



purna vidyā
AN AWAKENING

Philosophical Meaning of OM



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Philosophical Meaning of OM



- by Ammaji (Published in Oct 2020 Newsletter)

The “order” in the creation which is the basis for the existence of things and beings in the Universe is non-separate from the Lord and Om, being the name of the Lord, this order is, therefore, Om. Om pervades everything in the world. How?

When we mention the order behind everything, it is not in terms of location. It is the very thing sa such. For instance, when one analyses what makes a given cup, many questions arise. What is the material of the cup? Why can not mercury make a cup? Why does a cup appear in a given form? Why does it not have any other form? Why does it not rust, if it is a stainless-steel cup? Why does the other cup, made of pig iron rust? It is all an order. A steel cup is a steep cup whenever one perceives it. If it loses its form tomorrow, that also is within the order. The flower that is seen today is gone tomorrow and there is a fruit- this is also within the order.

All the possibilities in the creation form part of the order. It is the order that makes a thing what it is. That a chair is a chair, is because of the order. Anything that is here is perceived by this order. One is not going to get behind the objects to find the order. Order means how things are as they are. Every created thing, is maintained by the order, call Niyati. That Niyati is Isvara, the Lord and Om being the name of the Lord, is the order behind the creation.

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The scriptural teaching helps one to see this meaning of Om and connect it to the word “Om”. A word and an object denoted by the word, are one and the same. When one asks another to bring a pot, the other does not write “p.o.t” and bring it. A word and the object meant by the word, are identical, in the sense that one cannot think of the word without thinking of the meaning. If one does not know the meaning then it is not a word – it only becomes a group of sounds. Once it is known that for this group of sounds this is the meaning, then without thinking of the meaning, one cannot think of the word. Thus, Om is a name of the Lord and being identical with the Lord, what it means is the truth of the Lord.

Omkara as a Prayer

Om, as a sound symbol, indicates auspiciousness and is chanted at the beginning of prayers and Vedic studies. When one chants Om with the understanding that it is a name for the Lord, one can call Him, invoke Him or pray Him through Om. Hence many of the prayers, chants or mantras begin with “Om” and Om thus becomes a prayer for one’s protection.