

1. Time is God

All things happen according to the dictates of Time;

Both good and bad depend on Time;

Prosperity and poverty likewise depend on Time;

Time is the determinant of all things,

There is none who is not subject to Time

In this entire world; that's the Truth.

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Time is the embodiment of God. Hence Time is called *Samvatsara* (year). The sages have described God as *Kaalarooopaaya* (the embodiment of Time).

All things in the Cosmos, moving and unmoving, are permeated by God. Hence, God is characterised as *Kaalagarbha* (the One who holds Time in the womb). Sages have also described Him as *Dheerothama* (Supreme among the valiant). The term *Dheera* should not be understood as meaning one who is a great intellectual or highly intelligent person. *Dheera* is the appellation given by the *Veda* to a man who turns his *Dhee* (intelligence) towards God.

The word *Kaalam* (Time) is derived from *Kaa+alam*. This means that God, embodiment of Time, is the One who rewards people according to their deserts. God does not submit to worldly offerings, worldly authority or worldly power. He responds only to spiritual aspirations.

Realise the true goal of your life

In the world, we are continually experiencing the same round of days and nights. You perform the same ablutions and indulge in the same process of filling the stomach. Thus you go on from year to year. But what efforts are you making to lead a purposeful and ennobling life? You are going through the same mill of experiences again and again, doing the same things again and again. If you go on in this way, what is the worth of your life? What is the goal of life? What is its primary purpose? Few care to enquire into this basic question.

Hence what we have to examine is how we can lead an ideal, bliss-filled, spiritually-oriented life which will serve as an example to others. People are engaged in *sadhana*. But when the outcome of these exercises is examined, it is found to be without meaning. All these exercises are purely designed to provide some sort of mental satisfaction and nothing more.

In my view, neither *Sadhana* (spiritual endeavour) nor *Sadhyam* (fulfilment) exists independently and apart from each other. *Sadhana and Sadhyam* are one and the same. It is a trick of the mind to make *Sadhana* as the means to *Sadhyam* (the Goal). True *Sadhana* consists in giving up the *anaatma bhava* (the idea that one is not the Spirit but the physical body). To turn the vision from the physical to the spiritual constitutes real *Sadhana*.

Today, we have knowledge of many sorts in the world. All these categories of knowledge do not constitute what is regarded as *Jnana in Vedantic* parlance. *Atma Jnana* (knowledge of the Spirit) alone is true knowledge. Ordinary knowledge may be knowledge of material objects, sensory knowledge, or any other kind of knowledge acquired by investigation. But none of these can be

Atma Jnana. In the highest sense *Atma* (the Spirit) and *Jnana* (Knowledge) are not two different things. They are one and the same.

That is why the *Vedas* declared: *Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma* (*Brahmam* is Truth, Wisdom and Infinite). Truth, Wisdom, Infinity and *Brahmam* are all different names for the *Paramatma* (Omni-Self). They are synonymous. They are not different from each other.

Jnana and Bhakti lead to the same goal

What is *Jnana*? The awareness of *Swaswaroopa* (one's real nature) is true knowledge. Devotion is the means to achieve oneness with this knowledge (when Self-knowledge becomes one with the Self). *Jnana* implies freedom from all thoughts. The *Jnana-Marga* (the path of Knowledge) calls for the control of thoughts by appropriate efforts. Whether one takes to the *Jnana-Marga* (the path of Knowledge) or the *Bhakti Marga* (the path of Devotion), the resulting illumination is the same.

For instance, the light of the sun is reflected by the moon. The light from the sun is warm and effulgent. When the same light is radiated by the moon, it is cool and soothing. It is the same light that is present in the sun and the moon. The principle that illumines both the sun and the moon is the Spirit (*Atma-tatwa*). The sun's light has been compared to *Jnana* and the moon's light to *Bhakti*. *Jnana* is effulgent, while *Bhakti* (Devotion) is blissful. Thus *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are the beginning and the end of the same process.

God accepts all that comes from a pure heart

In the phenomenal world, we recognise three *entities*--*Kartha, Karma and Kriya* (the doer, the act of doing and the goal of the action). This is characteristic of devotion. The *Sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) is the *Kartha* (doer). The *Sadhana* (spiritual exercise) is the *Karma* (what he does). Getting the vision of the Divine is the *Kriya* (goal). The same process is described as *Jnana* (knowledge), *Jneya* (that which is to be known) and *Jnatha* (the knower). In the highest sense all these are one. They appear in three different forms at different stages. People are carried away by what they imagine are their spiritual experiences in *their sadhana*. But what they should really seek is *Anaatma. bhaava* (the giving up of the attachment to the non-spiritual). You should not rely on the power and pelf of the world. God accepts only what comes from a pure heart. He does not yield to any mundane offerings. There is a historical illustration for this.

