

32. Bhaarath's glorious *Vedhic* heritage

There is no greater eye than knowledge.

There is no greater penance than Truth.

There is no worse misery than greed.

There is no greater happiness than sacrifice.

KNOWLEDGE is the real eye. Truth is real penance. Penance does not consist in forsaking food and drink and roaming in a forest, Seeking the eternal Truth is real penance. Desire is the main cause of grief. Desire will go on multiplying. As and when one is fulfilled, it gives rise to another and this goes on endlessly. True Bliss consists in controlling desires. Sacrifice gives the greatest and lasting happiness. That is why the *Vedhas* have declared that it is not by work, progeny or wealth, but by sacrifice alone, one can get immortality.

Sacrifice is the life-force of a human being. The *Vedha* teaches *Thyaaga*, *Yoga* and *Bhoga* (sacrifice, spiritual practice and material pleasure). The word *Vedha* itself has many meanings. It means intelligence, knowledge, awareness, etc. To lead a meaningful life man has to follow certain *Niyamas* (regulations of discipline). It is also necessary to know one's own Inner Reality. Mere intelligence and acquisition of knowledge are not enough. Knowledge should foster wisdom leading to awareness. This is what the *Vedha* teaches. The word *Jnaana*, which is translated as wisdom, contains two syllables! *Jna* and *na*. That which is not true at all times--past present and future---cannot be termed *Jnaana*. *Adhvaitha Dharshanam* (Awareness of oneness) is the real *Jnaana*.

The Truth is one, it is infinite and it is *Brahmam*. "*Sathyam, Jnaanam, Anantham, Brahma,*" is the *Upanishathik* declaration.

***Vedhas* confer security on humanity**

The Vedha should not be treated as mere *Manthra*. It helps to realise full knowledge and wisdom. The sages in ancient times had the inner vision and experience of the Divine and they gave expression to this revelation through the *Vedhas*. They are applicable to entire humanity for all times. They confer security on humanity and show the way to happiness and peace. The goal of human life is to sacrifice desires and realise the Divine.

Since the *Vedhas* are *Anantham* (infinitely vast), it is difficult to master them within the short life-span of human life. That is why *Vedha Vyaasa* divided them into four sections. He compiled the *Riks* into one part and called them *Rik Samhitha*. He put all the *Yajus* together and named the collection as *Yajus Samhitha*. All the *Saama* hymns were presented in the *Saama Samhitha*. Other *manthras* were compiled in a fourth section termed *Atharvana Samhitha*. The *Yajus Samhitha* was further divided into *Shukla Yajur* and *Krishna Yajur Vedha*, bringing the actual number of *Vedha samhithas* to five.

The division of *Vedha Samhithas*

Each *Samhitha* was further divided into three parts, namely, *Brahmana*, *Aaranyaka* and *Upanishath*. The first part is full of *manthras* for rituals, and for doing acts of charity and other sastraic rites. *Manthra* has Life-Force in it and, when properly interpreted, every *manthra* is related to Divinity. The second part, *Aaranyaka*, relates to the chanting of *manthra* during

Vanaprasthaashrama, when one finishes his *Grihastha-ashrama* (family life) and retires to the forest to lead a life of austerity.

The chanting of *manthras* should always be synchronised with practising of the prescribed *Karma*. By such practice one can realise the Divine. By merely listening to *manthras* and failing to practise, one can never get happiness or peace. In order to realise the Divine, you have to practise the precepts prescribed in the *Vedhas*. No doubt, even listening to the recitation of the *Vedhas* is itself capable of purifying your mind. It is *Shabdha Brahman*. Sound is the first attribute of *God*. *Vedha Shabdha* is all-pervasive.

Today a great deal of wickedness, troubles and turmoils are prevalent in the world because of the decline of the influence of the *Vedhas*. Water, air, food, noise are all tainted by pollution. We are forced to lead a polluted life. When the air we breathe is itself polluted, how are we to lead a pollution-free life? The environment and the elements should be pure to ensure purity of heart. The cause of this pollution lies nowhere else except in our own actions. Whatever words we utter, they spread to the entire atmosphere. We can purify the atmosphere of the world by chanting the *Vedhas* and singing the glory of *God*.

Cherish the *Vedhas* for sublimating your lives

The Rishis in ancient times used to move to forests and chant the powerful *Vedhic Manthras* to purify the atmosphere of the whole world. These *Vedhas* are neglected today. The people of this great country of Bhaarath have not understood the infinite potency of *the Vedhas*. It is a pity they have not tasted the sweetness of the *Vedhas*. *The Vedhas* should be cherished for sublimating life and not to earn a living.

