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Vision Of The Atma

*One may be able to repeat Vedas and
Sastras by rote.*

*One may be able to sing ornate poetry
melodiously.*

*If one lacks purity of heart, one is
bound to be ruined.*

The word of Sai is verily the truth.

(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

IF you lack purity of heart, you will not be able to understand the principle of Atma, irrespective of your educational qualifications. You may be a highly learned person but you are not able to see your own body when you are in deep sleep. On the contrary, even an illiterate person can see himself and the surroundings if he opens his eyes. Just as ash covers the live embers, man's vision is clouded by delusion.

Consequently, he is unable to realise his true nature. Man should understand the intimate relationship between himself and Divinity. You can acquire immense power and strength once you develop purity of heart, gain spiritual knowledge and understand Divinity. *Sadhana* or spiritual practice does not mean undertaking good activities like *japa* and *dhyana*. True *sadhana* lies in removing the veil of illusion that covers the *antahkarana* (inner instrument). It is said, *Pas-hyannapi cha Napashyati Moodho* (he is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality). O man, is it not foolishness on your part to think that you have not seen God though you see Him in the form of the world. Fire is seen if you blow the ash from live embers. You can see the pellucid waters only after removing the moss. A person's vision is clouded when he has cataract in his eyes, but when the cataract is operated on, he gets back his normal vision. Similarly, as long as a person is under the influence of the mind, he identifies himself with the body and experiences pleasure and pain. Once he transcends the mind, i.e., *maya*, the dualities of the world do not exist for him. He visualises Divinity everywhere. Today man tries to know Divinity with his mind. In order to visualise Divinity, you should understand the principle of Atma or 'I'. The Atma is formless. So long as you are attached to your form, you will not understand what Atma means. Everyone introduces himself using the letter 'I', which is nothing but the

Atma. Though not seen, the Atma is present in one and all. This Atma is all-pervasive.

Atma Is The Greatest

There are three types of ethereal dimensions, namely, *Bhutakasha*, *Chitthakasha* and *Chidakasha*. *Bhutakasha* is engulfed by *Chitthakasha*, which in turn is encompassed by *Chidakasha*. The *Bhutakasha*, which consists of the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars, is very vast. The sun is much bigger than the planet earth having a circumference of 8000 crore miles. But it looks small to our eyes, as it is at a distance of 9 crore miles from the earth. The stars are still farther away and are much bigger than the sun in size though they look like small diamonds adorning the sky. Light travels at a speed of 180 thousand miles per second. Some of the stars are at such a great distance from the earth that the light emanating from them is yet to reach the earth. All the stars, the sun, the moon and the earth, form a part of *Bhutakasha*. All these are present in *Chittha* in a subtle form. So, *Chitthakasha* is many times bigger than *Bhutakasha*. You feel the sun is self-effulgent, but in fact, it is the Atma, which illumines the sun. So, the Atma is the greatest of all. Its vastness cannot be described in words. All the five elements are made up of atoms, whereas the Atma is not made up of atoms, as it is formless. What do you mean by vision of the Atma? It is visualisation of the all-pervasive effulgence. The Atma is present in every

cell of the human body. In order to understand this, you have to transcend form. All the material objects have a definite form, but in due course of time they lose their identity and merge into the causal dimension, i.e., in the Atma. So, man should make an effort to go beyond form and merge into the Atma. All the activities that are related to the form correspond to *Pravriddhi* (outward path) i.e., *Bhutakasha*, which is made up of atoms. All this will ultimately merge into the Atma. What is Atma? Bliss is Atma.

Atma Transcends Name And Form

In the days of yore, many sages made concerted efforts to recognise the nature of the Atma. Ultimately, they declared to the world, *Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adithyavarnam Thamasa Parasthath* (I know the Supreme Being who shines with the effulgence of sun and who is beyond *Thamas* (the darkness of ignorance). O people, the Atma transcends name and form. It is self-effulgent. In order to have the vision of the Atma, you don't need to go to the forest and undertake penance. You can see it everywhere once you dispel the darkness of ignorance from within. Efforts in this direction amount to true *Sadhana*. Divinity is latent in humanity, but you are attributing various names and forms to it and are trying to visualise it through worship and rituals. As a result, you are subjected to frustration and depression. First of all, you should make efforts to realise the divinity that is latent

in *Bhutakasha*. But how can one understand Divinity when he fails to understand humanness. In the first place, man should understand what humanness means.

