

5. All Religions Lead To The Same Goal

If one can conquer one's mind, peace will result. If one can find peace, he can look at all other things with an equal mind. Good and bad, respect and disrespect, likes and dislikes are all aspects of one and the same thing and that is Brahman.

Boys and girls!

The words that come out of the *Vedas* refer to and contain in themselves, the names of all forms and for this reason it also has a name *Bibarthi*. This has been explained in *Manusmrithi* by saying that all the *Jivas* have this aspect of *Bibarthi* in them. Thus, identity of this aspect of *Bibarthi* with the Brahman follows. In this sequence, the identity between the *Veda* and the word *Rishi* has been established as the very first

step. While expanding the meaning of the word *Rishi*, we need to take account of the aspect of the *Vedas*.

In this context, we recognise the inner meaning of the word *rishi*. For that individual who can experience the *Vedas* and Brahman directly, the name *Rishi* is appropriate. One who can explain and expound the essential form of the *Veda* can be called a *Rishi*. Our *Puranas* have been telling us that Vasishta is the first *Rishi*. Vasishta had the aspect of Brahman in him, and he was called the *Brahmarishi*. Viswamithra, also, wanted to acquire this name of a *Brahmarishi* and he himself undertook great penance and then acquired the aspect of Brahman. As a result of his penance, Viswamithra could have the vision of Brahman. As soon as he had the vision of Brahman, he was addressed as *Brahmarishi* by Brahma Himself. Viswamithra was not satisfied and he told Brahma that he was not satisfied by his merely being addressed as a *Brahmarishi*. He said that he wanted to directly experience the *Om* and the *vashatkara* which the *Veda* has explained. Viswamithra understood that by getting merely the name of *Brahmarishi* he was not going to get the aspect of *Brahmarishi*. He would truly become a *Brahmarishi* only when he grasped fully the meaning of the sound *Om* and of *Veda*.

Vasishta had a title which meant that Vasishta had understood all that was known to the *Suras*, the sacred people, and Vasishta was known as the head of all these sacred people. It is quite easy to call oneself by the name *Brahmarishi*, but it is very difficult to get the qualities of a *Brahmarishi*. If one wants to acquire the aspect of *Brahmarishi*, one should merge in the Brahman and become identical with Brahman. Because Viswamithra had surrendered everything to Brahma, these aspects were taught to Viswamithra by Brahma Himself.

If one is able to get the grace of Brahma, then everything will be under control. If you are far away from the grace of Brahman, all the evil planets will begin to influence you. Viswamithra was one who had no acquaintance whatsoever with the contents of the *Veda*. He did not understand the aspect of *Om*. In spite of this, Brahman himself taught him these things because of His grace. *Sakthipata* was given to Viswamithra by the Lord and we have to examine the meaning of this word. *Sakthipata* means that the *guru* hands over in one shower all the capacities to the disciple. This, however, is not the correct meaning. When we make this statement, it means that there is a *guru* and there is a disciple to whom the *Sakthi* is being handed down. It is

in contradiction to the statement, “*Sarvam Brahma mayam*” (Brahman is immanent in all). This *sakthipata* is something that is given only when there is a deservedness. It is not given where there is no deservedness. In all individuals this *sakthi* is present in a hidden manner and is in a latent form. What the guru does is simply to remove the veil of ignorance which is hiding the power that is intrinsically present. He does not hand out anything new.

The aspect of Brahman is not something which can be given by one to another. But today, because of the influence of Kali, it looks as if someone pays for this and someone else receives payment and sells it or transfers it to a disciple. This bliss is such that one can only experience it. If we do what we should do and adopt the path that we should adopt, then naturally the strength of Brahman will automatically come to us. Because the ancient scholars of our country have been describing Brahman as something which is unattainable and indescribable, our people always felt discouraged and disappointed. In fact, they have been abandoning attempts to understand this aspect of Brahman. To explain this aspect of Brahman, they have been using inappropriate and confusing words.

If we ask any of the ancient scholars to tell us the meaning of the word Brahman, they simply use various words, the meaning of which they themselves do not know. These are not the right type of interpretations. It is very easy to recognise the aspect of Brahman. It is even more easy to experience Brahman. In the absence of knowledge about the methodology of understanding Brahman, man is unable to recognise what is right in front of him. He is groping in the dark.

