

## 8. Make every moment holy

ALL HOLY festivals in Bharat are invested with profound inner significance. Today is *Yugadi* day. It is commonly believed that this marks the beginning of a new year. No. It is really a beginning of a *yuga* (aeon). The Lord is the beginning and the end of every aeon. Hence, He is called *Yugaadikrit* (the creator of *yuga*). God is not only the creator of each aeon, but He is also described as a sustainer of the *yuga*.

In sustaining the *yuga*, the Lord is all-powerful. He is omniscient. Hence, He has the appellation "*Yugadhara*" (the supporter of *yuga*). He is also known as *Yugaandhara*.

Divinity is the power behind the creation, sustenance and dissolution of every aeon. *Yugadi* is also celebrated as *Samvatsaraadi* (the festival of the new year). What is the meaning of *Samvatsara*? *Samvatsara* means God, the One who dwells in everything. For *Samvatsara* (the year), the underlying spirit is *Atma*. Another name for *Samvatsara* is *Kaala* (Time). Because Time is subsumed by the Spirit, God is known as *Kaala Atma* (the Time Spirit). *Yugadi*, therefore, represents the form of the Divine. The Cosmos itself is the form of the Divine (Vishnu). "*Sarvam khalu idam Brahmam*," declares the *Upanishad*. The four *yugas* (aeons)--*Krita, Treta, Dwapara* and *Kali*--are permeated with Divinity. Hence, God has also the name *Chaturatmaka* (the Fourfold Spirit).

This fourfold Spirit is manifested in four forms with distinctive attributes though their powers are one and the same. They are' *Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Aniruddha* and *Pradyumna*. All the four are combined in the *Avatara* (the incarnation of the Divine in human form).

God should not be regarded as some separate power or entity. Time is a manifestation of God. Hence, God is adored as *Kaala* (Time), *Kaalakaala* (the Master of Time, the Controller of Time), *Kaalaatheetha* (One who transcends Time), etc. God is also known as *Vatsara* as the Divine indweller in all beings.

### ***Vasudeva-the first form of fourfold Spirit***

Of the four forms of the Lord regarded as *Chaturatmaka*, the first is *Vasudeva*. This name signifies that the Lord is immanent in everything in creation and bears within Himself everything in the Cosmos. He is omnipotent. He is resplendent. He remains unmoved in any condition, in any circumstance, while being present in every limb and every cell. He is known also as *Angirasa*--the One who is present in every *Anga* (limb) in the form of the circulating blood and imparts vitality to it. As the *rasa* (vital essence), He is described as *Raso vai Sah* (the elan vital). Thus, everything is permeated by God and there is nothing outside Him.

### ***Sankarshana, Aniruddha and Pradyumna***

The second name is *Sankarshana*. *Sankarshana* is the One, who at the time of *Pralaya* (the Great Dissolution), absorbs within Himself the entire Cosmos. He is the One who ends all sorrow and confers all happiness. The *Sankarshana* principle is the one which removes misery and confers joy. *Sankarshana* should not be regarded merely as Balarama, the son of Revathi (the elder wife of Vasudeva). *Sankarshana* represents the Divine attribute of eliminating grief and giving happiness, removing mental agitation and conferring peace, destroying weakness of spirit and instilling fortitude. This is no ordinary attribute. It is a Divine quality which is present in every human being.

*Aniruddha*, the third, refers to one who has a unique quality. He confers this *quality--Sampada* (wealth) on whoever prays to Him. He is the Lord who confers both material and spiritual benefits on those who adore Him. In this aspect, He shines through His effulgence. This illumination is not derived from outside. He Himself is the source of His light and also the light that illumines everything. This principle of *Aniruddha* is essential for every human being.

The fourth name is *Pradyumna*. He represents the invincible Divine power, which cannot be overcome by anyone. He has no equal. He is His own example. He is His own law. There is no one below Him or above Him because He is even in those below Him. The *Pradyumna* principle is all-pervading and omnipresent.

### **Union of all four principles is humanness**

It is the combination of all these four principles which constitute humanness. God is not different from man. *Vasudeva* is *Paramatma* (the Omni-Self). *Sankarshana* is *Jivatma* (the individual Soul). *Pradyumna* is the mind. *Aniruddha* is *Aham* (the ego). The union of these four is *Manavatva* (humanness).

