

God, man and the Cosmos

Trees yield fruits for the benefit of others,

Rivers carry water for the use of others,

Cows give milk for the good of others

The human body is given for serving others.

(Sanskrit shloka)

FOR the benefit of others, trees yield fruits. Likewise, for the benefit of others in the world, rivers carry water. Cows, without consuming their milk, take the trouble to produce milk for the benefit of others. Man also, without considering his own personal interests, should use his body for the benefit of others.

"Shareeram Aadhyam Khalu Dharma Saadhanam" (The body is the primary requisite for the achievement of *Dharma*). The body has to discharge a variety of functions for the sake of the family, the society and the nation.

"Aham Eva Akshaya Kaalah" (I am the indestructible Time), says the Lord in the Geetha. This Time is not a momentary phenomenon. It is the embodiment of eternal and infinite Time. The sages called this Time as *Vathsarah*. This name signifies the presence of the Divine as the Time-Spirit in all human beings. Moreover, God is the basis for all that happens, either through instrumentality or by direct intervention. He is the basis for what is permanent and what is temporary, for birth and death, for joy and sorrow. For this reason the Divine Time-Spirit has been called *Hethu* (the Cause). *Hethu* means that God is the primal cause of everything. He is also the eternal witness. He is *Pramaanasvaruupa* (validating authority) for everything. Hence He is described as omnipresent, having His feet, etc., everywhere. Time is the basis for everything.

Samvathsara (year) is also called *Vikshara*. All objects in the world are subject to the process of creation, growth and decay. But the name *Kaala-Svaruupa* was given to the Divine, who is not subject to birth, growth or decay. This changeless Divine is called *Vikshara*. Since the year is associated with *Vikshara*, God is *Samvathsara Svaruupa* (the embodiment of Time and its periods).

Sathya and Dharma in Bhaaratheeya culture

For the proper utilization of Time, which is Divine, the *Vedhik* texts laid down basic injunctions for mankind. Among these, foremost are *"Sathyam Vadha: Dharmam Chara"* (Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness). This aphorism has a pre-eminent position in Bhaaratheeya culture. Likewise, we have the injunctions' "Esteem the father as God: Revere the mother as Divine." The *Vedhas* proclaimed these aphorisms to be followed by the whole world.

Sathya is the basic goal of human life. Bhaaratheeya culture has revealed how this goal is to be reached. Bhaaratheeyas today have forgotten this culture. From immemorial times, Bhaaratheeyas were engaged in the quest for Truth. Everything is encompassed by Truth.

The quest for Truth is linked with the pursuit of *Jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). For the acquisition of wisdom, purity of *Buddhi* (intellect) is essential. If the intellect is not pure, the senses are likely

to go haywire. Purity of the intellect is in fact, essential for every purpose. *Saadhanas* performed without purity of the heart will be utterly useless, like food cooked in unclean vessels.

The glory of spiritual bliss

Bhaaratheeya culture and the *Vedhik* texts have proclaimed the glory of *Aanandha* (spiritual bliss). The *Aathmik* principle can be understood only in relation to this concept of Bliss. What is the *Aathma*? Who has seen it? What is the proof for its existence? To answer these questions, here is an illustration. Today is Friday, the 14th April. Who told you these particulars about today? The day did not announce this when it began. You derive this information from a calendar or an almanac. In the same manner the proofs for great spiritual truths are provided in the declarations of the *Vedhas*. It is only *Aathmathathvam* (spiritual principle) that reveals the oneness of the universe. The entire cosmos has emanated from the *Aathma*.

The human being is called *Nara* in Sanskrit. *Nara* means *Aathma* (the Self). *Nara* is made up of two syllables. 'Na' and 'Ra.' *Ra* (rah) means that which is perishable. *Na-Ra* means that which is not perishable. This means that *Nara* (man) is subject to change in bodily form, but is essentially immortal. He is full of bliss.

But today people are oblivious to this true nature of man. Human values are also forgotten. People are behaving either like animals or like demons. It is only when people recognise their real human nature and pursue spiritual values, they will realise their sacred divinity.

For all these, devotion is fundamental. Does devotion mean meditation, *japa*, or observing various austerities? No. Anything done with expectation of reward gets tarnished by the desire for fruits and cannot be deemed real devotion. Devotion has been defined as desireless love for the Lord. Any prayer to God for fulfilment of a desire cannot be called devotion. God should be loved for His own sake. Love should be fostered for its own sake.

