

19. Different Avathars Are Manifestations Of The One God Without A Second

Whatever work is prescribed in the *Vedas* is desirable work, and one should accept it as worth performing. Whatever is not prescribed in the *Vedas* is forbidden. One who fails to differentiate between work that should be done and work that should not be done is a sinner.

“*Brahmithi Bharatha Bhasha*” “*Girivag Vani Saraswathi.*” This is the description of the language of Saraswathi and of Bharatha given in our scriptures. Our tradition has been prescribing that the words which occur in the *Vedas* show the right way in which one can group the letters. To regard the *Vedic manthras* as mere groups of words without understanding the sacred

meaning thereof has become customary. The words like Ida, Saraswathi and Bharathi are sacred words of *Vedic* origin. They represent the essence of *Veda* and *Veda* itself. The words *Indra*, *Vayu* and *Brihaspati* convey to us some aspects. They together contain the meaning of the words Ida, Saraswathi and Bharathi. The summary meaning of these three words is also contained in the three words *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Aditya*. The synonymous nature of the meaning that is contained in the two sets of three words makes it impossible for either set to come to the place of *yajna* by itself. They always come together to the place of *yajna*. Along with *Aditya* comes Bharatha and along with *vayu* and *agni* comes Saraswathi and Ida. The combination of all these is represented together at the ceremony of *yajna*. The word Bharatha has been considered as synonym or equivalent to *Aditya*.

Bharatha, Saraswathi and Ida are *Vedic* terms. They represent *Veda* itself. They have a *Vedic* origin and *Vedic* significance. We have to recognise and appreciate this aspect.

There is also a well-known alternative name for Bharatha and that is *Dravanodam*. *Dravana* can be interpreted to mean wealth and strength. For one who gives wealth and strength, there is a name *Dravanodaha*.

This aspect of *Dravana* is also a name for the *havis* or the offering to the god of fire. The one who makes the offering is also called *Dravanodaha*. For this *Rithwick*, the *agni* is in the position of the son. For the statement that *agni* is in the place of a child for the *Rithwick*, the support is that the *Rithwick* uses his physical strength and generates the fire by rubbing two pieces of wood. Thus we figuratively regard *agni* as being in the position of a child for the *Rithwick*.

So the *Rithwick* is also called Bharatha. In that context, the word *Dravina* will apply to Bharatha. It is because of the *Rithwicks* who have the name Bharatha and because the name *Dravana* is applicable to the *Rithwicks* there is also a class of people called Dravidas. In this country, whether it is a name taken by an individual or a philosophical principle, that name must have our acceptance in the *Vedic* context. If this does not happen, it cannot be taken as a name by anyone in this country.

The people of this country regard all kinds of work they do as something ordained by and emanate from the *Veda*. They are passed on from generation to generation. It is not as if we learn them afresh and put them into practice. To believe in the statement, *Sakuntalayam*

Bharatha, (which means that the name which Sakuntala's son had, has been given to our country) is a mistake. In fact, the name Bharatha was derived from *Veda* and given to Sakuntala's son. We must realise that the country did exist even before the birth of Sakuntala's son and that the *Veda* did exist much earlier.

These statements are made by the historians and are all false. These three names Bharath, Bharati and Bharatha are *Vedic* names and have *Vedic* origin. It will be appropriate to come to the conclusion that from time immemorial, our country has been called Bharatha. The name came to us from the *Vedas* where the *Rithwicks* were using the term in various ceremonies. Its origin is purely and wholly *Vedic* and is not from anywhere else. It has not come from any kings or philosophical expositions. By virtue of its sacred origin, the name Bharatha has significance for the entire world. Bharatha is a significant name for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world. Although the world appears as one, it manifests itself in all the three aspects. When we examine this aspect of Bharatha in the light of the three modes of time, namely the future, present and past they reflect Ida, Saraswathi and Bharathi. When we look at this name in the aspect of *agni*, it has been referred to as

“Ida”. When we look at it by the aspect of *vayu*, this has been referred to by a second name Saraswathi. The same thing looked at in the aspect of Indra, is referred to as Bharatha.

You must realise the truth that the name Bharath has not been divided from any individual and its significance is universal. The sound which spreads all over is also referred to as Bharatha. Since there is no direct connection either with *agni* or *vayu*, it is regarded all over the world as *Dwiloka* and is called Bharathi. Since the Brahma Dharma is spread all over the world, it also is called Bharathi. If today the citizens of Bharath are not able to recognise the full significant meaning of this sacred name, it is a very unfortunate situation. All aspects represented by the name of our country must be realised by one and all. Today, the youth are not able to understand the significance of their own names. The name of their country and the stories contained in the *Puranas* convey no meaning to them. If you want to raise your country back to its glorious past, you must read and understand the sacred texts of *Bharatha*, *Bhagavatha*, and so on. The appropriate authority for these sacred texts is not an individual, but *Vedas* themselves. Since the *Veda* has not originated from

any individual, its authority is infinite. The *Vedas* are verily the embodiment of Truth.

