

31. The Raama Era

Sarva Jeeva dharma shaantham

Sarva naama dharma Shivam

Satchidhaanandha ruupam adhvaitham

Sathyam Shivam Sundharam

The support of all beings, the Supreme Peace;

Known by all Names, the Supreme Good;

The One without a second; the Being-Awareness-Bliss

Truth, Prosperity, Beauty.

RICHES melt away only when you spend them, but the span of years you can live on earth is shortened every moment whether you like it or not, whether you are conscious of it or not. Therefore, you must feel an urgency in the great tasks of life. *Buddhi* (intellect) is a special gift that has been offered to man. This has been given him so that he might know himself but unfortunately it is now used by him to know others. When man has been given a mirror to look at his own face and set right its blemishes, he is foolishly holding it before other people's faces!

The three debts to be discharged during one's life

There are certain fundamental duties that man has to accomplish through his intelligence. Three of these are referred to in the scriptures as *ma* (debt). Man has to discharge three debts as a consequence of his human birth and earthly career. The first one is *Dheva-ma*, the debt to be repaid to the Gods. Every organ of the human body, every function in fact, is dominated and controlled and motivated by a Divine Power, or God. Therefore as a grateful repayment for the debt man owes to Him he has to use his organs, limbs, functions and skills for the benefit of other men and for the welfare of the community.

The second debt is called *rishi-ma*, the debt owned by man to the sages, seers and ancient law-givers. Long before the birth of this generation, a beneficent code of morals and a precious collection of guidelines for the realm of the spirit had been preserved and handed down as heritage through the efforts of selfless seers and sages. Each generation draws inspiration and knowledge from the previous ones, especially from the pathfinders, the pioneers and bridge-builders in the regions of ethics, law, mysticism, sociology and religion. These persons promote concord and progress and remove social conflict; their footprints mark out the lines of individual and social development. So an enormous debt of gratitude has to be repaid to them.

The sages and seers have handed down a precious quantity of knowledge about nature, about consciousness and also about the means and methods of testing and enlarging that knowledge. But today man is neglecting this heritage and even discarding it as invalid and superfluous. This is suicidal. Man has to preserve this knowledge and foster it, revere it and use it. That is the way to repay the debt to the *rishis* (sages).

The best repayment one can make to the *rishis*

The festivals in the religious calendar like this *Yugaadhi* (The Lunar New Year), are instances in point. The *rishis* have laid down these days as holy days and it is your duty to become aware of the meaning and significance of the festivals and as to why they have been so designated. You can infer, from what is generally done in every home when this festival starts, the real purpose intended by the *rishis*. On this day people take ceremonial baths, wear new clothes, tie new fresh green-leaf festoons across their door sills, have their houses whitewashed and painted anew, draw novel designs on the floors and make their homes charming to behold. All these are reminders of the prime purpose, namely, that of entertaining fresh ideas and giving up the old faded ones, installing *aanandha* (divine bliss) in the mind, recouping courage and confidence and strengthening hope and faith.

Yugaadhis come and go; *Nala* gives way to *Pingala*. Plenty of milestones are soon crossed, but the Journey does not progress. You are still immersed on outdated beliefs and fancies. Observe the right codes laid down by the *rishis* with an awareness of the deeper plans they had in view. Follow the *Shaasthras* (spiritual sciences) and perform the daily and seasonal rites, rituals, fasts, vows and vigils recommended by them, always laying emphasis on the inner meaning and significance and the spiritual aspect of the celebration. That is the best repayment you can make.

Debt to be repaid to ancestors is Universal

The third debt is the *pithru-rna* (the debt repayable to the ancestors), especially to the parents. This debt is also Universal, that is to say, men in all lands and all climes have to acknowledge it; for we are all born of parents to whom gratitude is due for endowing us with a body. Adore the parents, make them happy, give them contentment and joy by paying loving attention and bestowing affectionate care. Another duty is to propagate the line through children of pure character, high virtue and noble endeavour.

