

15. The Universe - the Guru

Ishaa vaasyam idam sarvam---All this is enveloped by God. All this is soaked in God, saturated with God. Everything is the substance of God.

We are on the Earth; around it revolves the moon. Both the Earth and the Moon are illumined by the Sun. Dependent on the Sun, planets like Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Saturn, dutifully move along the prescribed orbits, at different speeds. Their satellites too belong to the solar family. When we lift our eyes up at the sky at night, we notice stars beyond numbers. And in the Milky Way, we see thick masses of star clusters. There are in space more than ten thousand crores of stars, and of galaxies in the Milky Way and elsewhere, we have more than ten crores. Without being lost in numbers, we must ponder over the mystery of the Unity and Harmony of this Cosmic Projection.

The Sun is about 90 million miles distant from our Earth. The most distant planet so far known is Pluto, which is nearly 3670 million miles away from the Sun. It takes 248 long years to make one journey round the Sun. Well! Has God planned all these heavenly bodies out of sheer caprice? Or, does He intend to convey any lesson through these happenings? God will never produce an effect without cause or purpose. Nor will He manifest any substance without value. Why? The rotation of the Earth on its own axis, for example, causes night and day; its circumambulation round the sun causes the seasons, the formation of clouds, the falling of rain and the beings. God has graciously willed to establish peace and prosperity on earth. Let us see the purpose behind the alternation of day and night. After the activities of the day, night is provided to man and animals for rest and recoupment. Sleep refreshes the mind as well as the body; without sleep, man is in danger of being too exhausted. Night, which restores health, is a gift of God to man. Placing faith in God's compassion, one can measure the benefits one derives even from stars and galaxies, the waves and the sea.

God is the best friend for man

In fact, the best teacher is one's own heart. Time is the best preceptor and awakener; the world is the best scripture; God is the best friend for man. So there is no need to wander in search of a guru (preceptor). Learn lessons from every living being, everything that you find around you. Learn faithfulness and gratitude from the dog, patience and fortitude from the donkey, perseverance from the spider, farsightedness from the ant and monogamy from the owl.

It is not possible to consider creation and the creator, Nature and God, as different or separate. Can we say that waves are separate from the sea? They are of the sea, with the sea and from the sea. Man too is of God, with and from God. The bubble is born in water, stays in water and is lost in water as water. The Cosmos too is a bubble born in the Absolute, exists as the Absolute and merges in the Absolute or *Paramaathma*. *Nara* (the human) is the bubble; God (*Naaraayana*) is the sea. Recognise this truth as the bubble cannot be conceived without positing water, the Cosmos, this world, cannot be conceived as without God. Of course waves rise and fall, advance and recede, but the sea has no such agitations. The movements of the waves do not affect the sea. As a consequence of human activities, man has ups and downs in life, growth and decay. But the God in him is not affected at all.

Be God-men, always associated with God

Activities (*karma*) are of three kinds *karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma*, (action, inaction, and unaction). Of these unaction is the most subtle of activities, for it is neither sloth nor action motivated by desire. It is simple awareness, the deepest experience, it is neither *thaamasik* nor *raajasik*. Action is *rajasik* when urged on by selfish motives. Inaction is *thamasik*. But unaction is *saathwik*.

Based on these three types of 'activity,' the nature of humans can also be distinguished as characteristic of three types---the beast-men, man-men and God-men types. Those who do not pay any attention to anything other than their own selfish ends, these belong to the beast-man level. They have no trace of devotion and dedication. They do not share in helping others. They have no concern with the sorrows and sufferings of others. They do not take them to heart. They do not worry over the children they have borne or the life partner they are wedded to.

The man-men, however, involve themselves in the welfare of their wives and children and the small circle of their kith and kin. They spend their lives in this restricted sphere. Of course, the nature of these people is not laudable; but there is at least the possibility of the little spark of love becoming brilliant and expansive through contacts with society, or impact of saints, or participation in some projects of selfless service. Man-men can raise themselves up into God-men.