Only when you transcend *Bhutakasha* and *Chitthakasha*, can you understand *Chidakasha*. *Bhutakasha* is like a small star in the sky of *Chitthakasha*. The same can be said of *Chitthakasha* as compared to *Chidakasha*. *Chidakasha* is nothing but the Atma. There is nothing beyond this. To understand the formless Atma, you should go beyond form. In the beginning, you meditate on a specific form, but gradually you should go beyond that form and realise the formless Divinity. So long as you are attached to the form, you are bound to experience pleasure and pain.

The formless Atma is experienced in the deep sleep state (*Sushupti*) in which you lose the identity of name and form. In the deep sleep state, there are no feelings pertaining to *Bhutakasha*. So long as your mind dwells on *Bhutakasha*, you identify yourself with a form. Though the modern man is highly educated, he is unable to comprehend the principles of *Bhutakasha*, *Chitthakasha* and *Chidakasha*. He is keeping himself away from such an enquiry, thinking them to be abstruse philosophical truths. It is not mere philosophy. They are the eternal truths, which are to be understood and put into practice in daily life.

In *Bhutakasha*, beings are many, but the underlying Atmic principle is the same. Right from his childhood to old age, man uses the letter 'I' while introducing himself. Man passes through different stages of life, but the 'I' in him remains the same. That changeless 'I' is verily the Atma. Oblivious to the presence of such divine principle within, man is after the worldly and ephemeral pleasures. This corresponds to *Pravritti*. But the Atma is related to *Nivritti*. As man is engrossed in *Pravritti*, he is not able to realise his true nature.

Divinity Pervades The Entire Nature

All that you see in the external world is nothing but the manifestation of God. All of you who have assembled here are the embodiments of God. Even this hall is a manifestation of God. In fact, you are yourself God. Though you see God everywhere, still you search for Him. Here is a small example. The hostel boys see Sai Gita every day, so they are not excited about it. But if they happen to see even the tail of an elephant in a forest, they would feel thrilled. Likewise, though you see God in the form of people around you, you are not excited. But if you see a person with three heads, you will become ecstatic thinking that you had the vision of Divine Cosmic Form. You should understand that Divinity pervades the entire nature. Lord Krishna declared in the *Gita. Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathana* (the eternal Atma in all beings

is a part of My Being). I and you are not separate. We are one and the same. Once you understand this truth, you will not go in search of God here and there. All that you find in the external world is nothing but *Viswa Virat Swarup* (cosmic Divine form). All forms are His. Form is associated with *Pravritti*. It is the root cause of delusion. What is *Maya*? That which leads to mistaken identity is *Maya*. When you mistake a rope for a snake in the darkness, you are scared. But when you flash torchlight on it, you realise that it is a rope and not a snake. It is the mistaken identity that has given rise to fear in you. Once you know the reality, you become fearless. Due to the influence (*Prabhava*) of worldly objects, you have forgotten your *Swabhava* (true nature). Once you recognise your *Swabhava* and strictly adhere to it, there will be no scope for delusion or fear. Where is the question of fear when you are everything and there is nobody other than you? An actor once came to the Court of a King to give performances. That day, he had come dressed as Sankaracharya. He gave a scholarly exposition on the philosophy of Adi Sankara. He preached thus:

*Janma Dukkham, Jara Dukkham, Jaya Dukkham
Punah Punaha,*

Antyakale Maha Dukkham, Tasmath Jagrata
Jagrataha

(Birth, old age and worldly life are full of misery. Death too is miserable. Beware of this truth.)

*Matha Nasthi, Pitha Nasthi,
Nasthi Bandhu Sahodaraha
Artham Nasthi, Griham Nasthi,
Thasmath Jagrata Jagrataha*

(Parents, friends, relatives and wealth are like passing clouds. Beware of this truth.)

