

God as a mother Divine

One of the most important dharma our Vedas teach us is that God is Purusha-Shakti alias our supreme atman [soul divine] our Prakruti embodiment – divine mother.

When human soul transmigrates in its pilgrimage unfolding with time, the jivan-atman learns the lessons of karma undergoes through karma and is under the shelter of Mother Divine.

This Mother phenomenon is the Mother – Maa in a bigger perspective of the sense all that is taking care of us. Maa is Guru [teacher], Maa is Janeta [birth mother], Maa is Divine shakti [supreme Goddess], Maa is sacred Prakruti [existence], Maa is Krupa Grace [health and wealth], Maa is Daaneshvari [sustained giver]; Maa is Savitre [light], Maa is maha-mahakali [the fiery destruction of evil] and Maa is Samdhya [the dawn and the dusk].

The most important relation that a child has is that with the mother; analogously God is the cosmic mother *Savita* who gives birth to the entire universe. Although every relationship is a two-way one, a mother is exceptional in that she gives everything to her child without expecting anything in return. Similarly, God benevolently makes available all that we need for our overall good such as food, water and air. Our vital body systems function due to MAA so that even when we are deep in sleep this continues to be the case. Although our relationship with maa also seems to be a one-way affair (because we cannot visualize what we can give to Her) there are, in fact, some responsibilities incumbent upon us humans in order to be good children.

Every relationship needs to be nurtured at three levels: **knowledge, action** and **togetherness**. The corresponding Sanskrit words are *jnana, karma* and *upasana*.

a) **Jnana** – Just as we must know our loved ones well, we must also know our duties and responsibilities towards God.

b) **Karma** – Our actions ought to fulfil these duties and responsibilities.

c) **Upasana** - We must, exclusively and devotedly, spend time with God. We must be faithful in all three facets of our relationship with God.

Prasthanatrayi – Jnana, Karma and Upasana

As a whole the triad of *jnana*, *karma* and *upasana* is called **prasthanatrayi** (three-fold journey) in Sanskrit; in India the vehicle traditionally utilised for this journey is **Sandhya** (also, called *Sandhya-Vandanam* or *Sandhyo-Pasana*). As explained by Maharsi Dayananda Sarasvati (1824-'83), the books of the Vedas correspond neatly to these three dimensions of *jnana*, *karma* and *upasana*.

1. a) Rigveda mainly details *vi-jnana* (the spiritual sciences, shedding light on the nature of both God and the soul) b) Atharvaveda covers *jnana* (wordly knowledge such as the material sciences; family, community and political affairs)
2. Yajurveda deals with *karma*
3. Samaveda covers *upasana*

Jnana: We must know and understand the true nature of self and God. I, the individual, am a tiny spirit within the body structure for which the Sanskrit word is **atma**. Likewise, the entire universe is inhabited by an infinite cosmic spirit, called God – for whom there are many Sanskrit names e.g. *Atma*, *Paramatma*, *Isvara*, *Paramesvara*, *Brahma*, etc. But, Vachas-naama mantra of this eternal God is *Om*, the most natural sound that exists in the universe. Furthermore, we must understand the relationship between our soul and God. The Vedas teach us that a proper understanding of anything cannot be complete without an increased awareness, appreciation and affinity towards the creator. An enlightened person always seeks to know the artist from the art. Similarly, differentiating the creator from the creation enables us to learn the differences between matter and the spirit. Both material sciences and spiritual sciences must be studied together – *avidya* and *vidya* (or *apara vidya* and *para vidya*). Knowledge cannot only be derived from books and teachers but must also be acquired by personal **experience**, such as self-realization and God-realization – *atma-saksatkar* and *isvara-saksatkara*. The importance of gaining **experiential knowledge** is illustrated by the meaning of the Sanskrit word for philosophy **darsana** – seeing is believing!

Karma: Knowledge must be used to guide karma. The objective of improving the quality of our knowledge is to **apply** it to improving the quality of our actions and behaviour. An average human being performs karma to obtain its fruits – the end results. Crucially however, the best human beings perform excellent karma as a matter of nature or habit without consciously having any vested interest in making any type of personal gain. **niskama** is one word used to describe such karma – disinterested action. The word **yajna** is more commonly used in the Vedas to describe this concept of acting in a giving way without having the remotest motive of desiring any gain in return.

Upasana: Thus, it is inevitable that such a person will succeed in the third dimension of life, namely, *upasana* – to be with God. How to best attain this is explained par excellence by Patanjali, the author of *Yoga-Sutra*; it is the ultimate objective of human life.

Although we must make step-by-step progress in all three of these directions on a day-to-day basis, the relative balance varies at different stages of human life. So, student life is dominated by **knowledge**, the married householder's life is dominated by **karma** and retirement should be dominated by **upasana**. Nevertheless, it must be re-emphasised that the Vedas teach us that we must perform the other two components daily *in addition* to the dominant one.

The Vedas Say:

Ya im cakara na so asya veda ya im dadarsa hiruginnu tasmad

Sa maturyona parivito antarbahupraja nirrtima vivesa. Rgveda 1.164.32

Its meaning: One who is action-oriented, but who does not care to know his true self, is destined to go through the wombs of many mothers by the One who sees every event and delivers justice.

Purport: Those who are engaged in karma alone and do not balance their life with true knowledge and communion with God (*jnana* and *upasana*) must take birth again and again.

Where Do We Go Wrong?

Not only is modern-day education heavily biased towards material sciences but its objective nowadays is also to maximize one's personal income. Few people these days seem to embrace and have a true love of divine knowledge. Thus, in the modern world, with fierce competition, knowledge is a means and not an end. This is contrary to the Vedic objective – *jnanan-mukti* (described classically in the *Samkhya-Darsana* by Kapila) – that true knowledge is experientially learning to contemplate both God and the soul in order to eventually gain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Most people these days focus on devoting their life towards karma, in particular the acquisition of material wealth, to the exclusion of gaining true spiritual knowledge and *upasana* through the prescribed method of *Astanga* Yoga.

Conclusion

People must devote some time everyday to study the Vedas and perform Vedic *Sandhya* as a meditative experience; neglecting to do so will perpetuate the sense of a lack of fulfilment and eventually the body gives into the physical wear and tear resulting into difficulties.

Jyotikar Pattni

© Copyrights

December 2009