

### **3. Brahman Denotes The Totality Of Prajna In The World**

Diverse branches of Education are like the details of the art of cooking, but each one of these diverse branches corresponds to each item that we are cooking. Why do we give up the individual item and go to learn only the method of cooking? Listen to the truth that is contained in this question, Oh! youth of Bharath.

**T**he theme of today's discourse is to acquaint you with the meaning of the word Brahman. For the *Vedas* and the *Vedic* religion, this word Brahman is synonymous with all the contents thereof. However, many historians who have given the meaning of this from time to time, have adopted an alternate path

and have also inserted into the commentary their own notions and ideas and have thus made available a distorted version to the people. Although this word Brahman has infinite number of meanings and could be interpreted in infinite number of ways, these commentators have given it a colour and meaning which, in each case, depended on the individual taste and individual experiences.

This word Brahman has been explained by some as having something to do with the Brahmanas in the *Vedas*. On the other hand, when some writers gave it the meaning of the *purohit* (performer of rites) in the *Rig Veda*, they also explained that he is not to be confused with one of several *Rithwicks* of the *yajna*, but they gave him a special place and called him by the name *Hota*. These historians have explained that the particular *Rithwick* who has the responsibility of looking after the sacrificial ceremony of the *Yajna* and seeing that the ritual is conducted properly is called by the name *Hota*, and he has been regarded as the important Brahman in the *Yajna*. Several scholars have been giving this kind of connotation for this word. In this explanation of the word Brahman, they have not taken care to see that the aspect of Easwara or divine is included in this word.

Some other historians have understood this aspect and given this a meaning which covers the aspect of the divine. In this context we have to take into consideration the comments of some of the western scholars who have made an effort to understand our *Vedas*, our civilisation, and our culture. One great western scholar has taken this word Brahman as originating from the root word *Bruh*. This root word indicates expansion, or to swell, or to grow. He has taken this word as the starting point for understanding the divine aspect of the creation.

Another western scholar has given a different meaning for this word Brahman. He has regarded this word as something which is specially related to the divine strength and to the force of will which is directed towards God. There is a necessity for us to enquire into the interpretations given by these western scholars as well.

Apart from these two scholars who may not be so well known in this country, there is another western scholar by name Max Mueller who is more widely known in this country. He has also commented and given a meaning for this word. He started with the idea that this is a word which signifies sound and linked it with names

like *Vachaspati*, and so on. At this point, we have to examine whether all these interpretations have the authority of the *Veda* and whether these interpretations are contained in the *Veda*. We have to examine where and how this word Brahman occurs in the *Vedas* and what meaning is conveyed by the word in that context. This has been mentioned in *Sama Veda* by equivalents like Brahma and *Veda Rupa*. *Sama Veda* has established that the form of *Veda* is Brahman. In the *Rig Veda*, it has also been said that the song of Brahman is the essence of the *Vedas*. Again, when we look at this word from the point of view of *Bhagavad Gita*, we come to the conclusion that everything in the creation is filled with Brahman.

Our *Vedas* have not stopped at this point by merely giving a form and a meaning to this word Brahman. They have also given a more distinctive and special significance for this word Brahman. It has been taught to us that an aspect of the word Brahman means that it is something which has no discernible dimensions and which is limitless. If in this world we have things that can grow, then the aspect of Brahman has the capacity to grow so much that it is far beyond the growth of such things. The growth capacity of whatever is signified by the word Brahman exceeds the growth capacity of

everything that we can comprehend. That aspect which is not discernible, and which is beyond our comprehension, and which is infinite, has been described by the word Brahman. It has been established that this is synonymous with growth and with complete growth. This Brahman which represents complete growth in all respects has been represented as the characteristic of *Purusha*.

