

25. The *Guru* within

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! As long as a dream lasts, all that is experienced, heard or seen in it appears as real. Likewise, in *samsara* (worldly existence), filled with likes and dislikes, everything seems real till the dawn of *Jnana* (wisdom). When one attains the state of Supreme Realisation, all that happens in the world appears as a dream.

The human body is composed of the five basic *elements*--*Prithvi, Aapa, Agni, Vaayu, and Akasa* (earth, water, fire, air and space). These five are compounded together in an orderly way. The human body is described as the *Bhautika Sarira* (physical body). It establishes all types of relations with the world. This may be described as "*Pancheekaranam*" (the bonding together of the five components). In the body, in its waking state, all the sense organs are active.

The body is the abode of pleasure and pain. It has three forms: *Sthoola* (gross), *Sookshma* (subtle) and *Kaarana* (causal). The gross physical body is *Annamaya* (permeated by food). It is inert. It is comparable to an instrument. What we see is only the physical body. Believing that this is real and permanent, man tends to forget the all-pervading and eternal *Atmic* principle.

The *five pranas* (vital breaths), the mind, the intellect and the ten sense organs (of perception and action) constitute the *sookshma-sarira* (subtle body). It functions in the dream state. In this state, the individual is oriented inwards. In it, man creates for himself a new world. The dream is itself the proof of its reality. It is self-constituted with no external relations. In the dream state, everything is created by the mind--forms, sounds and taste, which are experienced without any physical basis for them. This entire experience is limited to the individual concerned. If, for instance, ten persons are sleeping in one room, each person's dream is unique to himself. Each one's actions in the dream are unique to himself.

Mind creates both waking and dream states

There is no relationship between the dream and the waking state. One individual has a dream in which his friend harasses him in many ways. If after waking up in the morning he accosts his friend and asks the latter why he harassed him, the friend replies: "You madcap! I have not seen you at all!" This means that the friend in the dream and the troubles he gave are all self-created by the dreamer. All other dream experiences are also self-created. Hence, all the experiences in dreams are confined to the individual concerned and have no connection with others in the real world. The joys and sorrows experienced in the dream are the stuff of the dream state. It is in the dream state that one goes through the consequences of good and bad actions in previous lives. This means that the experiences are related to the *sookshma sarira* (subtle body). In this, the mind is the most important factor. It is the mind that creates everything.

Although the mind is one, according to the different functions performed by it, different names are given to it. When it is engaged in the thought process, it is called *Manas*. When it is engaged in discriminating between what is permanent and what is transient, it is called *Buddhi* (intelligence). In its role as a reservoir of memory, it is called *Chitta*. When the mind identifies itself with the body, it is called *Ahamkara* (ego). The four names are related to the mind and their combined aspect constitutes *Antahkarana* (the inner instrument). Thus, both the waking and dream states are creations of the mind.

Mind causes both bondage and liberation

The third state is *Sushupti*. *SU* means good. *Shupti* means sleep. *Sushupti* means sound sleep. In this state the mind is absent. When the mind is not present the world also is absent. In the absence of the world, there are no experiences of joy and sorrow. The world exists as long as the mind is present. Joy and sorrow are experienced through contact with the world. Hence, the world is associated with joy and sorrow. The mind is said to be the cause of both bondage and liberation.

There is, however, one other state which transcends these states: the *Atmic* state. It is because of his identification with the body in the first three states that man forgets his spiritual reality. But, for all experiences the *Atmic* principle in everyone is the cause, though the physical forms are varied. Man is a prey to ignorance because, forgetting *his Atmic* reality, he identifies himself with the mind-body complex. The waves appearing in an ocean appear as different from each other. But they consist of the same water. Likewise, though man appears in innumerable forms, all these are like the waves appearing on the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Names and forms may be different but the basis is the same.

