

22. God Is Above All Sense Perceptions And Is Omnipresent

Man is ready to indulge in sinful acts but when it comes to reaping the fruits of such sinful acts, he shows much hesitation. On the other hand, he will give up doing good work knowingly and with considerable ease. He is always ready to give up doing good deeds.

Pavitratma Swarupas! students, boys and girls!

You have already learnt that *Veda* teaches you things which are beyond direct as well as inferential evidence. There is a definition of *Veda* which states *Vedayati iti vedaha* which makes some people think that *Veda* is preaching to you something secret and special which we are not able to understand easily. When

we ask the question “What is it that the *Veda* tells us?” we begin to learn that the *Veda* has certain supplementary branches of knowledge such as *Gandharva Veda*, *Ayur Veda* and *Natya Veda*. These occur as additions to the *Veda*. In other words, we see that for the word *Veda* there are certain prefixes which are added. These prefixes explain what those *Vedas* deal with.

What is it that the word *Veda* without a prefix tells us? There are four *purusharthas* namely *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* which are dealt with in the *Veda* in relation to an individual and the kind of work an individual has to undertake in his life. Thus actions of all kinds that concern man at every moment of his life are being dealt with by the *Veda* in the words *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. *Artha* and *kama* or wealth and desire, are natural to human beings. One should not in that context think that *dharma* and *moksha* relate to some higher state of life.

To think that wealth and desire only are important for human life and *dharma* and *moksha* are related to a higher aspect is not correct. It is only when we understand this clearly that we will be able to understand the aspects, teachings and the significance of the words contained in the *Veda*. We should understand the significance of the

life principle in the manifold *jivas* and know how it has come into them and what happens after that life principle departs from the body of a *jiva*.

It is only when we understand the significance of the words creation, sustenance, dissolution, life and grace, in this world, will we be able to get at the full meaning of what is contained in the *Vedas*. These words are synonymous with the five *pranas* (airs). These five *pranas* are the basis for the five *kosas* (sheaths). These five *kosas* have also been called the five elemental substances. Amidst these five elemental substances there is also something which is divine and lets us know the nature of the inner self. The five *karmendriyas*, the senses of action, are externally visible. But we also know of the five senses of perception.

Besides these, we should recognise the inner organs called *Antahkarana*. Associated with this inner *Antahkarana* is the *Atma* or the inner self and in the context of this *Atma*, you have to use the word *Hiranya*. *Hiranya* signifies to us the life force. The word *Hiranya* literally means gold. Through the help of fine gold, one can get rid of all impurities. Because of this capacity to remove the impurities and to cleanse with the help of fire, *agni* or fire has been associated with the word

dharma and such fire has another name *Pavaka*. This strength or capacity by which it can purify matter is also called an aspect of *pavaka*. Because it is filled with the aspect of *Hitaramya* it is also called *Hiranya*. The subtle body is to be described as *Hitaramya* but gradually the name has changed into *Hiranya*. *Hitaramya* became *Hiranya* and in common parlance it became *Hiramyra*. Here the aspect of Brahman associated with *Hiramyra* has been dealt with in the aspect of Saraswathi. Just as *agni* can cleanse, purify and remove all impurities in matter, the inner organs can be purified by Saraswathi.

In this context, because of its ability to cleanse the inner organs, Saraswathi has also got the name *Pavaka*. You can remove your ignorance, if you listen to Saraswathi. Therefore Saraswathi has the capacity to remove your ignorance through this process of listening. Because of this capacity by which it can remove your ignorance and give you *Prajnana*, Saraswathi has been called *Pavaka*. It has also been called by a sacred name *Pavana*. This word *Pavana* means breeze or air. This divine air or breeze takes the form of life in every individual. This aspect of life which we recognise as being present in everyone is referred to as the aspect of Bharatha. This aspect of Bharatha which is synonymous with the aspect of life in everyone has also been identified

with *Aditya*. As such, the synonym *Pavaka* became common for *Aditya* also and has become common for Bharatha as well.

Thus, Ida, Saraswathi and *Vayu* have become synonymous with the aspect of Bharatha. Therefore in the inner place where the *Atma* resides because of the aspect of Ida and Saraswathi also being resident, the aspect of Bharatha is also resident. The coincidence of the inner *Atma* and the aspect of Bharatha is not being recognised by us. Hence, we are not giving the word Bharatha its due prominence. We are just thinking that it signifies the name of a country. This is wrong. The poets, writers and historians did not go into details of the origin of the word Bharatha and they drew conclusion which are not fully acceptable in the context of what is being said now about *manthras*.