Dhasharatha, the emperor of Ayodhya, desirous of paying back his debt to his ancestors, had to perform the *Puthra-kaameshti Yaaga*, the *Vedhic* sacrifice that can bless the aspirant with sons. This is the *Vasantha Kaala* (spring time). This season comprises two months---*Madhu-Maadhava* and *Mesha-Rishabha*. *Mesha* is the most glory-filled month in the entire year. It was in the *Vasantha* season that Dhasharatha released the sacrificial horse so that it may wander freely over the continent along an unhinderable course, and it was in the same month that it returned unopposed to Ayodhya. The *Puthrakameshti Yaaga* also commenced in *Vasantha*, and the four sons---Raama, Bharatha, Lakshmana and Sathrugna---were born in *Vasantha*. This is the reason why the *Yugaadhi* is acclaimed as the Inaugural day of the *Vasantha Navaraathri* (the first nine nights of the spring season) culminating with the *Raama-Navami* (the day on which Raama was born).

Man is destined for some higher goal

Yuga means in era. This day is called not *Samvathsaraadhi*, the New Year day, but *Yugaadhi*, the first day of a New Era. The era indicated is the *Dharma-yuga* or the *Raama-yuga*, for Raama is identified as the very embodiment of *Dharma* (righteousness). *Raamo vighrahavaan Dharmah*. The prime duty, of every one who participates in this celebration, therefore, is to adhere to *Dharma*, to support *Dharma* and to foster *Dharma*.

It is mostly a question of the final goal that man sets before himself in life. The goal has to be realisation of the unity of the self with the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Self). Why else should the self take this human form? If mere 'living' or even 'happy living' was the goal, the self could have

been encased in the form of birds or beasts. The very fact that man is equipped with memory, mind, intelligence discrimination ability to anticipate the future, desire to detach himself from the senses, etc., is an indication that he is destined for some higher goal. In spite of this if man craves for a lesser consummation, he is a *paapi* (sinner). But he who persists, in spite of temptations and obstacles, on the path that leads to self-fulfilment and self-realisation, is a *gopee*, for the *gopees* (cowherd girls) of Brindhaavan were the most inspiring examples of such souls.

The most effective discipline that man can adopt to attain this lofty goal, is the control and conquest of the five senses, avoid the errors and evils that the eye, the ear, the tongue, the mind and the hand are prone to commit. These are called the *panchadoshas* (five vices).

The eye ever seeks the vile and the vulgar. Notwithstanding the danger to his own life and body, the motorist will stare at obscene posters advertising a movie film. The eye must be held in check so that it may not ruin the mind as well as the body of man.

The ear craves for scandal and salacious stuff. It does not persuade you to attend discourses that can really help in your spiritual development. Even if you chance to attend any, the ear dissuades you by giving you a headache. But when some one pours abuse on another, the two ears attain maximum concentration.

Start the day and end the day with Love

The tongue is doubly dangerous unless held in check, for it speaks scandal and creates craving for taste. It is well nigh impossible to lead the tongue towards the path of *japa* and *dhyaana* (spiritual recitations and meditation), however sweet be the Name of the Lord. Suurdhas pleads with the tongue to call out the Names--- *Govindha, Dhaamodhara, Maadhava*. When the eye, ear and tongue are under control and capable of being used for self-improvement, the mind and the hand can also easily be held in check. Thus when man realises himself, there is no need to inquire where God dwells. He dwells in the pure heart of man, clearly shining in His innate splendour of Wisdom, Power and Love.

Give joy to all. *Prema* (Selfless Love) is the means to achieve this ideal. When Love can bring even God nearer to you, how can it fall where man is involved? Krishna could not be bound by any other means. That is the reason why Sai has declared Start the day with Love; spend the day with Love; fill the day with Love; end the day with Love. That is the way to God.

Yugaadhi, Brindhaavan, 20-3-1977

Through a desire to judge or estimate or evaluate, you cannot discover the mystery of God; through devotion and faith, you have to win His Grace, which will reveal Him to your understanding and experience. Steady faith alone can earn victory. You cannot be changing your allegiance as and when you please. Hold fast until the realisation is awarded.

When a man is suffering from the effects of cobra-bite, they give him chillies to chew; the idea is they will not taste "hot" if the poison is still in his system. So too, when the poison of worldly sensualism is there, puuja, japam, dhyaanam all will taste drab and dismal.

Sri Sathya Sai