The *Atma* alone is self-effulgent

The *Atma*, however, is covered in the human being by five sheaths: *Annamaya*, *Pranamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijnanamaya* and *Anandamaya Kosas* (sheaths). As a result, the *Atma* is not easily cognisable. The physical body is the *Annamaya kosa* (the sheath of food). The sheaths of *Pranamaya* (life-force), *Manomaya* (the mental sheath) and the *Vijnanamaya* (imbued with intelligence) form the *sookshma sarira* (subtle body). The *Anandamaya kosa* is the *Kaarna sarira* (causal or seed body). Although it has the name *Anandamaya* (blissful), it is not real bliss. It is the blissful state of the *Atma* that is reflected as an image in the sheath of Bliss (the causal). The mind is like the moon, which is not self-luminous. The *Atma* alone is self-effulgent. It is this light which illumines the body, mind, the *Buddhi* and the senses and invests them with consciousness.

It is this *Chaitanya* (*Atmic* consciousness) which makes the cosmos function. For the entire creation, consisting of living and inanimate objects, this consciousness is the basis. All that is experienced by the body and the mind has no real connection with the *Atma*. Relying on the light coming from the sun, many people perform different actions. Some may do good deeds and some others may be indulging in bad actions. *The Atma* is unaffected by the consequences of these actions, just as the sun is not affected by the activities done with the help of sunlight. The Sun is a witness. Likewise the *Atma* also is a witness to what is done by the body, mind and other organs.

But man, because of his identifying himself with the body and other organs, attributes all their activities to the power of the *Atma*. For all this, the mind is the root cause. It is the mind that assumes these multifarious forms. For instance, if a person builds a house, he erects within it a bedroom, a drawing room, a kitchen and so on. All these separate rooms are for his comfort. But if the separate walls are knocked down, only one hall remains. Likewise if the walls created by the mind are removed the *Atma* alone will be experienced.

Man can experience his true Self

If man embarks on the process of casting off one by one the five sheaths which envelop the *Atma*, he will experience his true Self. This process consists in the practice of *Sravana*, *Manana*

and *Nididhyaasana* (hearing, reflection in the mind, and meditation on the Divine). The body, the mind and the senses are merely like the husk which encases the grain. When the husk is removed, the rice alone remains. As long as man is enveloped in this husk, he cannot escape birth and death. When the husk (in the form of the five sheaths) is cast off, man is freed from rebirth, just as the rice without husk cannot sprout. Even as you do not need a lamp to see the sun, there is no need to search for the *Atma* when it is omnipresent. The *Atma* shines eternally. No other *sadhana* is required to recognise it.

As long as man is not aware of his own true nature, he will be under the delusion that *the Atma* is somewhere else remote from him. Like the ashes hiding the fire in burning charcoal, the delusion regarding the body is covering the *Atma*. Once the delusion goes, man will experience true bliss and understand the Cosmic Reality.

Aham* and *Hridaya* refer to the *Atma

In this context, the significance of the use of the term "I" by everyone should be rightly understood. Without the "I", the world will have no existence. What is this "I" ("nenu" in Telugu)? It is the basis (Uniki). Because the same basic entity exists in all beings, it is called *Atma*. It is also called *Brahmam*. Another name for it is *Hridaya* (the spiritual heart). It is also called *Aham* ("I"). All these different names refer only to the *Atma*.

When we use the term *Hridaya*, we generally consider it as referring to the physical heart in the body. This is not correct. *Hridaya* has no physical limitations. *Hridaya* in the true sense of the word refers to that which is all-pervading. Forgetting this omnipresent spiritual heart, we tend to regard the physical heart in the body as the true heart. This betokens a narrow mind.

In ordinary parlance we use the term *Aham* ("I") in every context. This *Aham* is *Brahmam*. When you declare, "I am a householder," the first reference is to yourself as "I." Another says, "I am a *sanyasin*." Here, again, the "I" comes first. Similarly in other references, the "I" comes first and then the description follows. When you separate the "I" from the person who used it, the "I" alone remains distinct from the different individuals. This shows that the "I" is basic to everyone, whatever his status or form. This "I" which is present in everyone is the *Atma*, which is omnipresent. Because man forgets this basic truth, he is the victim of endless sorrows and doubts. What we should love and cherish is the *Atma* and not the body.

