

10. Hold Fast To The Lord

*When sandalwood is rubbed repeatedly,
the fragrance from it increases;
When the sugarcane is chewed again and again,
the juice gets sweeter.
When gold is heated in the crucible repeatedly,
it becomes pure and brighter.
The noble ones adhere to righteousness
through all the vicissitudes of life.*

Embodiments of Divine Love! Human life is supremely precious in this world. But not all are alive to this truth. Wherein lies this preciousness? Humanness does not consist merely in the physical and the mundane. "*Shareeram Aadhyam khalu Dharmasaadhanam*" (Verily, the body is the primary requisite for the realisation of *Dharma*). It is for the pursuit of Righteousness that this body has been given to man. God is the repository of *Ananda* (Bliss). He is eternal. Among the myriad names of the Divine, the greatest is *Sath-chith-ananda*. *Sath* means that which is unchanging at all times--past, present and future. It remains the same irrespective of time, place and circumstance. It transcends time, space and conditions.

Chith means *paripurna jnaana* (complete awareness). It comprehends full knowledge of everything--social, moral, physical, scientific and spiritual. It is the undercurrent of every kind of knowledge. Where *Sath* and *Chith* exist together, there is *Ananda* (Bliss).

Humanness originates from *Ananda*, grows in *Ananda* and merges in *Ananda*. This bliss is the goal of man. Man is born in bliss. To manifest bliss is the duty of man. This is the secret of the human saga.

It is a sheer folly to search for bliss outside

Every individual makes a variety of efforts to experience bliss. From infancy to old age, man dedicates every effort of his to secure bliss. But, this bliss is not to be found in the places he searches. When he is the very embodiment of bliss, to seek for it outside himself is sheer folly. Does any man in the world search for himself outside himself? If such search is a sign of ignorance, equally the search for bliss outside one's self is a mark of ignorance.

Water can exist without fish, but fish cannot exist out of water. A branch is part of a tree. A child is part of the mother. A branch cannot survive apart from the tree. The child cannot live without the mother. Likewise, the human existence is based on the Divine. Man is a spark of the Divine. Without the Divine, man cannot experience bliss. Unfortunately, on account of the perversions of the *Kali* Age, men express verbal acceptance of this truth, but do not experience it wholeheartedly and hence seek, by their own efforts, to find the bliss by exploring the phenomenal world.

Understand your true self

What is the origin of man? Wherefrom has he come? What is his original home? No one tries to investigate these matters in the proper manner. Man exists, he moves about, eats and lives, but

wherefrom has he come? Basing himself on his corporeal form, he declares that he has come from Madras, Bombay or some other place. Similarly, reckoning on the profession in which he is engaged, he describes himself as a doctor, a lawyer, an agriculturist or something else. By relating himself to a place, a country or a profession, he cannot understand his real self.

What is this true self? The answer is *Manuja* or *Maanava*. What does Manu signify? It refers to *Swayambhu Manu* (the self-created Manu). *Ja* means birth. *Manuja* refers to one who has had his birth from Manu. Man is called *Manuja* because he has originated from the self-born Manu. Man does not recognise this fact. Consequently, even though he is the embodiment of *Sath-chith-ananda*, he desperately seeks bliss elsewhere. What is the reason? Oblivious to the *Jnaana* (higher knowledge), he lives in ignorance' in a dream world of illusions. Immersed in this sleeping state, he forgets his nature. One may be a president, an emperor or a prime minister, but in the sleeping state he is not conscious of his position. In the dreams he experiences in this state, he considers them to be real and feels that these are his true state. In that dream state, a poor man may think he is an emperor (or a President). But the moment he wakes up, he is conscious of his real position and status.

Wake up from the sleep of ignorance

Likewise, man in his dream state of *Ajnaana* (ignorance) forgetting his true form of *Sath-chith-ananda*, identifies himself with a country, a profession or a physical form. It is this ignorance that envelops man in delusion. Just as one cannot see the rice when it is covered by husk, or see the water underneath a layer of moss, or the sun covered by a cloud, a man enveloped in ignorance is unable to see his true self. Hence it is that the Upanishads have exhorted man to wake up from his sleep of ignorance and realise his true nature. When the husk is removed, the rice is visible. It was there in the paddy. But because of the husk coveting it, it could not be seen.

