

3. Goodness is Godliness

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Creation proclaims the *Easwara ichcha* (Will of the Lord). It is called *Prakriti* (Nature or Creation). This means that the whole of creation is a manifestation of the Will of the Lord. Every being existing in Creation has necessarily to bear the qualities of the Divine. Man has taken birth in this world to manifest the Will of the Divine. A seed sprouts into a plant and puts forth a flower. The plant and its different constituents like branches and leaves are all the basis for the blossoming of the flower. God is the seed for the whole of creation. God is present in every human being as a seed, which sprouts into a plant, develops leaves and branches in the form of *gunas* (qualities) and blossoms into the *flower of Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

For a seed to become a plant, earth and water are necessary. Likewise, for the divine seed in man to grow into a tree and blossom into the flower of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, it needs *Bhakti* and *Sraddha* (devotion and earnestness). Humanness does not consist merely in turning the mind towards God. The Divine has to be experienced within him. The human estate is the manifestation of the infinite potential of the Divine. Man is the individualisation of the infinite rays of the Divine. Not recognising his divine essence man is wasting his life in the pursuit of transient and trivial pleasures.

What is spirituality? It is the resolute pursuit of cosmic consciousness. Spirituality aims at enabling man to manifest in all its fullness the divine *chaitanya* (cosmic consciousness) that is present within and outside him. It means getting rid of the animal nature in man and developing the divine tendencies in him. It means breaking down the barriers between God and Nature and establishing their essential oneness.

Goodness is a synonym for God

To realise such a state of divine consciousness, devotion is essential. Devotion aims at awakening consciousness of the *Easwara* (Divine) in man. All activity aimed at turning the mind towards God is a form of devotion. To think of God for attaining worldly desires and physical comforts is not devotion. To envisage and experience the Divine *Sat-Chit-Ananda* within him is the true mark of devotion.

Anil Kumar said in his speech that God does not dwell in some foreign place, but resides within everyone. Because from ancient times man went after external material objects, he forgot the Eternal Divine Reality within him. Imprisoned within his qualities, man forgets the Divine. The one who is immersed in spirituality, is indifferent to the *Prakriti* (phenomenal world). Spiritual transformation calls for changing the mind from a prisoner of the *three gunas* (qualities) to one that is bound to God. You have to acquire the firm conviction that the Divine is the basis and sustainer of the Universe. Goodness is a synonym for God. The power of the cosmic consciousness consists in making the good qualities manifest in a man.

Pure mind is the abode of the Lord

Almost everyone in the world is unaware of what is true spirituality or devotion. When one is submerged in worldly desires, how can he recognise the Divine? It is only by persistent effort that this can be done. One has to endeavour to experience the presence of the Divine in every particle and at every moment. A devotee must regard a pure mind as the abode of the Lord. He must fill the mind with pure, sacred and Divine thoughts. Thereby he redeems his entire life. The

Chataka bird endures many ordeals to secure unsullied raindrops from the clouds. The moment it spies a dark cloud in the sky, it embarks on its adventure. There is water aplenty on the earth in lakes, ponds and rivers. But the Chataka bird has no use for these polluted waters. It waits for the pure raindrops in the month of *Karthik* and does not seek any other water. It is undaunted by thunder and lightning. It seeks only the pure raindrops falling from the clouds, without fear or concern. It sings in joy as it drinks the raindrops.

The Chataka bird is an example of pure love. The true devotee should perform a similar penance (to realise God). He must have the same determination. He must go through similar ordeals to experience the ultimate ecstasy. He must not succumb to the wiles and attractions of the world.

Man is not merely a human but verily a God

The golden life of man should be tested on the touchstone of the Lord's name. Instead of following this easy path, man involves himself in multifarious troubles and wastes his precious life. Man is not merely a human. Verily he is God. He is submerging his inherent divinity in worldly desires. He should utilise the pure and sacred thoughts that arise in him to turn away from the transient attractions of the world and to set him on the path towards the Divine.

"Whether it is described as *Chaitanya* (Cosmic Consciousness), or the *Kshetrajna* (Indwelling Knower), or *Jnana* (Supreme Wisdom) or *Ahamkara* (I-am), or *Easwara* (the Supreme Lord), or Vishnu, or *Ananda* (Pure Bliss), or the *Paramapadam* (Supreme Abode), or *Prakriti* (Nature), or the *Aadi Sakthi* (Primal Energy)---all these are only different names given to the *Atma* (the Supreme Spirit). Originally It had no name." (Poem)

The effulgence of the *Atma* exceeds the splendour of a multi-faceted diamond. The diamond may have a myriad facets, but it is one and the same. Likewise, *the Atma* radiates infinite number of rays, but is only One.

