

10. All That We Take In Through The Five Senses Constitutes Our Food

If one's feet slip and he falls, one can pick one's self again and set matters right; but if one lets his tongue slip, one has no remedy. Similarly, if one has taken to wrong path, no one can change his path and pull him out of such a situation. We will see today that *Pratishtha*, *Swadhyaya* and *Srihi* stand for one and the same thing. The aspect of Brahman which has been described by the names *Pratishtha*, *Swadhyaya* and *Srihi* will now be described by another name *Swadha*. In one of the Brahmanas, the same thing has been called *Pitru yagnesu Swadha bhoota*. Taking such sacred words of the *Vedas* as the basis, we should try to give the relevant meaning for the word *swadha*. In the *Aitreya Brahmana*, it has also been said, "*Swadha name iti vashatkara*". This means that this aspect of *vashatkara* will also be taught to us by the word *swadha*.

In common parlance, the word *swadha* has the meaning of food. When we give this meaning, it becomes possible for us to recognise the equivalent word food as what we normally eat by our mouth. In this word *swadha*, we must take it to mean not only the food that we normally eat but all other things that we take in. Here, there is a meaning which we may extend so as to include the five senses, that is *śabda* (sound), *sparsa* (touch), *rūpa* (seeing, form), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (smell) and regard all that is absorbed through the sense organs as included in the word *swadha*. All the items that we see around us that can be experienced with the five senses have been included in the meaning of this word *swadha*. For all things which we can experience and enjoy in this world, this word *swadha* has stood as the basis. Therefore, this word is the very basis for the environment around it.

It is in this context that our scriptures have been explaining that for nature or *Prakruthi* a synonym would be *swadha*. This kind of *Prakruthi* does not manifest itself in different aspects but manifests itself in a chosen way and is called *Parameswari*.

This *Sakthi* or energy which goes by the name of *Parameswari* is the basis for *swadha* because *swadha* is

the equivalent of this *Parameswari* or *Sakthi*. In the context of this, we see that *maya* or illusion, *avidya* or lack of knowledge and *karma* or work have been explained as the basis of creation. Here illusion and ignorance are synonymous.

It is not possible for us to undertake work without a basis. For work, desire is the basis. For desire, ignorance is the basis. Here we see that the basis of all work is desire and the basis for desire is ignorance and for all these things, this word *swadha* has been standing as the basis. In other words, when we try and see the inner meaning of this, we come to the conclusion that for whatever we see in the world, *swadha* becomes the basis. For this word *swadha* in all its forms, the *Parameswari Sakthi* is the basis. This *Parameswari sakthi* is no doubt the basis, but this *sakthi* does not by itself independently do anything.

Parameswara (Almighty God) is the one who has *maya* as his instrument. This *maya* is taking the form of ignorance. Ignorance also occasionally takes the form of illusion. The body that is *maya* and the *Parameswara*, who is resident in the body are closely associated with each other. These two aspects, *maya* and *Parameswara*, are inextricably linked to each other. We have seen that

swadha is the basis for *maya*, ignorance and creation; and therefore, *swadha* also becomes a meaning for the word *Parameswari*. For this *Parameswari sakthi*, *Parabrahma* is the *pratishta* or the basis and therefore, this word *swadha* also becomes appropriate for *Parabrahma*. Here the ignorance which is the *Parameswara sakthi* can be experienced and enjoyed. In this context, *Parameswara*, who is the basis for *sakthi*, turns out to be the one who experiences. This relationship between the experience and the experiencer itself has been established by *swadha*.

This word *swadha* has also given a meaning to *Prakruthi* as if it was a woman, and a meaning to *Parabrahma* as if He was a *Purusha*; and *swadha* gives the relationship between these two. If the aspects of *Parameswara* and *Sakthi* do not come together, there cannot be creation in the world. Specifically these two aspects are such that one cannot exist without the other. In this context, there is no objection to regarding the whole of *Prakruthi* as a woman and the aspect of *Parabrahma* as *Purusha*. The fact that ignorance and *Parabrahma* are intermixed with each other is implied by the word *swadha*.

Creation is something which is the result of our imagination. This creation by imagination has desire as

its basis. If this *sankalpa* which is latent in us is not there, it is not possible to have a view of the created world. In order that this *sankalpa* or desire in us may be of the right type, we shall have to perform the necessary *sadhana*.

The seeds that we plant will determine the kind of tree that will sprout and the kind of tree will determine the kind of fruit that we will get. The *sankalpa* is the seed and when *sankalpa* gets into action, the result will be the tree. The fruit that will come on the tree is the final result. The kind of seed that we put in will determine the kind of fruit that we get from it. If an individual desires to have sweet and good fruit, he must take care to see that he selects sweet and good seeds. Therefore, that which is the basis for our *sankalpa*, or desires and the world is the aspect of *swadha*. This *swadha* which is the aspect of Brahman is the basis for all these things.