***Atma* is the only source of lasting bliss**

People have love for their parents, wife, children and other kinsfolk because of the relationships. But these relationships are essentially impermanent. In cultivating these ephemeral attachments, men are failing to love the *Atma*, which is ever present and is the source of lasting bliss.

If you have doubts regarding *Atma*, it is because you have no steadfast love for the Divine. To develop firm love for anything, you have to get the conviction that "it is mine." Unless you acquire such a conviction regarding *the Atma*, you cannot become a *Sthithaprajna* (a man of steadfast wisdom). You will not achieve real bliss. You cannot reach the permanent state of Self-Realisation.

Develop the unshakable conviction that the Divine is present in everyone. Then there will be no room for developing differences of any kind. Conflict and disorder will have no place. Likes and dislikes will go.

Once you direct the mind towards the *Atma*, you have learnt the supreme *mantra*: "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am the *Brahmam*). Whatever you do, eating or walking or seeing or speaking, do it with *the Atmic* consciousness.

There are two "I's" in everyone--the "I" that is associated with the mind and the "I" associated with the *Atma*. Consciousness of the *Atma* is the real "I." When this "I" is wrongly associated with the mind, it becomes *Ahamkara* (the Ego). When the "I" associated with the *Atma* experiences *Atmic* bliss, it realises that the universal consciousness is One, though it may be called by different names. When you eliminate *the Anaatma-bhaava* in you (that is, the body consciousness), you will have the *Atma-bhaava* (consciousness of the Universal), within you. Without this consciousness all *sadhanas* are of no avail.

The water vapour produced by the sun becomes a cloud and hides the sun itself. Likewise, the thoughts arising in the mind conceal the *Atma*. When the mind is eliminated the *Atma* alone remains.

For eliminating the mind and removing the delusions from it, desires have to be controlled. But the *sadhaks* of today have not reduced their desires. It must be realised that selfishness and self-centredness have to be got rid of. Selfishness is the root cause of all the afflictions plaguing man.

Reform of the individual is the basic need

If the world is to be transformed, we must begin with the individual. His evil traits have to be removed. He must fill himself with sacred thoughts.

To start with, the individual must reform himself. Without the individual realising his true nature, all other accomplishments are of no avail. Man is exploring the most distant regions in space, but is not moving even an inch towards understanding his heart. Is this the journey man should undertake? He must turn the mind inwards. Turning the mind towards the external world can only breed sorrow. Enduring bliss can be got only by directing the mind towards God. That is the real *sadhana*. Without mental transformation all other changes are meaningless. Without changing your qualities, you remain in the same state as before. Develop good qualities and sanctify yourself. This is the message for everyone.

Your true *Guru* is God alone

Today is *Gurupoornima*. *Poornima* refers to the full moon with all his 16 aspects being illumined by the sun. In man there are sixteen black spots: the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy), the two *Gunas*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, and the eight types of *mada* (conceit) based on lineage and scholarship, wealth, youth, beauty, position and penance. It is only when man gets rid of these sixteen evil traits that he will be able to realise his oneness with the *his poornatva* (Divine). Who is the one who enables man to achieve this state of *Poornatva* (fullness)? It is the *Guru*. *Guru* refers to one who has transcended the *gunas* and has no form. The *gurus* of today are filled with qualities of all kinds. The disciples seem to be better than the preceptors. The disciples are making sacrifices. The preceptors are acquiring possessions. In this situation it is difficult to say who are *gurus* and who are disciples.