This word *Purusha* refers to one who has experienced completeness or fullness. Our *Purushasuktha* has described this aspect of *Purusha* as something which has one thousand heads, one thousand eyes, and one thousand feet. In this interpretation, we are not taking the true inner meaning; instead sometimes we are getting the wrong meaning as well. The words “*Sahasra Seershaha Purushaha*” should not be interpreted in a limited way by thinking of only one thousand heads. This really means that thousands and thousands of heads are contained in this aspect of *Purusha*. The word head immediately conveys to us the meaning and picture of the head that we see in the ordinary worldly way, and we think of the Lord as having a thousand heads. This is not correct. When we use the word head, it connotes *Prajna* or wisdom in this

context. The totality of *Prajna*, or the wisdom that is present in all the heads, represents the concept of *Purusha* here.

When we describe the *Purusha* as *Sahasraksha* what we mean is that we worship the concept that the Lord has thousands of eyes. In accordance with the authority of the *Vedas*, the inner meaning of this is that all the energy and effulgence that comes out from the eyes of the various people, or the totality of that energy, represents *Paramatma*. This is the inner meaning of referring to Him as *Sahasraksha* or one with a thousand eyes.

We also describe him as *Sahasrapad*, or one who has a thousand feet. What is it that we mean by describing God as one who has a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, and a thousand heads; and what benefit do we get by describing him in this manner? The physical ability to carry this material body rests in our feet and in our legs. Because such strength is contained in our feet, however big the body may be, we are able to move the body with comfort. The totality of the capacity to understand or *Prajnana* and the totality of brightness and the effulgence, and the capacity of locomotion have been given the name Brahman.

The ability by which we have our vision and we see, the ability by which we are able to hear, and the ability by which we can have our mind functioning, and the ability by which we can bear the weight of the material body are given to us by God and because all these strengths are given to us by God, God is also referred to as *Prajnanam Brahma*, or the embodiment of wisdom. When we say, *Purusha eva idam sarvam*, what we mean is *Paramatma*, who has got all these strengths in Him, is moving about everywhere manifesting all these strengths.

Whether we talk of the *Veda* or use the word Brahman or the word *Purusha*, these are only different names given to the same aspect and to propagate the same idea that is contained in all these words. The words are different, but they describe one and the same idea. All the energy that is present in the gross form and also in the minutest and infinitesimally small thing represents the aspect of Brahman.

It is only by having this all-knowing, all-powerful, and omnipresent personality of the Lord in his mind that Arjuna prayed to the Lord in the form of *Viswa Virat* (Cosmic being). “Can we understand you? Oh Lord! Krishna, You are smaller than the smallest particle and

bigger than the biggest body. You are present everywhere and always in the eighty-four lakhs of the living species and one knows you as the biggest thief among all the thieves.” Arjuna had prayed to the Lord by understanding these aspects of the Lord.

Because of this, Arjuna could understand the real aspect of the Lord. “*Brahmanam Brahmana Vahanam.*” Brahma has also been described as the carrier of the Brahman. We must examine the meaning of the word Brahma in this context. The word Brahma has been understood to connote *Manthra*. In this place, the meaning is that the *Purusha*, who is the embodiment of *Vedas*, has the *manthra* as his carrier. This is the reason why people in our country have relied on such great men who achieved their greatness on the basis of *manthra*. They started learning these *manthras* and getting purification for themselves with the help of these great people. Mere utterance of words like “*Om Namō Narayana,*” or “*Om Nama Shivaya,*” cannot constitute a *manthra*. A *manthra* has two aspects. The first is *Manana* or what has been learned has to be taken into your mind. The second is the aspect of *Trana* that is what has been taken into your mind has to be established firmly therein. By taking the divine into your mind and firmly

establishing it therein, if you can carry on your life and do the work that is ordained for you, then your life will be full of happiness.

Such meaning of the word Brahman which has the authority of the *Veda* has been distorted by the historians and because of this we have also started getting a distorted picture of the nature and creation that is around us. In this situation, we see that the inner meanings of these words which have the authority of the *Vedas* and the interpreted meaning given by the various historians are very different because the historians brought their own ideas into the interpretation. We should note that there are essential differences between the actual meaning and the interpreted meaning. Common people have begun to lay complete confidence in what has been given by these historians and having accepted the meaning that is given by the historians, they are promoting wrong notions and wrong meaning.

