

12. Values In Later Texts

Soon after the propagation of Vedantha through the Upanishads and other texts, the Rishis, steeped in *tapas* (austerities) and the spiritual experience they gained therefrom, composed the Smrithis, expatiating upon the codes of conduct for the people, during the various stages of life as well as when they occupied various statuses in society. The Smrithis, however, did not acquire the authority that the Vedantic texts had, for they dealt with rights and responsibilities, duties and obligations.

Such Smrithis can be found in sacred scriptures being adored by followers of other religions. They consider such social codes and individual guidelines given by their Prophets and Seers as valuable and binding. We too revere them and should continue to revere them as regulations set up for the good of society and the progress of man. For, we must admit that they were framed by *Mahapurushas*, outstanding sages and well-wishers of the people.

But in the process of time, the Smrithis suffered change, by omissions and additions and by differences in emphasis. The sages allotted for each era or *Yuga*, a particular Smrithi, as authoritative. For, too many Smrithis, with divergent counsel, caused confusion and doubt. They said, those in the *Kritha Yuga* have to consider one Smrithi as specially laid down for them, that those in the *Thretha Yuga* have to follow the dictates of another, that in the *Dwapara Yuga*, people have to observe the path prescribed in a third and that the *Kali Age* people have to resort to a fourth. When centuries roll over the land one after another, new problems arise, new situations and predicaments confront man; and so the laws and limits of the past have to be altered here and there. Indeed, such adjustments are a part of the Design. The people have to be shown the path to spiritual progress, under the altered circumstances, and so the Smrithi that suits the new era is declared as binding.

Nevertheless *this* has to be borne in mind and carefully noted in memory by the readers. The Atma Dharma enunciated in the Vedantha, is eternal, unchangeable. It can never be watered down or “adjusted to the needs of the times.” Faith in the Atma as the Core, the Reality, the Goal is the lasting teaching. It is true for all time. The truths of Atma Dharma are based on the eternal foundation of the core of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, of Man and Nature which is the projection of the Divine Will. So, they are beyond the reach of change. They are as relevant and as valid today as they were thousands of years ago. Even when a thousand

more years roll by, their relevance and validity cannot be affected in the least. Vedantha will stand firm irrespective of the past becoming the present and the present flowing on into the future.

The moral codes and ideals of good conduct, the sadhanas that man can adopt to control his mind and senses and purify his intelligence have, however, to suit the conditions of the people, the bonds they cultivate among themselves and other groups. With the changing face of social conditions, they too have to undergo adjustments and modifications. They could well be appropriate and beneficial under certain circumstances of time and space, but might be not so, under other circumstances. For example, the food regulations that are prescribed during certain periods are withdrawn and new rules laid down during certain other periods. Climatic conditions dictate the type of food needed. Smrithis recognise the need and allow changes in food habits, in order to maintain health. The same attitude is seen in other matters also. For the same reasons under modern conditions, it is desirable to have changes in the regulations and limits that govern society. Of course, the fundamental principles of Dharma must remain unaffected. They can never be shaken or loosened.

Now, about the Puranas. “*Puranam pranjali kshanam.*” That is to say, the Puranas deal with historical incidents of Creation and Evolution. The incidents are so chosen and narrated that they provide illustrations of basic

philosophic truths. The Puranas were composed to expound the teachings of the Veda and Vedantha to the common man through interesting mythological and legendary tales. The language of the Vedas is very ancient and it contains many archaic elements of grammar and vocabulary. Even great scholars find it difficult to discover the age when the Rks were formulated. But the Puranas were composed in the language that was current and that was easily understood at the time. What we now know as the Sanskrit language is the language of the Puranas. Not only scholars but even ordinary folk could easily follow that language when the Puranas were written.

The Puranas have historical narratives of Divine Personages, great Rulers and Dynasties; and the fortunes of kingdoms and communities. Through them all can be seen shining examples of Dharma and expositions of spiritual principles.

All the texts, scriptures and holy books referred to are grouped under the one comprehensive name, “Hindu Sastras.” It is no wonder that the people who revered and composed during thousands of years such a vast and valuable literature of religion and philosophy were, in course of time, divided and subdivided into sects and subsects, owing preferential loyalty to special creeds and beliefs. Some of these had broad gaps between them. We have no time now to elaborate on the fact that the differences between the sects are based on attitudes born out of the freedom of

thought that was authoritatively allowed by the ancients. Nor is it necessary. What we have to grasp are: the truth accepted by all, and the attitudes approved by all, that is to say, the principles which a person calling himself “Hindu” has to believe.

