

9. Three-in-one

The Lord of the Universe permeates the Cosmos like the thread running through a Necklace of gems, although He is not Visible in the universe and shines in it As the invisible Atmic Consciousness.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! "Sarvam khalu idam Brahma" (Verily, all that is, is Brahman).

This is the quintessence of the Upanishads. The truth about the vast universe of moving and motionless objects is contained in this single pronouncement. There is nothing in the Cosmos sans *Brahman*. Divinity is latent in everything like fire in wood and oil in sesame. Hence there is nothing in the world that is not permeated by the Divine. The processes of creation, survival and dissolution occur according to the injunctions of the Divine. Whether man believes in it or not, this wheel of creation is revolving according to the dictates of the Divine. God is the author of the Wheel of Time. Man, however, is forgetting how this Time should be employed meaningfully and purposefully.

Concept of equality in enjoyment

The sun shines and the moon sheds his cool rays on the earth. Rains come down and rivers are in spate. And crops grow. None of these happens because of the will of any single individual. Every human being in this world has an equal right to the enjoyment of the benefits flowing from these occurrences.

Man has unfortunately forgotten this basic truth. He makes no effort to enquire into the concept of *samatwa yoga* (equality in enjoyment). This feeling of equal enjoyment is conspicuous only among innocent children. Only in the hearts of babes can you notice the sense of enjoyment, of drinking the milk from the mother, rejoicing in the cool breeze and forgetting themselves in the sweet music of the lullabies sung by the mother.

As the child grows to manhood the ideals of "mine" and "thine" grow in the mind. Self-interest grows. The spirit of sacrifice declines. Humanness is eclipsed. What is the reason? It is the loss of *Atma-visvaasam* (faith in the Self). One forgets the omnipresence of the Divine. The great truth that "Narayana pervades the universe by His presence in and outside of everything" is ignored.

The world is full of powerful men, men endowed with wealth, great scholars and men with good qualities, but there are few who have realised the *Atma* (the Omni-Self). The body is visible. The mind appears to exist. But the *Atma* (the Spirit) is not visible. The *Atmavaan* (Self-realised person) is one who has recognised the visible Spirit, who is immersed in the bliss of that awareness and who is intoxicated by that Divine experience. In ancient times, many sages experienced the potency, the sweetness and the ineffable joy of this Divine bliss and gave the fruits of their experience to the world. They codified the knowledge contained in the *Upanishads* and offered it to the people in the world in the concept of *Trikonam* (Triangle). The Body is one side of the triangle. The second side is the mind. The third is the *Atma*.

Realise the unity of body, mind and Atma

The body is gross. The *Atma* is subtle. The mind coordinates the gross body and the subtle *Atma* and makes the individual experience *Ananda* (bliss). The *Vedic* declaration: *Tath-Twam-Asi*

(That thou art) reflects the truth about this integrating process. Man does not understand the truth about the unity of "This" and "That." *Tath* means "That," referring to something remote. "This" refers to something that is near. From *what* is "That" far? From *what* is "This" near? "That" refers to what is far from our sense organs. "This" refers to what is proximate to our sense organs. The body, which is nearest to the senses, is connected by "This." "That" which is beyond the senses is the *Atma*.

The role of the mind is to bring together the body that is close to the senses and the *Atma* that is far from them. *Asi in Tath-Twam-Asi* refers to the role of the mind in integrating the body and the *Atma*. Man should strive to realise the unity of the body, the mind and the *Atma*. "*Tath-Twam-Asi*" is not a recondite formula. It is an aphoristic declaration calling upon everyone to realise the integral unity of body, mind and the *Atma* and thereby experience the Divine.

The concept of Triangle was explored from another point of view, namely, the *Jiva* (the individual), God and Nature (the phenomenal universe, *Prakriti*). The essential nature of these three was described in the terms: *Rakti*, *Bhukti* and *Mukti*. *Rakti* represents the cosmos. *Bhukti* (enjoyment) represents the body (which seeks enjoyment). *Mukti* (liberation) represents *Atma*. The *Upanishadic* declaration points out that these three are essential for every human being.

Another triad that has to be noted consists of *Sthoola* (gross), *Sukshma* (subtle) and *Kaarana* (causal) bodies. Another triple concept contained in the *Upanishadic* aphorism is that of Past, Present and the Future (the triple aspects of Time). In these different ways, the sages sought to popularise the idea of oneness of body, mind and *Atma*.