True devotion is a combination of selfless service and love. This is illustrated by an episode from the Mahaabhaaratha.

Dharmaja's love for Krishna

Dharmaja, the eldest of the Paandava brothers, ceaselessly adored Krishna. While living in the forest or when he was in Dhuryodhana's court witnessing the dishonouring of Dhraupadhi, or when Abhimanyu was killed in battle, or when the infant Upapaandavas were killed (by Ashvathaama)--in all these situations Dharmaja used to love Krishna with perfect calmness. He used to feel "Krishna! These joys and sorrows are twins that always go together. Hence there is no need to get elated or depressed. I cannot swerve from my allegiance to your divinity. My love for you is for your own sake and not for the sake of the world. My love is the bond that links you and me. It is like a bridge that connects the OmniSelf and the individual Self."

Such sacred and divine love is being abused today and consequently the results are bad.

You hail this year as new, but it is not new at all. Nor is *Maanava* (man) a new arrival on earth. *Maa-nava* means that which is not (*Maa*) new (*Nava*). When man himself is not new, how can the year be new? Time is divided into night and day, weeks and years on the basis of the revolutions of the earth and the moon in relation to the sun. In truth, man should regard every moment as new, every day as new. Man is governed by these changes, but God is unaffected, God is changeless.

It is only when such sacred truths are understood properly that real devotion will arise in people's hearts.

Fill your hearts with love

For the growth of crops water is essential. But the crops cannot go upto the sky in search of water. For the sake of the crops, the clouds come down and provide water for them. When you pray to God for His own sake, He will take care of everything. Flowers do not invite the bees, but the bees go to them in quest of honey. When we develop the nectar of love in our hearts, God will come to us, like the bee, to drink the nectar. If, on the other hand, you have a plastic flower, no bee will come near it. Likewise only when we fill our hearts with the nectar of love will the Divine enter it.

Today there is perpetual discord between man and man, community and community, village and village, caste and caste. What is the reason? The absence of unity and feeling of common bond. This accounts for the divisions among people. People should realise that it is the one Divine Self that resides in all beings.

I often tell the students that the one truth proclaimed by all the 18 *puraanas* (epics) is: "*Paropakaaarah Punyaaya; Paapaaya parapeedanam*" (It is meritorious to help others; it is sinful to harm other's). The term *paropakaara* should be properly understood. It is not merely rendering help to others in one form of other. The term *para-upa-kaara* means: Bringing (*Kaara*) to the proximity (*Upa*) of God (*Para*). Purely mundane forms of help cannot be described as *paropakaara*. They are gross, external and worldly. True *paropakaara* consists in bringing your life close to the divine. That is *punya* (merit). *Punya* does not mean going on pilgrimage or giving gifts. *Punya* means taking your life close to God. This calls for *Ekaathmabhaava* (the recognition of the Divine in all beings). *Para-peedanam* means failing to see the Divine in all beings. That is *Paapa* (sinful).

Growth of selfishness

Man has progressed a great deal in the physical and scientific fields. But with regard to morality and spirituality man has declined considerably. The reason is the deep-rooted growth of selfishness over the centuries. The entire human life is permeated with selfishness. This selfishness should be brought under restraint. Only then human life can be meaningful. Man should look at the world from the Divine point of view. Life is full of ups and downs. All these are transient. Man should use what is temporary (the body) as the base for realising what is eternal, the *Aathma*. These are inter-related.

People should endeavour to understand the *Aathmik* principle. What is the *Aathma*? Where is it? These questions were raised by a king. Where is God? Where does He cast His looks? What does He do? Few in his court could answer these questions. He then summoned a sage and asked him: "Where is God?" He replied, "Like butter in milk, He is everywhere." "Where does God cast His eyes?" asked the king. "In which direction does this lamp shed its light?" asked the sage in return. "It sheds its light in all directions," answered the king. The sage observed- "Likewise, God is effulgent and sees everything everywhere. There is no particular direction for God's vision. He is all-seeing and omnipresent."

The king then asked: "What work does God do?" The sage said: "To answer this question I have to assume the role of the preceptor and you should accept the role of the disciple. Are you prepared for this?" The King said "Yes." the sage said: "In that case, you better come down from

the throne and sit down, while I sit on the throne." When the king sat down the sage remarked: "This is what God does. He brings down the mighty and elevates the humble, He can make the poor rich and the rich poor. He can do anything. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-pervading." These are true characteristics of God. He is all-pervading like butter in milk. He is all-seeing like the light of a lamp which sends out its rays all around. God is also all-powerful. He can do anything.

