

21. Three In One

*Man's foremost duty is to make
The stream of Divine Love
Flow throughout the world.
It is not for living for himself
That every man has been born;
Only by having the noble thought
That he has to serve the society
Will he ennoble himself
And achieve self-satisfaction.
Of what avail is human birth
If you cannot get rid of narrow feelings
And resolve to serve all mankind?
What greater message can the Guru give ?*

Embodiments of Divine Love! Forgetting his inherent eternal divinity, man today regards life as intended only for the pursuit of selfish aims. It is this divinity that should be manifested in man's life.

Creation is the projection of Divine Will. It is called *Prakruthi* (Nature). In every object emanating from Nature the Divine principle exists and must exist. It is to proclaim this immanence of the Divine that man has evolved.

Consciousness in Nature is not purposeless. When it is filled with ego, it gets deformed. When it is turned towards the *Atma*, it becomes Divine. To whom is this consciousness to be dedicated? Not for selfish ends. It should be offered to the Divine. However, man today is caught up so much in selfish pursuits that he has degraded himself to the level of animals and is displaying demonic traits. At every step he is violating *Dharma* (Righteousness). Every desire is turning into greed. Large-heartedness is on the wane. Man's vision has lost the light of love. Truth is the casualty in man's speech. Spirituality has become a form of ostentation. Qualities like *Kama* (lust) and *Krodha* (anger) are having a free rein. Consciousness has become dormant in man. Human relationships have become mechanical and artificial. In fact, humanness has virtually disappeared.

Why the Divine incarnates

In this situation, what is it that man should seek? How can he attain peace and happiness? The first requisition is the cultivation of the love of God. The *Puranas* and the ancient sages have declared that the Divine incarnates to punish the wicked and protect the good. This is not correct. The Divine incarnates to inculcate love in mankind and teach how love should be promoted and practised. Only when such love is developed will man be free from sorrow and trouble. Sins will be wiped out and fear will cease to haunt men.

Where there is love of God, there will be fear of sin. When both of these are present, society will experience morality. Man's primary duty is to foster these *three--Daiva Preeti, Paapa Bheeti* and *Samaja Neethi* (Love of God, Fear of Sin and Morality in society). This has to be done by developing *Bhakti* (devotion) on the basis of faith and love. Actions have to be performed with devotion. Love is devotion; the faith generated by love is *jnana*. The actions done on the basis of love and faith are *karma*. The combination of *jnana* and *karma* leads to *upasana* (worship). *Upasana* is the combined outcome of *Bhakti, Jnana and Karma*.

Develop love to experience bliss

The dualistic attitude is rampant in man today. Dualism can never eliminate sorrow. It can only increase it. It takes man far from bliss. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate the sense of *ekatwa* (oneness). Love alone signifies that oneness. For this love, there is no path, no reward, no discipline other than love itself. The more you develop this love the more you experience bliss.

Today love is cribbed and confined. It is limited to one's kith and kin. Our love should transcend these narrow limits, embrace the whole world and extend love to every living being. Love is present in everyone in varying degrees. In Nature everything functions according to its specific qualities. "*Swabhaavastu pravarthathe,*" declares the *Upanishad--*(Everything behaves according to its specific nature). It cannot be altered or destroyed by anyone. This is the inherent attribute of Nature. It manifests the Divine principle, which is eternal, immutable and unchanging. To bring out this divine aspect in Nature and make it manifest, all things have been endowed with certain *gunas* (qualities). They are *Satwa, Rajas* and *Tamas*. To endow nature with these qualities, certain media are necessary. These have been described as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara.

The Gunas and the Trinity

Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara are not entities with forms. The Trinity represent the deified expression of three qualities. The *Puranas* have misrepresented Brahma as a four-headed deity engaged in cosmic creation. This is not correct. In fact, the Trinity represents the three *gunas*.