Man today is like a horseman riding two horses at the same time. He aspires for the Divine, but also yearns for worldly pleasures. He forgets that the creator contains the creation. Forgetting this truth, he goes after the phenomenal world, regarding it as different from the Divine. He is foolish like the man who cries for ghee while having milk in his hand, not realising that ghee is latent in the milk. Today's devotees study the *Vedas* and other scriptures as a ritual, but do not put into practice any of the injunctions contained in these.

Scriptures are guides for practical living

Of what avail is it merely to know how the *Vedas* or *Upanishads* have described the Divine? This book lore is not reflected in his life. He is like a blind man who hears about the existence of the world, but cannot see it. There is no difference between this physically blind man and the spiritually blind person who merely studies the scriptures. The scriptures are intended to provide guides for practical living and not merely to be learnt by rote.

Everyone knows the word God,

But that does not mean they know God.

The meaning of 'God' has to be known

Only by serving those who have realised God.

Everyone utters the word God, but how many really seek to know God? What efforts do they make to know God? Goodness is another name for God. How much of goodness is there in you? When there is no goodness, how can God be understood? For understanding anything subjective experience is essential. In the fast-flowing Ganga, a small fish is able to swim freely and joyously, without fear of the depth or swift flow of the river. But in the same river, a big elephant is likely to be swept away by the current. One should know how to keep afloat in the current and protect oneself.

A tiny ant, for instance, is able to get at the sugar that is mixed with sand, because it has the ability to distinguish between sand and the sweet sugar in the mixture. But another animal, however big it may be, if it does not possess this ability, it cannot separate the sugar from the sand. Likewise, if a man has experienced the bliss of the Divine, will he go after worldly pleasures? Only the person who has not tasted the nectar of Divine love will seek these pleasures. This Divine love is within man. All Divine feelings and thoughts emanate from within him.

The Creator and the Cosmos are inseparable

Today, people think that spirituality has no relation to mundane life and vice versa. This is a big mistake. True divinity is a combination of spirituality and social obligations. National unity and social harmony are founded upon spirituality. It is the Divine that links spirituality and social existence. The Creator and the *Prakriti* (Cosmos) are inextricably associated with each other. Hence, God should not be regarded as separate from the creation. See God in the cosmos. For instance, here is a tumbler made of silver. The one who notices the silver in the tumbler, thinks only of the material base and not the form of the tumbler. The one who sees it as a tumbler, does not note its silver base. Only the person who can recognise both silver and tumbler can recognise that it is a silver tumbler. Likewise, without the Omni-Self there is no creation. Today, most people see only the creation. Very few recognise that the creation is a projection of the Creator. It is essential that every human being should have the realisation that without the *Brahmam* (Supreme) there can be no cosmos.

Unfortunately, man today adheres to a different view. The reason is, he has become a slave of the senses. It is high time he recognised the truth about his inherent nature and started exercising control over the senses. Only when man has mastery over the senses can he perceive the ultimate reality. It is disastrous for man to be dominated by his senses. He forfeits peace and forgets the Divine.

Every man is inclined to ignore his own defects and see the faults of others. The root cause of this tendency is selfishness and self-centredness. All his attachments are based on self-love. And this applies also to man's love for God. Men pretend to love God, but one who truly loves God will forget himself. Loving anyone for your own sake is *anuraga* (affection). But loving God for His own sake is *Prema* (true love).

Man fails to recognise the power of the Divine because of his selfishness and self-centredness. Only when he can get rid of the impurities encrusted in his heart will man be able to experience his divinity.

Eschew ostentation and self-conceit

Ingratitude is a great sin, which brings in its wake a host of troubles. To forget what one owes to others for his position and prosperity is to forfeit the grace of the Divine. He is as good as dead.

You have to be grateful to those who have helped you to achieve position, power, wealth and prominence. By forgetting the good done by others, the ungrateful person is setting at nought the highest human values and strutting about as a vainglorious creature.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Eschewing ostentation and self-conceit, cultivate selfless love towards all. There must be a limit to one's self-interest. Selfishness carried to extremes leads to disaster. Excessive selfishness can cause loss of friendship and honour and ultimately result in utter ruin. Reverence for one's parents is a sacred obligation.