Whether it is for our own countrymen or for people from outside our country, there is no escape from our accepting that the meaning contained in the *Vedas* is the authoritative meaning. *Veda* is something which does not have its origin in human beings. It has come from

sources other than human beings. All history is something that is created by experienced people. In such things which have been created by men, there are possibilities for changes, additions and alterations; but there is no such possibility in the case of the *Vedas* which have not had their origin in human beings.

Because *Veda* has been obtained merely by listening to sound, it has been referred to as *Sruthi*. This is something which is directly connected with the Lord taking in and giving out His breath. Such divine breath, which constitutes the *Vedas*, is our life and if there is no breath and life, there will be no belief and faith; and if there is no faith, man will be lifeless. Therefore, any citizen who has faith in the *Vedas* can really be described as one who has life in him. When the aspect of Easwara is not present in your heart, then you have no human quality in you. Because we have forgotten the *Vedic* culture which has had neither a beginning nor will have an end, and placed our faith in material comfort, and we have tried to give more importance to what we see around us in the form of material comforts, we have given up what is essential for our own culture and brought our life into great difficulty.

To have faith in the *Vedas* and to accept the injunctions of the *Veda* is being regarded by the modern youth as outmoded and uncivilised. Young people today are not making an enquiry as to what is contained in the *Vedas* or in the *Sastras*. They go further and say that those people who have faith in the *Vedas* and the *Sastras* are only having blind faith. This is the kind of attitude which the young people are developing. If one argues, after acquainting oneself with the contents of what he is arguing about, one can argue for any length of time, but if a person is arguing without knowing the contents, it is not possible to argue with him.

A blind man will always see darkness irrespective of how bright a light you might put in his presence. As far as the limited capacity of the blind man is able to discern, the truth is that it is dark even though you might put a bright light there. In the view of the rest of the people, this is not the truth. Therefore, absolute truth is not something which can depend on and vary from individual to individual. It is something which can depend only on the entire cosmos.

But, modern man has recognised the individual aspect and he is proclaiming that what he sees as an individual to be the truth is also the truth for the rest of

the world. He is not making any attempt to recognise the infinite divinity. Our *Vedas* have been teaching us several aspects of *Sathyam* or truth, of *Jnanam* or wisdom, and of *Anantha* or infinity. We should ask ourselves whether the people who describe truth as truth and knowledge as knowledge are foolish, or the people who describe truth as untruth and knowledge as ignorance are foolish. These questions can be answered and decisions reached by yourselves. People who have faith in the *Vedas* are like people who say that  $2+2=4$ , while those who do not have faith in the *Vedas* are like the people who say that  $2+2=5$ .

We shall ask ourselves a question regarding the extent and the basis of the world. In the world there are many people. Some of them are believers, some of them are non-believers, and some of them are believing non-believers. There are many people in other countries who have no faith in God and who believe in individual strength. They are proclaiming and honouring individual strength. Not only this, there are people who belong to other countries and many other religions. There are multitudes of people, religions, and faiths. Christians may worship Jesus, Muslims may worship Allah, and Hindus may worship Rama, Krishna, and so on. Different people

have different faiths and they adhere to different faiths. But all these people, although they may have different faiths, and profess different Gods, and worship different Gods, yet none of them can be distant from truth. Truth is something that is common to all of them. Whether the people are Russians or Chinese or Pakistanis,  $2+2$  is always four and this truth is recognised by all of them.

People of all countries and all religions must understand that *Vedas* are something which establish the authority of truth. I mentioned yesterday that during this one month I will explain the meaning of Brahman and the meaning of the word Bharath. Some of you may feel that these words Brahman and Bharath are words relevant only to the citizens of this country. This is not correct. These words are significant for people of all countries. Those who belong to Bharath might use the word Brahman and others may use a different name, but no one will be against the aspect of Brahman.