There is a small example for this which can go straight into your heart and which you can understand easily. Suppose you have a book in your hand and you go to a friend when you are reading the book. On seeing the friend you ask for a loan of ten rupees. The friend is willing to give you the loan but before that, he wishes to see the book you are holding in your hand. While the friend was looking at this book, he finds a ten rupee note inside the book and asks the person who asked him for a loan why he was asking for a loan when the ten rupee note was already inside the book. Immediately the former says that he had forgotten about the ten rupee note that was placed in the book and that he no longer requires a loan and he goes away. Now we have to ask if this friend has given the ten rupee note from somewhere or whether

he simply pointed out to an already existing ten rupee note which belonged to him. The fact is that the ten rupee note really belonged to him and he had kept it in a book which was pointed out by his friend. He was not aware of the existence of the ten rupee note which is his own property.

In the same manner, nowadays, we are having the book of our heart and forgetting that there is wisdom latent in our heart. We go to some *pundit* and request him to show us the sacred path of wisdom and knowledge. This *guru*, who has been approached, simply says that there is the basic wisdom in the book of his heart and only points this out to him. On realising this aspect, the disciple feels that there is a divine aspect in him and feels that he no longer needs a *guru*. So when we talk of a *guru* and the *sakthipata*, it is not as if we are communicating something which is exterior to us. What we are doing is simply drawing our attention to the existing strength and wisdom in our own heart.

As in this analogy, what Brahma did to Viswamithra was to simply remove the clouds that have been hiding the strength that was present in Viswamithra intrinsically. The *thapas* (austerities) which Viswamithra went through gave him the *darshan* of Brahma, and then

Brahma enabled him to realise the strength which was already present in him. He taught Viswamithra to recognise the presence of Brahman everywhere and told him to sing about the grace of the Lord and about Brahma's presence everywhere and then he disappeared. So the aspect of Brahman is not something which is separate or distinctive but is present everywhere. It is not a material item which has some specific features. It is *parartha* (spirit) and not *padartha* (matter, object). It is something present everywhere.

There are many names for Brahman. This aspect of Brahman can be called as *Vakpathi* or *Vachaspathi* or *Brihaspathi*. These are identical and synonymous names for Brahman. We may get a doubt as to why Brahman should have so many different names. In our own houses, we are worshipping God with a thousand names and each of these names refers to a particular quality of the Lord. We may get a doubt as to whether each one of these thousand names is appropriate to the Lord or not and whether they really signify a true aspect of the Lord. In our daily life we are experiencing the significance of these different names. When there is a householder who is the head of a family, we know that the son comes and addresses him as father, while the daughter-in-law

addresses him as father-in-law, the grandson addresses him as grandfather, and the wife will address him as “My dear husband”. Here we see that because he has established different types of relationships, he is addressed by different names by different people. A Brahmin is called a *pujari* if he is performing *puja* and he is called a cook if he is cooking. He acquires a different name depending on the nature of work that he performs. Similarly, depending on the time, situation and the country, Brahman has been given different names which are appropriate to the situation and work.

Yesterday we have understood the meaning of the names *Vakpathi* and *Vachaspathi*. Today we shall take the names *Brahmanaspathi* and *Brihaspathi*. Indra and Varuna have recognised the *Manthra* as the basis for everything, because Brahma is the master of these *Manthras* he is called *Brahmanaspathi*. Because he is the one who controls these *Manthras* they have accepted him as *Brahmanaspathi*. *Brahmana* is a word which comes from Brahman. Brahma rides over these *Manthras* or the *Manthras* carry Brahman and, therefore, he has also been called *Brahmanaspathi*. If we want to get control over Brahman or gain his grace, then his carriers, namely the *Manthras* over which he rides, must first be brought under control.

Such inner meanings are contained in our *Bharatha* and *Bhagavatha* in many ways. On one occasion Brahma came to Valmiki and told him that the gift of Saraswathi was given to him and that he should write the *Ramayana*. When we say that Brahma came to Valmiki and handed over Saraswathi to him as a gift, we find it difficult to understand the statement because we regard Saraswathi as the wife of Brahma. Because of the word *Pati* we take Brahma as the husband of Saraswathi. That is not correct. *Pati* really means *Kartha* or the head of a situation. When we say that Brahma is the head or controller of all *Manthras*, we should not readily interpret Brahma as the husband of Saraswathi. Brahma is to be regarded as the master of *Manthras*. Brahma is really the controller or the master of the *Manthras*, and to misinterpret by saying that he has a wife and a family is not correct. Brahma, the master, does not have any such relationship and such an interpretation is erroneous.