What is exactly the Cause of Creation? What is the nature of the original Substance which Creation affected and how? These are questions important not only for Bharathiyas but for all men prone to inquiry. There can be no effect without a cause. There can be no structure without a base. Well, it can be asserted that all this visible Cosmos has Brahman as the root cause. But what is Brahman? Brahman is eternal, pure, ever-vigilant, omniscient, indivisible, formless. Brahman is the origin of this Cosmos or *Jagath*. Brahman is shaping, evolving and fostering this *Jagath*.

Now, a few doubts might arise in people’s minds: How is it that there is so much partiality evident in Creation? Some are born healthy and some others, unhealthy. Some lead prosperous, carefree lives, while others toil throughout their lives in dire poverty. Certainly, it can be argued, there are signs enough of the partiality that the Creation or Creator reveals.

It has to be made clear that life thrives on death. Life is based on death. One living thing consumes another, in order that it may live. The strong trample on the weak. This tale of terror continues unceasingly. That is the very nature of this

world. Seeing this, people conclude that, if the world was created by God, He should be Cruelty itself. Such inference appears justified from the ordinary man’s point of view. But the Bharathiya Paramartha Vahini, the Pure Stream of Bharathiya Spiritual Culture declares that this is not true at all! God is not the cause of either misery or joy, of good fortune or bad, it announces. Then, who brings about the evil and the good? The answer is—we ourselves. Rain falls equally on ploughed land and on unploughed. Only the ploughed land derives benefit therefrom. The clouds are not to blame. The fault lies in the ignorant idler who lets his land lie fallow. The Grace of God is ever at hand. It has no “more or less,” no ups or downs. We draw upon it, more or less, or let it go by, or use it for our good.

The question might arise, “For what reason are some born in happiness and some in misery? They have done neither good nor evil, to be treated so unequally.” True they have done nothing in this life, they are only just born. But they had done good or evil, in previous lives. The consequence of what was done in the previous life has to be experienced in this life.

Now, we can arrive at two conclusions on which all sects of Hinduism are agreed. The Buddhists and the Jains also accept these two. Every one of us has a firm belief, that life is eternal. It could not have originated from nothing. That is impossible. If it has come out of inert slime or mud, it would have been inert and inactive. All things put together

will disintegrate. All that is bound by Time will end in time. If life started only yesterday, it cannot last beyond tomorrow. If it has roots, the roots shall go dry and the tree cannot survive forever. Life must have been existent ever since the Cosmos has been in existence. It does not require argument to understand truth. Do we not see that all modern sciences are tending to confirm more and more assuringly and clearly the revelations made in the texts and scriptures of Bharath? This too has to be accepted some day.

As authoritative texts of the basic beliefs of Bharathiya Culture in the spiritual field, the Upanishads, the *Brahma Sutra* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Prasthanas*, or the Three Sources, have to be reckoned. Many in India feel that the Adwaitha Vedantha alone is the correct one. But this attitude is not a correct one. The Upanishads are the very Voice of Easwara. The *Brahma Sutra* is the supreme embodiment of the principles and doctrine propounded by Vyasa. It is the most important of the texts depicting philosophic doctrines. It harmonises the entire body of philosophic beliefs. Though based on earlier texts and dissertations, there is no conflict between the earlier and later. In the aphorisms of the Brahma Sutras, each conclusion attains fulfilment and reconciliation. The *Bhagavad Gita* acts like a Commentary provided by God, for Vedantha.

All sects of Hinduism, who claim to be authentic and orthodox, accept the Three Sources as their basic texts—whether they are Dwaithins, Visishtadwaithins or Adwaithins

(dualists, qualified-non-dualists or non-dualists). Whoever desired to propagate a new interpretation or a new attitude or theory—Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhwacharya, Vallabhacharya or Chaitanya—had to propagate it through commentaries from that standpoint on the Three Sources, the Prasthanas only. Therefore, to assert that Vedantha can be used only with reference to the Upanishads and the doctrines that they teach will be a great mistake.

All conclusions drawn from the Prasthanas are genuine and deserve the name Vedantha. Visishtadwaitha as well as Dwaitha have as much claim to be known as Vedantha as Adwaitha. This unity in diversity, this harmony in difference, this is the core of the current of Bharathiya thought.