We should recognise and understand the meaning of the statement *Sarvam Brahmamaya Jagat*. This means that the aspect of Brahman is the basis for all the work we do. Keeping this in mind, we should not be disappointed with the result that we may get. If we understand correctly the meaning of what has been said,

then we will understand the spirit of the *Shiva Sakthi Atma* of the world. We have to recognise the oneness of the experience and the experiencer himself.

The mother of the universe is *maya*, and the father, *Parabrahma*. If there is no *maya*, we will not even attempt to understand the aspect of *Parabrahma*. *Maya* is the form of God, whereas *Parabrahma* is the name of God Himself. This form and name are related to each other in an inseparable manner.

Therefore, this ignorance or *maya*, which is a form of God, can be controlled only by praying to get over it. There is a good example for this in the *Ramayana*. In the forest, Rama, the embodiment of *dharma*, is showing the path and going ahead and behind him was his wife, Sita, following him. Lakshmana is following both of them as the protector. The point here is that Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana are going one behind the other in a single line. At that time, Lakshmana representing the *Jiva*, decided to have the darshan of Rama, the symbol of Brahman. But if he wants to have a glimpse of Rama, he has Sita, representing *Maya*, standing as an obstruction between him and Rama. Thus if *jiva* wants to have a glimpse of *Parabrahma*, *Maya* stands as an obstruction in between them. Under those circumstances, Lakshmana cannot use

harsh words and ask Sita—representing *Maya*—to make way for him. This will only make matters worse. Rama would not like to hear such harsh words. In such a situation, neither using harsh words nor getting angry with Sita would be the right way. The only method, therefore, would be to pray and ask Sita to move aside a little, thus allowing Lakshmana to have Rama's *darshan*. Then Sita will take pity on Lakshmana and will move aside to enable Lakshmana to have a glimpse of the Divinity.

Sita symbolises *Maya* and accompanies Rama like an inseparable shadow. One cannot become angry with Sita because Rama will not like such a situation. God wears this *maya* as “form” and because of this, we must bear with *maya* and welcome it and treat it with reverence. *Swadha* constitutes the basis for *maya sakthi* as well. Either for the creation or for the existence of the world both *Maya* and *Parabrahma* constitute the basis.

If we examine this aspect carefully, we will come to the conclusion that *Parabrahma* alone cannot be responsible for creation that we see around us. Creation is possible only when *Parabrahma* and *Sakthi* or *Maya* come together. This becomes the basis for creation. A potter cannot make pots with dry clay. If he wants to

make pots, he has to use both water as well as clay. We cannot make pots with clay alone or with water alone, but pots can be made only when both water and clay are mixed together.

One cannot run a machine like a railway engine with fire alone, nor can such a machine be run with water alone. It is only by bringing fire and water into intimate contact and generating steam that we can run a machine. *Parabrahma Sakthi* and *Parabrahma* are interdependent and are both needed for creation like the clay and water for a potter or like the fire and water for a railway engine. Thus, we get a basis to regard the entire *Prakruthi* as having the nature of a woman. The one who has taken endearingly to this woman called *Prakruthi* is the *Parabrahma*. Such a *Parabrahma* is also pictured as wearing the ignorance or the *maya sakthi* as His form.

In this context, there is only one *Purusha* and the entire creation consists of women only. You may get a doubt at this point and may feel that when so many *purushas* are sitting here, how is it possible to describe the entire creation as women only with just one *Purusha*? You are all only wearing the apparel of a *Purusha*, but you are all not really *purushas*. The qualities that mark

out the word *Purusha* are not present in you, and therefore you cannot be appropriately called *Purusha*. You can call yourselves *purushas* only when you develop qualities which are above the *gunas* and above all worldly ideas and thoughts. You may get a doubt here and ask how God who is present everywhere and in all the *gunas*, is described as being above *gunas*. *Gunas* are all artificial creations. God exists in all these created *gunas*, but the *gunas* themselves do not exist in God and therefore we can correctly describe Him as being above *gunas*.

In the example that we have considered, we get an understanding of this aspect. We have considered pots as having been made out of soil and water and therefore in all the pots there is soil, but there are no pots in the soil. The pot has been artificially prepared, like the *gunas*, and in the pot there is soil but in the soil there is no pot. In a similar manner, God is present in the artificially created *gunas*, but the *gunas* are not present in God. Therefore, *gunas* are also described as those that bind one. They may be understood as the ropes that bind one. In this context, it may be mentioned that you are all bound and not free. You are all bonded to this artificially created world. God has no such bondage and is a free individual at all times. You can call yourself a *Purusha* only when

you get rid of these bondages and become a free individual. To call yourself a *Purusha* without doing this is not correct. You are having the aspect of *Purusha* in your inner self but you are not giving any attention to the qualities that go to make a *Purusha* or that entitle one to call himself a *Purusha*. When you aspire to become a *Purusha*, you must be prepared to accept and imbibe all the qualities of a *Purusha*.