From the source, to the source

There is a cyclical process constantly going on. Rains fall. The water flows in the rivers, which rush towards the ocean. From the ocean, again, clouds are formed, which pour down rain and the rainwater forms rivulets which ultimately join the ocean. The river does not know its origin. But once it has merged in the ocean, it can be seen that the river and ocean are one: *Tath-Twam-Asi* (That thou art). The rivers may well declare: "We come from the ocean and we have merged in the ocean. The ocean and we are one." To take another analogy. A seed is planted in the earth. It sprouts, grows into a tree puts forth branches, leaves, flowers, buds and fruits. Wherefrom have these different manifestations come? All have come from the seed. The ancients realised from this fact that although the tree presents multifarious forms and names, the source is one only. The seed, from which the various manifestations have emerged, proudly declares: "*Tath-Twam-Asi*" (All of you have emanated from me).

Enlarging on this concept, the sages declared: "*Isaavaasyam idam Jagat*" (The Cosmos is pervaded by the Divine). This all-pervading principle is illustrated by the example of sugar dissolved in water. After the solution, the sugar is not visible and cannot be taken out. But its presence can be experienced by tasting the syrup. The sugar thus proclaims the truth: "I am present as a pervading element even though I am invisible. The sweetness you experience comes from me and not from the water."

Unity in diversity in the universe

By these simple but telling illustrations from real life, the ancient sages sought to convey the great truth about the all-pervading nature of the Divine and the unity that underlies the apparent diversity in the universe. Only the One abides. But it assumes many forms. The *Upanishads*

demonstrated that the essence of *Bharatiya* culture consists in the recognition of unity in diversity. Men waste their lives failing to recognise this unity.

Take the three letters A;U;M. The unity of these three letters represents *Omkara*, the primordial sound called *Pranava*. *The prapancha* (world) is a manifestation of *pranava*. *The Upanishads* emphasised the integral unity of the *Pranava* and the *Prapancha* as manifestations of the *Atma*. It may be said that the *Pranava (Om)* is not apparent anywhere, nor can it be heard. But, in the process of inhaling and exhaling and in the circulation of blood in the human system, the presence of *pranava* can be experienced. *Omkara* can be heard when the wind blows. *Om* can be heard when one keeps the ear close to an electric pole.

Om is equated to *Brahmam*

When we breathe in, there is the sound "So" When we exhale, there is the sound *ham*. (Bhagavan demonstrated how these sounds can be recognised). Together, "So" and "Ham" contain the *Pranava mantra "Om."* "So-Ham" ("He is I") conveys the same message as "Tath-Twam-Asi." "Om," which is derived from "SoHam," has been equated with *Brahmam*. The inner meaning of the two sounds "So" and "Ham" should be properly understood. In the sound "So", the consonant "S" represents the experiences in the waking and dreaming states. Similarly "Ham" is related to the same states. When "S" and "Ha" are eliminated in the deep sleep state, only "O" and "M" remain. This means that as long as man is attached to the experiences of the waking and dream states, he cannot recognise the Divine symbolised by "Om."

As long as man is caught up in the coils of the phenomenal world, he cannot escape from experiencing pleasure and pain. In the deep sleep state, man is oblivious to the phenomenal world and is free from experiences of pleasure and pain. It is for this reason that the sages have compared *Samadhi* to the state of deep sleep.

Hence, for man to realise the Divine, this is the path that has to be pursued. The *Upanishads* have explained in very simple terms the profoundest and most complex ideas. They have indicated to ordinary men how to experience the highest spiritual bliss by simple practices. The word *Upanishad* means "sitting near" (the preceptor). The spiritual aspirant is called upon to approach the wise teachers and elders in a spirit of humility and reverence.

Search for the eternal and Divine Reality

The Vedas declare: "Dooraath doore anthike cha" (Farther than the farthest and very near too). This statement means that the Lord is as far from you as you consider Him to be, and as near as you feel His presence. It is your own feelings which account for the distance. The remoteness or nearness should not be attributed to the Divine, who is omnipresent. He is present in the subtlest atomic particle and in the vastest object in creation. This truth can be experienced by man if he makes the proper enquiry with diligence and devotion. But few undertake such a quest. All men's energies are devoted to the pursuit of ephemeral, transient and illusory material gains. Not even a moment is devoted to the search for the eternal and Divine reality. This is the result of man's indifference to the eternal verities. "Sradhhaavaan labhathe Jnanam," declares the *Gita* (the highest wisdom is secured only by the earnest seeker). Without earnestness, one cannot be aware of even what is nearest to him. Men suffer today from lack of peace of mind, but make no effort to find out the root cause of this malady

Narada, the mind-child of Brahma, who was proficient in all the scriptures and every field of knowledge, suffering from a peaceless mind, went to the Sage Sanatkumara and asked him: "Oh Sage! Why do I have no peace of mind? Please remove this malaise and impart to me the knowledge to retain mental tranquillity" Sanatkumara asked Narada what all he had mastered and what credentials he had acquired to entitle him to seek this knowledge Narada said, he had mastered the 64 kinds of knowledge, studied the *six sastras* and learnt the four *Vedas* and their subsidiary sections.