There are five elemental powers in *Nature--Bhoomi, Aapa, Agni, Vayu* and *Akasa* (earth, water, fire, air and space). If you want to understand the process of creation, the order of describing the elements has to be reversed. Starting from *Akasa* (space), we have in succession air, fire, water and earth. Nature has to be understood in two ways: one, in relation to the process of creation; the other, in relation to everyday experience. Likewise, when the order of Brahma, Vishnu and Easwara is viewed in relation to creation, it has to be reversed; we have Easwara, Vishnu and Brahma in that order.

To begin with, what does the principle of Easwara signify? The *Gita* declares: "*Easwarassarvabhootaanaam hriddese Arjuna thishtathi*" (Easwara dwells, O Arjuna, in the heart region of all beings). Easwara, therefore means the Lord of the Heart. He illumines the heart of every being. This means that the Divine power of Easwara is present in every heart. The other name given to Easwara as Lord of the Heart is *Atma*.

The Supreme Guru

It is from the heart that the mind has emerged. The mind corresponds to the Vishnu principle. Vishnu means one who is all-pervasive. The mind is equally all-pervasive. "*Manomoolam idam*

jagath," it is said. (The mind is the basis of the cosmos). The mind pervades the entire universe. Hence it signifies the Vishnu principle.

Brahma is traditionally described as arising from the navel of Vishnu. It is from the mind that *Vaak* (speech) has come. *Vaak* is the embodiment of Brahma. Hence Brahma has, among other names, "Sabda Brahmamayee" (Sound as Brahman).

Thus Easwara, Vishnu and Brahma symbolise the heart, the mind and the faculty of speech. The combination of all these three represents the *Atma*. Hence each of the three should be revered as the one supreme *guru* in three forms.

Gurur-Brahma, Gurur-Vishnuh,

Gurur-devo Maheswarah.

Gurussaakshaath Parabrahma

Thasmai Shri Gurave namah.

This *sloka*, which has a profound and sacred inner significance, has been given a distorted meaning, elevating the role of the ordinary teacher, fragmenting the Divine and missing the basic truth of oneness expressed in it.

Gurur-Brahma: The Brahma referred to here is not the creator. It refers to *Vaak*. *Gurur-Vishnu* refers to the all-pervasive mind, which is present in all beings. This is the Vishnu principle. *Gurur-devo Maheswarah*: This refers to the seat of the heart. *Gurus-saakshaath Para Brahmah*: This means that the unity of speech, mind and heart represents the Supreme *Atma*, which should be revered as *Guru*.

The Gunas and the Cosmos

What is the role of the *Guru*? It is the total removal of the darkness of ignorance. As long as there are the three *gunas*, there can be no freedom from darkness. It is only when one transcends the three *gunas* that one attains the state of the *Guru*. Alternatively, when one realises the unity of the three *gunas*, the message of the *Guru* is comprehended. The import of the unity of the three *gunas* is indicated in the *Gita* declaration: "*Mamaatma Sarvabhootha Atma*" (My *Atma* is the indwelling spirit in all beings). That which dwells in all beings is the One only. "*Eko vasi Sarvabhootha antaratma*" (The One that is the Inner Spirit in all beings). Forgetting this basic principle of Oneness and lost in the wilderness of multiplicity, men are having no peace.

It is on account of the varied functioning of the three *gunas* that the process of creation, growth and dissolution takes place. The three *gunas* are the primal source, the basis and the life-breath of the universe. They are responsible for the manifestations and transformations in Nature. The permutations and combinations of the three *gunas* in varying proportion account for the infinite diversity in the Cosmos.

The Trinity and their colours

Three colours have been ascribed to the three *gunas*. It is commonly believed that Vishnu represents the *Satwa Guna*. It is not so. The *Satwa Guna* is really the attribute of Easwara. It is not subject to *Maya*. In the state of *Yoga nidra* (yogic sleep) it acquires the *chith-shakthi* (the power of Awareness) and appears as *Suddha-Atma* (the Pure Absolute). Hence *Satwa* represents the Easwara principle. Its colour is white.