Only those of our *rishis* who had mastery over the *Vedas* were the people who could claim to be true poets (*kavi*). It is appropriate to call only such people who are well-versed in *Vedas* as poets. To assume that a person who has only poetic abilities can become a *rishi* is very inappropriate.

The *rishis* of the old days had pure and clear minds, and hence they could comprehend Divinity. Hence they

were called *kanta darahana*. They could have the vision of the past, present and future in one glance. On account of their purity, they could comprehend the three modes of time. Here we can recognise the fact that the name *rishi* is appropriate to only those who can comprehend all the three divisions of time and the three worlds and the triune aspect of divinity. Since such sacred *rishis* undertook the job of compiling the *Puranas* and *Ithihasas*, they acquired fame and importance. People like Valmiki and Vyasa were great *rishis* first by their *thapas* and clarity of mind. It is only afterwards they became writers and poets. One may ask why these *rishis* had to be poets when they already had the aspect of Easwara in them. This they did because they wanted to convey to the rest of the world the subtle aspects of divinity in an easy manner through their writings. The *rishis* of old not only enjoyed the bliss and happiness associated with the aspect of God, but were also anxious to convey the same to others and so they earned God's grace and undertook to write sacred stories which brought happiness and bliss to others. This is an easily recognisable feature of the citizens of Bharath in the ancient times. They realised that the bliss flowing from divinity which they enjoyed was not for their selfish

purposes, but they shared it with people who are engaged in the worldly aspect as well.

There are three methods of learning namely *sravana* (listening), *manana* (constant contemplation) and *nididhyasana* (to assimilate). In these three levels of learning, they installed Saraswathi, Bharati and Ida. You have by now realised that these three names are the three parts of the same aspect. Truly, what you have listened to cannot be easily grasped and assimilated just by listening. You have to do some *manana* or think it over again and again and then absorb what you have listened to. This is *nididhyasana*. If you do all three—listen, think over and absorb—then only can you enjoy the fruits of what you have listened to.

There is a small illustration for this. Suppose some food is cooked in your kitchen. Will your hunger be relieved merely by looking at what has been cooked? Even if you just eat what has been cooked, will you be able to derive the necessary strength from the nourishment? Only if you digest the food that you have eaten, can you get the nourishment. As cooking, eating and then digesting are three essential processes to get the ultimate result, so also, *sravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana* must follow one another in that order, so

that it may give you the ultimate result. Then only can you acquire some aspects of the *Atma Vidya*. People who just listen and do not do any *manana* are like those who just see cooked food in a kitchen and do not attempt to eat it.

There may be a number of eatables in the kitchen but this in itself is not enough and does not relieve one's hunger. Only if one eats them will one get some benefit. This stage can be compared to listening and giving some thought to what one has heard. After this what you have listened to must be absorbed into yourself. Then only will you get full benefit out of what you have listened to. These three steps are called *sravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana*. Poets are of the view that just by listening to things, one gets full benefit. The *rishis*, having experienced the *Ananda* or bliss after going through various stages and absorbing such *Ananda*, will transmit the same to ordinary people and they will follow up with *manana* and *nididhyasana*.

A small illustration. A scholar takes into his hand a big book and goes through it page after page. His attention is drawn to the contents of the book. On the other hand, we can take the case of a small child who is looking at the same book. The child's attention is drawn only to the pictures in the book and nothing else. The

implication of this example is that the child enjoying only the pictures in the book can be compared to a poet, whereas the scholar who is reading the contents of the book and absorbing them is comparable to a *rishi*. If you look at the pictures only, can you understand the detailed contents?

Will the darkness on the earth disappear merely by listening to the news of a lamp existing somewhere? Will the hunger of a hungry man be relieved by hearing names of several sweets? Will the poverty of a poor man disappear simply by hearing the potential of great wealth and prosperity? The disease of a man is not going to be cured if he simply hears the names of all the medicines that are available. Similarly poets and writers have been reading and writing things without realising the essential meaning of what they have been writing. They are misinterpreting the word Bharatha and hence they do not get the full meaning thereof.