Understand the principle of Life-force

After listening to Narada, Sanatkumara told him that all the knowledge he had acquired was only a mass of words. The sage told him that beyond all this scriptural and other knowledge was something transcendental. Narada was surprised to note how all his vast knowledge had been devalued. Sanatkumara said: "Above the power of words is *Vaak* (the power of Speech). Above speech is the mind. Greater than the mind is the *Sankalpa* (Will). Higher than the Will is the *Chitta* (Awareness). Greater than the *Chitta* is *Dhyana* (Meditation). Greater than *Dhyana* is *Jnana*. Greater than *Jnana* is water. Greater than water is *Thejas*. Higher than this is *Prana* (the Life-force). It is only when you understand the principle of *Prana*, you will understand the truth of the aphorism *Tath-Twam-Asi*."

Understanding the principle of the Life-force is thus crucial. For instance, when one starves for sixteen days he loses all his sixteen *kalas* (capacities). He regains them as he resumes taking food. What is the inner significance of this phenomenon? The body is constituted by *Annamaya* (food). When the body is deprived of food, the Life-force begins to decline. The body is thus subject to decay. But the *Atma* (Spirit) within is not perishable. The body is made up of the five elements. It is bound to perish. But the *Dehi* (indwelling Spirit) is immortal. It has no birth or death. That indwelling Spirit is God.

Thus the imperishable *Atma* is always shining in this perishable body. Sanatkumara told Narada to understand this eternal Reality, which underlies the Life-principle. In the same manner Aruni told his son Swethakethu to seek to know That by knowing which all else is known, by having a vision of which everything else can be seen. Thus, there is only one thing which man has to recognise, by knowing which he can understand all other things. That one thing is the *Atma-Tatwa* - (*Atma-Principle*).

Direct all thoughts towards *Atma*

Today we are forgetting the truth of the Spirit. We are immersed in things unspiritual. What is the *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) which men have to practise? Is it *dhyana*, or *japa*, or *yoga* or *yaga* or rituals? None of these.

One vital fact has to be recognised. When a person gets rid of the *Anaatma bhaava* (the identification with the body), he will experience the *Saakshaatkaara* (vision of the Divine). There is no need to perform any spiritual exercises. These are mainly undertaken to secure some mental satisfaction. All these exercises are performed through the mind. How can such exercises control the mind? Can a thief catch himself? Likewise the mind cannot undertake to control itself. The mind has to be negated (*Amanaska*). *Amanaska* means freedom from thoughts. As thoughts are minimised, the mind loses its power.

When one wants to develop faith in the Self, the potencies of the body, the mind and the *Buddhi* (intellect) should be diverted towards the Self. Whatever thought arises in the mind, it should be

turned towards the *Atma*. This is real *Saayujya* (attaining oneness with the Divine). In this merger, there is the realisation of unity and the feeling of diversity disappears. Take the example of the sacred rivers Krishna, Kaveri, Godavari, Ganga and Yamuna. They flow in their separate courses, have distinct names and the taste of their waters also varies. But once they join the ocean, they lose their distinct names, forms and tastes and become one with the ocean. That is the import of the *Upanishadic* saying: "*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*" (the knower of the *Brahmam* becomes *Brahmam* Himself). When one merges in the *Brahmam*, the separateness ends. When all one's thoughts are merged in the *Atma*, one becomes integrated with the *Atma*.

Look at the world with Divine insight

In this world there is nothing apart from the *Atma*. There is nothing divorced from Divinity. Although everything is Divine, people do not look at the world with the Divine insight but with the worldly vision. As long as one sees with this corporeal vision, the spiritual Reality cannot be understood.

For example, when you see this tumbler (held before the audience by Bhagavan) and view it as a tumbler, only the form of the tumbler registers in the mind. What is the tumbler made of?. It is made out of silver. When one considers the material from which the tumbler is made, one only thinks of its silver base and not its form.

Another example: When you go to a pilgrim centre and look at the form of the deity in the sanctum, you are conscious only of the form. But when you think of the material from which the idol has been made, you recognise only the stone and not the form. Today you are looking at the world in terms of the names and forms of the objects in it. Hence you see only the hills and dales, mansions and huts, forests and rivers, and so on. But when you try to look at the basis of all of them, you realise the One that underlies all of them. All trees are essentially wood. All mountains are made up of rock. The earth is made up of mud. The body is permeated by blood vessels. All these are different manifestations of the five elements (ether, air, water, fire and earth). These five elements find their unifying factor in the *Atma*. Once, therefore, the *Atma* concept is grasped, the nature of all other objects becomes intelligible. This principle of unity was the perennial message of the ancient sages.

