one hears the words of the Guru with this one-pointedness and introspection, *Ātma Bodha* shines forth within. The *lakṣyārtha*, that which those words indicate, shines forth in the form of *Ātma Bodha*. That isn't in the *vāchyārtha*, the literal meaning of the words.

So, this matter is something we have discussed in various circumstances. Still, we are discussing again, because the nature of the mind is to turn away from and reject these matters. That is the nature of the mind, since it is a product of *Māyā*. To practice hearing about the Self, to experience *Ātma Bodha*; these aren't things that *Māyā* likes. This is because these make the *Jīva* free from *Māyā*. Because these aren't things that *Māyā* likes, *Māyā* won't ever allow these. In this way, the tendency of the mind is to leave behind such things, and forget. Even if we hear again, we will again fail to remember. All of these things constantly happen to the *Jīva*.

Therefore, for a renewed reflection, a renewal of thinking, we have discussed these matters as a preface. This matter should be kept in mind when we enter the *bhāṣyā*.