The Upanishaths, which are termed as *Vedhaantha* or the concluding part of the *Vedhas*, detail the method of achieving the *Purusharthas* (four fold goal of life), namely *Dharma, Artha, Kaama and Moksha*. These can be achieved by one's own efforts through *Vidhya* (acquisition of right knowledge), which is of two types: one is *Para Vidhya* (the Higher Knowledge) and the other *Apara Vidhya* (lower knowledge). *Para Vidhya* shows the way to *Moksha* (Liberation), while *Apara Vidhya* deals with worldly pursuits, which cause bondage.

For acquiring spiritual wisdom this worldly education is not necessary. *Sathyadhrishti* (the vision of Truth) is the only requisite for spiritual pursuits. Since ancient times Bhaaratheeyas have taken to spiritual pursuits as their goal in life.

Nine different appellations for the *Vedhas*

There are nine different appellations for the *Vedhas*. They are: *Shruthi, Anusmara, Thrayee, Aamnaaya, Samaamnaaya, Chandhas, Svaadhyaaya, Nigama and Aagama*.

Shruthi: *The Vedhas* were taught by teacher to disciple by oral recitation, adhering to the right *swara* and tune. There were no gadgets such as tape recorders or gramophone records in those ancient times. The students used to learn the text only by constant repetition with intense devotion day and night and get *manthras* by heart. Even if the words are missed the *swara* or tune of the chanting should be without the slightest blemish, since *swara* is its basis. Hence it is called *Shruthi* (that which is learnt by hearing).

Anusmara: Since the *Vedhas* were learnt by memorising and constant chanting, they got the name of *Anusmara*.

Thrayee: Originally there were only three *Vedhas Rig, Yajur and Saama*, which formed the basis of all rituals, the *manthras* for *Yajna* and musical notes. Hence they were termed as *Thrayee* (the three).

Aamnaaya: It means practice. The practice of chanting and memorising was followed even in the dream state and deep sleep state, apart from the waking state. So it is called: *Aamnaaya*.

Samaamnaaya: As the *Vedha* is preserved in the heart of the students it is called *Samaamnaaya*.

Chandhas: The *Saama Vedha* lays down the basic meter for the *Vedhic manthras*, meter which is *Chandhas*. Hence the *Vedhas* are termed as *Chandhas*.

Svaadhyaaya: The *Vedhas* were learnt by son from father or disciple from teacher. Thus it was passed on from generation to generation, from grandfather to grandson. Since it is preserved only by constant self-study and practice after learning, it is called *Svaadhyaaya*.

Nigama and Aagama: As the study of the *Vedhas* is related to inhalation and exhalation, it is called *Nigama and Aagama*. For example, when one inhales the air the sound is "So" While exhaling, the sound is "Ham" With every breath this *Soham* meaning "I am He," is being repeated. This goes on 21,600 times per day. This is verily the practice of the *Mahaavaakyas* of the *Vedha*, "You are That"---"Thath Thvam Asi." This goes on all through life by every human being in the breathing process. When breathing stops life will be extinct.

Transcend body-consciousness to realise Inner Self

Many sages and saints did penance for realising Divinity. They said, "*Vedaahametham Purusham Mahaantham*" (We have seen God Almighty). Where did they see Him? "*Aadhithya Varnam Thamasaah-Parasthaath*" (We have seen God beyond the darkness, of ignorance). This darkness is the identification of oneself with the body and attachment to the senses. To realise the Inner Self you have to transcend the body." consciousness and attachment to sensual desires.

Vedha teaches many things with emphasis on unity and purity. Some say that the *Vedha* discriminates between people, declaring only some that are qualified to chant the *Vedha*. This is totally wrong. In the *Shanthy Shloka*, the *Vedha* says, "*Sahanaa Vavathu; Sahanau Bhunakthu Sahaveeryam karavaa Vahai, Thejasvinaavad-heethamasthu; Maa Vidhvishaavahai.*" What is the meaning of this? "Let us grow together; let us live together, let us study together, let us develop knowledge together, without conflict, with friendship, with broadmindedness." While this is the teaching of the *Vedha* how can any one say that it discriminates against some? *The Vedha* teaches a subtle form of equality and equanimity.

Only a fraction of the Vedhas remains now

Each Vedha has many branches. The *Rig Vedha* has 28 branches, of which 26 have faded out of memory and only two remain now. The *Yajur Vedha* had 17 branches out of which only two are in vogue, while the *Saama Vedha* had 1000 branches of which 998 are lost. Even with this fraction of the original *Vedhas* existing now, the world is progressing at least to the present extent. Imagine how powerful this planet would have been if all the branches of the *Vedhas* were in vogue now!

