

PART II : BHARATH

17. Historical Interpretations Of The Name “Bharath”

Like the rats, while being unable to give up the desire to get at the fried rice in the cage, enter the cage and get trapped in it, men unable to give up the attraction of the sensory desires get caught in them and as a consequence miss the great bliss which they can enjoy by realising Brahman.

Pavitraatma Swarupas, students!

There are three words *Bharatha*, *Bhaarata*, and *Bhaarati* which we must examine, in the first instance, in the context of the meaning given to them by our historians. Later, we will see what kind of support we get for such meanings from our *Sruthis* and *Smruthis*. Our ancient historians on some occasions expressed the

view that the name Bharath has been derived from the name Bharatha, son of Sakuntala. Yet, on other occasions, they said that the name Bharath has been derived from the name of King Manu who was also called Bharatha.

In some places, historians have expressed the view that the name Bharath is synonymous with the name Jambudwipa. In other places they have taken the word Bharatha as *yodhdha*, or one who can fight; and in that context, they concluded that this name refers to Kshatriyas only. Amarasimha got support from the statement, “*Lokoyam Bharatha Varshaha*” and took the view that the name Bharatha refers to the entire world and not any one particular country. Further, just as when one is worshipping a goddess, one uses the name of the goddess in order that his desire may be fulfilled, some historians have regarded the name Bharath as if it arose from the name of the Goddess Bharathi. In addition to this, just as Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, etc. are religious names named after various individuals who first propagated them, so also they thought that Bharatha was a specific name of a religious leader and that the name for this country arose from such a name.

We, also have various names like *Dwaitha*, *Adwaitha*, *Visishta Adwaitha* for the schools of philosophy propounded by great teachers who propounded them. Some have taken Bharatha to mean a school of philosophy prominent in this country. However, the historians who have given all these interpretations never associated the name Bharatha with the *Vedas*. On the contrary, mostly they have taken the view that Bharatha is not a word which has any connection with the *Vedas*. They have been arguing that Bharatha signifies fire. They have been preaching *Agni* Bharatha establishing the identity of fire with Bharath. This fire was looked upon by them as something which arises in a *yajna* or a ceremony and they thought that Bharatha was a name appropriate to the fire that is generated in the *yajna*. But if we enquire into the connection between *agni* that is generated in a *yajna* and Bharath, we come to the conclusion that there is no connection at all. But they argued that there is a connection between the priests and Bharatha. They have established further that there is a particular class of people called Bharathas among the Aryans.

This class of Aryans who were then called Bharathas were living on the banks of river Saraswathi

and were worshipping it as a goddess. Because they were worshipping the river as Goddess Saraswathi, they propagated the view that Bharatha is an alternative name for Saraswathi. This group of Aryans were worshipping *agni* in addition to Saraswathi. Hence, they said that *agni* is an alternative name for Bharatha. However, all these theories and ideas do not seem to have sufficient support behind them. These are worldly usages and names given in the daily context. If we accept that which is in use in our daily life as our primary authority, how can it have any basis in the *Veda*? The historians gave a great deal of importance to the common usage of these words and they built theories based on their own ideas. Their decisions were based mainly on the common usage of this word. We have the authority of the *Rig Veda* to say that the principal priests or the *Rithwicks* have been called by the name Bharatha.

In this context, our *Sruthis* have recognised the *Rithwicks* by their power of *mantras* and the fact that the *Rithwicks* were generating fire in the *yajnas*. Since *agni* has been generated by the *Rithwicks*, it has been regarded as the daughter of the *Rithwicks*. Thus *agni* which is regarded as Bharatha, is also the child of the *Rithwicks*. Because *agni* or Bharatha has come out as a

result of the power or strength of the *Rithwicks*, there is an alternative name for this and that is “*Sahasa Sad Putraha*”.

Having accepted that *agni* is generated by the power of the *Rithwicks*, we should ask ourselves about the process by which the *Rithwicks* generated fire. We know that the *Rithwicks* had the power to generate the fire through the *mantras* and through their constant contemplation of God. That is why the *Rithwicks*, *agni*, and the *Purohit* have also got the name Bharatha.

