

Discourse# 2. ***Anekantvad***: (multiplicity of viewpoints or non-absolutism)

May 3, 2006 – Day 2 (8 pm to 9:30 pm)

- *Vandami Namam Sami* – greeting Swami Ji
- *Navkar Mantra*
- Breathing Meditation for 5 minutes with “AUM” sound
- ***Anekantvad***: multiplicity of viewpoints or nonabsolutism
 - *vad*: *drashti*, opinion, viewpoints or *anekant*: multiple
 - *syadvad*, *sampradaivad*, *nayavad*, “*vivad*: conflict”
 - opposite of *anekantvad*: *ekantvad*
 - Mahavir Swami preached about *anekantvad* after he attained *kevalgnan* (ultimate knowledge, all-knowing, omniscience). He did not need the principle of *anekantvad* as he already had knowledge of past, present, and future. Since he could see the future, he wanted non-*kevalis* to avoid fighting and to live in peace and harmony by accepting each other. This is why he preached *anekantvad*.
 - So basically, this means that we all must practice *anekantvad* to the utmost extent unless and until we attain *kevalgnan*. This will help us reduce conflicts as we all have limited knowledge right now.
- *Anekantvad* applies to everything: object, person, situation, incidence, and circumstance. It gives us all a different outlook on thoughts and puts everything into perspective. It gives freedom of thoughts for one’s self and for others. Begin by adding “according to” to your sentences to be correct and avoid conflicts. For example, the water is cold according to the kids. This will create flexibility and decrease rigidity in thoughts.
- Lawyer story: There was once a man and his lawyer. The lawyer knew that the man was very stubborn and was up to no good. So the lawyer told the man that when the lawyer asked a question, the man could ONLY answer with either a YES or a NO. No exceptions. The man agreed. The lawyer asked the man, “Did you stop hitting your wife?” Either way, the man would be caught!
- When looking at others from yellow-colored glasses, you will see yellow. If using red-colored glasses, you will see red. So use the right eyeglasses. Remember that the object has NOT changed, but the INTERPRETER of the object has changed.
- Six blind men and an elephant: Once there were 6 blind men touching different parts of an elephant. One touched the leg and said it was a pillar. The second man touched the tail and said it was a rope. The third man touched the trunk and said it was like a thick branch of a tree. The fourth man touched the ear and said it was like a fan. The fifth man touched the stomach and said it was like a wall. The sixth man touched the tusk (teeth) and said it was like a pipe. Then they started fighting. A monk walked by and made each man touch the 5 other parts of the elephant’s body. This put everything into perspective and they all learned what an elephant really looks like! The fighting stopped.
- Mahabharat: In this story, there were Yudishtha and Duryodhan. The king told Duryodhan to go around the kingdom and write down the names of wise people. Duryodhan went around and came

back to the palace and announced that no one in the kingdom was wise, except for himself, so he wrote his name down on the piece of paper. Then Yudishtha went around the kingdom and wrote down many, many names of wise people. He said the only person whose name he couldn't write down was his own as he had many faults.