People today tend to be naive in their actions. Whenever they see some aged persons, they seek some *mantra* (spiritual message) from them. What is the *mantra* they really need? It is the understanding of their true nature. This *mantra* is within them. Each contains within himself the *mantra*, *tantra* and *yantra* (the spiritual message, the method of practising it and the instrument

for implementing it). Your process of breathing contains the *mantra* you need: "So-Ham", "So-Ham". (Bhagavan demonstrated how this should be done). "I am That," "That is I." This is the *mantra*. What is the *yantra* (the instrument)? It is your physical body. What is the *tantra*? Your heart! When you have in you all the three, why go to anyone for a message? It is a sign of weakness and ignorance.

Your *true guru* is God alone. He transcends *all gunas*. He is beyond all forms. He is the only one who can dispel the darkness of ignorance and light the lamp of *Prajnaanam* (Supreme Wisdom). It is a mark of ignorance to go after nondescript preceptors and seek messages from them. When they are wallowing in bondage themselves, how are they going to free you from bondage? How can one who is filled with delusions himself rid you of your delusions? Can one who is begging for food relieve your hunger?

Have confidence in the *Atma*

Do not go in search of *gurus*. Strengthen your faith in the *Atma*. Seek to enjoy the *Atmic* bliss. Strive to develop the conviction: "I am the *Atma*." That is the true message. When you have grasped this Truth, all other things will be unnecessary.

For experiencing this *Guru*, there are no restrictions as to time, place or circumstances. Only for the man steeped in the mind, changes in time exist and he is bound by them. But to the man who has transcended the limitations of time, everything remains immutable. This spiritual state can be reached only through confidence in the *Atma*.

Gurupoornima is observed as a day for honouring the *Guru*. Some types of *gurus* welcome this day as the day which brings them income. They are an inferior breed. The real *Guru* is only one. He is the One, the God of gods, who is hailed as father, mother, teacher, knowledge and wealth and all else. He is the Supreme whom you must seek by your *sadhana*. God alone can transform your spiritual efforts into a transcendental experience. You have the vision of the Divine (*saakshaatkaara*). The vision does not come from outside. It is within you, because the Divine is omnipresent. Only the person who considers himself separate from God will have the feeling that the vision of God comes from outside. God is everywhere. You are God.

Dedicate every moment of life to the Lord

It is the agglomeration of body, mind and the senses which is preventing you from recognising your inherent divinity. You are covering yourself in this manner. You are the cause of your bondage through the body and the mind. When you understand the nature of the body-mind complex, you will realise your true essence. It is enough if you develop the *conviction* that you and the Divine are *one*--"Aham Brahmaasmi." Cultivate steadfast faith in this Divine oneness through love. That love will lead you to Self-realisation.

Wherever you may be and whatever you do, regard yourselves as instruments of the Divine and act on that basis. You need not wait for a whole year to observe *Gurupoornima*. Treat every moment of your life as being intended for dedication to the Lord. This is the way to experience the Divine all the time at all places. This is *true Saakshaatkaara*. Serve all and love all. Firmly believe that the Divine is in everyone and constantly act on this belief. Only by continual practice can you develop this sacred attitude. Fill yourself with self-confidence and courage. Make your life a complete offering to the Divine, who is the real source of all that you are and all that you have.

There was an old woman in Uttar Pradesh who used to give away many things in charity. She used to go about with her head bowed. Some people asked her why she was humbling herself in that manner when she could hold her head high because of the numerous gifts she was making to all and sundry. She modestly replied: "When the Lord is giving me so many things with His thousand hands, all that I am giving is only with a single hand. What reason is there for feeling proud about what I am doing? Should not people feel ashamed about giving to others with one hand what God gives to them with a thousand hands?"

Hence, everyone must develop the spirit of *Thyaga* (sacrifice). You must serve the people with your body. You have to cherish good and noble thoughts in your mind. You must use your wealth for supporting educational and other institutions to help the people. Give food to the starving. This is the way to lead a purposeful and sublime life. Life has been given to you not to fatten yourself. The body is the basic instrument for the practice of *Dharma*.

Dedicate your entire time to service and the discharge of your duties. Your *sadhana* must not be for selfish ends. It must promote the good of others. Giving up selfishness, cultivating selfless love for others, sanctify your lives.

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