You may like to know the significance of calling the *Rithwicks* by the name Bharatha. The justification for calling the *Rithwicks* by the name of Bharatha is that at the time of generating the fire, they are thinking of God in many ways and concentrating on God. Since they are completely merged with God and enjoying the Bliss of divinity they are called Bharatha. In this context, our *Sruthis* have taken the three words Bharatha, Bhaarata and Bharati and have synthesised the three names with Ida, Saraswathi and Bharati.

In this context, they had taken these three—Ida, Saraswathi and Bharati—as the three aspects of God and teaching that they relate to the whole world. This is what

the *Veda* has been teaching. Bharatha has been used also for *Vayu* and *Indra*. In the earth there is *agni* and in the space there is *vayu*, and in the sky there are sun's rays. By using *agni*, *vayu* and the sun and in identifying these three as phases of *Bharatha*, the *Veda* has been teaching that this Goddess pervades Bharathi and the entire world.

We should regard these three—Ida, Saraswathi and Bharati—as three phases of one and the same divine aspect. They are not distinct. This has been taught by our *Veda*. By looking at what is commonly seen from a worldly point of view and to say that a particular thing is air or sun's rays and to mention them in isolation is only ignorance. You will notice that even if any one of the three is absent, it is not possible to recognise the existence of the other two. If there is no sun, there is no air and fire. If we do not have air, we shall not be able to comprehend the meaning of fire or sun's rays. If there is no fire there is no possibility of getting air or sun. Therefore, fire, air and sun are all inseparable aspects of Bharath and always go together.

While the *Sruthi* teaches the oneness and yet sometimes talks of *agni* in an isolated manner, there is a meaning for this. When we talk of the nature or *Prakruthi*,

we usually mean the gross manifestation of the created world. In addition to this, there is the subtle aspect of human nature which is also included in the word *Prakruthi*. In this subtle aspect of *Prakruthi*, if there is no fire, then the body will perish. It is only through fire that there is a possibility of water coming up for us. In every body air is present in the form of *prana* or life. If air which takes the form of life is not present in our body, then the entire life becomes extinct. In the aspect of fire and that of air or *vayu*, the sun takes the place of the heart. If the heart is missing, even if one is leading a life for outward purposes, it is equivalent to death. Therefore, if there is no *agni*, *vayu* and sun, we cannot recognise human life. In this context, in order that we may understand human life in its fullest sense, it is appropriate to use the word *Bharatha* for all that which encompasses humanity.

This fact has been explained to you several times by Me with the use of many analogies. In understanding the relationship between space, mind and the sun if we compare our mind to the moon, eyes and vision to the sun and the spiritual heart to space or the sky, the thoughts that cross our mind are like clouds that fill the space. There is truth in comparing our ideas and thoughts

with the clouds since they are not permanent. They are continually changing and taking different shapes. Sometimes these ideas come to us as thick clouds and they take some uncommon shapes and forms. They keep on changing from time to time. It is common experience that the clouds take different shapes while they are formed. Sometimes we feel that the clouds that are gathering take the form of a deer while at other times, the form of a fox. However, no sooner do we see one particular form than the cloud begins to break up and reappear in a different form. The clouds thus continually change their form.

The breeze that is blowing is responsible for this changing form of the clouds and their breaking up. This air or breeze can be compared to a kind of desire which breaks up the thoughts which are like the clouds in your mind. The cloud of thoughts is formed because of desires. The desires themselves are responsible both for the forming as well as breaking up of the thought-clouds. When we ask ourselves a question whether there is any connection between the sun, the moon and the desires that we have, we come to the conclusion that there is no connection at all.

In the above analogy, when sometimes very thick clouds (desires) are formed, they often hide the sun and

the moon, in this case the mind and the intelligence. In the same manner, although the mind and intellect of the young people are fresh and bright, they are not able to function properly due to bad thoughts and ideas. It is in this context, it is said that Love is blind.