If any one of these four constituents is absent, man cannot live in the world. If it is asked *whether Ahamkara* (egoism) is also essential, the answer is: *Aham* (the ego) should be present but not *Aham-kara* (the feeling of egoism, the sense of separate identity associated with the body consciousness). *Aham* means "I." The "I" should not be identified with the physical form. "*Aham Brahmaasmi*" (I am the *Brahman*). "*Aham na Dehaasmi*" (I am not the body). "*Na Aham Jivaasmi*" (I am not the *jiva--the individual soul*). "*Aham Aham*" (I am I). This *Aham* is the essence of everything. In the Sanskrit alphabet, the first letter is "A" and the last letter is "Ha." When the two letters are combined, you have "Aha." All the sounds in the language are comprised within these two letters. *Aham* means the principle which is present in everything in the cosmos, from the atom to *Brahmam*.

This is the significance of the *Vedic* pronouncements: "*Aham Brahmaasmi*," "*Prajnanam Brahma*" (*Prajnana* Constant Integrated Awareness--is *Brahmam*), "*Thath-thwam-Asi*" (That thou art). Failing to recognise the truth of these pronouncements and regarding the body as real and permanent, man is becoming a prey to sorrow.

*Bhagavan* is the unified form of these four principles. Most people do not seek to understand the meaning of the word *Bhagavan*. *Bhag* means *Sambhartha*. A second meaning is *Bhartha* (master). *Sambhartha* means the One who creates the Cosmos on the basis of Nature. Combining clay and water, the potter makes pots. Without either clay or water, it is not possible to make pots. So, for the pot, the basic materials are clay and water. Only when the two of the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) are available can pots be made. Even these two elements are forms of the Divine.

How wonderful is this creation! Air has the power to blow out a flame. A lamp is endowed with the power to spread illumination. But the same air is needed to keep the flame of the lamp burning. Thus air has the God-given power to both extinguish a flame or keep it burning. How does the same element have both these contradictory powers? This is the mystery of the powers of the Divine.

### ***Bhagavan* is the Creator and Protector**

*Bhaga* (in the term *Bhagavan*) refers to the creative powers of God. Hence, He is called *Sambhartha*. *Bhartha* is the One who protects what exists. So, *Bhagavan* is the creator and the protector of the Cosmos. The term also means one who illumines everything in the universe. Without this all-pervading Divine light, we will not be able to live for a moment: This means that if the Cosmos, which is constituted by the five basic elements, and the human body, which is made up of the same five elements, are to be sustained well, they need the sustaining power of the Divine.

*Yugadi* should not be treated merely as a holy festive occasion. It must be regarded as a day dedicated to the Divine. All festivals observed by the Bharatiyas have a marvellous inner meaning. But men in general view them only in terms of external observances and celebrate them with feasts and frolic. These festivals were really intended to be used for the exclusive worship of the Divine, enjoy the bliss of that devotion and overcome pain and sorrow. These holy days were instituted for getting rid of the ignorance and cultivating right knowledge, the higher wisdom and cosmic consciousness. Man has been endowed with intelligence together with the human form. Along with these, man has also been given temporary existence. Man has, therefore, to use the life-span allotted to him for leading a purposeful existence by the use of his intelligence. Man unfortunately misuses his intelligence and gambles away his precious life.

### **Be grateful to the society**

Man should strive to use every talent and skill given to him not only for his own benefit but also for the good of the world. Man owes everything to society and should be grateful to society for all that he receives from it. Expressing this gratitude is man's foremost duty. This gratitude has been described as *Bhakti* (devotion). Chanting the names of the Lord is one of the ways of expressing this gratitude. All the nine forms of worship are different ways in which this gratitude is expressed.

*The Yugadi* celebration is an annual reminder of man's obligation to express his gratitude to the Divine for all the benefits received from God.

### **Sanctify every minute**

We hail the new year as *Samvatsara* because it signifies the omnipresence (in time and space) of the Divine. *Samvatsara* does not merely mean period (of the year) made up of minutes, hours, days and months. Every moment is *Samvatsara*, because without seconds, minutes, etc. there cannot be a year. If the year is to be sanctified, every moment is to be sanctified. Every second constitutes a year. It is not the new year that matters. Every new second is significant.

Hence, you should fill every moment with sacred thoughts, with pure feelings and pure actions. Every moment you should try to get rid of bad thoughts and fill the mind with good thoughts.

