

31. Brahman Is Ananda: Anando Brahman

This motherland of ours has given birth to a number of great people who have spread her name and fame all over the continents and the world. We have established our independence after driving away the outside rulers and earned a great reputation for her learning and scholarship. This country of ours has also been known for its fine arts, scriptures, culture and traditions. Since you have been born in this great country, the responsibility for maintaining her glorious traditions is on your shoulders, boys and girls.

I will give you the quintessence of all Vedanta in one sentence. 'The Atma that is present in all living beings is one—and the only one—and that is no other than you.'

That was the early morning time. The environment was such that the mind was put at ease, because of the cool breeze. The rising sun gave the entire sky a golden colour. In this very peaceful atmosphere, a thought was generated in the mind of Bhrigu. In this sacred atmosphere, the mind of Bhrigu was indeed constantly generating sacred thoughts. Who is *Brahma*? Who discovered this aspect of *Brahma*? What constitutes *Brahma*? Who is responsible for all this creation? In this manner, from moment to moment, Bhrigu was troubled with ideas and filled with the desire to learn the answers to such questions. Bhrigu made the firm determination to get at the answers. Unable to contain himself any longer, he went to his father to seek an answer. His father Varuna was an all-knowing person. He prayed to his father to give him the

knowledge that he was seeking. Varuna did not have any objection to give answers to such questions, but in those days, the environment was such that the answers to such questions were to be sought by the students themselves. If a *guru* clears the doubts of the disciple as soon as they arise, then the disciple will lose all capacity to seek and search for answers. Every individual must be given some independence to seek answers to such questions and satisfy his curiosity. In this manner, Varuna wanted to give such an opportunity to Bhrigu. He gave him only a brief outline and said, “*Brahma* is one in whom all creation started and in whom all creation will merge. He is also the one who sustains all Creation.” Having received these indications, Bhrigu went back to the forest and after a great deal of thought came to the conclusion “*Annam Brahma.*” He thought that man is born out of food, man lives on food and food sustains man. Ultimately, man dies because of what he eats, and so he came to the conclusion that ‘food is a form of *Brahma*’ and returned home. He came home and asked his father if what he has learnt was the truth or whether it was merely a reflection of his ignorance. The father said that he had not yet recognised the true significance of *Brahman* and suggested that he go back to the forest to seek further answers. He went back to the forest and contemplated for some time. He began to wonder if man can live by food alone. If there is no life in man, can the body enjoy the food that is kept before him. He therefore concluded that life is more important and concluded that “*Pranam Brahman.*” He made several attempts to reach this conclusion and came again to his father. Again his father said that the answer was not correct and suggested that he should make further enquiry. Here we may wonder if it is right for the father to keep on sending his son back to the forest without giving him the correct answer. A true seeker of truth should be prepared to undergo any amount of trouble to get at the truth. The teachers of those days believed that each person—be he

their son or some one else—should undergo all the trouble necessary to learn the truth. The *gurus* of those days were such that they recognised this aspect. Bhrigu went back to the forest and in many ways was making attempts to learn the truth of *Brahman*. He asked himself if food and life were available, would man be happy and contented. Would it be right to conclude that man is born only for food and sleep. He came to the conclusion that in order to understand life, one's mind is most important. If mind was not present, we can never understand human nature. If there is no mind, one cannot understand the connection that should exist between man and man. Mind, alone, is responsible for bondage and liberation of a human being. He thus came to the conclusion that mind is the form of *Brahman*. He returned to his father and reported to him his conclusion. Again the father said that he should go back to the forest and seek the truth. Bhrigu did so and thought that if man has not got the ability to distinguish right from wrong, his life will become useless even if he has food, wealth and mind. One should be able to distinguish the permanent from the impermanent. Sometimes we also accept this and say, in common parlance, that if a man has no *Buddhi*, he is useless. In this context, Bhrigu came to the conclusion that *Buddhi* is *Brahman*. This was referred to by him as "*Vignanam Brahma*." When he came back to his father and reported this conclusion, the father was still not happy and suggested further enquiry. Bhrigu went back to the forest again. A true *jijnasu* will have such intense desire to seek an answer to his questions. Without such concentration, one cannot achieve true satisfaction. Today, our concentration is on transient and impermanent things. The *Maharishis* and students of the earlier days had immense concentration on their objective. This is the true destination of man. This is the secret of man and should be the final destination of man. After having acquired human birth, he should make an attempt to understand divinity. Bhrigu continued his enquiry

and came to the conclusion that however learned a man may be, unless he has bliss and happiness, his life is useless. The purpose of life is *ananda* and life comes from *ananda*. As a water bubble is born in water, grows in water and merges in water, man has to be born in *ananda* and sustain himself by *ananda* and finally merge in *ananda*. Bhrigu came to the conclusion that this *ananda* was *Brahma*. He was filled with such *ananda* and this began to grow. He did not come back to the father. After a few days, the father himself came to see him. Bhrigu was fully immersed in bliss and, for such a person, there is no father, or mother or relatives. The father recognised this state of bliss and blessed his son.