All objects that are enveloped in this manner are liable to change and are impermanent. The Veda has declared: "Whatever is perceived is liable to perish." That is, all objects in the phenomenal world are bound to perish sometime or other. Man sees with his physical eyes all objects in the world, moving and non-moving. All these will disappear in due course in the stream of Time. Neither the eye that sees nor the object that is seen is permanent.

All beings in creation are endowed with eyes. What is the special significance of the eyes possessed by man? What is the unique significance of human existence? Having been born as a human being, it will be unfortunate if man is content with the physical vision. Man must acquire *Jnaana netram* (the eye of Wisdom). Without it, of what avail is one's education? What is the use of one's intelligence or one's mental powers? What is a man worth if he is unable to recognise the divinity within him?

Man is the crown of creation. That is why the scriptures have praised the noble virtues man is capable of manifesting. Hence, as a human being one must strive to acquire the eye of wisdom. The physical eyes are inept. You cannot see your own eyes. These imperfect eyes, how can they see the highly subtle mind? The eyes which are unable to see the mind, how can they see the *Aatma* (the Indwelling Spirit)? One who is unable to understand himself, how can he expect to understand others? The physical eyes will never be able to see the *Aatma*.

Man is unable to comprehend his true nature

The most important thing in this world is the *Aatma-Jivitham* (life of the Spirit). Bodily existence, mental life or intellectual life cannot be considered true living at all. Man's main

preoccupation appears to be with nurturing the body and wasting it until death. Falling a prey to the forces of time, space and circumstances, man is unable to comprehend his true nature. From dawn to dusk man is engaged in enquiring into various matters. He studies many books and makes many investigations. But what is the outcome of all this? He has learnt nothing. The satisfaction he derives from time to time from these endeavours ends in disappointment. They are like the pursuit of a mirage. They do not serve to quench one's thirst. They may appear like water, but there is no water in them.

All pleasures derived from *Prakruthi* (the phenomenal world) may appear to confer happiness, but they do not confer real happiness and bliss, because they are not lasting. They come and go, leaving a trail of misery.

Real conqueror is one who has subdued his mind

Sankaracharya posed the question: "Who is a real conqueror in this world?" His disciples gave different answers. One disciple said that a real conqueror was one who had subdued the world and brought it under his sway. Another said that the man who scaled the Himalayas and planted a flag on its summit was a great conqueror. Another declared that one who crossed the oceans was a hero. Sankaracharya listened to these replies with a smile and said: "Dear students! you are looking at conquests solely in worldly terms. Viewed in this way, anyone can achieve victories. An animal can fight another and establish its victory. Likewise, there can be a victor among birds. Birds cross oceans and fly over the Himalayas. Where is the victory in all this? Nothing at all." Sankaracharya declared: "Only the person who has subdued his mind is a real conqueror." It is a mental aberration to think that one has achieved a victory without subduing his mind.

The mind is associated with the moon. It resembles the moon in not being self-luminous. If the moon shines at night, wherefrom does it derive its light? The moon shines by reflecting the light of the Sun. It must be noted that the Sun shines effulgently, His light is very powerful. One cannot dare to look at it directly. But moonlight is cool and comforting. Although the light from the sun and the light from the moon have the same source, what accounts for the difference between them?

With regard to the mind, it will be seen that when filled with desires, it has a *thamasik* quality. Where the *thamasik* quality prevails, there is darkness. When the mind's desires are fulfilled, it experiences coolness. When desires are not satisfied, the mind is restless. But it does not get heated. Such is the nature of the mind.

It is not easy for anyone to control the mind. The mind has been described as a bundle of thoughts and fancies. It is not possible to stop the thought process even for a moment. The mind experiences a ceaseless flow of thoughts like the endless waves of the ocean. Sankaracharya said that the true victor is one who is able to conquer this ceaseless flow of thoughts in the mind.