Suppose we take water in a tumbler. Foreigners may describe this as water while people belonging to the north will call this *Pani*, and those people who speak Telugu will describe it as *Neeru*, and so on. Although different names are used, the contents are the same. The place may be different, the names may be different, but

the material for which you have given the name cannot change. In the same manner, the significant divine aspect is the same although different people describe it by different names in different places. What is mainly responsible for growth in different places is being referred to by different names. For Bharath, this is the aspect of Brahman. Some call it the “Force of nature.” They are using the words “Force of nature” to describe the aspect of Brahman, but they do not understand what is signified by the word “nature.”

Every matter in any form must have some basis for its existence. We must examine and find this basis for its existence. Even if you are not able to see the one that is responsible for its birth, there should be present someone who has given birth to it. When you wear a wristwatch, for example, and ask where it was manufactured, you will state that it was made by some Swiss company. We have neither seen the Swiss Company nor the persons who made the watch, but we are using the watch. Has this watch come spontaneously or has someone taken the time to manufacture this in a workshop? The person who has made this watch must know how to divide the time and how time is to be

measured. If he does not know about this, he cannot prepare a watch. Therefore, some individual who knows the process of assembling a watch has to exist somewhere. We readily accept that there must be some individual who has assembled such a watch.

Similarly, there are artificial satellites in the sky which are going round as temporary planets. We accept that some scientists have put them up, but these rockets and satellites are alive only for a limited time. If you accept that these rockets, which have only a limited life, have been created by individuals, we ask who has created the permanent planets that we see. The motion of the sun, the moon, and the earth takes place regularly and without faltering. We have to ask who has given them such steady motion. The creation of this infinite world, the creation of the sun and the moon, which are moving so regularly, or the generation of a steady heat in a human body, the functioning of the lungs, are such mysteries that unquestionably there is a divine hand of creation behind them. Who can create all these things which are so permanent and steady? When we ask such a question, people simply push away the question and say that these are natural. They do not recognise the creator who has created all this.

Not to accept the existence of such a creator is to be very foolish and hard-headed. The divine strength or the divine aspect who is the creator of all these things is Brahman. Our people have been able to go up to a certain point, using their intelligence. Having gone up to a certain point in that manner, they have learnt that there is a limitation and that they cannot go beyond that point. In that context, it is better to accept that there is something which they do not know; instead, to say that nothing exists beyond what they comprehended is very foolish. We must make an attempt to understand and search for the truth and put it into practice.

Even today what the scientists have really learnt is a very small fraction of what there is to learn, but the pride they have accumulated after having learnt such a small fraction is out of all proportion. When we give room to such ego and pride, we are not able to understand even the things which we can understand. The decisions which the scientists are arriving at as a result of their work are being altered in a short time by the scientists themselves. They are criticising and changing the very same conclusion which they arrive at, and there is no scientist who can say that this is the final stage and there is no more to be done.

In the *adhyatmic* path, as well as in our traditions, it has been usual to declare that this is not the truth, this is not the truth, and so on. Ultimately they reach a stage where, by their inner vision, they are able to say that this is the truth and signify the aspect of the Atma and realise what ultimate truth is.

The scientists of today are devoted to a machine philosophy. They do not recognise the capacity of *manthra*. Their knowledge is something which is accumulated from studies of the external. It is not something which is generated from within as an essence. Those who are devoted to machines and those who stuff information from outside into one's self are scientists and those who develop the inner strength and who are devoted to the strength of *Manthra* are saints.

