

19. Nature: God: Man

*Men run hither and thither
In search of food, of worldly goods,
Of position and pelf, name and fame;
But few seek to realise God.
This is the truth declared unto you.
Men pursue intensively mundane studies
But do not seek to study the path to Liberation.*

Dear students! The cosmos is the magnificent manifestation of the Divine. When you direct your vision on this vast creation you are filled with awe and wonder. True education consists in understanding the inner meaning of this creation.

At first sight what we see are inert objects like mountains and hills. We cannot see any sign of *chaitanya* (consciousness) in these objects. The second category of objects are trees. There is consciousness in them, but they cannot move from place to place. They are stationary. The third category are living beings. Besides consciousness, these have the capacity of motion. Man belongs to the fourth category. He has not only fully developed consciousness, but has another extraordinary, marvellous quality. That is the supreme gift of *Sambhashan* (speech).

Starting with the inert, we have the conscient, the mobile beings and the human species with the power of speech. If this progression in the creative process is tightly understood we can realise how important is the advent of man.

Om is the primal letter in the alphabet

The ancient sages, after performing severe penances and making profound enquiries, realised and declared how unique is the human birth. "*Vedaaham etam Purusham mahaantam Aadithya varnam tamasah parastaath*" (We have known that there is a Supreme Purusha who is effulgent like the sun and who transcends darkness). By their penance, meditation and intuition, they recognised two things: One is *Akshara* (the alphabet) and the other is *Sankhya* (numbers). In the alphabet the primal letter is "Om." All other letters have emerged from the *Pranava (Om)*. "Om" is the first letter among all letters. It comprehends within itself all other letters of the alphabet.

During *bhajans*, when the harmonium is played, the bellows are pressed and the reeds are manipulated, we have the musical notes, "*Sa, ri, ga, rna, pa, da, ni.*" What is the source of these seven notes? It is the same air that produces the notes. That air is filled with "*Omkaara.*" And it is that "Om" which produces the separate notes, "*Sa, ri, ga, ma, etc.*"

Likewise, among numbers, we start with one and go to nine, ten. In all the numbers, one is the primary number. All the other numbers are multiple variations of one. If you take away one from nine you have eight. If you add one to eight, it becomes nine. What comes and goes is one alone. What remains is also one.

Nature and Divinity

From this, the sages drew the inference that the beginning and the end are One, which is the Divine. They declared that this One is the *beejam* (seed) of the cosmos. No seed exists without husk. Because the grain is covered by husk its parts are not visible to us. For the cosmos, *Prakruthi* (nature) is the husk. The seed of divinity is within it (and enveloped by it). We cannot experience the seed of divinity within as long as it is covered by the husk of Nature.

We have to endeavour to get at the truth about Nature. *The Upanishads* declared: "*Isaavaasyam idham sarvam*" (All this is permeated by the Divine). That means, there is only one thing that is immanent in the entire universe. If the truths declared by the *Upanishads* are to be understood, we have to seek the truth of everything in our daily lives. For instance, why has Nature come into being? Nature's role is to help man, the crowning achievement of the evolutionary process, to realise the Divinity immanent in creation.

Mountains help man to build houses by using stone slabs, quarried from them. Trees provide the timber for constructing houses and also firewood for domestic use. Among animate beings, every creature, from an ant to an elephant, is of assistance to man in one way or another. Cows provide nourishing milk to man. Bullocks are useful for ploughing the fields and helping to grow food crops. All other creatures like birds, fish, sheep and others are serving man in different ways.

Seen in this light it will be clear that all things in creation are helpful to man in leading his life. Even the sun and the moon are serving man. The sages regarded the Sun as an important deity and worshipped him through the Gayatri mantra.

Man's debt to Nature

Thus man is deriving innumerable debt from Nature, and enjoying the amenities provided by Nature in various ways. But what is the gratitude he is showing to Nature? What gratitude is he offering to the Divine? He is forgetting the Divine who is the provider of everything. That is the reason for his becoming a prey to various difficulties and calamities. While he is receiving countless gifts from Providence, he is offering nothing in return to Nature or God. This shows how unnatural and heartless is the behaviour of man. When we are enjoined to return good for evil, how unbecoming it is to fail even to return good for good? Man is not learning the great lessons Nature is teaching him. The foremost lesson is doing service with no expectation of return.

People ask, "Where is God?" The answer is provided by Nature. Who is it that has created the five elements, the five life-breaths, the five sheaths, the five external sense organs and the five internal sense organs, which are all ceaselessly carrying on their functions according to their prescribed roles. The seasons in their regular cycle are teaching a good lesson to man. Therefore Nature is the demonstrable proof for the existence of God. Nature is not under any obligation to any man, it takes no orders from any man, it operates according to the will of the Divine.