The senses' sway over man

Today men boast about their myriad achievements. But all these are accompanied by anxiety. So, these achievements are not significant. Man assumes that he is investigating various phenomena. This is not so. It is man's senses which are experimenting with him. Man imagines that he is making use of his sense organs. Not at all. The truth is the senses are sporting with man. Man is not alive to this fact. If man really mastered the senses and had full sway over them, he would not be subject to *vicharam* (anxiety). It is the senses that are holding sway over man. They are

utilising man for their enjoyment, with the result that man has become a weakling. He is a victim of peacelessness. He is a prey to many troubles.

How, then, are the senses to be brought under control? It should be recognised that the senses are merely instruments. They are called *Karanams*, that is, instruments. These instruments should be wielded by you. You should not become their plaything. Unfortunately this is not the case now. Man has become an instrument in the grip of the senses. As a result, he is powerless to act properly. Nor is that all. He is even misusing the senses. Hence, it is essential to bring the senses under one's control. Only then will the senses be powerless to cause any harm to man.

The *Aatma* is the seer--not the eyes

Take for instance, the power of sight. You think that it is the eyes that see (any object). No. The eye is inert matter. Who is it that sees? The seer is *Aatma*. When you notice the lights of a car, you think that the bulbs are burning. But the bulbs are burning because of the current they are getting.

Consider the ears. People are listening to the broadcast from their loudspeakers. They may consider the loudspeakers as the source of the sounds they hear. But if there is no current, the loudspeakers will be silent. Here, again, it is the current that is the basic factor. The ears are like a loudspeaker. It is because of the current of *Aatma* that the ears are able to hear.

Hence, for the functioning of all sense organs the *Aatma* is basic. Without mentioning this term, the scientists call this prime mover as power or energy. This energy is of no use without matter. Equally, matter is of no use without energy. God can be defined as Matter + Energy - God.

The functioning of the Divine must be seen in this combination. For instance, one cannot see without eyes. This is true. The eyes are able to see a person only by the help of sunlight. At the same time, the sunlight by itself is of no use. There are any number of blind people in the world. They are unable to see the effulgence of the sun. But for that reason can they deny the existence of the sun? The blind cannot see the sun, but those with eyes can see.

However great a scholar may be, when he is asleep, he cannot see the world. But a totally illiterate person, who is awake, can see the world. To see things in the waking state, no scholarship or intelligence is needed. Man needs the eye of wisdom to see the good and bad things in the world.

Special significance of *Yugadi*

Today is the beginning of the new year (*Yugadi*). What is the first *rithu* (season) of this year? It is *Vasantha-rithu* (the season of Spring). What is the most important month in the year? It is *Chaithramasa* (the first month of the new year). The *Shuklapaksha* (bright fortnight) is the better part of the month. Among the days, the first day of the lunar month is important. As all these important elements are present today, it has special significance as marking the commencement of a new year (described as *Yugadi*).

This is the *Kali Yuga*. There are four *yugas* (aeons) *Kritha*, *Thretha*, *Dwapara* and *Kali*. How do Bharathiyas celebrate the advent of the new year? After a sacred bath in the morning, they put on new clothes, eat sweet preparations and celebrate the day as a festive occasion. These celebrations have gone on for many years. But how far have the people imbibed the truths underlying these celebrations? The garments are new, but the natures are unchanged. It is not

enough to wear new clothes. The qualities must change. Without a reformation in character there is no meaning in observing these festivals.

***Yugadi* is related purely to the phenomenal world**

Bharathiyas have been observing the birthdays of *Avatars* as festival days. The birthdays of the founders of various faiths have also been observed as festivals. The death anniversaries of wicked persons as well as of holy men have been observed as festivals. But the *Yugadi* celebration is not related to the birth of *any Avatar* or the birth or death of any saint or prophet. It is related purely to *Prakruthi* (the phenomenal world). It is important for one and all. It is an occasion for comprehending the nature of the universe. When we want to know who is God, the answer is found in *Prakruthi*. It is the visible manifestation of God.

