

11. A Child begins to take Shape even as It Grows in the Womb of the Mother

Swa is truth, *swa* is dharma, *swa* stands for *Veda*, *swa* stands for *ahimsa*, *swa* is *yajna*, *swa* is conduct, *swa* is kindness, *swa* is, in fact, everything that we find in all the worlds.

Prema Swarupas! Students!

What has been given to you yesterday as the meaning of the word *swadha* is also the meaning of the word *swaha* according to the *Vedas*. This word *swaha* is something in which there is considerable importance. Some persons have argued that the origin for this word *swaha* is not in the *Vedas*. It has been said that this word *swaha* has something to do with the ceremony of *homa* (offering ritual articles in sacrificial

fire) and is not directly derived from the *Vedas*. In the context of *homa*, while we offer something to the Gods, the word which describes the offering usually ends with *swaha*, and hence people thought that it has nothing to do with the *Veda*. Others believed that the word *swadha* has some relationship to our forefathers because we use the word *swadha* when making an offering to our forefathers, while in fact, the word *swaha* is associated with gods. The meaning of these two words *swadha* and *swaha* has been explained as if the two are related to each other. This word *swaha* has also been seen as an ending for words such as *Kesava ya swaha*, *Madhava ya swaha*, *Indra ya swaha* and so on. In our daily ritual, these words have been occurring quite frequently. While making the offering, we use several words and several materials are placed in the fire and the word *swaha* is used to mean that everything should be burnt up and digested. They also use the word *Suhuta* to mean the same thing.

One is bound to get a doubt in this connection. Whether you utter the word *swaha* or not, whatever you put in the fire is sure to be burnt up. It is the nature and quality of fire to burn up and swallow everything that is put in it. If this is the case, why is it that we use the words *swaha* and *swadha* and pray that what we offer to

the fire be burnt up? However, in the *Vedas*, they have been using the words *swadha* and *swaha*. *Veda* has been giving us the inner meaning that these two words are intended to satisfy the God in the context of the *homa* and also satisfy the person who is the head of the ceremony. If you look at the word *swaha*, we come to the conclusion that the word comes from the combination *swavakaha*. In such a combination, we also understand that this word *swaha* is the spoken word of *Prajapati*.

In this word, *swaha*, we describe Saraswathi as *vakrupuni* or the embodiment of all speech. We have also to understand that this word signifies the fact that she is the embodiment of all that is contained in the *Vedas*. Another way of looking at the origin of this word is to look at it as *Su-aha*. This means that the prosperity which goes along with the voice of *Prajapati* is being handed over to the world. There is another combination *Swa-atmanam-aha* which gives the word *swaha*. We understand this to mean something which deals with the knowledge of Atma and this will give us the full meaning of the word *Sakthi*.

In this manner, this word *swaha* has been interpreted in different ways and several alternative

meanings have been given. We understand that it is something related to the *sakthi* of *Prajapati*, but to mistake it as something to do with the ending of the offering is not correct. For every word in the *Veda*, there are two aspects: one of *Prathyaksha* and another of *Paroksha*, that is—what you see directly and what you have to infer.

For the word *Agnihi* there is an aspect which comes from *Agrihi* the form of direct authority. These words *Agrihi* and *Agnihi* represent *Prathyaksha* and *Paroksha*, the direct manifestation and the inference. The same aspect has been described by Kalidasa in the text *Kumara Sambhavam*, that *Prajapati* has two aspects—one direct and the other the aspect of *Paroksha*. What is the evidence that enables us to understand that the word *swaha* will satisfy the Gods and by being satisfied Gods will confer satisfaction to the master of ceremonies? Our *Vedas* have told us that because of the strength of life contained in the word *swaha*, Gods are satisfied by the use of this word and thereby they give satisfaction to the master of ceremonies.

Manthras contain various types of strength. We sometimes feel that *manthras* are simply a collection of

words without any specific strength. The power behind the *manthra* can be understood only by those who are well versed in them. Although we are not able to see directly the connection that exists between the divine and the humans, yet as a *paroksha* or by inferential evidence, we are able to feel that through the *manthras* there is a connection between the divine and the human. In simple things, like the machines which are created by man, we see direct evidence of their strength, but to think that the *manthras* created by God do not have such strength in them is not correct.

There is an example for this. Suppose you are travelling by plane from Bangalore to Delhi. You know that the pilot of the plane can keep in contact with Delhi as well as Bangalore airports even though you are unable to see any direct and visual evidence of a connection between the plane and either of the airports. In this case, we don't see *pratyaksha*, or direct evidence, but the strength that is present in the machines at the airport and in the plane enables them to have contact. This kind of connection is an inferential connection.