The *Rajo Guna* manifests itself in likes and dislikes. It used to be associated with Brahma. But this is wrong. It is a quality associated with Vishnu. Vishnu has been depicted as a deity bearing a conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. Vishnu has also been described as *Alankaaraswarupa--one* who is embellished by decorations. Vishnu also bears the name *Viswambhara--one* who protects and rules over the universe. As a *Raja* (ruler), he has the *Rajo Guna*. The colour of *Rajo Guna* is red.

Then, there is Brahma. The *Rajo Guna* has been attributed to Brahma. This is incorrect. Brahma represents *Tamo Guna*. *Tamo Guna* is associated with *Murkhatvam* (irrationality) and *andhakaara* (the darkness of ignorance). It is filled with *Mamakaara* (the sense of possessiveness) and *Abhimana* (attachment). These two impulses account for creation. If there were no sense of 'I' and "Mine," the creative process would not go on. These two are the insignia of *Tamo Guna*, which is represented by black colour.

White, red and black are the most important colours. All colours are merged in these three. Likewise, there are in the world, people with *Satwa Guna*, *Rajo Guna* or *Tamo Guna* and are distinguished by one or other of the three colours.

Five kinds of *sadhana*

What is the way to bring about unity in diversity of colours? The ancient sages, after deep enquiry, have indicated five different paths for achieving this objective. They are: *Sathyavathi*, *Angavathi*, *Ananyavathi*, *Nidhaanavathi* and *Swarupaatmaka-jnanam*.

Sathyavathi is a kind of *sadhana*. This *sadhana* reveals the presence of the Divine in the subtle form everywhere, in everything, in the same manner in which butter is present in milk. The *sadhana* provides the proof for the view that God is the Universal Indweller abiding in all beings. No one should think that God dwells in a particular place or in a particular being. The purport of this *sadhana* is to make one realise that God is present in all beings and to act on that conviction.

Next is *Angavathi Sadhana*. There are the five elements: Space, air, fire, water and earth. The Divine is present in each of these elements in a specific form. In *Akasa* (space) the Divine is present in the form of sound as "Om." *Akasa* is the base and the form of *Pranava* (Om) issues forth from *Akasa*. *Vayu* (air) has the power to sustain life. This power is represented by hydrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere. Oxygen has this Divine life sustaining potency. The Divine is thus present in air in the form of *Prana* (life-giving breath). This is the matter of daily experience for everyone. When somebody faints, the people around him are cleared so that he may have more air and breathe more freely. This is the recognition of the presence of the life-energy in air.

In fire, the Divine is present as an alarm-signaller. Even when a fire is mild, people are careful. Consciously or otherwise, when we have to deal with fire, we develop a sense of cautiousness.

In water, the Divine is present as *Prajna* (Constant Integrated Awareness). The scriptures declare: "*Prajnaanam Brahma*" (Integrated Awareness is Brahman). This *Prajna* arises out of water. When a person becomes unconscious, water is sprinkled on him to restore consciousness.

The potencies present in the five elements

The fifth element is the *Prithvi* (earth). In the earth, *chaitanya* (consciousness) is present. The potencies present in the five elements--*Prajna-shakthi* (Integrated Awareness), *Jaagrata-shakthi* (the awakening or warning potency), *Chetana-shakthi* (Consciousness), *Sabda-shakthi* (the

potency of sound) and *Jiva-shakthi* (life-sustaining potency) are all different forms of the Divine power. Those who are engaged in the *Angavathi sadhana* regard the five elements as manifestations of the *Paramatma* (Supreme) and offer worship to them.

The third *sadhana* is *Anyavathi*. In this *sadhana* the Divine is worshipped on the basis of certain insignia in a particular form like that of Vishnu or Shiva. Shiva, for instance, is envisaged as a deity with the trident, the *damaru*, three eyes and is worshipped in this form. Similarly Rama is pictured as one bearing the Kodanda bow and Krishna as the Lord with the flute, wearing a peacock feather on his head. In this manner each deity is distinguished by certain special insignia for purposes of worship.