"Kesava" symbolises the oneness of the Trinity

Whatever be the school of thought in which one believes---whether it is *Advaita* (non-dualism) or materialism (as expounded by the Charvaka school) or *Mayavada* (the doctrine of the illusory nature of the phenomenal world)--one thing common to all of them is belief in the power of the Lord's name as "Kesava." This name is regarded as cardinal principle. What is the inner significance of this name? It is made up of the three terms: *Ka + eas + va*. "Ka" stands for *Brahma*, "Isa" stands for *Easwara* and "Va" for Vishnu. Together, the name symbolises the oneness of the Trinity, who represent the powers of creation, dissolution and protection of the Cosmos. Men today do not understand the inner meanings of such terms as "Kesava."

Embodiments of Divine Love! It is necessary to study the scriptures, the *Upanishads* and other sacred books. But this should not be done as a mechanical ritual. The religious preachers today merely prescribe the reading of the *Gita* or other spiritual texts as routine exercise. Of what use is mere reading of scriptures if their precepts are not put into practice? The sacred names of different deities are repeated as a daily routine (*parayana*). Is it of any use? Instead of reciting a hundred *slokas* mechanically, it is better to put one *sloka* into practice after grasping its full import. For instance, there is the expression, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. *Sat* refers to the *Paramatma* (Omni Self). *Chit* refers to the *Jivatma* (the individual soul). When *Sat* and *Chit* come together, there is *Ananda* (Divine Bliss). If *Sat* and *Chit* are apart, how can there be bliss? There can be only sorrow. You must strive for the union of *Sat* and *Chit*. You can have light only when the current is switched on to the bulb.

All are embodiments of the Divine Spirit. But because of their submergence in worldly desires, they are leading mundane existence. Experience the Divine in all your activities. In worshipping God, do not make distinctions between one name or form and another. All names--Rama, Krishna or Govinda--are Divine. Some fanatics adoring the name Vishnu will not like to utter or even hear the name of Siva at all. Such an attitude should be given up. You must regard the entire Cosmos as the embodiment of the Divine.

Significance of Sivarathri

Today is celebrated as Sivarathri. Si-va-ra-thri consists of four syllables. Numerologically, the three letters, "Sa" "va" and "ra" together make eleven. These eleven represent the five *Jnanendriyas* (sensory organs), the five *Karmendriyas* (organs of action) and the mind. These eleven are governed by the eleven *Rudras*. These eleven organs involve man in sensual desires and drag him down to worldly existence. Beyond these eleven is the *Paramatma*, the OmniSelf. When one relies on the Supreme, he can master the other eleven. No one should make any distinction between Siva and Ranga or Rama and Krishna, because the Divine is One, under whatever names it may be worshipped.

The essence of all Divine names is the same

To worship one name and revile another is not true devotion. Most devotees today are narrow-minded and sectarian in their attitudes. There are some who go about glorifying the name of Rama and collecting money in Rama's name. No quarter should be given to such commercialisation of the Divine name. Do not lend your ears to such preachers. Recognise that the Divine dwells in all beings. Love all. Realise that the essence of Divine names is the same. Chant the name of the Lord in this spirit. When you perform *bhajans* in this way, you will realise the oneness of all mankind. In community singing, all have the feeling of oneness.

Sivarathri is an auspicious night. On this night, of the 16 aspects of man, fifteen are merged in man's Divinity. One aspect remains. It is an easy and convenient time for experiencing the Divine. If at least on this one night, the eleven senses are kept under control, one is bound to experience the Divine. If on this night, all bad thoughts are kept out and the mind is concentrated on the name of the Lord, it will experience the consciousness of the Divine. This process has been described as *Jagarana* (nocturnal vigil). Most people claim that they have observed *Jagarana* on *Sivarathri* night by keeping awake witnessing two or three cinema shows at night. Observance of sacred wakefulness on *Sivarathri* night is not achieved by playing cards the whole night. It is a *caricature of Jagarana*. This is the kind of religious observance that is practised in the *Kali* age. During the twelve hours of this night, if all the senses are kept under control and the mind is wholly concentrated on the Supreme, that alone constitutes *Jagarana* (spiritual vigil). If such a vigil is observed by even one in a million, that is enough. Seek to observe such a pure, holy and Divine vigil this night and experience Divine bliss.

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 12-2-1991, Sivarathri Day.

Krishna as the Guru gave the Gita to the world through Arjuna because He found a worthy disciple in him. Your lives will become blessed when you develop faith in God, reverence for His words and the resolve to implement His sacred teachings in your daily lives.

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