This earth revolves round itself hundreds of miles in an hour. What is it that happens because of these revolutions? You have night and day. Because of this succession of night and day, man is able to take rest. Moreover, the earth is moving round the sun at the speed of thousands of miles an hour. Because of this motion, the seasons occur and we have rains, crops and harvests. Thus, without expecting any return, Nature is nourishing man.

Good prospects for the year "Angeerasa"

There are sixty years in the Hindhu almanac's cycle of years, starting with *Prabhava* and ending with *Akshaya*. The present year is the sixth in the cycle, bearing the name Angeerasa. It conveys the message relating to the six primary enemies of man (lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride and envy). All these enemies are present in every limb of man.

There are nine deities presiding over the events of the year. They are the Sun and other planets. Among these nine, six are beneficent in this year. During this year, by and large, only auspicious things will occur. Moreover, there will be no shortage of food-grains and other agricultural produce. The monsoon will be normal. Prices, however, will continue to rise because of the misguided policies of governments. But the administration in general will be peaceful and orderly. Political disorders will be less. Individual differences and antagonisms may exist, but there will be no serious disorders. This is because all the principal ruling planets are friendly towards each other and are of good disposition. When a ruler and his commander-in-chief are at variance, the nation suffers. This year, the ruler and the commander-in-chief among the planets are friends. This has beneficial effects on the world.

Angeerasa is one of the names of the Lord. It means that God as *Rasa* (essence) flows in every *anga* (limb) of man. Because the year bears the Lord's name, it is bound to be a godly year. Devotional activities will grow. But they are likely to be more in the nature of preaching and propagation than practice and performance. Devotion should express itself in conduct. Ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in the world profess devotion, but not one of them displays any godly virtues. Devotion is preached and professed out of selfish interests and not as a means to God-realisation.

You must hold fast to one ideal. Today man lives his life without any ideal. He has to understand what is his goal in life. The goal is *Aatma* (the Divine). It is *Sath-chith-ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). This *Sath-chith-ananda* is within man. People eat inert things and worship inert objects, wasting their lives, but ignore the divinity that is present in the same objects in subtle form as *Chaithanya* (Consciousness). Any act done with love will be immensely helpful. Animals serve man by toiling and helping to grow crops. But man treats such animals harshly.

He harms the creatures which serve him. But he offers worship to images of animals such as Nandi. What folly is this!

Firm faith and clear vision are essential

God is omnipresent. But he should be experienced as present in subtle form as Consciousness. This divine feeling should arise in man. The entire Cosmos is pervaded by the Divine, declares the *Upanishad*--"*Isaavaasyam idham Sarvam*" Divinity is present in every human being. Man today is more intent on dividing the One into the many than on realising the unity that subsumes the diversity. To recognise the unity that underlies the multiplicity is the primary task before man today.

You must develop faith and see to it that it is firm and unchanging. Firm faith and a clear vision are essential. Men proclaim their faith in God when their desires are fulfilled, but deride Him when they are not realised. These desires are often petty and trivial. Men do not realise that God is waiting to fulfil much greater desires. Ignorant of the immensely valuable treasures in God's treasury, man seeks cheap trinkets. Instead of a diamond, man asks for a piece of charcoal. Not getting it, he feels disappointed. God wishes to give you a diamond. You do not have the patience to wait until you get it. Men will wait hours in a queue to catch a bus or buy a film ticket but will not devote five minutes to think of God.

Develop an optimistic attitude in life

Your attitude to God should not be based on the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of petty desires. You must feel that whatever happens to you is for your own good. You must have the firm belief that whether your wishes are fulfilled or not, nothing harmful will happen to you. Be firm in your faith in weal and woe. Develop an optimistic attitude towards life. When there is a glass half full of water the optimist is glad to see the water in it while the pessimist is sorry it is half empty. One must recognise both the truths.

