

13. THE PHILOSOPHY OF POORVA MEEMAMSA

It is hard to obtain the company of the noble.
It is easy to obtain the company of the ignoble,
Pebbles are available in plenty; but it is hard
to obtain the precious diamond.

Embodiments of Divine Love,

The sages of yore made an intense study of metaphysics and shared their wisdom with others. Sage Jaimini devoted his entire life to the study of **Meemamsa** and propagated it in India. Since this system of philosophy originated before the Vedas and flourished much before '**Uttara Meemamsa**' it came to be called '**Poorva Meemamsa.**'

This system propounded that man should advance from '**Karma Jijnasa**' to '**Dharma Jijnasa**' and from **Dharma Jijnasa** to '**Brahma Jijnasa.**' Sage Jaimini made sincere investigations into this subject, experienced it and gifted his doctrine of **Poorva Meemamsa** to the world.

KARMA, DHARMA AND BRAHMA JIJNASA:

The system of **Poorva Meemasa** recommends **Karma Jijnasa** in the initial stages. Man's life from morn to night is marked by Karma. All actions of humans—including inhalation, exhalation, blood circulation etc.—constitute Karma. The universe is suffused with Karma at all times. Sage Jaimini beautifully explained the three concepts of **Karma Jijnasa, Dharma Jijnasa** and **Brahma Jijnasa** through a convincing example of making 'Chutney' (a side dish). Gathering all the ingredients like coconut, tamarind etc. and finally preparing the chutney constitutes Karma

Jijnasa. Tasting the Chutney is Dharma Jijnasa. Realising that some ingredient is disproportionate, like salt, and adding it is Brahma Jijnasa. Whereas making the Chutney and tasting it is Karma and Dharma Jijnasa respectively; finding the deficiency in the preparation and correcting it is Brahma Jijnasa. Similarly the performance of actions and putting the scriptural commands into action immediately, constitutes Karma and Dharma Jijnasa respectively. Tracing the deficiencies and correcting them is Brahma Jijnasa. Living the human life marked by the five elements is Karma Jijnasa. Realising that the life he is leading is devoid of eternal joy (**Sashwatananda**) due to the non-experiencing of Brahmatatwa and making it up is Brahma Jijnasa.

Sage Jaimini propounded the system of Poorva Meemamsa to enable the common man to experience the bliss of Brahma in his daily life. The life of the modern man today is centred on the secular world. Believing that the secular world is everything, he strives hard to enjoy as much secular joy as possible. Though man worships gods numbering three crores, he is not able to dispel the unrest and the agitation deep-seated in his heart. Ignoring the moral and spiritual tenets, he subjects himself to disappointment and disillusionment by leading a worldly life. He identifies himself with the body and considers the body to be everything without caring to enquire about the presence of Divinity within.

Man introduces himself to others as Ramaiyya, Krishnaiyya etc. basing himself on the name given to his body. If the people ask what he is he introduces himself depending upon his profession, like a lawyer, farmer, business man etc. If he is further asked who he is, he replies that he is a Canadian, an Indian, an African etc. Thus man introduces himself in terms of name, profession and nationality, without giving his true identity. Identifying oneself with a name, profession and nationality is wrong, as they are not eternal. People change names, professions and even their

nationality; hence it is a mistake to give ones identity in terms of profession, country etc. Hence, the answer to the question “Who are you?” is “**I am Atma.**” Since Atma is the eternal reality which transcends all times and all entities, it forms the real identity of man. Atma is **Dehi** whereas the body is **Deha**: Atma is charioteer, whereas the body is the chariot: Atma is the owner of the house, whereas the body is the house.

ATMA, THE LIGHT OF THE BODY:

It is sheer foolishness on the part of man to identify himself with a house while he is only a simple resident in it. It is as good as identifying oneself with a car which one is driving. As the body is a harmonious composition of eyes, ears, legs, hands etc. and not a mere eye, ear or hand, similarly the Atma is the harmonious entity embracing the entire universe including manas, buddhi etc. In fact, it is Atma which activates the senses and makes them function. This fact can be substantiated with the example of a car. Though the car has different parts like steering, clutch, brake etc., these parts cannot function by themselves unless there is a driver who operates them. Similarly, for the car of the human body, the Atma is the driver who operates the senses, the organs etc. It is the Atma which makes the eyes see, the ears hear and the hands work. It is the driver who forms the life of the car, because he is the one who operates the different parts of the car and makes it run. The body is **Shivam** (auspicious) as long as Atma dwells in it: it becomes **Shavam** (dead body) once Atma leaves it. Though the eyes, ears and other senses are very much existent in the body, they do not function once the Atma leaves the body. It only proves that Atma is the true master of the body. An earnest enquiry into the human system reveals that the different organs in the body are only instruments, the Atma is the master. The conglomeration of **Mind**, **Buddhi** and **Samskara** (tendency) is Atma. Mind is called manas

because it has the quality of doing manana (remembering and reflecting).

The mind functions by the power of the Self. The intellect, which is endowed with the capacity of discrimination, is also the instrument of the Self. The intellect has the capacity to **discriminate**, to **decide** and to **investigate**. Samskara which consists of tendencies which one develops in one's life, forms the foundation for the next life. The tendencies are like seeds which sprout later. It is said that the last thoughts of a man on his deathbed decide his next life. The last thoughts of man are decided by his dominant thoughts in his life. If we wish to think of the Lord at our deathbed, we must prepare ourselves for the final end by thinking of the Lord. Our own practices in life decide the final thought. This can be substantiated by an example. If you have the habit of rotating the rosary with your fingers, the finger rotates involuntarily, even if you are unaware of it. Similarly, people who have the habit of snuffing, take their fingers automatically to their nose.