*Embodiments of the Divine Atma!* From ancient times Bharat has been holding forth to the world great ideals and the highest wisdom. It has been concerned not only with the physical and material welfare of man but has laid stress on Divinity that permeates the universe. Men should recognise this Divinity and respect every being as the embodiment of the Divine. Forms may vary but the Indwelling Spirit is one and the same in all. Hence, you should bear no ill-will towards any one. Control of speech is most important. Excessive talk should be avoided. Speech should be sweet and well intentioned.

Vyasa summed up the essence of his eighteen *puranas* in two maxims: It is meritorious to help others, sinful to cause them harm. "Help ever: hurt never." The damage done by a bad word may cause more lasting injury than any harm done to the body. Bear in mind that India has been in the past an exemplar to the world. It has been the birthplace of great sages and scholars, valiant heroes, renowned artists and poets and many who have excelled in all the arts. Having been born in such a country, it is the duty of all devotees to uphold the *sacred Dharma* of Bharat. People ceaselessly talk about *Bhakti* (devotion). But what is this devotion? What are you doing for the land of your birth? Gratitude to your native land is the real index of devotion. Your *Deha* (body) and your *Desa* (nation) are one. Therefore, the welfare of the nation is your welfare. Remember this always.

After the fall of Ravana in Lanka, when all around him appealed to Rama to take over the lordship of Lanka and rule over it, Rama replied that the mother and the motherland are greater than Heaven itself and he would not give up his motherland, whatever might be the attractions of Lanka.

### **Develop intense love for the motherland**

Today, whatever might be the plight of Bharat, we should not give it up, because it is our motherland. Young people should develop an intense love for the motherland. The sense of attachment to the nation, regarding it as "*My Country, my people,*" is conspicuously absent today. Born in Bharat, breathing its sacred air, drinking the sacred water of the Ganga, inheriting the hoary culture of the country, people are still going after alien manners and customs. This is nothing less than treason to the nation. In no circumstance should you forget Bharat, whatever its defects.

You must love the country and strive ceaselessly to promote its progress. The one who cannot proclaim, "This is the land of my birth, its language is my mother tongue, its culture is my religion," is as good as dead. No other country can boast of such a long line of great men in every sphere as Bharat. India has been the beacon-light to the world in the spiritual field. It has held out to the world such ideal rulers as Harishchandra, Nala, Maandhaata and Sri Rama. Their fame abides, though their empires have gone. Today's rulers should realise that their rule will be temporary and they should conduct themselves in such a way that their names are remembered for their integrity and devotion to righteousness.

### **Earn God's love**

The only wealth one can carry with him after death is the love of the Lord. One should strive to earn that wealth during his life. This can be done only by selfless devotion and love. To earn God's love, one has to dedicate one's time, body and actions to the service of the Lord. This was the realisation that came to Arjuna after listening to the message of Sri Krishna. He declared: "*Karishye vachanam thava*" (I shall carry out whatever you say). Arjuna, who was an exceptionally intelligent person, came to this conclusion only after every kind of argument with Krishna.

Today, men argue in various ways, forgetting that the source of the reasoning power is itself God. Men should depend not on their physical or intellectual strength, but on the power of God. Only the man who relies solely on the power of God can experience true peace and bliss. Such a person need not mind the criticisms of others. He can defy the opinions of a multitude of persons and stand up for what he 'holds to be true. Unmindful of praise or censure, you have to cultivate

firm faith in God. Do not worry about the world; concentrate on God. This was the attitude of the *Gopikas*, who were unmindful of what others said regarding their total absorption in the contemplation of Krishna. They exemplified pure and unwavering devotion. One must hold fast to one's belief, whatever may happen.

A true devotee will not give up his faith, whatever may befall him. The basis of that faith is not reason but instinctive conviction like the child's love for its mother. Students and young men who profess devotion to God, must be prepared to declare openly that they adore and love Bhagavan for no reason except that He is God. "My experience is the basis of my faith," should be their answer. For devotion to God, only two things are needed' faith and experience. Both these are rooted in love.

*Embodiments of the Divine!* Do not forget God, who is the embodiment of the *Yuga*. He is the Lord of Time. *Kaala* means one who is the giver of all happiness. If you take refuge in the Lord of Time, no one can cause you any harm. Make the best use of time chanting the name of the Lord or engaging yourselves in sacred activities.

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