For instance, it is true that there is no rose without a thorn. The wise man must pick up the rose without touching the thorn. The optimist looks up at the night-sky and enjoys the cool moonlight. The pessimist looks down at the ground and feels depressed over the darkness below. Hence, you must look up. Aiming low is a crime. Do not look downwards. Develop sublime thoughts. It is because man today lacks sublime thoughts that he is a prey to disappointments. Why is he disappointed? Because he has built up expectations. If he does his duty without expectation, there will be no disappointment.

Duty is God. Work is worship. The results come of their own accord. The weak-minded man meets with failures. The strong-minded man accomplishes whatever he wants. Turn your mind towards God. You will then be free from bondage. It is because you are all the time involved in worldly pursuits that you get bound.

Love is God. Live in Love

A pure mind is like a pearl in the oyster. Worldly life is like an ocean. In that ocean you can find the pearl of a pure mind within the oyster of the human body. This pearl is the *Aatmic* truth. It is immaculately pure, without attributes, eternal and unchanging. Its effulgence and purity are beyond compare. The *Aatma* has no legs but moves faster than anything else. It has no hands but can grasp anything. It has no eyes, but there is nothing in the universe it cannot see. To experience this *Aatma*, the only means is the way of Love. When you are filled with Love, the Lord is easily attained. Love is God. Live in Love.

Our life must be lived in Love. Years may come and go. Seasons may change. Wars may be going on. But if only you have a drop of Divine Grace, you will be able to accomplish anything. To receive the benefit of such grace, you have to direct your vision inwards. Unfortunately, all your vision is turned outwards. What you see depends on the direction of your vision. Therefore, convert your vision into *Premadhrishti* (a vision of Love).

It is said that the cosmos is *mithya* (illusory) and the Brahman (Absolute) alone is real. This is not correct. The *Jagath* (Cosmos) is also real. When you have the love-filled vision, the whole cosmos appears *Brahmanayam* (permeated by the Absolute). When you see the world with the physical eye it appears as a bundle of miseries from birth to death. Love of God is the only way out of this misery. Acquire this love at least now. There is nothing greater than this that I can convey to you.

Practise at least some part of what you hear

Embodiments of the Divine *Aatma!* You listen to many discourses and exhortations from great speakers. They do not become part of you unless you practice at least some part of what you hear. Whatever position one may hold in any bank, what belongs to him in it is only the amount of his deposit in it. Likewise, whatever great teachings you may listen to, only that part of the teachings which you practice belongs to you. All that you merely hear is not yours.

Wealth and education are not good or bad in themselves. This depends on how each individual uses them. When they are used for right ends, they become good. This calls for purity of the heart.

Treat all experiences with equanimity

On *Yugadi* day, it is the practice among the rural folk to eat what is called "*Yugadi pachchadi*" (New Year savoury). This chutney is made from neem flowers, mango juice, honey, sugar and other ingredients with different tastes. The inner significance of this preparation is to indicate that life is a mix-rare of good and bad, joy and sorrow and all of them have to be treated alike. All experiences have to be treated with equanimity. Everyone should make a resolve that he will face calmly whatever happens in this year, accepting it with good grace. Welcome everything. Do not bemoan over anything untoward. Consider everything as for your own good. Men should rise above sorrow and happiness, success and failure. This is the primary message of the *Yugadi* festival. Everything that occurs should be treated as a gift from God.

This world is a mixture of pleasure and pain, which are inseparable. Pleasure is the outcome of pain. By developing equal-mindedness, you must cherish faith in God. Fill your hearts with Love of God, and perform your duties with dedication. This is the foremost duty of man.

Kalyana Mandap, Brindavan, Yugadi Day, 4 Apr 1992

Greed is the monstrous evil that drags man down. When Ravana lay dying, Rama directed His brother, Lakshmana, to go to him and learn from him the secrets of successful statecraft! Ravana taught him that a king who is eager to win glory must suppress greed as soon as it lifts its head, and welcome the smallest chance to do good to others, without the slightest procrastination! He had learnt the lesson through bitter experience!

Sathya Sai Baba