Science is being used for destructive purposes

The artificial instruments produced by man function for a time and then become useless. Scientists today have launched many satellites in space. Sooner or later they cease to function and drop away. No one knows how, when and in what circumstances the planets in nature were created but they have been going round in space ceaselessly and unfailingly for billions of years. These planets have been created for the welfare of mankind and not for destructive purposes.

God is the creator of the world for man's good. All the planets created by Him are serving mankind. Many of the missiles and space instruments produced by scientists are for destructive purposes. Science is being used more for destruction than for construction.

What is the reason for this? The Ego is the cause. The sense of egoism and conceit arising from it is the root cause of the destructive tendencies in man. Man today is placing more faith in his physical and mental strength than in the strength coming from faith in God. How long can it last? In a mere fit of sneezing, life may leave this body. What meaning is there in regarding it as permanent?

Let no one be proud about his beauty, strength and youth. The ravages of old age are ahead and will overwhelm him. Even while you feel puffed up by your strength and energy as a youth, age creeps on you irrevocably. With the body bent, wrinkles on the face and bleared eyes, the old man becomes a butt of jokes for juveniles, who call him an old monkey. What is lasting in all this? Everything is subject to change and decay in this world. Whether it be physical objects or individuals, all are transient and impermanent. Nothing is lasting. Only your purity is permanent. Purity is the essential nature of man. But if man leads a polluted life, he is degrading himself.

Love does not seek any return

Man's purity is manifest when human relations are based on heart to heart and love to love. Love has a form of a triangle with three arms. *Prema* (divine love) does not seek any return. Where an individual offers love in expectation of a return, fear overtakes him. The one who loves with no expectation of any return is totally free from fear. Love knows only to give, not to receive. Such a love is free from fear. For true love, love is its own reward. Thus, love seeks no return, is free from fear and is its own reward. These are the basic features of true love.

Love today is based on desire for a return benefit. It is filled with fear and anxiety. Thus love is motivated. When love is based on a desire for transient and perishable objects, life will be futile. Love must be its own reward.

You have to show your gratitude to God

Love is eternal. You are the embodiment of Love. You are the embodiment of Peace. You are the embodiment of Truth. You are the embodiment of God. It is only when this supreme truth is realised, and our life is based on it, that our love can make our life meaningful and enable us to comprehend the world. Your studies, your conduct, your actions, all that you see, hear and think—all these should be regarded as offerings to the Divine. This is the true meaning of *Saranagathi* (taking refuge in the Divine). All that is seen, heard or experienced should be considered as intimations of the Divine.

Have firm faith in the reality of God's existence. You have to show your gratitude to God for the benefits showered on you. Consider, for instance, how the Divine has filled the atmosphere with life-giving oxygen to enable you to live.

The biggest fan made by man can provide breeze only for a small area. But the winds caused by Nature can blow over the whole world. Who is the cause of this wind? There are three kinds of lamps in this Mandir. They illumine a small space. But the Sun created by God illumines the whole world. We pump water with the help of pump sets. Can all the water pumped by these sets equal a fraction of the water got from a heavy downpour of rain which can inundate the Ganga? Who is it that is providing this air, this water and this illumination? We are en-

joying all these, but we show no gratitude to the provider of these benefits. We render thanks to those who render trifling acts of service. But what thanks are we expressing to God who is providing such essential life-sustaining amenities for meaningful human existence? Can this be a virtue in a human being? Is it a sign of a right education? Is it the mark of a scholar? No. You must show your gratitude with humility and sincerity to whoever has done you any good.

You must shed your narrow outlook

Education that does not promote gratitude is worthless. It is the parents who give you education. The *guru* is the educator. The Divine has given you the capacity to get educated. Hence, the mother, father and the *guru* are to be revered as God, as enjoined in the *Vedas*. You must show your gratitude to your parents, offer due respect to the teacher, and base your life on faith in God. You may feel proud that you are getting on in life by your own abilities and intelligence. This is utterly foolish. You must cultivate a wide appreciation of Nature. You must shed your narrow outlook. Realise for instance, how small is the eye. But it is able to see the whole universe. Even your eye is teaching you a lesson. "What a fool are you? In spite of my minuscule smallness, I am able to see the whole universe with my wide vision. But your mind has a very narrow outlook." You must try to broaden your heart and enlarge your mind. You must dedicate your *chittha* (will) to the Divine.

Discourse at the Prashanthi Mandir, 12 Jul 1988

Do not jump to conclusions, abdicating your discrimination and do not deny the validity of your own experiences, stand on your strength. Be unmoved, either by adulation or denigration. Follow my lead, I am unaffected by either, and march on alone, undeterred and of my own accord. I am my own Guide and Witness. Have full faith in this.

Sathya Sai Baba