

## 12. The Divine and the Cosmos

*The trees yield fruits for the benefit of others;*

*The rivers carry water for helping others;*

*Cows give milk to benefit others;*

*The body is given to man to help others.*

*EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma!* Trees produce fruits for the enjoyment of others. They have such sacred feelings. Rivers carry water to meet the needs of others. They don't consume the water they carry. All their water is offered for the benefit of the world. In a spirit of helpfulness, cows offer their milk to the people. They do not consume their milk. However, man, forgetting that he has been endowed with a body for rendering help to others is immersed in selfish concerns and pursues narrow ends. Man today does not exhibit even a thousandth part of the spirit of selfless help to others shown by trees, rivers or cows.

From sunrise to sunset, man today is steeped in selfish pursuits. All the ills afflicting people today stem from this selfishness. To be concerned about one's self-interest is understandable. But, as the saying goes, nothing great can be achieved without observing appropriate restraints and limits. There must be a clear limit to selfishness. In the absence of such limits, divinity eludes man.

### **Universe is not different from God**

Man does not try even to be human in his way of living. When man becomes truly human, he can experience the Divine.

*What you think exists, is not real.*

*What you think does not exist, is the Reality.*

*God is the only Reality*

*And there is nothing in the world*

*Which is not pervaded by God.*

God is immanent in the entire cosmos. The Universe does not exist apart from God. "*Viswam Vishnumayam Jagath*" (The Universe is permeated by the Lord). "*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma*" (Verily, all this is *Brahmam*). "*Isaavaasyam idam sarvam*" (All this is pervaded by the Lord). The universe is not different from God. The *Prasnopanishad* expatiates on this cosmic unity.

In every *padaartham* (object) there is a *paraartham* (Divine element). Without this Divine basis, no object will be cognisable. A being without life is as good as non-existent. Likewise, any object which lacks a divine base is worthless. The divine element is the basis. The material form is gross. The divine is the basis of the physical substance.

Viewed from the physical point of view, these two appear to be contradictory. But viewed from the spiritual point of view, it will be apparent that there is no material object without a divine basis, no living being without the vital force and no inert substance without consciousness.

### **Cosmos is the synthesis of spirit and matter**

A living creature proclaims its existence by the Life-principle in it. There is life in matter and matter in life. This truth has been recognised by the *Vedic* sages and modern scientists in the concept of the convertibility of matter and energy.

*The Prasnopanishad* has pointed out how the essential one-ness of *Siva-Sakti* represents the unity of the Divine. Hence, there is no basic difference between the revelation of the scriptures and the discoveries of science.

Generally it is considered that the natural sciences are concerned only with matter. Metaphysics is regarded as being concerned with things spiritual. But the physical and the metaphysical are inextricably-related to each other. The unique greatness of the Upanishads consists in proclaiming this basic unity.

It is unfortunate that in these days the Upanishads are regarded as spiritual texts which are not concerned with physical phenomena. Many consider that spirituality has no concern with mundane affairs. Equally, they consider that there is no connection between the physical world and the realm of the Spirit.

This is a grievous mistake. One is the base and the other is sustained by it. One is *prana* (life) and the other is the *prani* (living being). The cosmos is the synthesis in consciousness of these two (Spirit and matter).

### **God and the Universe are inter-related**

To ignore this universe and to concern yourself with only the Spirit is a form of narrow-mindedness. You have to develop the conviction that the Divine and the Universe are intimately interrelated. If the phenomenal world did not exist, one cannot understand anything. Nor can one recognise any truth. The universe is the basic cause of ideas relating to what is Real and what is unreal. It is impossible to accomplish anything if the world is discarded. Basing yourself on the physical world, you have to aspire for realising the Divine. If you want to realise the Divinity in man, you have to understand the nature of the human estate.

Once upon a time, six young students, who were keen to learn about the mystery of existence and the true purpose of human birth and to investigate the goals of life, came to the sage Pippalada. Prostrating before the sage in all humility, they asked the sage: "Oh Maharishi! What is the cause of creation and of the Cosmos? What is the primary purpose of human life?" They appealed to the sage to clear their doubts and teach them the truth.