The King was very pleased and offered a lot of gold. The actor said, “O King, a *Sanyasi* does not need gold. I cannot accept this gift.” The next day the actor appeared in the Court as a dancer. He danced beautifully and pleased everyone present. At the end of the performance the King offered a small gift of just a few coins. The actor said, “O King, this payment is meagre and not enough.” The King was astonished and asked, “Yesterday, you refused a substantial gift but today you are demanding more. What is the reason for this strange behaviour?” The actor replied, “O King, an actor will not be true to his profession if his words do not match the costume he is wearing. Yesterday, I played the role of a *Sanyasi* and therefore, spurned wealth. Today, I am a dancer, and a dancer always expects a handsome reward! My conduct must be in consonance with my garb.” Today, though man has put on the garb of a human being, his conduct is not in

accordance with his 'dress'. Having been born as a human being, man should lead his life with self-confidence and uphold his self-respect.

Abraham Lincoln

You are aware of how Abraham Lincoln, though born in a poor family, rose to become the President of America because of his self-confidence. He was born in a poor family. His schoolmates used to heckle him for his dress and poverty. Lincoln, unable to bear this humiliation, approached his mother and said, "Mother, I am subjected to a lot of ridicule by fellow students. Please get me a new dress." Then the mother told him, "Son, we are not well-to-do. You must act according to our family condition. Don't be deterred by other people's taunts. Develop self-confidence and uphold your self-respect. From that moment, Lincoln strictly followed the advice of his mother. After some time, his mother passed away, and his father married again. His stepmother was also quite affectionate towards him and encouraged him to persevere on the path shown by his mother. After his father's death, Lincoln, who was aged 16 years then, left home to earn his livelihood and started selling newspapers. There also he continued to uphold his self-respect. Seeing his good qualities, his friends encouraged him to contest the elections. Lincoln stood for elections and won with a thumping majority. He was made the President of America. Though born into a poor family, he rose to an exalted position

because of his self-confidence and self-respect.

Students!

Uphold your self-respect. First of all, understand what Atma means. The principle of 'I' that is present in everybody is Atma. The Vedas declare. *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahma). But in My view, even this is not complete truth because the presence of 'I' and Brahma symbolises duality. Truth is one, not two. Man should hold on to the principle of non-dualism and sanctify his life. Once you develop faith in this principle, you will have all the purity and prosperity.

Today is the very auspicious day of Sivarathri. Siva stands for auspiciousness. What is so special and auspicious about Sivarathri? Mind has 16 aspects, of which 15 are merged on this night and only one is remaining. Make proper use of this holy night by undertaking *Sadhana* with devotion and steadfastness. What sort of *Sadhana* you must undertake? Cleanse your heart of all evil qualities. Evil qualities arise in you because of the misuse of the senses. It is the root cause of all sins. *Sadhana* does not mean doing *Japa* and meditation. You should develop pure and divine feelings in you. Consider everyone as divine. Respect them. "All are Mine and I belong to everybody." Once you have such firm conviction, you can enjoy immense happiness in life. There will be no trace of worry in

your life

Have Firm Faith In God

Once while Sankaracharya was going to river Ganga with his 14 disciples, he came across a Brahmin who was memorising some Sanskrit passage, "*Dukrun Karane*". The Acharya asked him, what he was doing and the Brahmin replied that he was studying Panini (the great grammarian). "What do you gain out of this study of grammar", the *Acharya* asked. He replied, "I shall become a great scholar and go to some royal Court or the other and become an official scholar and earn all the wealth that I need. With wealth earned like that, I shall lead a happy life." "How long will you live like that?" "I shall live as long as I am alive." "What next?" asked the *Acharya*. He replied, "I don't know," Then, Sankaracharya made his famous pronouncement, "*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodhamathe, Samprapthe Sannihite Kale Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane,*" (O fool, chant the name of Govinda. When the hour of death approaches, the nuances of grammar will not come to your rescue). The *Acharya* said, "You fool, you will enjoy all the pleasures of the world as long as you are alive, but after this body passes away, what will you do? So, keep chanting the name of Govinda incessantly and don't waste your time in these mundane studies. These studies are all related to *Pravritti*. This helps only for a very short time. You are proud of your youth; how

long does youth last? Soon you will be an old man. Do not put your faith on your youthful prowess, place your firm faith in God.” Realise your self-confidence. Self-confidence leads to self-satisfaction and self-satisfaction leads to self-realisation.

Students!