As an example of direct and visible evidence, we can take the case of a telephone conversation between

here and Bangalore. In this case, we see that there are wires which connect one station to another and that these wires are transmitting the information. This is an example illustrating *pratyaksha*.

Today, when we offer different materials into fire we see they are being reduced to ashes. This is what we may call *pratyaksha* or seeing directly. But the fact that the material which was reduced to ashes gets conveyed to the person for whom it is intended by the *manthra sakthi* is something which we cannot directly see as *pratyaksha*. It is the *paroksha* or inferential connection that is responsible for such a transmission. Only those who have complete mastery over the *Vedas* can understand this aspect. The inference that the sacrifice made while uttering the name of Indra, Rudra or Varuna really reaches them is *paroksha* and can be well understood by those who know the power of these *manthras*. For them it is as good as direct evidence.

We will take another worldly example for this. Once an old man who had faith in the formal ritual was offering something to his dead father on his death anniversary. A somewhat modernised young grandson of this old man approached the grandfather and ridiculed

the old man for thinking that the offering would really reach his father and for his having such blind faith. The wise old man told the grandson that the power of the *manthra* was such that it would definitely convey the offering to the dead father and he also told him that this was really beyond the understanding of the common people as only those well-versed in such aspects of *manthras* can appreciate this. This grandson was clever but was lacking in good qualities. He wanted to put his grandfather on the first floor of the house and see if the offering reached him when the *manthra* was recited. He asked his grandfather to go to the first floor and related the *manthra* while making the offering and asked him if the offering had reached him. When the grandfather said that the offering did not reach him, he began to argue that if with the help of the *manthra*, the offering could not even reach the first floor, how could it reach his grandfather's father who was probably very far away in a distant world? The experienced grandfather then told him that the *manthra* which was recited was appropriate to a different world and asked how under these circumstances, could this be reaching the grandfather who was in the first floor of the same house. He further asked, if your father is resident in Madras and if you write a letter to

him and address it to Bombay, how can it reach him in Madras? *Manthra Sakthi* is something which is related to the other world but the grandfather is sitting in the first floor of the same house and how can the offering reach him. Therefore, if you recite the appropriate mantra relevant to the place where you want the results to appear, surely there is no doubt that the result will appear, where it ought to appear. Even if you do not know the place where the offering has to reach and even if you are not acquainted with the person who is to carry the offering, there is no doubt that such persons whose duty it is to carry the offering to that place will be ready to do so.

In this context, we can also take a worldly example. Suppose one of your friends is in California living in a house on Napoleon Drive and you post a letter to that address. You know neither the people in the post office that are handling the letters nor have you seen the house, street, or address in California; but the letter reaches your friend. How do you reconcile this situation when the persons whom you have not seen and known are taking the letter to a place which you have not seen? Will you have any doubt about the letter being delivered to him just because you are not acquainted with the individuals

who work in the postal department and because you are not acquainted with the place to which the letter is addressed? Your duty is only to write the correct address on the envelope. Responsibility for delivering the letter is that of the postal department and not yours. Although the individuals who are to deliver the letter are not known to you, your letter is being delivered at the correct address.

In a similar manner, if you have uttered the words *swaha* and *swadha* and uttered the appropriate *manthra* and made the offering to the Fire God, there is no doubt whatsoever that the God of fire will deliver it to the intended destination.

Because in those ancient days there were sacred people who understood the strength of such *manthras*, it was possible for them to hold the entire world in their palms. There is a small story for this. Uddalaka had a daughter by name Sujatha. She was married to a great scholar by name of Ekapada, who was happily spending his time teaching *Vedas* to his disciples. While the husband was thus teaching *Vedas*, the wife was also engaged herself in the work connected with the teaching of *Vedas* or by helping her husband. Sujatha who was spending her time in this manner learnt the proper accent and pronunciation of the *Vedic manthras*. Every time a mistake

was made, the baby in the womb was saying that it was a mistake. Uddalaka was enraged that a baby inside the womb was already correcting him and cursed that the baby would be born as a crooked one. In course of time, a son was born to Sujatha and the boy had eight crooked curves on his body because of the curses of Uddalaka. The name of the son was Ashtavakra.