The God-men are described in the Bhagavad Geetha as *Sathatham Yoginah*---"*Always associated with God.*" They are never apart from God. They experience God in and through all things at all times. Whatever they see or do, they believe it is in God and for God.

God cannot be distinct from Creation

In order to rise to the full height of his glorious destiny the only equipment that man has to strive for is *prema* (love). Man is not a mere bundle of skills and acquisitions. Man has in him the yearning and the capacity to proceed from the narrow circle of 'I' to the wide horizon of '*WE*'. The human essence in man is Divine. It leads him from *Aham* (I) to *Soham* (He I am). It urges him to give up the tiny 'I' with its petty little desires and seek the vast limitless. 'He', that is the Reality.

Giving up the little 'I' is what renunciation or *thyaaga* means. *Thyaaga* does not mean running away from hearth and home into the jungle. It means sublimating every thought, word and deed as an offering to God, and saturating all acts with Divine intent. This is the best *saadhana*, to cultivate *prema*. Love gives itself for ever; it never asks another to give. Shower it and you will be showered in return. Stop sharing *prema*; there will be no more to share. *Prema* thrives on *thyaaga*; they are inseparable.

The essential reality of man rejects the ego as a blemish. When we investigate into the problem, "Who am I?" and find that every one is I, love expands limitlessly. In the Sanskrit alphabet a (as in hard), the two together form *aham*, meaning the 'ego'. The ego should not be allowed to express itself, as it smothers the spring of love. God is love; so, all things created by God are filled with love.

A silver cup is all silver; it is silver with an identifiable name and form. The Cosmos has a name and form; God became the Cosmos; God is love and so the Cosmos is Love. From the silver cup, you can never separate the silver as a distinct entity. So too God cannot be distinct from

Creation. Nothing is mean or low, ugly or disgusting; every thing is adorable. To get fixed in this universal God-consciousness, one has to tame one's impulses and educate one's desires.

But, unfortunately, man is fast losing steadfastness in spiritual pursuits. Learn from the poor little spider this lesson of inflexible determination to succeed. It struggles again and again, in spite of repeated failures, to fix the basic threads of its web, so that it can weave it taut and strong. Man, however, loses heart at the first disappointment, either foregoing faith in God or incensed with Him-and applying for a 'writ' against Him. Is this fickleness characteristic of human nature? No. Even a dog is more steady in loyalty. Give a dog a morsel of food for two days in a row; it will serve you faithfully for long. Man, however, eats out of God's hand for a whole lifetime and yet has no gratitude in his heart. He behaves worse than a worm.

Money is of the nature of manure

Man has been enslaved by money. He lives a superficial, hollow, artificial life. This is indeed a great pity. Man should seek to possess only as much money as is most essential for his living. The quantity of riches one must own can be compared to the shoes one wears; if too small, they cause pain; if too big, they are a hindrance while walking. Money too has to be with us only just enough for a life of physical and mental comfort. When we have more, it breeds pride, sloth and contempt for others. In pursuit of money, man descends to the level of the beast.

Money is of the nature of manure. Piled up in one place, it pollutes the air. Spread it wide, scatter it over fields---it rewards you with a bumper harvest. So too, when money is spent in all the four quarters for promoting good works, it yields contentment and happiness in plenty. But today, such deeds of renunciation and such holy thoughts are absent. We pride ourselves today as being 'modern'. Does modernism involve giving up morality and justice? Or, allowing the senses to run amok? Or, blindly running after countless desires? No. Modernism means self-control and self-confidence.