It is said “**Shreyohi Jnanam Abhyasat**” (knowledge is obtained by practice). As good practices are firmly implanted in the human system, so also the bad habits. It is by virtue of good practices alone that we will have a good next life.

The life of an Indian is marked by purificatory acts from birth to death. The purificatory acts range from ‘**Namakarana**’ to piercing the ears. Sage Jaimini clearly indicated the important purificatory acts which a man has to perform. We cannot obtain proper rewards without performing proper deeds. For example, we take bath to cleanse the body; but it is not enough if we clean the body alone, without cleaning the mind. If we are not able to clean even the body, how can we clean the mind? There was a lazy ‘renunciate,’ who went to the house of a lady for alms. He

requested the lady to give him food as he was very hungry. Since she was a learned lady, she asked him to take bath in a nearby river and then come for food. But, the lazy renunciate was a fake as well and did not want to trouble himself with a bath. He therefore said to her, “O mother! For renunciates like us, the name of Govinda is itself a bath.” As she was a very intelligent lady she retorted, “Govinda is food as well.” She then asked him to go away chanting the name of Govinda. We have such lazy renunciates all over the country today. These people have desecrated the entire Karma Kanda laid down by our scriptures.

It is imperative on the part of a Sadhaka to cultivate the purity of mind. The sages have recommended the chanting of the Divine name to ensure purity of mind. Some people argue that the world is not the creation of God and that it came naturally into existence. But it is foolish to say so, since there is no effect without a cause. Just as a person is required to make a garland with the help of flowers, needle and thread, so also there should be somebody to fuse matter and energy. Even if we have a container, oil and wick, there should be somebody to light the lamp, because the container, oil and wick etc., cannot light by themselves. It is not possible to make a necklace without a goldsmith despite the availability of gold and gems. Even if a boy has intelligence, he cannot know the alphabets unless there is someone to teach him. Without the guidance of a teacher, it is impossible for a boy to acquire knowledge. But, a true Guru is one who has experienced what he teaches.

THE CONQUEST OF ANGER:

As aspirant should not lose heart if his mind is eclipsed by ignorance, since ignorance is a passing cloud. The sun of Self is covered by a cloud of ignorance. But the cloud comes from the Self. Coming from the Self, it covers the self. The cloud of ignorance will

not stay permanently. It also will pass, leaving the sun to shine with all splendour. Hence it is most essential for a sadhaka to cultivate the sterling quality of patience. The Poorva Meemamsa taught how a sadhaka should cross impediments which come in the way of his progress. It advises people to think of happiness at the time of sorrow, so that sorrow will be driven away. Similarly, when ignorance descends on him the sadhaka should start enquiring. If you suffer from a fit of anger do not act or speak immediately. If you start enquiring the cause of anger, you will find that the speed of anger will be reduced. In times of anger, one should drink a glass of cold water or sit down or look into the mirror. If you are afflicted by conflict or stricken by sorrow, sit quietly in one place or walk speedily. You can even go to the bathroom and turn the tap on, attempt to merge your voice with the sound of the falling water. You will find that your sorrow is gone in the process of your harmonising your voice with the sound of the tap water. There are ever so many stratagems by which your anger can be quelled. But there are no people to tell the subtle points. However, Saint Jaimini came out with many solutions for the problems of man.

The system of Uttara Meemamsa resembled Poorva Meemamsa in certain respects. But otherwise, these two systems stand poles apart. Since north pole and the south pole can never be brought together in the phenomenal world, similarly, these two systems can never be united. If at all they merge, they will merge only in God.

Arjuna made a reference to the two opposite poles when Krishna was sent as an ambassador to the court of the Kauravas. He said, "Oh Krishna! Will the narrow minded Kauravas ever join us? Will the north pole and the south pole ever meet? Be ready for war. Let us not waste time."

The same Arjuna who very much wished to fight the battle found himself in a different predicament on the first day of the

Kurukshetra battle. He lamented thus, “Oh Krishna, how can I kill my friends, relatives and teachers? My eyes are rolling. Let us retreat from the battle. Let us not waste time.” It was the mind of Arjuna which was the cause for his different predicaments. Mind is the cause for one’s sorrow as well as joy: for one’s gain or loss, for praise or for blame. Liberation cannot be obtained unless the mind is conquered. Saint Jaimini said that one cannot attain liberation by simply living in a forest. Saint Jaimini said, “Misfortune will come to you even if you hide yourself in a dense forest. Your body is bound to be destroyed by death even though you take utmost care of it.”

DHARMA TO BRAHMA:

Man’s foremost duty is to foster his Atmic knowledge. He has to struggle hard to protect Dharma. **“Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah”** (the man who protects Dharma will be protected by Dharma in return). Everyone has to perform his Dharma. The householder should perform Gruhastha-dharma; the celibates should perform Brahmacharya-dharma; the renunciate should perform Sanyasa-dharma.

One should not only lead a righteous life, but also lead a Divine life as well. It is not enough if you close your eyes and say ‘Ram,’ ‘Ram’ by beating your sides. All your activities should be suffused with Divinity. Whatever you see, see with a Divine feeling; whatever you hear, hear with a Divine feeling; whatever you do, do with a Divine feeling. Do everything for the pleasure of the Lord. Students, it is not proper on your part to forget all that you have heard during the past few days. Implant in your heart whatever you have heard and seen here and reflect on them. It is only by practising what you have heard that you will derive the real benefit of having attended the summer course. You will also find fulfilment in this life.