Faith is essential for everyone

Everyone should have this faith in the Divine. Faith is essential for anyone, whether, he is a theist or an atheist. People may judge things as good or bad according to their own predilections. But for God all things are the same. In this world nothing will appear bad if one views it from the Divine point of view. Seen from the worldly point of view, there will be differences of good and bad.

To experience the Divine, one has to perform good deeds. The Divine is present in every being as *Chaitanya* (consciousness). This consciousness is also described as *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). *Sath* means Truth, that which is true and unchanging in all the categories of Time---past, present and future. Truth can be cognised only by truth. *Chith* means total awareness. To have total awareness you have to have a total vision. You must have complete love to get that vision. To see an object in its totality, and not partially, is total awareness. It is only when there is total awareness of Truth, you can experience the *Aanandha* (Bliss Divine). *Aanandha* is that which is unchanging. To experience *Aanandha* you have to fill yourself with bliss. How is this to be achieved? Where is *Aanandha*? Is it in this phenomenal world? You imagine that if you get a certain object you will be happy. But after getting it, how long does the happiness last?

The source of enduring bliss is within you

A student thinks that he will be happy if he passes his examination. After passing the examination, he wants to continue his studies. After completing his studies, he is again unhappy because he has no job. After getting a job, he is anxious for a promotion. And so on, at every stage happiness is only momentary, but desires are endless. Bliss cannot be found in worldly objects. The source of enduring bliss is within you. There is no meaning in searching for it elsewhere. Turn your external vision inwards. Close your eyes and try to see within. In this process, bliss will emerge from within you.

Some teachers declare: "Give up the world and take hold of God." Do these teachers follow what they preach? No. They are very much in the world and still preach in this manner. It is not possible to give up the world. The world also is a manifestation of God. Unfortunately, people go on looking at this Divine manifestation but do not see it as such. All that you see is a form of the Divine. Do not see it as different from God.

Sun presides over the intellect and moon over the mind

In this world, you have to give due recognition to the physical and the phenomenal. From the worldly point of view today is the beginning of a new year in Tamil Nadu. This relates to the sidereal year. The lunar new year began on April 1st. The lunar and sidereal years are not opposed to each other. The moon is not a self-luminous planet. He shines as a result of the sun's light. When sunlight does not fall on the moon, there is darkness on the moon's surface. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind and the sun is the Lord of the eyes. The *Vedhas* have

declared that "The moon came from the mind of the Cosmic Person and the sun from his eyes." The sun and the moon are not separate. The same light comes from both. This truth has to be recognized.

The sages have declared that the sun presides over the *Buddhi* (intellect) and the moon over the *manas* (mind). If you succumb to the mind you will be deluded by *Maaya* (worldly illusions). Follow the *Buddhi* and you will become a Buddha (The Enlightened One). *Buddhi* (intellect) is in close proximity to the *Aathma* (Self). Hence the effulgence of the *Aathma* falls directly on the *Buddhi*. The mind receives the light indirectly from the *Buddhi*. It is *Jada* (inconsient). It is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance. Man today is inclined to follow the mind rather than the intellect. Hence he is caught up in ignorance, because the mind has no luminosity of its own. It is only when the light from the intellect illumines the mind that man can make a safe journey. "*Buddhi-graahyam atheendhriyam*" (The intellect has been described as capable of going beyond the reach of the senses). Hence man should be guided by the intellect. Below the intellect is the mind. Below the mind are the senses. Below the senses is the body.

Consider the relationship between the body and God. The hands, the eyes, the ears, the mouth and the nose are organs in the body; all these are limbs of the body. The body is a limb of Society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a limb of *Prakrithi* (Nature). Nature is a limb of the Divine. This is the integral relationship between the human body and God. *Dehi* (the indweller in the body) and God are one. The body is a moving temple. Without the indwelling spirit, the body is only a corpse fit to be burnt or buried.

Man has to be sustained by faith in the power of God. Without that faith Kama, despite all his prowess, died ingloriously. Arjuna was victorious because of faith in Krishna. Man should recognise the divinity within him and should be guided by the Divine charioteer

Develop love for God. That love will take you to God. Observe three maxims in life: Love of God, fear of sin and morality in society. Then, in all situations, God will stand by you.

Every moment is auspicious if you dedicate your actions to God. If your mind is pure, other things do not matter.

Discourse in the Sai Ramesh Mandapam on 14-4-1995, Tamil New Year Day.