- Remember that each object/person/circumstance has INFINITE characteristics. The only thing stopping us from saying all of the characteristics is our speech. Mahavir Swami: husband, father, God, Arihant, son, brother, king, monk, Tirthankar, and on and on... He has infinite characteristics!
- Instead of saying "you are ONLY right", say "you are ALSO right" or "you are right, too".
- An author once described *anekantvad* in a book titled "MAYBE-ISM." There is no MAYBE involved in *anekantvad*. There is not a definite answer but there are many definite answers.
- We all can know and learn infinite amounts of knowledge, but we cannot EXPLAIN knowledge all at once. We have to explain everything one after another.
- Buddha: I am the best of the best and the worst of the worst all at once. Everyone has imperfections. No one is perfect. For instance, we might be perfect at cooking and singing. But we are imperfect at writing and speaking in public.
- **5 things to follow to master *anekantvad***
 1. Be open-minded: accept and learn all
 2. Stay neutral in life → don't be partial
 3. Be flexible → don't be stubborn. Have flexible thoughts and a flexible nature
 4. Opposing natures are helpful. Imagine your 4 fingers without your thumb... would they be functional? Imagine day without night or night without day...
 5. Remember that possibilities are endless
- **Practice:**
 1. Tolerance and patience. As youngsters in America, this is our biggest weakness
 2. Forgiveness. Ask for forgiveness and also forgive and forget bad deeds of others.
 3. Cooperation.
 4. Speak less or you will fall into a trap that will be hard to get out of.
- Digambers v. Shvetambers
 - Remember that we are all Jain so there should be no divisions. Nonetheless, one difference is that *Digambers* believe that all the *Tirthankars* were male. *Shvetambers* believe that *Mallinath*, the 19th of 24 *Tirthankars* was female. *Purush* means one who has power. *Purusharth* means capacity. So anyone can be a *purush* even though the term is reserved for males only. That is why *Digambers* and *Shvetambers* are both right. *Mallinath* was a *tirthankar* who was powerful and capable of becoming a *siddha*. That is what we all should focus on and that is what matters.
- Nishchay Nay, Vyavaar Nay: This means that you can both meditate and be realistic to gain the ultimate truth or you can be practical and conduct rituals to gain the ultimate truth.
- Christianity: Christians believe that Jesus said, "If you believe in Jesus, you will go to Heaven. If you don't, you will go to Hell." Jesus did NOT say this. There is no concept of reincarnation →

you are only born once. So, the priests, after much had passed, gave the public an ultimatum. Either choose Christianity or be very afraid. But Jesus never preached this. This depicts the gap between Jesus and the Christians, just like there is a gap between Mahavir Swami and Jains.

- Discussion:

- According to the *atichars*, we are not supposed to worship “*dev, devi, devtas*”?
 - We are higher than heavenly and celestial beings as only the human life will take you to *moksha*. Heavenly beings will NOT take you to God. According to Hinduism, a heavenly being is God and they watch over and come down to earth in human form when there is trouble. But Jain *siddhas* will not help you and neither will heavenly beings in attaining *moksha*. *Dev/devtas* can help you as you are leading a materialistic life right now, so you can ask for *punya*, money, and such and they will aid you. But they are also souls with *karma* and a body, so they have to be born again. They are not free from cycle of birth and death. *Siddhas* have no *karma*, no body, and they are all free from endless cycle of birth and death.
- In the US, many Americans have to face divorces in their lives. This is because everyone leads a VERY individual life with lots of freedom. It is hard to get along with others if you do not learn the art of acceptance and cooperation. Don't jump to conclusions.
- Talk less if the talking is PURPOSELESS. Purposeful speech includes anything we say in our professional/work life. Gossiping and chit-chatting on the cell phone for hours upon hours with available free night and weekend minutes is PURPOSELESS.
- *Bole ena bore vechay.* (Talking will help you) *Na bole ena navgun.* (Listening is good.)
- Pilot: There was once a pilot who took his parents flying with him. He instructed his parents to say nothing until they had landed. They flew in circles and finally, he started the descent. His mom spoke, “Son, you told me not to say anything but remember that I didn't say anything when you took off, when you were flying, and now I am speaking only as you are landing. But your father fell out of the plane when you were taking off.” This shows that you should speak when it is purposeful.
- Steamer: There was once a girl who fell into the ocean from a ship. The captain was watching this and began to panic. Right after that, he saw an old man jump into the ship after the girl and save her just in time. The captain was very happy and impressed with the old man. Therefore, he decided to throw a huge steamer party in honor of the old man's courage that same evening. He invited all of the members of the ship to this grand party. They ate cake and good food, and listened to good music. The captain invited the old man up to the stage to say a few words about his heroic deed. The old man came up and said, “I would not have been able to save her if someone had not pushed me into the ocean waters first.” This shows that it is not always smart to speak, as here, the old man lost all his respect.

- So basically, *anekantvad* is half-truths that all add up to the complete and whole truth. Everyone can have an opinion and EVERYONE is correct. This applies to everyone.

- If *ahimsa* is “nonviolence of objects”, then *anekantvad* is “nonviolence of thoughts.”

End of discussion and Manglik

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