This difference between a scientist and a saint is very deep and is one of essence. It is very difficult to understand this basic difference. Trying to understand this difficult relationship and spending our time in such a pursuit is something which you should not do. That which is the basis for everything and that which constitutes the power and the strength which is at the base of all this creation has been recognised by our culture and has been named Brahman. You may try for

years and years to understand the aspect of Brahman and yet it will not be completed. The moon that we cannot reach can be only pointed at with a finger and shown from a distance. In the same manner, we cannot understand the aspect of the infinite and unreachable Brahman, and we should only recognise its divinity in terms of something we can adopt. The aspect of Brahman is something which is beyond time and easy reach and if we want to understand it, we ourselves must adopt methods which are above and beyond time. It is in this context that our ancients have said “*Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavathi*” meaning that one who knows the aspect of Brahman will himself become Brahman.

Vivekananda once said that if anyone wants to understand his sagacity and his ability, he must first himself become an able and sagacious person. The result of your effort would depend on the extent of your effort and your sacrifice. The final result will only correspond to the effort that you put in.

This power or strength which we attempt to describe by the word Brahman is not something which is external to and outside you. It is present in you and is in your own self. If you acquire some good or bad, and if

you have the misapprehension that Brahman outside is causing good or bad to you, or that He is giving some punishment to you, this is not the right attitude. Do not cultivate the habit of building castles in the air and getting tired by thinking that you will do this and that, you will achieve this and that. The fruits that you get will correspond to whatever seeds you plant. If the seed is one thing and if you have the ambition to get a different fruit, how is it possible? You may be very clever, but all the cleverness is of no avail if you are not giving up your mean qualities. Whatever good or bad you may have done, the aspect of Brahman is not going to break the good and bad into separate parts.

*Paramatma* is going to give you an unbroken garland of all the good and all the bad that you have accumulated. This is the invisible garland which everyone wears round his neck, and it surely consists of all the good and all the bad that you have done. When you are born from your mother’s womb, you do not physically see this necklace. You do not have a necklace of pearls round your neck; nor do you have a golden necklace when you are born. You neither have a necklace of diamond nor one of emerald round your neck. But, while all these things are absent, whatever good or bad

deeds you may have done in your past are being brought along with you when you are born.

By doing a good act, you cannot get an evil result and by doing a bad act, you cannot accumulate good. Whatever kind of work you do, the result will correspond to that kind of work. Therefore, it follows that today you should make up your mind to do only good things and thus you will reap, in your future lives, the benefit of only good things. You should do good things today and thus aspire to get good for yourself. Brahman is present in your own heart and is functioning as a witnessing consciousness all through. To imagine and to deceive ourselves into thinking that there is no one seeing us do a bad thing is not correct. Whether anyone sees it or not, the aspect of Brahman which has been described as one which has thousands of heads and thousands of eyes is always watching you and the good and bad that you do.

This aspect of Brahman is always with you and is constantly present in you. Without recognising and understanding this basic truth that Brahman is always with you, you spend a great deal of time and energy thinking that God is somewhere and that you should find Him elsewhere and outside of your heart. In the

*Bhagavad Gita*, this is the reason why God has been described as being present wherever you go. When you walk, God is walking along the same footsteps; and in fact, we hear His footsteps often. There are devotees who pray to God and say, “Oh! God, are you not seeing my difficulties and are you not seeing the situation in which I am?” For such people, only the eyes of God become apparent. In the case of devotees who say, “Oh! God, are you not able to hear my prayers and why is it you are not listening to my difficulties?” For such people, it is only the ears of God that become apparent. For one who asks the Lord whether He does not see troubles, only the eyes of Lord become manifest, while for one who asks the Lord whether He does not hear his troubles, just the ears of the Lord become manifest; and to one who wants the Lord to be always present with him following Him in his work, only the feet of the Lord will become manifest.

One devotee once prayed to Krishna, “I have so many difficulties which I want to convey to you, but I am so distant from you and I can convey my difficulties to you only if I get near you.” Then she requested the flute with which Krishna uses to play music, because it goes so close to the lips of Krishna, to convey her trouble to Krishna because the flute has a chance of going very

close to Krishna. Asking for such recommendations is a practice prevalent from that day to this day. Asking such recommendations to the Lord through instruments close to the God was a practice prevalent then and continues even today.