Prayer is not mere pronouncing of words

This day, we are celebrating the holy *Guru Poornima*. Many people celebrate the day by garlanding the *Guru* and placing costly offerings before him. But, the true *Guru* is not a human preceptor. It is the Cosmos Itself, *Prakrithi*, Creation, the World around us. Life must have an ideal before it, it must proceed towards a goal; it must be a constant march. Life has as its sole purpose the divinising of man, the transformation of the 'man' we profess to be into the God we really are. *Gu* in the word *Guru*, indicates the quality of *gunaatheetha*, that is, unaffected by attributes and attitudes, not associated with any one particular characteristic. And *Ru* means *ruupa-rahitha*, that is, not limited to any form, pervasive in all forms. In this context, the Universe and all its components are to be looked upon as one's preceptors and lessons learnt from each.

What is the proof for having learnt such lessons? The proof lies in wholehearted service, in sweetness of speech, which reveals the divinity in man. Vidhura once advised Dhritaraashtra, "A tree when it is axed might yet put forth leaves; but a heart axed by a bitter word can never sprout again." The next step is hard work. A Thelugu proverb says "work until your bones ache, and eat until your teeth ache." We clamour for food all day, because we do not work until our bones ache. A person who does not work has no right to consume food. Only those who labour with both their hands can exercise the right.

The third step is Prayer. It may be said we are praying every day. But prayer is not the pronouncing of words. Prayer is the yearning one experiences to awaken the divinity latent in the heart. Embodiments of *Prema!* A heart without words is far more precious than words without a heart. Words cascade from the tongue but they are mere froth. People blabber a billion words but never do a deed. Be examples in doing, not doling out advice.

Well, the past is past; begin life anew from tomorrow. Revere the world as divine; do not underestimate it as unholy. "*Yaccha kinchith jagath sarvam drishyathe shrutyathepi vaa,*" says the *Upanishadh*. It means, "All that is seen or heard is God." "*Anthar bahischa thath sarvam, vyaapya Naaraayanah*"---The inner world and the outer world are both immersed in God. "*OM Thath Sath*", the *Upanishadhs* declare. "*Thath*" is That, the Cause "*Kim yath thath*"---these three words are to be thought over. Kim (*what?*) yath (*which?*) thath (*that*). *Thath* is the *Brahma* principle. *Thwam* (*you*) is the Effect, the *Jeeva*, the Individual.

God teaches us through Nature

Prayer must emerge from the effect to the cause. The individual self has to yearn for the Supreme Self. It must emerge from a pure heart. Prayer (drinking cup) must be clean both on the outside and the inside. Prayer should not arise out of the tongue, as music rises out of a gramophone record. When the song does not come from your depth, when you are not involved in it, how can it draw God unto you? Your self must achieve confidence. Then, that self-confidence will lead to self-sacrifice and self-realisation.

Man means he who marches from the status of self to the all-inclusive Self, from *Aathma* to *Paramaathma*. Towards the success of that march, all Nature can provide advice and guidance until the very end. The real *Guru* one must rely upon is Nature, saturated with God. God does not teach us direct; He teaches us through Nature which surrounds us. When we teach *OM* to children, we pronounce it loud and at the same time write the letter *OM* on a slate. God has written *OM* on every speck of Nature; that is the slate from which we have to learn of Him.

The Message

So, do not renounce the world or condemn Nature. Do not restrict the God of the Universe to any one Name and Form. Love all names and forms. Expand your letter world-wide. Just consider; when boiled *dhal* (lentle) is served for lunch, if it has less salt, you set it aside. We take such great care about a moment's sensation on the tongue. Well, when we have to spend 70 or 80 years of life on earth, imagine the care we must take to see that we realise the purpose of life. Virtue is the salt of life. Love is the highest virtue. Develop love by sharing it. Revere the Universe as your *Guru*. That is the message I wish to give you on this *Guru Poornima*.

Prashaanthi Nilayam, 17- 7-1981.

Ice and water are but one

in two names, and forms;

hard ghee and liquid ghee,

are one and the same;

so too, the Nirguna and Saguna aspects

are both the same God-head.

Sathya Sai Baaba