There is milk in the body of the cow. The milk has ghee in it. But the cow cannot derive any strength through that ghee. The milk has to be taken out of the animal, it has to be boiled, and a little sour curd poured into it in order to curdle it. Then, when the milk is transformed into curds, it has to be churned and butter separated and rolled. Afterwards, the butter has to be melted and clarified, to get the ghee. The ghee thus prepared can be fed to the cow and then, it would be rendered stronger. So too, just consider—God is omnipresent. Yet, He is not amenable to man, unless man does sadhana.

There is oil in the sesame seed. There is butter in milk. There is water underground. There is fire latent in wood.

Similarly, the Omnipresent God is in the human body and the human mind. When we seek to separate him and identify Him, one has to make efforts and do sadhana. Then, as a consequence of the effort and the sadhana one will realise that God is oneself and there is no difference between the two. This is liberation, wisdom, realisation, according to Adwaitha. Sankara names this process the *Upasana* of Adwaitha.

Now, about the Upasana in Visishtadwaitha. Is the Sadhaka to consider the God whom he yearns to adore, as different and separate from him or as a part of him, associated somehow with him? This is the question. Now for the answer. The Jiva is the soul of the body. God is the soul of the Jiva. Having one's faith fixed thus, adoring God is the means that Ramanuja has propagated. All this Cosmos is part of Him. It is in Him. He is the inner Motivator and He is present in all. That Supreme Person can be known only through unflinching devotion, *Prapatthi*, *Saranagathi*, Total Surrender. "*Thwameva sarvam mama deva deva*. You are my all, Oh my God of Gods. You are my only Master,"—this is the attitude one has to develop and make one's own.

The Upasana (sitting near, steady worship) of Dwaitha—the Jivatma and the Paramatma relationship is as the wife-husband relationship. The Full Free Supreme Vishnu is the husband, the master, the lord, the ruler, the provider. The individual is the ruled, the dependent, the wife. This method of sadhana has been taught by Madhwacharya.

Without devoted attachment to the Lotus Feet of the Lord, that is to say, without Bhakthi, liberation from the cycle of Samsara, why even purity of intellect and emotions is impossible of attainment. For those who have the spring of ecstatic devotion to the Presence of the Lord within them, though they may not have any texts to ponder over, the very contemplation of the beauty, grace, and power of the Lord will give them bliss of superconscious Bhakthi. One cannot discover what prompts the experience. In that ecstatic mood, they discard all sense of shame and personality, and yearn to become the beloved of God, in blissful Union. They will then dance and sing aloud and be merged in genuine joy and ananda. Sadhana in conformity with this faith have been laid down by Madhwacharya. The agony of the lover to attain the beloved is the true sign of *Dwaithopasana* (Worship using external means, Dualistic philosophy). This has been elaborated in a thousand ways by others who came after.

The Upasana laid down in the Gita, is incorporated in the *Mahabharatha*, named as the Fifth Veda. The *Mahabharatha* is a veritable treasure house of gems illumining the problems that confront man in worldly and spiritual matters. The *Mahabharatha* is a magnificent drama that was enacted by Sri Krishna on the stage called Dharmakshetra (Field of Dharma), where He had collected together all the items he needed for the production. *Madhava*, that is to say, Krishna, was Director who collected the participants, the cast, the songs each had to sing, the

words each had to utter and decided on the exits and entrances. He was the actor, the witness, the producer, all roles were He. On one side, immeasurable worldly power, soaked in unrighteousness, on the other side righteousness-filled, limited Atmic power. This is the essential charm of the *Mahabharatha*. This is the *Bhagavad Gita*. The entire essence of the *Mahabharatha* is in it. “*Karishye vachanam thava*”—“I shall do exactly as you order.” “One can find safety and happiness in doing one’s own duties”—“*Swadharme nidhanam sreya*h.” These are the touchstones of worldly Dharma.

Neglecting the path of Bhakthi which can add unto you all prosperity and progress, those who close their eyes and contemplate on “*Aham Brahmasmi*” “I am Brahman,” and suffer from the egoism it confers get only misery as their reward. If husk is pounded, no rice can be secured? Having no faith in Krishna’s words, if one goes as his intellect dictates, it cannot be the road that leads to ultimate Truth, the *Brahma Thathwa*. The *Bhagavad Gita* has itself taught beyond the possibility of doubt, by means of illustrative descriptions and incidents that Krishna is Parabrahmam itself. It is the essence of all Vedanthas. It is the repository of the Amrith, the Nectar; churned out of the entire collection of Sastras. It is the sacred stream of Indian Spiritual Thought, held in one text. Is there anyone who can deny this?