We should also recognise what kind of instruments and what kind of people will be close to the Lord. In this story, the flute has been mentioned and it is a very good example of an instrument close to the Lord. There is one great quality in the flute and that is its complete surrender. There is nothing left in the flute, and there are no residual desires. In fact, the inside of the flute is completely hollow. The flute has nine holes in it, and the flute of our body has also nine holes. That flute has been able to go close to the Lord because there is no pulp left in the flute, and it is completely hollow. So also, if we can remove all the pulp of desires from our body, then there is no doubt that this flute of our body can also go close to the Lord.

This word, surrender, has been misinterpreted and people promote idleness in the name of surrender. We think that our mind, thought, and body have been surrendered to the Lord. This, in fact, is not true and is in the direction of deceiving the Lord. We are undertaking

to cheat the Lord. Your mind is not under your own control and under such circumstances, how can you hold it and give it to the Lord? You have no control over your own body. If you have a small cut, blood oozes from your body and you run to a doctor asking for a bandage. If this is your body and if you have complete control over it, why is it that you are not able to control the outflow of the blood. In this context to say that you have surrendered your mind and body to the Lord is a statement which is untrue.

This word “surrender” conveys that there is someone who gives and someone who accepts and that you are surrendering to someone. There is a feeling of duality implied in this word surrender. A man with a dual mind is half blind. In this manner, while he remains with this dual thought, how can he recognise the non-dual aspect?

The true meaning of surrender is the recognition of the fact that in everyone and everywhere God is present. The recognition of the presence of God in all *Jivas* is the true meaning of the word surrender. We should perform all the tasks enjoined upon us as our duty and it is not right to neglect our duty, sit idly and say that you

have surrendered everything to the Lord. If you have the feeling that all the work that you do is to please God, then that is the right aspect of surrender or *Saranagathi*. It cannot be the meaning of surrender to give the consequences of all the bad that you do to God and take the consequences of all the good that you do to yourself.

The unity that is present in the diversity is the aspect of Brahman. That such an aspect of Brahman is present everywhere and always is the truth that we should recognise. To develop faith in this statement from the bottom of your heart is also an aspect of surrender. Therefore, if you want to understand the meaning and significance of the word Brahman, you have to put in a considerable amount of effort and care and you have to understand and listen with much care and attention to what is being said.

To be able to develop concentration, you should also practise *Yoga*; but the learning and the type of education that you are getting today is giving you habits which are contrary to these requirements. Many experienced educationists are coming and telling you on various aspects every day. You should listen with great care, to what they say. You must never miss the ultimate

objective. The methods to which you are accustomed in your daily college classes must change as a result of your stay here in the Summer classes. Sometimes, even in small classes, when the teacher is teaching some special aspects, some students, sitting in the back benches, keep reading useless novels which have no relevance to what is being taught. When the teacher finds out about this, the students simply grin. Do not do such things in our Summer classes. We have started to learn sacred things in this summer school. Therefore, you should try to control your conduct. There is no reason for excessive talking. This is no place for such talking. If you need something or want to get something, you need not go out. There are people who are assigned with the specific task of helping you in this regard. Do not go out of the campus and lose control over your conduct.

Similarly if you are habituated to smoking or drinking, you must stop such things and any small needs can be obtained with the help of volunteers. You are going to be the future citizens and guardians of the welfare of our country and so you should develop the habit of controlling your behaviour. If you are not able to give up small trivial habits like smoking, how are you going to develop the capacity to control your sensory organs?

How are you going to control the difficult things when you are not able to control the small things? In the course of this month, if you are not able to control these small and trivial habits, how can you achieve the object of controlling bigger things? You would simply have been a burden on the earth and wasted the food that you have eaten. When you go back to your own homes, your parents and your friends should recognise the many desirable changes in you and they should be able to see the good that you have acquired in the summer classes and speak well of the summer classes.