States of consciousness of an experiencer

To take another example: In the *jaagrata avastha* (waking state) one sees innumerable objects, goes through various experiences. But in the dream state, all the objects are creations of the mind by the dreamer. The pleasures and pains are also self-created experiences. The entire world in the dream state is a self-created mental phenomenon. But when he passes into the *Sushupti* state of deep sleep, all these are absent, he forgets everything and is in a state of *Samadhi*. The experiencer in the waking state, the dream state and the *Sushupti* state is one and the same person. It is this basic unity of the *Atma* that is conveyed by the dictum: *Tath-Twam-Asi*. This means that in all the three states, in all the different experiences, the experiencer is one and the same.

The need to develop humanness

Likewise, in the human condition, as long as it is identified with the body, the human level alone is recognized. People are conscious only of the physical human existence, but are not aware of the human qualities. The foremost thing that people today have to recognise and understand are

human values. Whatever position one may achieve, whatever one's scholarship or status, the primary requisite is comprehension of what it means to be human. This humanness can be developed only through spirituality. If you take a seed and plant it in a tin, it will rot. But if the same seed is planted in the earth, it grows into a tree. Humanness will not develop in an atmosphere of worldly concerns. It will grow only in a spiritual, ethical and righteous atmosphere.

Today students have to concentrate on the development of their human potential. Equally it is the duty of every man. It is not right to develop only physical relationships and attachments. These relationships are confined to the body. In man's life relationships like mother and wife are intermediate occurrences of a temporary nature. They come and go like passing clouds. The entire human life is like an ocean in which attachments and aversions, likes and dislikes, come and go like waves.

Spirituality and culture are inseparable

In our daily life, we are all the time involved in the pursuit of endless desires and are immersed in sorrow. It must be realised that in such a life spirituality is like a beacon that beckons man to a higher life. If spirituality goes, Bharat will cease to exist Hence it is everyone's duty to ensure the preservation of spirituality. The glory of Bharat is based on spirituality. There is a reference to "Indian Culture and Spirituality" This would suggest that culture and spirituality are distinct from each other' In my view this is not correct at all. Where there is spirituality, culture is embedded in it. Spirituality should not be divorced from culture. When spirituality prevails, every kind of *Dharma* (right conduct) will prevail. What kind of culture is possible without spirituality? Culture means *samskruti* (refinement of conduct). *Samskruti* refers to that which has been refined. How does refinement take place? Only through spirituality. There can be no refinement (of conduct) without spirituality. And without refinement there is no culture. Hence, the first step is refinement of conduct, which can be done only through spirituality

Unfortunately, today spirituality is in eclipse. Many refer to spirituality derisively But it is only those witless persons who are lost in the trivialities of the mundane world who indulge in such derision. To the one who is conscious of the impermanence and worthlessness of the things of the world, spirituality is a shining, priceless ornament. Man should seek to wear such a jewel. Only then human life can be divinised.

Dear students! The greatness of *Bharatiya* culture has been praised by people of all countries, creeds and castes. The Muslim ruler, Babar, held Bharat's culture in great esteem. In a letter to his son Humayun (who succeeded to his throne), Babar wrote: "Son! You are lucky in being born as my son and I am lucky as the father of such a son. It is your supreme good fortune to become the emperor of this sacred country of Bharat, which has stood for the unity of all faiths, which has proclaimed the truth of the unity that underlies all diversity, and whose religion embodies the essence of all religions. See that you safeguard this great good fortune. Do not interfere with the cultural practices of the *Bharatiyas*. Their culture is a mighty force. It is sacred and its potentialities are unlimited. Do not interfere with this culture. Whatever decisions you wish to take, seek the counsel of *Bharatiyas* before doing so." Babar, who was the founder of the Moghul empire, had such great esteem for *Bharatiya* culture.

Understand the basic tenets of religion

But, alas! today the *Bharatiyas* themselves are undermining *Bharatiya* culture. This is a matter for shame. Therefore, I call upon you as children of Bharat to understand *Bharatiya* culture, live upto its ideals, and enjoy the bliss to be derived therefrom. I do not make any distinction between one faith and another. All faiths are great. The inner truth of all faiths is equally sublime. But no one adheres to the culture associated with his faith. This is a grievous mistake. Everyone should try to understand the basic tenets of his religion and live upto its principles. Every man is entitled to strive for attaining the goal of human existence. In this quest, no distinction can be made between one person and another. Everyone of you should strive to evolve from the human to the Divine. In no circumstance should you descend to the demonic state.

Discourse at the Institute Auditorium at Brindavan, on 23-5-1991.

Education sans wisdom, mere wisdom bereft of discrimination, action without discretion, erudition lacking sagacity, power not justified by credentials, statements not based on Truth, music wanting in melody, adoration not sustained by devotion, a person devoid of common sense and character, a student not endowed with humility and a discourse that failed to inspire: these serve no useful purpose. In addition to knowledge derived from the sacred texts, one should earn wisdom through experience. Knowledge without personal experience is futile.

BABA