Here, we should understand the meaning of Saraswathi and what she stands for. Saraswathi has for her vehicle the *Hamsa* (Swan). This word *Hamsa* stands for *Soham* or the taking in and giving out of the breath. Thus, what Brahma has handed over to Valmiki as a gift

is the aspect of *Soham*. You cannot get a word out without taking in a proper breath. Here breath is the carrier *Hamsa*, or the Swan, and who rides over it is Saraswathi. This means that Brahma has given to Valmiki the aspect of *Soham* or the breath which brings out the words, and he asked him to use this in writing the *Ramayana*.

By the title *Brahmanaspathi*, we have to understand that Brahman is the master, and that he is in full control of the *Manthras*. The world is made up of all the material items that we see around us. Matter has arisen out of words. The meaning of the various words arises from the words themselves. We learnt that Brahman is responsible for the sounds that emerge. If, therefore, the meaning of the word *Brihaspathi* is that Brahma is the master of this whole world, we come to the conclusion that *Brihaspathi* is only an alternative name for Brahman. In this way, if we recognise the true meaning and interpret each of the names appropriate to Brahman, we can easily understand the presence of Brahman everywhere and the significance of these names.

Citizens of Bharath always liked to move closer and closer to God and, therefore, they created more and more names which are appropriate to God. For this reason and because each one is close to God, each

individual has given an appropriate name to the Lord. Each individual has given Him a name which pleases him most. They have enjoyed giving different names and forms. Westerners have questioned why we create different names and forms while God is only one. They think that we ought to have had only one name and form. We have been creating various forms of God based on our ideas and our capacity.

There is a small example for this. Ten children go to a cloth shop and choose some material which is to their liking. These children take the cloth to a tailor, and each one gives measurements appropriate to himself and gets a suitably stitched shirt. All the children have used the same cloth for making their shirts, but each one will have to adopt appropriate measurements. This is the right thing to do; but if the tailor stitched all bush shirts to the same size and asked all the children to somehow manage with that shirt, it would not be proper. If each one wears a bush shirt appropriate to his size, that gives satisfaction. If this were not so, they would not be satisfied. If one is given a shirt that is not suitable to him, he would rather go without a shirt than wear a shirt which is not suitable.

Therefore, if any religion tells all individuals to follow only one path and accept one uniform interpretation,

then it is something which is meaningless. To dictate uniformity is not right. There should not be any difficulty in allowing devotees to take into consideration their desire and strength and create a form which pleases them. In the old days, Westerners used to compel people to adopt one uniform religion and this is a situation similar to asking all the people to wear the same bush shirt. This is not the correct method. Whether it is for the citizens of our country or of other countries, this is not an acceptable situation.

The aspect of Brahman is shining in the heart of everyone and depending upon his own picture of the effulgent Brahman, which is present in him, he has the right to adopt that particular aspect. If we do not accept this much choice, how can we understand the aspect of Brahman? When we use the words “freedom of choice,” we use these words only with regard to our understanding of the divine. The reason for this is that God is limitless, and one can have freedom in this regard and yet enjoy the limitless aspect of God.

In order to understand this limitless aspect, it has been said, “*Ananto vai vedaha,*” which means that the *Vedas*, through which we can get an idea of the divine,

are limitless. Sometimes we may ask why there should be so many *Vedas* to describe the one aspect of God. If we want to understand this well, we must realise that religions are all different but all of them lead to the same goal. The cloth may be different but the basic material, namely the thread which makes the cloth of different kinds, is the same. Ornaments are all different, but the gold which goes into making the ornaments is the same. The colour of the cattle may vary from one to another, but the milk that comes from these cattle is the same. The flowers may be of different types, but the worship for which they are used is one and the same.

Human beings have missed the essential point and are unable to understand this as a result of their ignorance, and men have submitted themselves to a great many difficulties because of such ignorance. God is one, but each individual should be able to create a form for himself according to his taste. When salt is in the sea, it is not distinct from the sea. It is a part of the ocean. When we talk of this salty taste, it is a quality present in the ocean. When we say that the water of the ocean is salty, have we to drink and taste the entire ocean to experience this? One drop of water is enough to tell us that the ocean water is salty.

