

## 20. The Message Of The Vedas

*Of what woe is a life lived without chanting the Lord's name ?*

*What happiness is there in reigning over the realm of the Devas ?*

*What is the benefit from possessing all worldly riches?*

*Without Bhakthi can one be free from bondage ?*

Although in the human, there are animal, demonic, human and divine possibilities, ignoring the human potential, pursuing animal tendencies is a great misfortune for man.

There are some who identify themselves with the body. They do not realise that this body is transient and may pass away any moment like a water bubble. Death overtakes the man who identifies himself with his body. The body is made up of the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth). It is bound to perish. The Indweller is permanent, has no birth or death and is, indeed, the Divine itself. By treating the impermanent body as himself, man is wasting his life.

### **Five types of human beings**

There are other misguided persons, the second category, who identify themselves with their minds and waste their lives. They are harried continually by thoughts and fancies. Brooding over the past and speculating about the future, these persons ignore the present and land themselves in confusion.

The third category of persons apotheosise the *Buddhi* (intellect), identify themselves with it, make use of its powers and embark on various plans. By glorifying the discriminating powers of the intellect in this manner, these persons fail to recognise their true (divine) nature. Thereby, man is wasting the divine potentiality of the *Buddhi*. Life is wasted in endless enquiries and experiments. However long one may conduct enquiries and researches, the intellect cannot help one to realise the Divine.

The fourth category of persons rely on the power of the *Antha Karana* (the Inner instrument of thinking). Regarding the phenomenal world as separate from themselves, these persons seek to realise the Divine by taking to the spiritual path.

The man belonging to the fifth category declares: "I am everything. There is nothing in the world apart from me." He believes that the world itself is unreal. He is one who comprehends the *Prajna-principle* relating to the "I." The *Prajna* is constant integrated awareness).

If one seeks to integrate the body, the mind, the intellect and the *Antha Karana* to realise the transcendental goal, he has to go beyond the mind, the *Buddhi* and the *Antha Karana* and transcend the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Only then can he comprehend the "I" principle of *Prajna*. The body, the mind, the intellect and the *Antha Karana* are related to the *Prakruthi* (phenomena of Nature). They are all functional variants of the mind. Divinity cannot be comprehended through the mind. Efforts should be made to bring the mind under control.

### **Four great Mahaavaakyas**

In this context, the Vedas have proclaimed four great *Mahaavaakyas* (aphorisms). One is "*Prajnaanam Brahma.*" What is this *Prajnaanam*? It is *Chaithanyam* (consciousness or awareness). This consciousness pervades everything in creation, man, demon or deity, birds and

beasts. This all-pervading consciousness has been regarded as the Brahman (Absolute Divinity). Brahman refers to that which is pervasive. It transcends the body and the mind and is beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.

Because this all-pervasive Brahman is identical with the Aham---the universal "I" principle--the Vedas gave the second aphorism, "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am the Brahman). This emphasised the oneness of the "I" and Brahman.

Therefore, Brahman (Divinity), *Chaitanyam* (Consciousness) and pervasiveness are not entities with different names and forms. They are identical. But Brahman has different organs and limbs. For instance, there is the human body. It has a single name---body. But within the body, you have hands, eyes, ears, etc. In the same manner, the Brahman principle is associated with the *Prajna* principle, has the attributes of pervasiveness and *Paripuurnathvam* (wholeness), and Consciousness. All these are its limbs. Divinity is the integral form of all these constituents.

Hence, the declaration *Prajnaanam Brahma* means "Brahman is Consciousness." Where is this consciousness? It is everywhere. There is no place without consciousness. On this basis, the Vedas proclaimed that the Divine is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

#### **No difference between *Aham* and *Brahma***

In the second great *Mahaavaakya* "*Aham Brahmaasmi*," there are three words: *Aham*, *Brahma*, *Asmi*. *Aham* signifies *Paripuurnathvam* (wholeness). It is not subject to change on account of time, place or circumstances. *Aham* has another meaning, namely *Saakshi* (Witness). This means that the Divine is a witness to everything--in the past, the present and the future. But he remains unaffected by any of these. *Brahma* refers to the principle that is the basis for *aakaasa* (ether) and other *Pancha Bhutas* (five basic elements). There is no difference between *Aham* and *Brahma*. They are interdependent and inseparable. The *Aham* principle also has the attribute of pervasiveness. *Aham* is present in the five elements also. *Asmi* unifies the *Aham* and *Brahma*. They are not separate but one and the same. This is the meaning of *Aham Brahmaasmi*.

The third pronouncement is "*Thath Thoyam Asi*." *Thath* is that which has remained unchanged before and after creation. It has no name or form. That is why it is called *Thath* (That). The *Shuddha-Sathwa* (the pure goodness principle) is called *Thath*. It is changeless. Hence it is called "Being," that which is ever unchanging and transcends the categories of time and space.

#### **The common bond between Formless and Form**

The second term, *Thwam*, refers to that which has name and form. It has body, mind, intellect and *Antha Karana*. It belongs to the phenomenal world. There is a common bond between the Formless and the Object with Form. In all the objects with forms the *Prajna*, the awareness of "I" principle is present. Consequently, *Thwam* also acquires the attribute of *Thath*.

This is illustrated by an example. A sculptor produced an idol of Krishna out of a block of stone hewn from a rock. While chiselling the stone for sculpting the idol, he threw away the unwanted stones. He was concerned only with making the idol. After the idol was completed, it was installed in a temple. The idol was the object of daily worship in the temple. After the removal of the idol, the other stone chips remained on the hill. These nameless and misshapen chips of stones proclaimed: "We are the same as That (the idol of Krishna). Once we were together in one rock. But because the other stone was given a name and form, we have become different from it. But the Divinity present in all of us is one and the same."