This sacred land of Bharath, which was reputed to be the *Thyaaga Bhuumi* (land of Sacrifice) and *Yoga Bhuumi* (land of Spiritual communion), has now become a *Roga Bhuumi* (land of

diseases). The reason is people are turning to *Bhoga* (worldly pleasure) forgetting *Yoga and Thyaaga*. People should learn to live in *Yoga*.

The Vedhic injunctions have infinite meaning. All may not be able to comprehend the inner meaning of the teachings. The truth that the earth has a gravitational force was there since the world was created. But it was discovered only by Newton after some experiments. Similarly? the truth hidden in the *Vedhas* was perceived by the *Rishis* after intensive penance and *Saadhana*. They have given to mankind the Eternal truth which was revealed to them. The vibrations of their spiritual *Saadhana* have spread throughout the Universe. They are not limited to Bhaarath or any particular place.

This can be practised anywhere in the world, whether in America or Australia. This is *Sathya Svaruupa* (Embodiment of Truth). It cannot change according to time or place. It is beyond time and space; that is why it is called the Transcendental Reality. Some people think lightly of the *Vedhas* and even make fun of them.

Learning the *Vedhas* give immense benefits

Embodiments of love! Even if you cannot chant the *Vedhas*, if only you listen to the sounds with devotion they will elevate you to a higher level. Though the child does not know the meaning of the lullaby sung by its mother, it is induced to sleep hearing the tune. Similarly, listening to the chanting of the *Vedha* with undivided attention will give you immense benefit. If you ruminate over it and practise it in your life, you can imagine the magnitude of the bliss you will attain. The hymns of the *Vedhas* constitute *Naadha Brahman* (God in the form of sound), which is highly potent. Devotees who go to a temple ring the bell. The general belief is that it is intended to attract the attention of the Deity. Does it mean that God is asleep and you have to awaken Him by ringing the bell? God is always awake and is listening to the prayers of everyone. It is just like a visiting card which you present to any important person whom you want to meet any favour or help. Ringing the bell is only to draw the attention of the Lord towards you. The sound of the *Vedha* is also like ringing the temple bell.

***Omkaara* is the correct address of the Lord**

Sound emanates from the Primordial *Pranava*, which consists of the three syllables A, U And M. The correct address of the Lord is *Omkaaram*. The sound of the bell and the sound of the *Vedhas* also radiate *Omkaara naadha*. The uttering of *Omkaara* should be done in a sweet and smoothly progressive way starting with the sound of "A" which should come from the navel, and then the sound "U" from the throat, and finally conclude with "M" from the lips. It should resemble the sound of an aeroplane when it is far off, gradually increasing in volume as it approaches the aerodrome and finally subsiding after landing. (Svaami demonstrated the correct way of chanting the *Omkaara*). *The Vedha* teaches this very clearly.

The Vedhas lift the individual to higher levels. People are not realising this truth. Many *Vedhic* scholars send their wards to convent schools and seek to impart to them a secular education without caring to pass on to them the sacred legacy of the *Vedhas*, which will protect them. Because of lack of encouragement and proper propagation and promotion, knowledge of the *Vedhas* is declining day by day in this great country, which is the home of this sacred treasure.

Svaami expects the people to foster the *Vedhas* and is showing the way by making all the thousands of students of the Sai educational institutions, right from the primary school, to learn

Vedha chanting. You have watched the children of the primary school, ranging from 5 to 8 years, chanting the *Vedhas* at the commencement of this meeting. There is actually no compulsion to learn the *Vedhas*. All the students willingly come forward on their own to learn *Vedha* chanting. There are *Vedha paathashaalas* (*Vedhic* schools) elsewhere where they impart this teaching, but the students discontinue the chanting later on. You should make the children learn the *Vedhas* with enthusiasm, without compulsion. They should be made to realise the greatness of the *Vedhas* by sweet persuasion.

The Vedhas have protected our country from ancient times. Since the Government has not cared to realise the beneficial influence of the *Vedhas* in contributing to the welfare of the nation, the country is facing a lot of troubles. The propagation of *Vedhas* should be taken up by the people.

The essence of the *Upanishaths* is given in the *Bhagavath Geetha* and the *Brahmasuuthra*. Several saints have related stories to explain clearly the import of the *Upanishathic* truths. The *Eeshavaasyopanishath* is the first among the *Upanishaths*. It declares that God pervades the whole universe. Because people have neglected the study of Sanskrit they are unable to enjoy the treasures of knowledge contained in the *Upanishaths*.

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