Any particular text of history or literature which is the result of the work of an individual, is bound to reflect his attitudes. Our ancient *Puranas* and commentaries on scriptures are being written now by persons who live in the present age. These people are certainly influenced by the environment in the present age of Kali and this is reflected when they rewrite these stories. Since we are forgetting the original meanings of these sacred texts and relying on the statements of individuals, we are missing what is important.

The *Mahabharatha* is regarded as the fifth *Veda*. The stories in the *Mahabharatha* are often misinterpreted by commentators. From *Mahabharatha*, it is known that the Pandavas were living incognito at King Drupada's palace. At this time, according to some writers, Kichaka fell in love with Droupadi and Bhima got angry and killed him. This is not the truth. The actual fact is that Kichaka was ill-treating Droupadi who was at that time in the role of a servant. Bhima was enraged at this and killed Kichaka. There is nothing like Kichaka was in love with Droupadi, because at that time Kichaka was twenty-two years old and Droupadi was seventy-six years old.

Modern writers have in several instances created confusion in regard to stories they have rewritten due to lack of faith and considerable amount of doubt in their own minds in respect of our *Puranas*.

It is now a common experience that some foreigners who look at the religious practices of Indians think that we have too many deities, while God is, in fact, only one. They think we are foolish enough to regard God as having different names and forms. We are not so foolish and ignorant as these outsiders think us to be. It is time that they realise the truth behind the belief and recognition of these aspects of God. Even in the very early stages, our people have realised and asserted that God is one and only one and that there is no second. But for reasons of interpretation to suit each one's attitude, each one has created his own image of the one and only God that exists. It is time that the outsiders realise this aspect. Taking into account the situation that prevails in a country at a certain time we have to experience and regard the one God as manifesting Himself in so many different ways. This is only a phase which has been brought about by environment and conditions.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is the essence of all *Vedas* and in this Krishna had given a very beautiful and apt

analogy. Suppose we are seeing a big tree. In this big tree we see a number of leaves, branches, roots, fruits and so on. We see all this in the big tree. We do not call the flowers by the name of the leaves nor do we call the leaves by the names of the fruits or roots. We use an appropriate name for each part of this single big tree. The branches are branches but they do not become fruit. Similarly the leaves do not become roots. When we want to enjoy the fragrance of the flowers we must smell the flowers and not the roots. Similarly, if you want to taste the fruit you must eat the fruit and not the branches. This big tree which has so many different components and so many different parts is really one in the sense that the seed which gives rise to this tree is only one. Just as there is only one seed for the entire tree, there is only one divine being and all other parts are related to this one source.

The recognition of this oneness in the entire and diverse aspects of divinity is really the basis of *Adwaita*. *Beejam mam sarvabhutanam* or I am the seed for all being, is the basis of Indian philosophy in the form of *Adwaita*. We are witnessing all these different forms and parts of the tree although they have arisen from the same seed. So also we are experiencing different aspects of the one God. God is only one. All other names and

forms we create are only aspects to suit our own experience. As the time changes and the ideas of an individual change, the name and form that he gives to God also change. These names and forms are things which are manufactured artificially in the factory of your own thoughts and mind. For so many different names and forms, our mind is responsible. It is not as if God has in fact all these aspects.

One does not have to go so far to understand this fact. Even in a single human body we have so many different forms that appear at different stages of one's life. As soon as a baby is born, we refer to him as child. As time goes on, the same child becomes more mature and is called a boy. As this boy grows older and acquires different qualities, he will be called a man; and as the same man grows older, he will be called a grandfather. Therefore, the child, boy, man and grandfather, all refer to the same individual although at different times in different forms he is called by different names. The name and form of these different stages are, therefore, different but all these really refer to one and the same individual. These are all different names but appropriate to the same individual only at different times. Similarly good and bad also go on changing more or less in the same manner.

What is good at one time and in one place may be bad at another time and in another place. There is an example which young people understand very well. This evening we eat some very good and tasty food but by next morning the very same thing becomes waste and is rejected. Thus, what was good and tasty the previous evening has been rejected as waste material the next morning. As in this case, the change has come about with time, so also in the world what is good now becomes bad a little later and if there is a change in name and form of some material, we should recognise that such changes from good to bad are coming not because of any connection with the divine but only because of changing times.

In the same manner, we must understand the aspects of *agni*, *vayu* and *adithya* (Sun). When we make fire for cooking, we use for the purpose of cooking. We do not attach any importance to it. If the same fire is prepared for a sacred purpose of performing a *yajna*, then people prostrate before the fire and show great reverence to the fire. Fire is also used to burn dead bodies in cremation grounds. If such fire is seen, not only will people not give any respect to it, but treat it as an evil. No one will cook his bread or food on such a fire. Such

a fire will be treated as unsacred and no one will use it for any other purpose. If the same fire is put in the front of a sacred house, then it is the custom in our villages for people to go to such sacred houses and light another *jyothi* from such a *jyothi* in a sacred house. It was the belief in those days, that if a *jyothi* was brought from a sacred and good house, the other houses will also enjoy prosperity. In the olden days, they used to regard this as a very good custom.