Likewise, it is from the *Shuddha Thathwa--Thath---* that the body, mind, etc. have emanated. By separation from the *Sathwik* element, the body and others have been rendered useless. In what way are they useless? So far as ordinary worldly life is concerned, all these--- body, mind, etc.-- are essential. For performing any *sadhana*, the body is a prerequisite. To think about anything, you require the mind. To enquire into any matter, you have to utilise the *Buddhi* (intellect). So, for leading a worldly life, the body, mind and intellect are primary instruments. However, they are only instruments, but the agency that puts them to work is different. That is *Thath* which, residing in the body, the mind, the intellect and the *Antha Karana*, makes them discharge their respective duties. There is, however, no difference separating them from each other.

### **Principle of oneness implied by "Thath Thwam Asi"**

To take another example. There is the vast fathomless ocean. Innumerable waves arise from the ocean. The waves appear to be different from each other, but are not really different. They are expressions of the same water of the ocean. Only their forms appear to vary. From the waves arise foam. The foam is inseparable from the waves. The foam cannot separate itself from the waves and the waves cannot separate themselves from the sea-water. The ocean is present both in the waves and the foam. The unity of these three is called *Kootastha* by Vedantha. *Kootastha* refers to the *Thath* that is present in all things (that differ in name and form). This principle of oneness is proclaimed by Vedantha in the pronouncement, "*Thath Thwam Asi.*"

The fourth declaration is: "*Ayam Aatma Brahma.*" *Ayam* means that which is self-luminous and self-created. It is *unmanifested--Paroksha*. Its form is self-chosen. Next to it is the term *Aatma*. *The Aatma* is present in all beings in the form of *Chaithanya* (Consciousness). Such Consciousness, which is present in all beings, has been called *Sathyam*. *The* reason for this appellation is that this *Aatma* is *Nithya* (ever-present). Moreover, it is called *Sathyam* because, as pointed out in the *Thaitthireeya Upanishad*, the *Aatma* is the basis for all good thoughts and good actions.

### **The Eight Divine Majestic Powers**

Thus, the truth underlying all the four Vedantic pronouncements is the same. It is the principle of *Aham* ("I") as expressed by *Prajna* (constant integrated awareness). *Aham* ("I") is the Divine *swara* (sound) in all beings. All other sounds have emerged from *Aham*. That is the reason why the term *Shabdhabrahman* came to be used.

Where is this *Shabdhabrahman*? *The* answer comes from the term, *Charaacharamayee* (the one that is present in the moving and the non-moving). How does this *Charaacharamayee* exist? As *Jyothirmayee* (Infinite effulgence). How does the word *Jyothirmayee* issue from the mouth of man? As *Vaangmayee* (in the form of *Vaak* or speech). Even after a man dies, his words survive in the form of electrical waves in the ether. Broadcasts from Delhi can be heard simultaneously in distant places. The sounds are carried by radio waves to all places.

Because of the power of *Vaangmayee*, we can experience the bliss indicated by the attribute, *Nithyaanandamayee* (Ever-blissful). The blissful nature is the characteristic of one who is *Paraathparamayee*. *Para* is usually regarded as referring to a heavenly abode like Vaikunta. But it refers to that which permeates everything and is present as a witness. It is also called, *Maayaamayee*. It is the power which makes one believe the unreal as real and the real as unreal. This illusion-producing power is called *Maaya*. A student, for instance, mistakes a rope for a serpent in the semi-darkness of twilight. Immediately he experiences fear. After bringing a torch,

he finds that it was not a snake but a rope. His fear disappears. Only the rope existed before he brought the torch. There was no snake in the beginning or later. The snake was a creation of his mind on account of ignorance caused by darkness.

Today the darkness of ignorance has to be dispelled. Ignorance is due to *Aviveka* (lack of discriminating power). *Aviveka* is due to *Bhraanthi* (imaginary apprehension). These imaginary fears are caused by attachment and anger. The latter are the result of *Karma*, which is a consequence of *Janma* (birth).

### **Ignorance is the source of fears**

There is, thus, a close relationship between ignorance and birth. Human birth is the result of *Karma* (past actions). Actions result in attachments and aversions, which produce imaginary fears. The ultimate source of these fears is ignorance, which has neither birth nor death. There is no specific cause for ignorance. Forgetting his divine nature, man is caught up in the meshes of *Maaya* (delusion) and the fears caused by it. How to get rid of *Maaya*? The answer is: recognition of *Srimayee*. What is this *Srimayee*? It is the one that shines effulgently always, being wide awake and fully aware. Inauspiciousness is alien to it. It is ever auspicious. That is *Sath*. That is *Prajna*. That is "I" (*nenu*).

Divinity has the above-mentioned eight attributes--forms of wealth. It is necessary to unify them by getting rid of the body-mind consciousness. Then the oneness of the Divine becomes evident.

Today men's efforts are governed by selfish desires, narrow feelings and mundane objectives. As a result the meaning of divinity eludes man.

The supreme *sadhana* that has to be practised by man today is to concentrate all his senses on God. This may not appear easy, but with strength of will it is quite possible. It is easier to give up things than hold on to them. Those who declare that *Samsaara* (family life) is keeping them in bondage are misusing the language. It is they who are binding themselves to families and possessions.

Man should develop faith in God. Only then would he be able to experience lasting happiness.  
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*Change your vision, and the worm will appear accordingly. Let the eye be charged with the Divine, it will see all as God.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*