

Knowledge of Īśvara
By Swami Shankarananda

Continuation from previous month...

In this country there were many tribes each one had some *devatā* and all of them we accepted. As you just drive through Tamilnadu or Orissa or any place you go there are varieties of forms you can see standing there on the roadside. These roadside Gods, they all seem to receive daily worship because you see on their faces *kumkumam* and *chandanam*; whether you wear them or not they seem to get them alright, and therefore, I know they are worshipped. And how do they look? All kinds of odd looks they have got. Any form and any expression of worship is acceptable totally. It is acceptable to us. It is totally accepted and validated and then it becomes one of our forms of worship. There is no tribal God; there is only God. There is a tribal form of worshipping Īśvara. There is no tribal God. Therefore, we didn't try to modernise our tribal tradition because they are as valid as any other form. If someone calls him Jesus also I can accept him, if someone calls him Allah also I can accept him because I don't dismiss them as childish and tribal. And therefore, we can accept all of them. All forms of worship we can accept. We have no problem. They have problem. We don't have any problem. If they have problem they have to deal with them any way but we have no problem. Because my vision of God is such that every form is the Lord's form. And all the directions are *devatās*. All the elements are *devatās*. *Sūrya*, *Chandra* are *devatās*. All the *nakṣatrāṇi*, *aśvinī*, *bharaṇī* etc. are *devatās*. Even *nakṣatras* are Īśvara. What is not Īśvara?

Everything is Īśvara. *Ṣṛṣṭi-kartā* is Īśvaraḥ - Brahma, *sthiti-kartā* is Īśvaraḥ - Viṣṇu, *saṁhāra-kartā* is Īśvaraḥ - Rudraḥ.

Some people ask me Brahmaji of course some people worship, fine. Viṣṇu we can accept. Viṣṇu is worshipped; it is alright, because he keeps things going. But then why Rudra should be worshipped?

If Rudra is not worshipped the born baby will be born baby only. In fact, the baby will not be born at all because it has to grow inside. It has to grow inside. And therefore, I tell you, every growth also implies something dies away. All the old cells

die and new cells are born. For growth time is important. Time is something that is born, is and gone. Look at this. This moment is born. Due to whom? Born is Brahma. Time is expression. Through the time I look at the Lord, he is Brahma. Born is Brahma. Is is Viṣṇu. Gone is Rudra. Unless gone there cannot be new time born. Unless born it cannot be Is. Unless it Is is even for some time it cannot be going. Therefore, Born, Is, Gone, Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra. Born, Is, Gone, Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra. Born, Is, Gone. Even as I say Born, Is, Gone, even to say (the word) Born takes some time. In that interval of time itself, there is so many Born, Is, Gone instances! And therefore, if you really look into it, which is first? Born is first, Is is first or Gone is first? we have a problem. We can say Gone Is Born, Born Is Gone, Is Born Gone. All the three are OK. That is why we say Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra are all one and the same.

There is another problem that we encounter. Someone asks:

Are you a Viṣṇu *bhakta*?

Yeah.

I am a Śiva *bhakta*.

OK. There is no problem. You be a Śiva *bhakta*, there is no problem.

I am a Viṣṇu *bhakta*, you are a Śiva *bhakta*.

There is no problem. In fact we want some Viṣṇu *bhaktas*; then only we can have nice *prasādam*.

We want both *bhaktas*. Now and then you better be a Viṣṇu *bhakta* for four five days and Śiva *bhakta* for one or two days so that you can maintain your health!

You know whenever there is a problem the trouble-shooter is Nārada. Whether Nārada did shoot a trouble or not, whenever we find a problem and it is solved we think of Nārada. Any *sthala-purāṇa* starts with Nārada *uvāca*. Nārada is a figure; it is a name, which just parades everything. Whether he existed or not, Nārada is a trouble shooter. We think Nārada is a trouble-maker. No, he is a trouble-shooter. But in the beginning, it will look as though he is trouble-maker. But then he will troubleshoot later. If there is a simmering problem, he will surface it first and afterwards he will solve it. That is Nārada. The typical very colourful, beautiful character

with a *tamboora* in his hand goes up and down without a visa or passport. And he is Nārada. Just imagine. I love this Nārada.

Now Nārada had a problem. The problem was, there is a temple in south of India. Here in Tamilnadu, down below there is an Island, that is Rāmeśvaram. You all know Rāmeśvaram. There *bhagavān* is called *Rāmeśvara*. The name Īśvara is generally given only to Śiva. Śiva alone is called Īśvara. I don't know why. Īśvara is generally only Śiva's name. Rāma of course is *Bhagavān's avatāra*. *Avatāra* I am going to talk about later. Don't worry about that. Rāma is an *avatāra*. Rāma is Viṣṇu *avatāra*. Therefore, Rāma is Viṣṇu for us. If Rāma is Viṣṇu and here both Hari and Hara both of them are together. First word is Rāma and the second word is what, Īśvara. Therefore, Rāma and Īśvara in a Sanskrit compound is Rāmeśvara. It is a Sanskrit compound. A compound means there should be more than one word. Then only there can be a compound. There is more than one word here, Rāma and Īśvaraḥ; there are two words. Therefore, here what is the compound? Rāmeśvaraḥ. In Sanskrit there are many compounds. The beauty of Sanskrit language is you can create a new compound any time. That is why an exhaustive Sanskrit dictionary is impossible. Some words will be there, basic words. If you look into a Sanskrit dictionary for the words you see in the books etc. you will not find many one of them. Many compound words will not be there because anyone can make a new compound.