When Sujatha was in her ninth month, Uddalaka left home to go to the court of Janaka to participate in a *Vedic* argument, attain victory and thereby earn money. In those days, the *Rishis* were not in the habit of saving for the future because they realised that life is a transient thing and they were not thinking far ahead of the present. In the present day, we try to see far into the future and even as the son is born, we deposit money in the bank to send him abroad for higher education without giving a thought to whether the boy would even live that long and even if he lived whether he would be able to learn that much. Therefore, Ekapada set out to get some money for the expenses of the baby. When he learnt of *Vedic* argument in King Janaka's court, he went there. However, due to bad luck, Ekapada lost the argument which he had with the other scholars and having lost the argument he became a bonded person at the court of King Janaka.

After some time Sujatha realised that her husband was not coming back. At this time she gave birth to the son, Ashtavakra. At the same time Uddalaka's wife also gave birth to a son called Svetaketu. Svetaketu and Ashtavakra were thus cousins. Uddalaka brought Ashtavakra and Sujatha to his house, as Sujatha's husband was not there. From that day Svetaketu and Ashtavakra grew up together as very close companions and Ashtavakra thought that Uddalaka was his father. One day when Ashtavakra was sitting on the lap of Uddalaka, Svetaketu came and asked him to get down and sit on his own father's lap if he wanted to.

At this Ashtavakra ran to his mother and asked for the true story of his birth and for the name of his father. Sujatha then told him the entire story and on hearing this news, both Svetaketu and Ashtavakra went to the court of King Janaka and attained victory in the arguments there. In this manner they liberated Ekapada and brought him back home. The mother Sujatha was very pleased and happy and said that although many fathers had got their sons released or given birth to them, this was a rare case where the son gave back a father and she praised him for giving her such a gift. The child in the womb got these qualities only because of the power of the *manthra*.

Another instance in our *Puranas* where the child in the womb got such knowledge was the case of Abhimanyu, who learnt the details of *Padmavyuha* (labyrinth of lotus shape, particular type of maze), while in the womb of his mother. In view of this, it was the custom in those days that pregnant women were taken care of with great effort and they were always kept happy and were permitted to listen only to sacred stories and sacred things. They were always given only good news. It is in this context that the baby in the womb will be experiencing only happy situations and as a result will turn out to be a happy individual. But today, pregnant women see various kinds of pictures during the period of pregnancy and in this process the child also develops bad ideas even from the time of its being in the mother's womb and they take to an unsacred path once they are born. Thus the entire future of a child depends on the manner and conduct of the pregnant woman in whose womb the child is growing.

If today we take to a sacred path and do the right thing, there is no doubt that our children in the future will also attain reputation and will take to a sacred path. Although one does not directly see the greatness of a *manthra*, it is sure to hand in the consequence by

inference. Some people argue that it may not be necessary to read the *manthras* with the proper accent and the proper stress at the right place and that it may be looked upon as a mere collection of words. Our youth have no understanding and familiarity with the divine path or with anything that relates to the culture of our country. It has become a fashion to take a crooked view of everything and they give a reply which is quite irrelevant.

A devout grandfather was once reciting his *Sandhya mantra* and in the process he was uttering “*Kesavayaswaha*,” “*Narayanayaswaha*,” “*Madhavayaswaha*”, and so on; and with each of the names he was swallowing a small quantity of water. The grandson who was sitting at a nearby table and doing his homework was watching all this and asked his grandfather why he did not take the entire glass full of water in one gulp, if he was feeling so thirsty. The grandfather did not reply immediately because he did not want to be disturbed while doing the *Sandhya Manthra*.

Later, the grandson was doing his homework and in this process he was constantly dipping his pen in the ink bottle and writing. He was doing this each time whenever the ink dried out. The grandfather saw this

and asked the grandson why he was doing this instead of overturning the entire ink bottle at one time and have the entire ink in one lot. The grandson replied that if the entire ink was put on the paper, the words would not be seen. The grandfather said that if he swallowed the entire water at one time, the *manthras* cannot be heard. In the case of the *manthra*, unless you utter the proper name at each time and have the appendage of *swaha* each time and do what has to be done, you will not get the real benefit. Just as in the case of the writing, unless you use the ink moderately, bit by bit, the letters will not be distinct but will be muddled up; so also, we must recognise the situation when the *Vedas* held sway. If you do not understand, it is much better if you refrain from raising irrelevant questions. You should try to understand the significance of these *manthras*.

In the one month that you are attending the classes here, I am hoping that you will listen to the content that is conveyed to you by different scholars and acquire the necessary strength to understand what is being taught to you by the teachers during the evening discourses.