Pippalada said: "It is your good fortune that you have developed this desire for the highest wisdom. But, for undertaking any task, one has to have the minimum competence. Without that competence, even the answers I give will be beyond your comprehension. Even for doing the smallest task, one has to acquire the requisite fitness. If one wants to prescribe a medicine for a patient, he has to be a qualified doctor. If one wants to build a bridge, he must be a qualified engineer. This applies equally to every undertaking in the world. Therefore, while your desire is commendable, you have to prepare yourselves at the outset by preliminary studies relating to the processes of investigating the truth about the real and the unreal. Don't be in a hurry, because haste is inimical to the discovery of truth and results in waste of time and energy. The purpose of life is implicit in the fact of human birth. You must cultivate patience to discover the purpose of life. Therefore, stay in the *ashram* for some time, observing its disciplines."

After the lapse of a year, Kabandhi, the son of Katya Maharishi, approached sage Pippalada and said: "Sire, I have stayed here for quite some time. My doubts have grown. I appeal to you to clear the doubts and confer peace of mind on me." He asked the sage: "Who is the primal author of this creation? Who is the creator of these innumerable living beings?"

### **The creative process**

Pippalada smiled at the youth and replied: "Dear son! These are the progeny of *Prajapathi*." Kabandhi felt disappointed with the answer. He said: "Swami! You state that *Prajapathi* is the creator of living creatures. Who is this *Prajapathi*?" Pippalada replied: "Food is *Prajapathi*. It is through food that human birth takes place." "What is the root cause of food?" "Varuna," replied the sage. "It is because of Varuna, crops grow and food becomes available."

The sage told him: "Your conduct is of primary importance. The results are based on the nature of your actions like smoke from fire, rain from the clouds and the harvest from the rain. The nature of the human being depends on the nature of the food he consumes."

When the sage was asked what was behind this process, he explained: "The Sun represents *Prana* (life). The moon represents inert matter. The combination of life and matter is the cause of creation."

In the universe, both matter and *chaitanya* (consciousness) are self-existing. Likewise, life and the living being exist naturally. The unity of these two accounts for the creative process.

### **The Sun is the primary cause of creation**

The sun is ever shining effulgently. The sun's rays enter the digestive process (represented by the *Jataragni*--the digestive fire). For every object in the world, whether it is a tree or a mountain or a living creature, the sun's rays are essential for its existence. These rays contain the Life-Force. It is through this Life-Force that creation goes on. It is this Life-Force that sustains the cosmos. Sage Pippalada declared that the Sun is the primary cause of creation, growth and dissolution.

The sage observed that very few students were interested in making the enquiry about the fundamental goal of human life. Most men were content to regard eating, sleeping, etc. as the be-all and end-all of life. This is wrong. The true goal of human life is to discover what is right and what is wrong, to lead a life of righteousness and to share the fruits of such a life with others. An ideal student should follow the example of the fish, which removes the dirt in the water and purifies it. He should plunge into society, remove the evils afflicting it and stand out as an ideal example to others.

### **Courage is the key to success**

Students should also realise that they have to face the difficulties and challenges of life. Nothing worthwhile can be achieved without strenuous and difficult efforts.

There was a gardener who felt depressed over the drudgery of his life after a trivial domestic quarrel. The mud pot, which he used for carrying water on his head to water the plants in the garden, hearing his lament told him that without going through severe ordeals nothing great can be achieved. It pointed out the lesson to be drawn from its own career from a despised lump of clay to a pot carried on the head of man. This was possible because it was pressed and moulded into a pot and burnt in a kiln before it emerged as a pot.

The body has been given to man to face all difficulties. There is no need for man to bemoan his weakness. He is indeed endowed with the capacity to overcome the difficulties he encounters in life. Only because he is unaware of his strength, he feels overwhelmed by difficulties. Students must be ever prepared to face with courage every challenge in life. Courage is the key to success. Life is bound to offer all kinds of difficulties. You should not quail before them. Face every ordeal with fortitude. It was this kind of courage that sage Pippalada taught to his disciples.