In this context, I will give you a story from the *Bhagavatha*. If you are continuously taught the aspects of *Veda*, then your interest in the subject will decline. So I propose to narrate some light stories from *Bhagavatha* or *Bharatha* to make things easy and give you some relief. In Repalle, Nanda was a well-known and rich *zamindar* (land owner). The inhabitants of that village had great respect for Nanda and they would not disobey him at all. In fact, Yasoda and Nanda were treated by the villagers as if they were their very life-breath. People were lighting up their *jyothis* from Nanda's house in the hope that if they lit their lamps from such a sacred house, they would imbibe the good ideas and behaviour for which Nanda and Yasoda were famous. In those days, people did not have artificial and unreliable lights as we now have.

These lights and microphones which we now use may fail us at any moment. If there is a wick and oil, the lamp will continue so long as the oil and wick are there. These three components are called *Karma*, *Akarma* and *Vikarma*. *Karma* here stands for the wick and *vikarma* stands for the oil and if the wick and the oil are there, we can get the *jyothi*; but if either of them is exhausted, the *jyothi* would disappear and the disappearance of *jyothi* is called *akarma* or disappearance of all action. This kind of *jyothi* was lit and put in the verandah of their house by Yasoda every day. All the ladies of Repalle had the tradition of going in a line and light their own lamps from the particular lamp lit by Yasoda. As Krishna was growing and coming of age, the number of women coming to that verandah was dwindling gradually. The reason was that the mothers-in-law and the husbands in each household who could not recognise the true form and nature of Krishna were preventing the young women from going there. However, those husbands and mothers-in-law who had good feelings at heart permitted the women to continue this tradition. They not only permitted but encouraged the continuance of such a practice. In the pretext of lighting this *jyothi*, the Gopikas used to go to Nanda's house and come back with their hearts filled with bliss.

To that village came a new daughter-in-law by the name of Suguna. Neither the husband nor the mother-in-law of Suguna liked her going to Nanda's house. Suguna was a great devotee. In fact, when she got married she was very happy that she would be going to Repalle where she could watch and enjoy the *leelas* (Divine sport) of Krishna. On arrival at her mother-in-law's house, she found that she was bound by certain harsh rules and regulations. She was told never to look at Krishna and the windows should be closed if Krishna was ever to be found walking on that street. When other women from the neighbouring houses came to describe the *leelas* of Krishna, she felt very sorry that she was not in a position to enjoy these *leelas*. As faith and devotion grew, it was not possible for anyone to stop such devotees from fulfilling their desires. Fortunately, in that house the mother-in-law was herself bringing the traditionally-lighted *jyothi* from Nanda's house.

One day the mother-in-law became very ill and she asked Suguna to go and light the lamp from Nanda's house. The mother-in-law knew that Krishna was away from Repalle. When Suguna came to Nanda's house, she was very unhappy that Krishna was away. She was completely engrossed in the thought of Krishna and as

she was completely lost in the thought of Krishna, her hand was being burnt by the flame, but she was not aware of this. At this time, Yasoda saw this and enquired her how she was not mindful of her hand burning. She asked her if she did not have enough sleep the previous night. Suguna then replied that she was quite unmindful of herself because she was seeing Krishna in that flame and hence she did not feel the pain of her burning hand. When she was narrating this experience to Yasoda, other Gopikas also came to light their own *jyothis* and heard this. On hearing what Suguna told Yasoda, they came running into market place and started singing, “Our Suguna had the vision of the Lord in the flame in Yasoda’s house. It seems in Nanda’s house, our Gopal had given His Darshan to Suguna in the Flame and the very flame burnt her finger”. When this song was heard by the mother-in-law, her fever disappeared and she came running into the street.

From the above story, we have to learn that whenever God does anything, He does it with a purpose and out of it comes some specific good result. Here we see that pleasure is an interval between two pains and in this case Suguna’s mother-in-law realised that Suguna had such great devotion that she had the vision of the

Lord and she began saying that it was a great honour to have Suguna as the daughter-in-law in her house. She also began singing in praise of the Lord. Since it is difficult for common people to understand what is ordained as *dharma* in the *Vedas* and put such *dharma* into practice, our *Puranas* have given several stories which common people can understand and put into practice. This is the reason why our *Maharishis* have written the *Puranas*. Thus, sages like Vyasa and Valmiki have immortalised the stories of Krishna and Rama for the benefit of mankind in the form of *Puranas* so that common people can understand and follow them in their daily lives.