

Sloka 2 (Chapter 4)

EVAM PARAMPARA PRAPTAM IMAM RAJASRAYO VIDUHU SA KALENEHA MAHATA YOGO NASHTAHA PARANTAPA.

This knowledge was handed down in regular succession from generation to generation. The royal sages knew this yoga. But by long lapse of time it has been lost here, O “scorcher of enemies.”

Let us dwell briefly on the word “Rajarshi” mentioned in this Sloka.

“Raja” is “a king.”

“Rishi” is a “Seer.”

The rishis are said to be those who represent the Vedic Aryan current of thought. They are considered as the ideal or the model for others to follow the path to spiritual development. He who has conquered the mind and senses, practices the art of “Nishkama karma and Karma Phala tyaga” and has attained a vision of the “Supreme” is fit to be called “Rishi.”

The post-Vedic mythology classifies the rishis into the following sub-sections:

Maharshi:

These are “Saptarshis” who are the primary ancestors because they are said to be the “primal makers of creation”. They followed the command by their creator “Brahma” and created the various forms of life on this earth.

Rajarshi:

The royal sages are “Rajarshis.”

Brahmarshi:

Priestly seers are “Brahmarshis”.

Devarshi:

The seers who possessed virtues that merited the title of “Divine virtues” are “Devarshis.”

The example being sages Narada and Atri.

The knowledge given by the Lord is to be known as “Brahma Vidya” as it leads to the union with the Brahman. The kings and emperors who learnt, practiced and propagated the Brahma Vidya are given the title “Rajarshi.” Such kings possessed both the knowledge of the Vedas and the knowledge to rule the kingdom. King Janaka, father of Sita is the prime example of a Rajarshi. It is said that many great sages went to his palace to learn the scriptures. Possession of royalty and wisdom made them great monarchs whose fame remained eternally. The practical application of Vedanta to actual life was the contribution by the Rajarshis to mankind.

Let us be clear of the fact that this knowledge is not just the domain of these elite Rajarshis but really for any individual, who has the deep rooted desire to learn “Brahma Vidya”, be it a politician, professional, businessman or a labourer. The spiritual knowledge should not be a barrier to worldly life.

In olden days, the royal lineage continued from generation to generation and those who practiced Brahma Vidya passed it on to their subsequent generations. As we have seen in history we do get periods of time when there is a break in the continuity of ancestral teaching and practices. Instead of being true karma yogis, some rajas live as karma bhogis. They live to enjoy the life. Such selfish and arrogant people fail to follow the good way of living and the

practice of spirituality comes to a halt. One can say it is also natural and is like day followed by night.

The same rule applies concerning the revival of good and dharmic way of living. The night has also to be followed by day. Great people and sometimes the Lord Himself incarnate and bring to life the forgotten spirituality and propagation of dharma. The knowledge can never be lost and the expression by Sri Krishna that it has been lost here is only figurative. In the last Sloka, we have been told clearly that the knowledge is “Avyayam.”

The Lord is Eternal and the Dharma He gave to mankind is also “Eternal.”