In the same manner, even if you experience a small part of the aspect of Brahman which is in your heart, you can understand the entire divine aspect of the Brahman. So when we talk of Brahman, we need not think that there is one Brahman in each country. There is only one Brahman all over, and He is not different in different persons. There are many tube lights here, and we think that there are different tube lights. Indeed the light coming from each tube light appears to be different, but the current that flows through all the tube lights is the same. All the human bodies in this world are like tube lights, and the aspect of Brahman, in the form of *Sakthipata*, flows in all these human tube lights. However, in some of these tubes the fuse is absent because of ignorance and the light does not glow in such tubes. Simply because there is no light in him, the individual should not say that there is no Brahman in him. In everyone this capacity to shine is present, and it has been said, “*Prajnanam Brahma*” or Brahma is *Prajnana*.

From the four *Vedas*, our ancients have picked up four very special statements and taught their meaning to us. These four are “*Prajnanam Brahma*”, “*Ayam Atma Brahma*”, “*Thath Thwam Asi*”, “*Aham Brahmasmi*”.

These statements imply that Brahma is synonymous to *Prajnana*, and that the *Atma* is Brahma, and that Brahman is yourself. In these we will be able to see that in the dissolved state everything is one and the same. In this state of dissolution all bad and good, things that are attractive and things that are not attractive, appear as one and the same. All things look as if they are one and the same. We will not recognise the difference between names and forms. In this state one can only experience bliss.

There is a small example for this. They bring a large number of oranges in a lorry and dump them in a factory. Out of these oranges, they extract the juice and bottle it under a trade name. When the oranges are brought in, some of them are green, some of them are yellow, some of them are ripe, and some of them are overripe and so on. But once the juice is extracted and put in a bottle, you do not any longer see the different forms of the oranges which were present before. You will not be able to say that this part of the juice comes from this orange and so on. It is indistinguishable.

If all of us have merged ourselves in the aspect of Brahman, it will not be possible for us to recognise the individual form and name. We can only see the common

aspect of Brahman in all the individuals. Only one who is clearly above the concept of name and form can be called *Brahmarishi*. There are cases of people who are in the stage of a *Brahmarishi* but for the sake of the prosperity of the world, they will be doing certain things. They do such things, not because they do not have the aspect of equality in them. Today in the world there are several people who go by the name *Brahmarishis*. There are also several *yogis*, *Rishis*, *Maharishis* and *Yogeswaras*. But these people are not recognising nor possessing the qualities that are essential for deserving these titles. The meaning and the significance of the word *Yoga* was being expounded to you by several people in the past few days. How can individuals who do not get control over their own mind get control over other things? When we are not able to divert our mind from bad desires, how can we call ourselves *Yogis* and *Yogeswaras*? It is such people who are bringing disgrace and misunderstanding on the true meaning of the word *yogi*.

One who sees the dirty water in the drain alongside the road on which he moves should not think that the rain water which comes from the clouds is also dirty. To think so is foolishness. Simply because the water which one has seen is dirty or the experience which one

has had is dirty, it does not follow that all water is dirty. Because many persons only see such unclean and impure water, they do not even make an attempt to see if there is clean water anywhere. They cannot even recognise clean water when they see it. They are wasting their time in this manner. Such persons are bringing disrepute to our own culture and traditions thereby giving scope to others who do not belong to this country to ridicule us.

It should be the aim of the students and the young people who have gathered here to understand our culture well and to know what *Yoga* truly means. They should also put such knowledge into practice. I firmly believe that students are the only people who can set things right in future and can demonstrate the strength of these principles by putting them into practice. Do not undertake to follow anything in a blind manner. Always make an enquiry into the truth and the permanent or impermanent nature of what you are seeing.

In every country of this world good and bad come as a mixture. We should believe only in the good and forget what is bad. If people are not able to control their minds in trivial matters, what is it that they can control in their lives?

Pavitratma Swarupas!

With the hope that you will understand the sacredness of our culture and develop the strength to establish our culture, I am explaining to you these things and not with a view to criticise anyone. In the coming fifteen days, when you make an attempt to understand the meaning and the aspect of Brahman, you will find everything becomes as clear as if you are seeing it in a mirror. When all of you look at this piece of cloth in my hand you will call it a handkerchief but if I do not let you see it in its entirety and show you only one corner and ask you what it is, you will not be able to say what it is. Today what you know about Brahman is a very small aspect and in the next fifteen days you will see it in its entirety. Once you do see this, there will be no room for any further doubt in this matter. Similarly, after you have learnt all about Brahman, you will know it in all its detailed aspects.