Nidhaanavathi is the common type of sadhana

Next is *Nidhaanavathi*. This is the common type of *sadhana* practised by most people today. It comprises the nine types of worship practised by devotees: *Sravanam*, *Kirtanam*, *Vishnusmaranam*, *Paadasevanam*, *Vandanam*, *Archanam*, *Daasyam*, *Sneham* and *Atmanivedanam*.

The fifth *sadhana* is *Swarupaatmaka Jnanam*. This *sadhana* aims at achieving the realisation that every individual is the embodiment of the Divine and hence the Divine is present in everyone. The *Gita* declares: "All feet are His; all eyes, heads and mouths are His." That means, all human forms are Divine. True education should enable one to realise his inherent Divinity.

We speak often about prayer. Prayer does not mean petitioning to God. Prayer is an index of the experience of *Atmic* bliss. It is a means of sharing this bliss, spreading it all around, being immersed in that bliss. Prayer must come from the heart. Prayer that is not heartfelt is utterly useless. The Lord will accept a heart without words. But He will not accept words and prayers that do not come from the heart. This is why God is described as *Hridayesa* (the Lord of the Heart). It is only when you have faith in this that you will be able to manifest your divinity.

Regard the body as a temple in which the Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara--reside. There are no separate places where Brahma, Vishnu or Easwara dwell like Vaikunta or Kailas. These are the delusions born out of ignorance. God is inside you, outside you, around you. You have to recognise this truth and live according to it. Chittibabu (who had addressed the gathering earlier) referred to persons who are racked by doubts all the time. As long as you are filled with doubts, you cannot experience peace or happiness. We must perform all actions in the firm belief that "we are God and God is in us." We must experience this sense of *ekatvam* (oneness).

From unity to Divinity

What is the use of all the *sadhanas* you are doing? Only when the underlying unity of the *Satwa*, *Rajo* and *Tamo Gunas* is recognised can you experience the bliss of Self-realisation. For realising the *Atma* (Self) there is no need to go to any place. Do not imagine that the Divine comes from somewhere to give you *darshan*. What need is there for One who is Omnipresent to go from place to place? The Divine is beyond coming and going.

Realise the importance of unity. To achieve unity you have to cultivate purity. Where you have purity, you realise Divinity. Today you have no unity, purity or divinity. You have only community in the narrow sense of "mine" and "thine." You must develop fraternal feelings, without regard to barriers of race, religion, caste and class. When you develop this sense of spiritual kinship, the nation will progress and prosper.

In the name of Guru Pournima, you perform some *pujas* for some persons and waste your lives. There is only one *Guru*. He is God. That *Guru* is within you. You are seeking the *Guru* all over the world. Your *gunas* (qualities) are in you in the form of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, and can protect you, elevate you or ruin you. When you act righteously and pursue the right path, they will protect you by their *Vishnutva* (Divine potency).

Do not give up God; realise God is one

Sin or God have no separate existence. Our actions and thoughts assume the forms of sin or merit as the case may be. The royal road to happiness and the removal of sorrow is right action. The essence of all religions, all teachings and spiritual paths is only one thing: Love. Develop that Divine Love.

Above all, whatever your difficulties, whatever the ordeals you have to undergo, in any situation, do not give up God. God is One. Whether you are affluent or destitute, whether you are a scholar or an ignoramus, whatever troubles you may be faced with, whatever spiritual practices you may adopt, whether you are regarded as a sinner or a saint, "Do not give up God and realise God is One."

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium on Guru Pournima Day, 29 Jul 1988

Man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental; the one caused by the disequilibrium of the three tempers of Vatha, Pitha and Sleshma and the other caused by the disequilibrium of the three Gunas, Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. One peculiar fact about these two: types of illnesses is that the cultivation of virtue cures both. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health! An attitude of generosity, of fortitude in the presence of sorrow and loss, a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of one's capacity; these build up the mind as well as the body. The very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes you free from disease. The body and the mind are closely interrelated.

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