Students nowadays get easily depressed and confused when they encounter difficulties. Depression leads to frustration. This is not the way to face the challenges of life. They should develop the courage to go through the adventure of life. Adhering to truth, cherishing love in their hearts, cultivating fortitude, students should develop firm determination and a steady vision. Such a life will result in fulfilment. The rewards of life can be got only through strenuous effort, just as sugar can be got from sugarcane only after crushing it and processing the juice.

The body is like the sugarcane. The difficulties to be overcome by the body are like the crushing, etc, which the cane undergoes before sugar is produced. It is through the difficulties one experiences that the sweet juice of divinity manifests in man. This sweetness is all.

### **The three stages of enquiry**

In the world men drift along without making proper enquiry about the meaning and purpose of life. That is why the Gita indicated how man should undertake this enquiry. It pointed out three stages: "*Jnaathum, Drashtum and Praveshtum.*" *Jnaathum* refers to the first stage of ascertaining the objective. Without this knowledge, there is no meaning in undertaking anything. One has to find out what is to be sought, from where and from whom and how it is to be got. Even when a person wants to enjoy a mango, all these enquiries have to be made before the mango can be got and eaten. After getting the knowledge of where mangoes are available--which is the stage of *Jnaathum*--one sees the fruit in the market. This is *Drashtum* (seeing). After buying the fruit, you start eating it--this is the stage of *Praveshtum*. It is only when all the three stages are gone through that one realises one's objective and achieves fulfilment. Students should realise that whatever is their objective, they should approach knowledgeable persons and seek to know from them all about their objective. You should not arrogate to yourself that you are all-knowing. In fact, in the world today even what the greatest scientist knows is only a miniscule part of the totality of knowledge.

Students should recognise the unique importance of the *Prasnopanishad*. All the doubts felt today are answered in this Upanishad.

The students of the old days were highly dedicated and disciplined young men, who controlled their senses and led a life of renunciation in the quest for understanding the highest truth. Today the students' minds are running in all directions. Their aspirations vary from hour to hour. One's true goal should not change with time. One should pursue the goal with firm resolve. This calls for control over the senses. Students should strive to become masters of their senses.

### **Never dissipate your energies**

The disciples of the sages in the old days had the devotion, discrimination and determination, which enabled them to realise the divinity. True devotion calls for readiness to sacrifice one's all for what he values. You have to develop total commitment to whatever task you take up. When work is done in this spirit, it becomes worship.

You have to use your discrimination properly to determine what is right and act accordingly, uninfluenced by considerations of expediency or self-interest. In exercising your freedom of action, you have to show due regard for the equal right to freedom of others. Never dissipate your energies. They must be used for the sacred purposes for which they have been given to you. Bear in mind that you will be the future rulers of this country. How much knowledge and ability are required to govern a country like ours! You have to acquire all the qualifications for such tasks. Instead of acquiring the requisite skills, students fight for "rights." How can "rights" be divorced from responsibilities? Rights flow from the due discharge of responsibilities. As students, you have to keep in mind your duties to your parents, to society, to the nation and to life itself. When you discharge these duties, your rights will be automatically ensured.

### **Develop inner vision to achieve equanimity**

In his answers to the questions put by the six students who approached him, the sage Pippalada revealed to them what were the primary goals of life and how they should conduct themselves. In this *Kali* age, owing to the perversions of time, place and circumstances, students are prone to ignore the promptings of their inner conscience and act in response to external impressions. They must develop the inner vision to achieve a balanced attitude.

The world needs today the services of students dedicated to ideals. The external environment is highly polluted. But if you keep your hearts pure, you can cleanse these impurities and transform the environment. Develop Self-confidence for this purpose. The rest will follow--Self-satisfaction, Self-sacrifice and

Self-realisation. At the basis of all these is the awareness of the Self, the *Atma-principle*. Pippalada taught the students that this awareness should be their primary objective. In that awareness, the identification with the body consciousness goes and the oneness of the *Atma* in all is realised. This is the message of the *Prasnopanishad*.

*Discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, on 26-5-1991.*

*People aspire only for the fruits of authority; they shirk the responsibility that authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India, it is the attitude of aspirants all over the World today. Power is sought but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the World today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but do not discharge the responsibilities of those positions. No one is entitled to such position who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they may be, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold.*

*BABA*