If a man or woman is hungry, both the woman and the man eat food, irrespective of their gender and thus both men and women react to such situations in an identical manner. It follows that man is as weak as a woman. In this sense, they both have a weakness for hunger. A *Purusha* should have strength. On the contrast, a woman is characterised by weakness. It is for this reason that a woman is described by the word *abala* or one without strength. Today in order to fulfil the normal requirements in the world and in order to do the various tasks on the stage of this world, some of us are calling ourselves men and others go by the name of women. This is purely related to the worldly life but spiritually and in truth, all are characterised by the qualities of a woman.

You can take a very good example for this. During the college day at the Anantapur girls' College,

usually *adhyatmic* playlets are staged. In one such playlet, one of the girls played the role of Sakkubai while another girl played the part of Kasipat; but behind the screen, she knows and calls herself by her real name, say "Sudha". In a similar manner on the stage of this world, some of us call ourselves men while others call themselves women. Such a nomenclature is appropriate only for the purposes of acting on the world stage; but so long as one does not possess the qualities of a *Purusha*, one should not call oneself as a *Purusha*.

In the realm of the Divine, I mentioned yesterday that there are five different aspects, namely—Being, Awareness, *Ananda*, Name and Form. Of these five, name and form are relevant only to the aspect of the body and the world, but in matters relating to the realm of God, name and form have no significance at all. Even if we cannot fully understand the aspects of Brahman, it is possible for us to study the *Vedas*, scriptures and the *Sastras*. Since we are students and since we want to study something, it becomes imperative for us to submit ourselves to some kinds of discipline, to observe some rules and to accept some limitations in our daily lives. Whatever work we undertake, we should recognise our duty and discipline appropriate to the work that we have

undertaken. If we strictly adhere to the rules and discipline of the work allotted to us, then we will not meet with any obstruction and nobody can stop us from fulfilling our task.

There is a small story illustrating this aspect in the *Mahabharatha*. Once Kausika was sitting under a tree and was reciting the *Vedas* and doing penance to understand the aspect of the Brahman. As he was continuously engaged in *thapas* and always uttering the name of Brahman, his mind was full of Brahman and he acquired a special kind of strength.

There is a small example in this context which will clear some doubts regarding the Grace of God. If we take two pieces of wood and rub them against each other vigorously for sometime, we can generate fire. Thus by these two pieces of wood coming together and rubbing against each other, a new feature, namely fire, has been generated. This fire is not apparently visible in either of the two pieces. In a similar manner, if we concentrate on the name and form of the Lord and continuously strive to bring them together, in that process there will be generated a new feature, the fire of Wisdom. Our sacred culture has taught us many processes by which this fire of wisdom can be generated.

In this manner, while Kausika was sitting under the tree and continually reciting the *Vedas*, a bird sitting on top of that tree dropped excreta and it fell on the head of Kausika. This enraged Kausika and he angrily stared at the bird. Because of this anger, the bird was instantly killed by the fire generated from Kausika's eyes as a result of the discipline to which he was submitting himself. At this display of strength, Kausika felt proud and elated that his vision had the power to burn things. So long as he was one of pure and unwavering mind, this wisdom was like a burning fire; but the moment he started feeling proud and allowed a certain amount of ego to enter his mind, the great divine strength began diminishing slowly. The moment this ego entered his mind, a small desire sprouted in him and he wanted to test his newly acquired strength. He went to the front of a village house. The woman of the household was very dutiful and would not swerve from her duty. At that time, her husband was not in good health and she was serving her husband and was thus immersed in her duty. Kausika asked for alms but the woman did not pay any attention to this because of her immediate preoccupation. Finally when she did come out, she found that Kausika was very angry and that his eyes were red with anger. The woman was so devoted to

her husband and so disciplined that she could immediately see through the mind of Kausika. She said, “I am not a poor bird to be killed by your anger. I am a woman who has been discharging her duties, and I have not done anything wrong”. In fact she advised Kausika to get rid of his anger as that was not a quality which a *Rishi* can have. The lady said that whoever protects *dharma* will be protected in turn by *dharma*. Not only did she have confidence in herself but she conveyed the truth and strength of self-confidence to the *Rishi*, also.

Education should bring humility. A person who is educated should be humble. Humility will lead you to deservedness and deservedness will, in turn, get you wealth. Wealth, in turn, will get you righteousness or *dharma* and you will be able to give charity of the right kind. If you want to realise the aspect of *Parabrahma*, you should not feel proud that you are an educated person. You should first show humility if you want to realise yourself and have happiness. If you show ego and feel proud of your qualifications and your degree, you will be bringing disgrace to the qualifications that you have acquired. If one is not humble, he will not be called an educated person. He may think himself to be educated. Our scriptures, which have given the

injunction that a person who has acquired ordinary education should be humble, surely lay down much more rigid rules for those who are well versed in *Vedas*. For all this, the word *swadha* is the basis. Whether it is the *Vedas* or the *Veda Purushas* or even the creator of the *Vedas*, they are all one and the same and merge in this one word *swadha*. Therefore, in our being able to perform, with discipline, the tasks that arise out of certain duties, there is pleasure. Having *dharma* as our objective, recognising our objective and not swerving from the path of *dharma* if we conduct ourselves, then we can get the blessings of the *Vedas* and the grace of God.