

## 18. The new year dress

New Year must usher in a new step in spiritual discipline. The old must be rung out; the new must be rung in! How do we celebrate the New Year Day? We sweep, we clean, we remove the cobwebs, we whitewash the walls, we hang up festoons and greens, floral garlands and croton leaves; we wear new dresses, we feast on new types of dishes. For one day, we feel fresh and renovated. At this time of the year, Nature too puts on a new garb of green; every tree is gay with flowers. The green carpet on the earth is speckled with multicoloured floral dots! In this festival of renewal, man alone continues with his old prejudices and tendencies, outworn habits and moth-eaten principles. Should not he too brush the cobwebs from his mind? Should he not get rid of opinions and motives which tarnish and demean?

The word *Yugaadhi* means the Day of the Inauguration of the *Yuga* (Age). The spiritual discipline for each Age has been prescribed by the scriptures; for the *Kritha* (First Age), it is *dhyaana* (meditation); for the *Thretha*, the second, it is *dharma* (righteousness); for the *Dwaapara*, the third, it is archana (ritual worship) and for the present age, the *Kali*, it is *Naamasmarana*, the remembrance of the Name of God. So, on the *Yugaadhi* Day, you must resolve to accept it and practise it to the utmost. This involves giving up all habits that interfere with the constant remembrance of God.

### **Without grief, there is no relish in joy**

As a matter of fact, life is a series of acceptances and rejections, of attachments and detachments, of joys and griefs, benefits and losses. This year itself has got a rather forbidding, foreboding Name: *Virodhikrithi*, meaning, the year of making enemies! Do not have any apprehensions; the only foes you will be meeting will be the evil habits and meaningless pursuits that you are giving up!

Take-everything that happens to you as the Gift of Grace. Of course, on your path, you must act with all the skill and devotion you are capable of. Do this with as much sincerity as you worship God. Then, leave the result to the All-powerful, All-knowing, All-merciful God. Let whatever ensues ensue! Why do you hold yourself responsible? He prompted it, He got it done, through you; He will give whatever result He feels He must!

Without grief, there is no relish in joy! The orange has a bitter rind, the bitterness guards the sweet juice from marauders; you cannot have a sweet sugary rind, for the sweet fruit, for, then, it will be consumed entirely by all and sundry, then and there! The urge of the fruit is to travel far, so that the seeds may grow into trees in open spaces in the distance and not under the shade of the parent tree. The tree desires its progeny to spread far and wide. So, if the rind is bitter, the eater will take it with him and travel some distance, while removing it and start scattering the seeds only many paces away! You cannot keep gold safe in a gold box! You must have a steel almirah, for it! The gift of joy comes packed in the rind of grief. Do not pray God to give you only joy; that will be foolish. Pray for the fortitude to realise that grief and joy are but the obverse and reverse of the same coin.

### **Effort needed to win the Grace of God**

Today in every home, the priest reads the New Year's calendar, called the *Panchaangam* (almanac), of the five limbs. Which are these five limbs. Not as is usually understood, the position of the Sun, Moon, stars, etc. But, the five senses of man---which yield him the

knowledge he gathers through sound, touch, sight, taste and smell! They have to be pure, so that the knowledge can be truly genuine.

The hour and the moment have to be auspicious, so that auspiciousness may result. Hence, the careful study of the calendar is prescribed. The planets cannot prevail over the Grace of God, which is the most potent influence to guard and guide man. Thyaagaraaja sang that Raama's Grace can counteract the evil effect of the worst conjunction of stars! People resort to vows and rites, hoping to ward off the evil that stars may bring about! But, no effort is made to win the Grace of God. The pomp and the paraphernalia of *puuja* are merely superficial; they do not confer lasting benefits; at best, they prevent you from using that much of time and money in harmful ways! It is the 'why' of these rites that matters, not so much the 'how.' The why has to be the realisation of the reality of the individual, which is also the reality of the Universal!

Be devoted to the Universal; be eager to become That. When you pray to God for a job, or a son, or a prize, you are devoted, not to God, but to the job, to the son and to the prize. Pray to God for God; love, because it is your nature to love, because you know nothing else, because you cannot act otherwise than love. Expand your Self, take in all! Grow in Love. That is the new dress you have to wear and shine in, this day.

*Yugaadhi, 27-3-1971*

*Grief is caused, as joy is caused, by the attachment of the senses to objects; once you know that you are not the senses or the mind, but He who operates the senses and wields the mind, you cross the bounds of pleasure and pain.*

*Separate yourself from the grief; you are the President of your Realm. The senses and the mind, with all the attendant impulses, desires, attitudes, etc., are your servants, instruments that have to carry out your orders.*

*Sri Sathya Sai*