If you stand at the same level as the ocean and look at it, it will appear as a vast sheet of water. On the other hand, if you look at the same ocean from a height, it will appear like a lake. On the same analogy, since the *rishis* were on a higher level in spiritual knowledge and away from the world, they could recognise this vast world as a very small and insignificant entity. When one is at a

lower level, he thinks that the world is big, important and manifold. The diversity and the differences will be seen more clearly. But when one goes to a high position, everything will look smooth, small and even. When we have a narrow vision, our country, our people, our languages will all appear as full of problems and differences. If you can go to a high place and look at the world, it will appear in one unified aspect and all the people and all languages will appear as one.

The word Bharatha is associated with *Aditya*, the Sun. *Aditya* or sun belongs to the whole world and in the same manner, Bharatha does not apply only to a portion of this world. It applies to the entire world. Each of the countries in the world cannot think that the sun belongs to that country. For instance, there cannot be an Indian sun, African sun, or an American sun. There is only one sun which is giving light and brightness to all the countries in the world.

There is another illustration for this. Suppose we have a mud pot, a silver pot, a copper pot and a bronze pot. When water is poured in these four pots, the reflection of the sun will be seen in each of these four pots. We have to realise that it is the same sun that is reflected in all the four pots. The only difference is in the value of the vessel but not in the sun. These pots may

be compared to different countries. The people who live in each one of these countries may be compared to the water in each one of the pots and the reflection of the *Aditya* or the sun is to be compared to the concept which people of each country form of the one and the same divinity.

On account of their good fortune, the people of this country are able to understand the full significance of this word Bharath and hence gave this name for our country. People living in other countries did not understand the full significance of this *Vedic* word and so they did not adopt this name. We have already stated that *Pavaka* is a name synonymous with Bharatha. This name *Pavaka* signifies the aspect of cleansing the individual and therefore *Pavaka* and Brahman are words placed very high in our country. People who have the proper *Samskara* or tradition alone can appreciate the full meaning of the *Vedic* words Bharatha and *Pavaka*. It is in this context that the *Sruthi* has been teaching us that *Paramatma* is made out of the aspects which are above the five sense perceptions.

We should make an attempt to understand what is meant by the phrase above sense perception. There is a small example for this. In the five elemental substances,

matter or earth is the first one. Earth is bound by five qualities—sound, touch, form, taste and smell. The next stage of elemental substances is water. In water, we find that one of the qualities, namely smell, is not found. Thus water becomes a little lighter and more mobile than earth because one of the binding qualities is missing. Water can therefore move from place to place on its own. In the third elemental substance *agni*, we have the qualities of sound, touch and form, but there is neither taste nor smell for fire and so fire is much lighter and can move freely upwards. The next element is air. We find that it is characterised only by sound and touch. The other three qualities of form, taste and smell are not to be found in air. Air becomes very light and it moves freely from place to place in all directions. We come to the fourth element, namely space. Of all the five qualities of perception only the quality of sound is left. It has neither taste, nor smell, nor touch, nor form. Therefore, space has become still lighter, in fact the lightest, and is present everywhere.

So by referring to *Paramatma* as being above the sense perceptions, we mean that He is free from all attributes or *gunas*. It is in this context that our *Sruthis* have taught us that *Paramatma* is beyond all the five elements and is so light that omnipresence becomes His attribute. This is described by saying that He is present

in the smallest of small particles as *Anu* and in the largest of large things as *mahath*. He is both infinitesimally small and infinitely large. What we have to learn here is that as we shed our desires and illusion, we will be able to lead a life with broader views.

The process of gradually giving up desires is referred to as *vairagya* in the language of the *Vedanta*. Less luggage and more comfort makes travel a pleasure. When our ancestors referred to *vairagya*, they meant that you must give up the luggage of your desires and wishes and thus make life less burdensome. By *vairagya* is not meant giving up your family and children and going away to a forest. This is not the meaning of *vairagya*. It is the practice of our countrymen to stand before an idol and pray to it. We may ask how one can reach the infinite by worshipping a transient thing like a picture or an idol? We must realise that one may worship a picture as a God but not God as a picture. That is, you can raise a picture to the level of God by your worship but not bring down God to the level of a picture. Knowing such inner meanings, you should raise your ideas to a higher level. I am hoping that the youth will realise the true import of these statements and take it as their duty to re-establish *dharma* and take this country to greater heights.