If we are unable to discriminate between right and wrong and take to wrong path, it is because our mind and intellect are clouded by evil thoughts. Although our intelligence is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, we do the wrong thing because of the illusion from which our mind is suffering. For us to think that at times we have the power to distinguish between right and wrong and that at other times, this is not there is not right. If this *Prajna Sakthi* or the divine power to discriminate is not there, our ability to eat, sleep, hear, etc., will be completely absent. This *Prajna Sakthi* is an aspect of the trinity and the trinity itself is Agni, Vayu, and Sun and our mind is made up of these three.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* also it is said that *Buddhi* is the best manifestation of God in Man. Not only that, through *Gita* it has also been explained that everywhere are present the Lord's feet and the Lord's hands and this is what the Lord proclaims about Himself in the *Gita*. In this context, we should realise that the *Bhagavad Gita* is

the essence of all *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* themselves have come as the ultimate wisdom of the *Vedas*. Therefore we come to the conclusion that the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads* are intimately and inextricably connected with each other. I often say that “*Gita* is God’s messenger. *Gita* is the mother of the world. *Gita* is the support on which one can lean while leading his family life. *Gita* is also the essence of Sri Sai. One can also say that *Gita* is the Mother Sai”.

Having said that *Gita* is the Mother Sai in relation to the commentaries of the *Vedas*, we may come to the conclusion that the name Bharatha applies to the entire universe and the entire humanity. There is an important thing that we must understand today. The word Bharatha is not narrowly confined in the context of any one particular country or a particular group of people. In due course, you will be able to recognise the truth that the word Bharatha relates to the entire world. You are not likely to comprehend fully the aspect of Bharatha with today’s discourse alone. Today’s discourse is of the nature of an introduction or a foundation and simply consists of what the historians had said about this word. In fact, the entire meaning of life depends on what the historians make out of it. As time progresses, you will

be able to understand whether the picture given by the historians is true and comprehensive.

It is true that the words of the historians have an authority but in the context of comparison and relative assessment, the words of the *Vedas* have a much greater authority for everyone, depending very heavily on the authority or *Pramana* which we get from the *Vedas*. Life has been going on in accordance with such an authority from times immemorial whether knowingly or unknowingly. In fact, in this country whatever task we undertake, whatever work we do, whatever *karma* we indulge in, our ancestors have always relied on the *Vedapramana*.

In the word *Pramana*, the part *Pra* means beginning and the part *Mana* means a measure. It is customary for Indians to prescribe a measure for everything. If we have to measure cloth, we use the unit of a meter. If we want to measure milk, we use the unit of a litre. Similarly for everything there is an appropriate measure or a unit. In order to measure the human nature or what is important in life, there is only one unit and that is what arises from the *Vedas*. For instance, if an individual goes and asks another individual about something and if the other person says that he does not

know the answer, there will be no further questions. On the other hand, if an answer is given there will be a volley of further questions as to how he knows the answer and what the authority or *pramana* is for such an answer. Therefore, all things that you do not know have no measure. Only things which you know are describable in terms of a measure. If your ideas or thoughts about something are such that you cannot describe in terms of a measure, then it means you do not know the thing.

Divyatma Swarupas!

The culture of Bharath is based on the authority derived from the *Vedas*.

Whether in the worldly aspect or ancient thought or modern thought, you should permanently imprint three aspects in your heart. These are: "Do not believe the world that you see around", "Do not forget God" and "Do not fear death". The world here refers to the material world. If you are afraid of death, it is not going to leave you. In fact the more you are afraid of death, the quicker will it come looking for you. Death is like a monkey. If we run, the monkey runs after us but if we stand where

we are, the monkey will also stand still. If you are afraid of death, it will come searching for you and will meet you and take you early.

There is a small story which I usually narrate to illustrate this aspect. On one occasion, the epidemic of cholera struck one village. At the entrance to this village, there was the house of the doctor. He was watching as the Goddess of the disease cholera was entering the village. He asked the Goddess where she was going. The Goddess replied that she was going into the village to take the lives of certain number of people. The doctor became very friendly and even invited the Goddess to have a cup of coffee with him. The doctor was informed by the Goddess of Cholera that she will take about a hundred and fifty lives. After some time, the Panchayat President of the Village came to the doctor and asked him to certify that two hundred and fifty persons had been killed by the cholera disease. The doctor then surmised that even the Goddess had not honoured the commitment given by her, according to which she was to take only a hundred and fifty lives. When the Goddess of Cholera was returning, she again met the doctor, who questioned why she had broken her promise and extracted two hundred and fifty lives. To

this, the Goddess replied that she stuck to her word and had taken only a hundred and fifty lives but that the other hundred people died because of fear of death and she was not responsible for their death. In a lighter vein, this story reveals the truth that one should not be afraid of death as it will surely overtake you one day or the other. You must develop the capacities to forget the material world, not to forget God and not to fear death.