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अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्व-
न्महानहं विश्वमहं विचित्रम् ।
पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो
हिरण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि ॥ २० ॥

*aṇoraṇīyānahameva tadvanmahānaham
viśvamahaṁ vicitram
purātano'ham puruṣo'hamīśo
hiraṇmayo'ham śivarūpamasmi*

अणोः - than the subtle अणीयान् - subtler अहम् एव - I alone तद्वत् - similarly महान् - (greater than the) great अहम् - I am विश्वम् अहम् - I am the universe विचित्रम् - the manifold पुरातनः - ancient अहम् - I am पुरुषः अहम् - the whole I am ईशः - the ruler हिरण्मयः अहम् - effulgent I am शिवरूपम् अस्मि - I am of the nature of auspiciousness

I am subtler than the subtle, and similarly greater than the greatest. I am the manifold universe. I am ancient, the whole, the ruler, the effulgent, and of the nature of auspiciousness. (20)

Aṇu means an atom. Here it stands for the subtle, very small, and very subtle. *Aṇoḥ aṇīyān*, subtler than the subtle I am. *Tadvat mahān aham*, in a similar manner, I am big. I am simultaneously smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. How can a given thing be simultaneously small as well as large? This can be only when the qualities of smallness and largeness are superimposed. Therefore, I am the one that shines as smaller than the smallest and larger than the largest. Whatever is small, whatever is large, and whatever is in between, all of it exists because I am. I impart existence and intelligence to everything; I am everywhere. I am *aṇu*, smaller than an atom. I have not become an atom; I have not become big or small. Whatever is, big or small, it is and it shines because of me. To put it another way, the self shines or appears both as the small and the big, as well as everything inbetween, without having become any of that.

Viśvam idaṁ vicitram, this manifold, variegated universe I am. I shine as this variegated universe of names and forms. In the same way as the rope shines as the snake, I shine as the manifold universe. The universe is recent and constantly changing. Are you also changing? No. *Purāṇaḥ aham*. I am the most ancient one. I am not subject to birth and growth. I am ancient, ever the same, eternal, and changeless. I am all pervasive. I am *puruṣa*, which means *pūrṇa*, complete. *Puruṣa* also means consciousness. The one who dwells in the 'city' of the body is called *puruṣa*, and the one in whom the whole universe dwells is also *puruṣa*. I am the self of all. I am the one that fills up everything. That all pervasive consciousness I am.

Aham īśaḥ, I am the ruler. In my presence alone is everything ruled. The word ruler is used for *īśvara*, but it is not meant in the literal sense, because some kind of exertion or strain is always involved in such an action. Nobody wants to be ruled; everybody wants freedom. Even a child does not want to be ruled. We might ask the child to hold our finger and walk, but it wants to walk independently. Even a little dog does not want to be ruled. When you take the dog for a walk, in the beginning, you walk the dog, then the dog walks you! So if *īśvara* wanted to rule this universe, he would really be in trouble, because that would involve a lot of stress on his part, and some day all that stress would cause him to come to an end. However, as we have already seen, this is not the case, because it is in the mere presence of *īśa* that the ruling takes place; there is no real ruling involved.

Things can be caused to happen by one's mere presence only when the presence is of the nature of love; then alone is everything happy. We see that everything in the universe is happy doing what it is required to do. We do not see any kind of pressure. The sun rises every morning at an appointed time; it never revolts for a break in that routine. The sun, the moon, and the stars function exactly according to the laws, as appointed. There is no transgression of the law. That is because they do not see any need to transgress it. They are happy being what they are. If you are happy doing what you are required to do, then no ruling is required. The self-motivation is sufficient, isn't it? Only if one is not quite happy doing what one

has to do that there is a need to be ruled; one then needs to be forced or needs to be disciplined. Otherwise, if one enjoys what he or she is doing, there is no need for any rule.

It is clear that the whole universe seems to function out of *ānanda*, joy. Says the Taittirīya Upaniṣad, “All the beings of the universe are born of *ānanda* (wholeness, fullness), in *ānanda* alone are they sustained, and back into *ānanda* do they go.” As this *ānanda* alone is *īśvara* manifest. Call it *ānanda*, happiness, or call it love. In that state, everything seems to be quite content being what it is. There is no need for any external motivation or pressure; everything functions out of total contentment and harmony. By the presence of *ānanda* or love, everything automatically is ruled. That kind of *īśa* or ruler I am. *Hiraṇmayo’ham*, I am golden, the effulgent. *Hiraṇya* means gold, which implies shining or effulgence. ‘I am golden’ means ‘I am self-effulgent, self-shining, self-revealing.’ *Śivarūpaḥ asmi*. I am *śiva*, I am the very auspiciousness. Ever pure and sacred I am.

We hear that *īśvara* is omniscient and omnipotent, meaning all-knowing and all-powerful. In what sense is that so? In what sense is *īśvara* the ruler? That becomes clear when we analyze the meaning of the word *īśvara*. The word is derived from the root *īś*, in the sense of ruling. To that root, the suffix *varac* is applied. That lends it the sense of an agent having such a habit. Hence, one whose nature it is to rule is called *īśvara*, and such a one as he is also omniscient and omnipotent, all knowing and all powerful. God alone knows how many galaxies there are and what happens in each one. But how many eyes does he require to know everything? How many ears should he have to be all-knowing? How many hands should he have to be all-powerful? How many weapons should he wield? Indeed, our gods are shown with many hands and many weapons. But how many weapons should God have? How many hands would he need to control the universe, which extends everywhere?

The next *mantra* explains this.

To be continued...