Therefore, Rāmeśvaraḥ being a compound he wanted to know how these two people are brought together here. That is the trouble. So he surfaces the trouble now. He surfaces the trouble not among the devotees where it is a problem. Nārada goes to the real authority. He goes straight to Lord Viṣṇu and asks him, “Bhagavān, in Rāmeśvaram there is a Lord and it is the Lord Śiva but his name is Rāmeśvara. How come he is called Rāmeśvara? How your name got attached to this Īśvara”, he asked. Then Rāma said, “Nārada, don't you know this very simple compound in Sanskrit. Simplest compound is called *Ṣaṣṭhi Tatpuruṣam* is a genitive case compound, the sixth case compound, and therefore, Hey Nārada this is a simple *ṣaṣṭhi* compound. *Rāmasya Īśvaraḥ*, Rāma's God. Rāma went and worshipped that Śiva, therefore, he is called Rāmeśvara. *idhula enna periya vishayam appa. Idhu easy samajaram Nārada. Yenna vandhu katkaraye ne.* (Says in Tamil. What is a big thing in this? This is an easy thing Nārada. You are coming and asking me.)

Then he went to Śiva. *Nāradaṇ āche, viduvana?* (Says in Tamil - He being Nārada would he let it go?) So Nārada goes to Śiva and he asked him, “Bhagavān I went to Lord Viṣṇu, to get a compound resolved. There is one Rāmeśvara, that is of course your name only. Therefore, I asked him what is the compound meaning. He said Rāmasya Īśvaraḥ. It seems you are the Lord of Rāma. You are Lord of Viṣṇu. Rāma means Viṣṇu *illaya?* Therefore, are you Lord of Viṣṇu. Is that true?”. Śiva says, “Viṣṇu *cholradha eppodhum ketkadhe. Nān choldren kelu. Avan edhavadhu vambu panninduthan irruppan*”. (He says in Tamil. Never listen to what Viṣṇu says. Listen to what I say. He will always be creating some mischief.) He is a mischievous person. So don’t listen to this guy. I tell you what it is. *Rāmo Īśvaro yasya. Rāman yarukku Īśvarano.* (says in Tamil - to whom Rāma is Īśvara) It is a *bahuvrīhi appa idhu*. It is another compound *Ramo isvaro yasya*. This is one of the most beautiful compounds in Sanskrit, this *bahuvrīhi*.

Eka-karṇaḥ is a common example. The guru said *eka-karṇam ānaya*. The guru told this fellow, *śiṣya, ekakarṇam ānaya. Ivan enna panninan. Velila poi oru katha arunthundu vandhuttan.* (says in Tamil - What this fellow did, He went out, cut one ear and brought it). *Ekam* means one. *Karṇam* means ear. So he cut an ear and brought it. He is a great *śiṣya*, a great *bhakta*. *Chonna varthaya thattama chaiyaravan.* (says in Tamil – This is the fellow who does exactly as he was told). He did as he was told. Therefore, this *śiṣya* brought one ear. Guru asked, My god, what have you brought? *Eka-karṇam* is a *bahuvrīhi* compound. *Ekam karṇam yasya. Yarukku oru karnam irrukiratho avanukku peyar ekakarnam* ((says in Tamil – the one who has one ear is called *eka-karṇa*) , the one who has one *karṇam* (ear) is called *eka-karṇam*. Even in Tamil you have got an equivalent compound - *otthakāḍhan* (the one with one ear) is different from *ottha kāḍhu* (one ear). *Oru kāḍhu evanukko avan otthakāḍhan* (says in Tamil – the one who has one ear is called *ottakāḍhan*) . *Eka-karṇaḥ* is not one ear; it means the one who has one ear. It is a *bahuvrīhi* compound. Therefore, *Ramo Isvaro yasya, rāman yarukku Īśvaranaha irrukirano* (Says in Tamil - the one to whom Rāma is the Īśvara) that means what? *Śivanukku* (for Śiva) Rāman Īśvaran, Viṣṇu Īśvaran. *Enakku avanthan Īśvaran.* (says in Tamil – Rama is the lord, means Viṣṇu is the lord, for me too he is the lord). Rāmeśvaraḥ. *Rāmo Īśvaro yasya*.

To be continued...