

## 52. The voice of God

*Heaven does not lie up above;*

*Here it is in the world of men.*

*When men lead the good life*

*The world itself becomes Paradise.*

Embodiments of love! The *Vedhas* are known as the voice of the *rishis*. The *rishis* intuitively perceive the truth. They can see the past, the present and the future. They are free from attachments. It is because of such high souled seers that the voice of God was revealed to the world. This revelation demonstrates the truth about the divine. Although it consists of the four *Vedhas*, they have been divided into seven *Samhithas*. Among these, three are *important*---*Rig*, *Saama* and *Atharvana*. *Samhitha* means a collection of *manthras*. Among these, three types of branches have arisen. These are the *Braahmanas*, *Aaranyakas* and the *Upanishadhs*.

The *Braahmanas* embody the science of Reality in the form of *manthras*. The *manthras* are related to *yagnas* and *yaagas*. The primary purpose of the *Braahmanas* is to teach the rules relating to *yagnas* and describe their performance. Among the *Braahmanas* the better known are the *Aithareya Braahmana*, the *Taittiriya Braahmana*, the *Shathapatha Braahmana* and the *Shadvimsha Braahmana*. There is a close connection between the *Braahmanas* and the *Samhithas*. The *Braahmanas* are intended to enable people to realise their desires by reciting *manthras* relating to God and thereby securing God's grace. They are concerned with worldly and otherworldly objectives and are not devoted to the realisation of *Brahman*. All human desires are concerned with the world and are associated with desires and hatreds.

### Four stages to achieve oneness with the Divine

Next come the *Aaranyakas*. Although these contain primarily the *manthras* from the *Braahmanas*, they contain also poetic and prose passages. As these *manthras* were intended to be studied by those who gave up family life and entered on the *Vaanaprastha Aashrama* as a recluse and lived in forests, they came to be known as *Aaranyakas*. In ancient times, *rishis* used to live in the forests and devoted themselves to the continuous recitation of *manthras* relating to God. Hence, these *manthras* came to be known as *Aaranyakas*. The *Aithareya* and *Taittiriya Upanishadhs* belong to the *Aaranyaka* group.

The third group consists of the *Upanishadhs*. The full life of a human being is indicated by one conforming to the four goals (*Purusharthas*): *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha*. Education is of two kinds---one is worldly knowledge (*apara vidhya*) and the other is knowledge of the Eternal (*Para Vidhya*). The *Rig*, *Yajur* and *Saama Vedhas* relate to the *Apara vidhya*. These *Vedhas* are helpful for the understanding of the four *Purusharthas*. The *Vedhas* may help one to understand the divine nature of the *Brahman*, but they cannot lead one to the *Brahman*.

In the realisation of the divine, there are four stages---*Saalokyam* (seeing the divine), *Saaruupyam* (enjoying the form of the divine), *Saameepyam* (nearness to the divine) and *Saayujyam* (merging in the divine). When one reaches the stage of nearness (*Saameepyam*), the stage of merging (*saayujyam*) is not far off. Just as the Ganga, when it reaches the sea, will not turn back, similarly one who has experienced nearness to God will not turn back. The four *Vedhas* enable one to approach the divine, but it is the *Upanishadhs* that enable one to achieve

oneness with the divine. The *Upanishadhs* embody the experiences and ecstatic realisations of *rishis* who perceived the Reality and enjoyed it. The *Upanishadhs* also lay down the manner in which they should be recited. It is only when they are recited with due regard to the sound and the meter will they yield the desired results.

### **Aids for the control of the senses**

There are eight ways of reciting the *Upanishadhic manthras*,--*Jata, Ghana, Maala, Shikha, Rekha, Dhawaja, Dhanda and Raadhwa*. Of these *Jata and Dhanda* are the most important. The others are variations of these two. The *Jata* method of recitation is essential for the performance of the *seven Paaka-yagnas*, the *seven Havis-yagnas* and the *seven Soma-yagnas*. The 21 *yagnas* are associated with the 5 senses of action *Karmendhriyas*, the 5 *Gnaanendhriyas* (the Cognitive senses), the 5 *Thahmanthras* (the subtle elements), the 5 *Praanas* (life-breaths) and the Principle of the Ego. Consequently every *yagna* is related to one *Indhriya*.

The *Braahmanas*, the *Aaranyakas* and the *Upanishadhs* are aids for the control of the senses. Although different deities are mentioned in the *manthras*, it is the one Supreme that is invoked under different names for different purposes. When the Divine is invoked for giving rain, the name of *Indhra* is called; *Varuna* is invoked for another purpose. When the *Mruthyunjaya Manthra* is recited, it is not for conquering death (as it is commonly believed), but for avoiding unnatural or premature death.

### **Regard every day in your life as a yagna**

It should be noted that every *Vedha* is intended to enable man to make his daily life holy and good. Although human life is transient, the allotted span must be used for sacred purposes and to realise the Divine. The *Vedhas* have the power to enable man to transmute his life and make it sublime. Whether consciously or otherwise, from morning till night, man carries out the duties laid down by the *Vedhas*. Every act is governed by the dictates of the *Vedhas*, but it is only when these acts are done with an understanding of their purpose will their true character be known. Similarly, every sacrificial act, *yagna* is intended to propitiate the Divine.

In *yagna*, ghee is offered to the fire. To obtain ghee, you have to secure milk, which can only be provided by a cow. The word "*Go*" in Sanskrit refers not only to the cow, but also to the *Vedhas*. It also refers to the earth. It also refers to the region of the heart. The ancient *rishis* demonstrated that the "*Go*" which is represented by the *Vedhas* is the same as the "*Go*" represented in the physical world as the cow.

The *Yajurvedha* has enjoined protection of the cow as a supreme duty, as it is an animal which lives on *saathwik* food and has virtuous qualities. The inner significance of *Vedhic manthras* should be understood by every *Bhaaratheeya*. Having been born in the land of the *Vedhas*, to fail to understand the meaning and significance of the *Vedhas* will mean lowering ourselves in the estimation of foreigners. Our whole life is bound up with the *Vedhas*. We must regard every day in our life as a *yagna*. Every word that we utter must become a *manthra*.

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