‘I’ is a permanent reality. Consider this Atma as Godhead itself. Without a substantial basis, there will be no manifestation. The basis for the waves in the ocean is the water therein. In the same manner, Atma is the basis for the phenomenal world. All the good and bad, praise and blame that happen are all mere passing clouds. The baby, the boy, the youth and the old man are all differences in form but the Atma in the person is the unchanging entity. While traveling in the train, you see out of the window, trees, mountains and lakes fleeting past. This is an illusion. Sometimes, in the skies, you see as if the moon is moving fast, while in reality the clouds are moving. This again is an illusion. The moon is not moving at the same pace as the clouds. In the same way, the Atman does not change or move; it is only our feelings that change.

Total Understanding Is Awareness

Embodiments of Love!

Today is a very holy day. The time at 6 o’clock is highly sacred. At that time, the Atma Lingam will be manifested. God is sometimes called the *Hiranya-*

garbha. The golden Lingas emerge from *Hiranyagarbha* itself. Don't conclude that only Swami is *Hiranyagarbha*. All of you are manifestations of *Hiranyagarbha*. You are also eternal and self-effulgent. Hold this truth firmly in your heart. Keep this awareness firm.

We have 'Awareness classes' in our Institutions. Knowing this or that bit of information is not complete awareness. Awareness implies total understanding. Having seen just the tail of a rat, how can you claim to have seen the rat itself? Today what the scientists have known is only a fraction of the total truth. But they think that they know everything.

First of all, you should understand what humanness means. In accordance with your form, you should have human qualities. Of what use is your life if you behave like a monkey? Understand that you belong to mankind. Do not have a monkey mind. One whose heart is full of compassion alone is a true human being. Today man talks of the need for compassion but has filled his heart with demonic qualities like anger, greed, jealousy, etc.

Excessive Desire Causes Imbalance In Nature

Man should put a ceiling on his desires. As man's conduct is perverted, today we find natural calamities taking place. You are aware of the devastation caused by the earthquake in Gujarat. Thousands

of people lost their lives. The reason for this is that, man is entertaining excessive desires. God maintains perfect balance in His creation. In God's creation, the earth and the oceans are endowed with balance. But man is indiscriminately exploiting the earth for extracting oil. Every day tonnes of fish are caught from the oceans. This indiscriminate exploitation of nature results in imbalance in earth, which is playing havoc with human lives. Only when man is free from *Kampam* (unsteadiness) within, will he not be troubled by *Bhukampam* (earthquake). Not only the people of Bharat but also the people of the entire world should strive to maintain balance. The five elements are nothing but manifestations of the Divine. Man's life will be secure only when he realises this truth and acts accordingly. A few days ago, I had sent Lorry loads of rice, grams, etc., to the earthquake victims of Gujarat. Some people asked "Swami, why should you take the trouble of spending so much money for sending the relief material to Gujarat. You could have as well averted the earthquake." I replied, "My dear, man has to blame himself for the earthquakes. Due to excessive greed for wealth, he is disturbing the balance of the earth. Hence the earthquake. That is the law of Nature. You have to express your love for man by helping the needy. Love is your nature. Just as balance is very much essential for Nature, so also love is very much needed for man. Know that whatever God has created

is for your own welfare. You should enjoy Nature according to your need. You should not rob Nature of its resources to satisfy your greed. Here is an example. Once a greedy person owned a duck, which used to lay a golden egg every day. One day, he ripped open the stomach of the duck thinking that he would get many golden eggs at a time. Today man also is indulging in such foolish and greedy acts. Instead of being satisfied with what Nature is giving him, he aspires for more and more, and in the process, creating imbalance in Nature.

Today scientists are interested in new inventions. The advancement in science and technology has also led to imbalance in Nature. As a result, there are earthquakes and no timely rains. Science should be utilised only to the extent needed. Science has its limitations, and crossing those limits leads to danger.

You have a long way to go. Adhere to truth and righteousness. Our ancient sages said, *Sathyam Bruyath, Priyam Bruyath, Na Bruyath Sathyama-priyam* (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). Make proper use of natural resources and do not put them to misuse. Help everybody and make them happy. Share all the good things you have learnt with others. This is your foremost duty.

Sivarathri, 21.02.2001, Prasanthi Nilayam.