Fathers and sons of those days were such that they were after truth. Nowadays, if the children ask any questions about the aspect of *Brahma*, the parents will curb such curiosity by saying that they should not waste their time. They are told to think of such things only after getting old. Today, many people who are preaching the aspect of *Brahman* will go nowhere because they are subservient to the worldly desires. There a small story here. Nanak was propagating sacred ideas of God and even the Muslims were attracted by his teachings. It appeared as if the teachings of Nanak were acceptable to all religions. He was one who was clearly indicating the path that one should adopt. After some time, some religious leaders started worrying that all the Muslims may take to Nanak's religion. They carried complaints to King Akbar and created tales about Nanak which would influence the King against Nanak. They wanted Akbar to punish Nanak. Akbar however had a very steady mind and a great respect for all religions. Even though the religious leaders complained about Nanak, he did not believe them. Akbar decided that he should talk to Nanak directly and assess the situation. He sent for Nanak, but Nanak would not come to meet kings who rule over the material world. He

said that he would go only to devotees. He said that he is a free person moving in God's Kingdom and would not come to meet Akbar. Such a reply further excited the religious leaders. They were planning and inquiring further to trouble Nanak. However, Akbar sent word to Nanak, again telling him that the next day there would be prayers in honour of God at the mosque and requested that Nanak attend the prayers. He also sent a palanquin to carry Nanak. However, Nanak thought it very arrogant to go to God's abode in a palanquin and walked to the mosque. Much before others came there, he unobtrusively sat in a corner. The religious leaders began to recite prayers; and as soon as this started, Nanak laughed very loudly. All those assembled there felt very angry. Nanak was laughing so loudly that people were not even able to hear the prayers. After some time, Akbar began to pray and Nanak laughed even more loudly. All others who were assembled there felt angry that he was humiliating even Akbar. After that, Akbar went and asked Nanak softly why he had laughed, when the prayers were being recited. Nanak said, "Although the priest was reciting prayers, his thoughts were in his home where the child was having fever. The priest's mind was directed towards his home. If the mind says one thing and he does something else, he cannot be a religious leader. This is not helpful at all." Akbar went and asked the priest if, in truth, his mind was thinking of his son when he was saying the prayers. The priest confirmed that as the child was suffering from high fever, he was thinking of his son even while reciting the prayers. Akbar then asked Nanak why his laughter continued even when he started to pray. Nanak then said, "Surely you know why I laughed. Before you came here, several horses were sent to you by the king of Panchala, and you have a great liking towards horses. Although you were praying here, your thoughts were on the horses. Is this not true?" After Nanak gave this answer about his laughter, Akbar helped Nanak spread his religion and gave

him all support. In the prayers, that we undertake, we go on striking at the mosquitoes soon after we start the prayer. Because religious leaders like Nanak of earlier days had the power to concentrate, they were called *Mahatmas*. Their thought, word and deed were totally united. Today, it has become difficult for man to even live as man. Because of the advances in science, man is learning to fly like a bird in the sky, swim like a fish under water, but, unfortunately, he has not learnt to live like a man on earth. If we cannot live like a man on earth, what is it that we achieve by living like a bird in the air? That is why we say, "How many are born as human beings? How many become human beings after being born? How many of them, having been born as human beings, have given up the right conduct? If a human being gets to be described as such, just because of his birth, then who is the monkey?" One does not become a human being by birth. One should show that he is a human being by his conduct and behaviour.

The body may be that of a human being; but in him, there is no right conduct at all. We should, therefore, shape ourselves as human beings. There is an example for this. There is a microphone here. If there is no current in this microphone, it is useless. In the same manner, in the body of a human being, only when there is a current in the form of divinity, will it have any distinctive feature. The body is like a negative aspect. The divinity in the body is the positive. It is only when the negative and the positive come together, there will be some good. Today, the negative is in good shape, but the positive is totally missing. In such a body, how can we expect to promote the righteous conduct. It is easy to understand why righteousness has disappeared. If there is a head with bad thoughts, if there are ears which are willing to listen to bad things, if you want to pry into others' activities, how can justice and truth even remain with you. If we want to live like human beings, we

should, if necessary, with the help of elders, take at least one or two good aspects of life and put them into daily practice. Students, in the sacred history of our motherland, there have been many sacred texts like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharatha*. Ninety percent of the students have no idea of these sacred books. If you are children of Bharath and if you do not know the sacredness of Bharath, how can you call yourselves citizens of Bharath? Truly, you should recognise the glory and sacredness of your motherland. If you do not do so, your life is as good as living death. I hope that at least from today, you will recognise this sacred truth and that you will be prepared to serve the society through the Sai organisations. You should recognise that the Sai organisations represent the essence of all religions. There is no use having stayed here for one month if you do not put what you have learnt here into practice.