How Shiva accepted Parvathi as Ardha

Both in the *Vishnupurana* and the *Sivapurana*, Parvathi is described as the most beautiful goddess. Conscious of her own exceptional charms, Parvathi desired to win Siva as her spouse. But all her efforts proved fruitless. Learning a lesson from this experience and shedding her ego, she embarked on a severe penance. Facing the rigours of heat and cold, wind and rain, she allowed her body to waste away by her penance. Her mind was solely concentrated on Siva. Seeing that she had completely got rid of her ego, Siva agreed to accept Parvathi as *Ardhaangini* (one half of Himself).

What is the inner meaning of this episode? Nature is symbolic of Parvathi. It is exceptionally beautiful. Feeling proud about its charms, it seeks to attract everybody. As it succeeds in its attractions, its ego grows. Man, who is a child of Nature, also develops the ego and leads a life filled with egoism. The ego gets puffed up on the basis of knowledge, physical strength, power

and position, handsome looks and such other accomplishments. Even the pride of scholarship takes one away from God.

Persons filled with such conceit can never realise God. Only those free from self-conceit can be God-realised souls. Valmiki, Nanda, Kuchela, Sabari, Vidura, and Hanuman are examples of devotees who realised God, but who could boast of no great lineage, wealth or scholarship. Their supreme quality was freedom from ego. Hanuman, for instance, was content to describe himself as a servant of Rama, despite his great prowess and knowledge. All the accomplishments and acquisitions in this world are transient and impermanent; lured by them, men get inflated and ultimately court ruin. Hence, giving up the notions of one's own doership, man must regard God alone as the doer. He is the giver, He is the recipient and He is also the object that is given.

Time is the very form of God. Birth and death are encompassed by Time. Everyone, therefore, should regard Time as Divine and utilise it for performing sacred actions. You should not waste a single moment. Time wasted is life wasted.

The fruits of your actions are determined by Time. All your experiences are the results of your actions, whether it is happiness or sorrow, affluence or poverty. Hence, good and bad depend on what you do. As are your actions, so are the fruits thereof. The way you utilise your time determines the outcome.

God is the origin for all *Yugas*

Hence, this new year, which is a form of the Divine, should be put to right use. You have heard about the four aeons called *Krita Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Dwapara Yuga* and *Kali Yuga*. These are not distinct from each other. The divisions are based on experiences. Whether it be *Krita yuga* or *Kali Yuga*, it has no separate form. According to the conduct of the people at the time, the name is given for the *Yuga*. Even during *Krita Yuga* there were people filled with attachments and aversions. There are even in *Kali Yuga* people wedded to truth and leading virtuous and peaceful lives. For all *Yugas*, God is the origin. Hence one of the names bestowed on God is *Yugadi* (One from whom the *Yuga* begins). The *Yugadi* festival is celebrated for this reason. Everything is a manifestation of the Divine.

Not realising this, man becomes elated when he gets something and feels depressed when he loses something. You should develop the state of equanimity which leaves you unaffected by gain or loss.

The story of white and black

Once a King summoned an assembly to find out who is the most intelligent person. He posed a question before the gathering: "What is the whitest thing in the world? What is the blackest?" There were varied replies from the intellectuals in the assembly. One said, it is milk, another said it is cotton, yet another said it is the sky, and so on.

There was one great devotee in that gathering. When questioned by the King, he said, "I am not a learned or intelligent person. Whatever little intelligence I possess is gift from God. All the intelligence that every person has, comes from God. There are some who misuse that intelligence and others who make good use of it." Then, after offering a prayer to God, he declared: "The day is whiter than all things, the night is blacker than all other things. This is what is evident in this world. Day is white, night is black. All our lives are passed through this procession of days and nights, of white and black. Who is the one who has overcome this cycle of days and nights? Only

God. The combination of white and black is described as one day. The one who has conquered this cycle is God. The difference between *dinamu* (day) and *daivamu* (God) is that for God there is neither day nor night while they exist for the world." He concluded: "Only God can give men the grace by which they can transcend day and night."

All the scholars present in the assembly felt outraged by the impudence of an unlettered man coming forth to give an answer to the King's question. Arrogance of other types can be subdued, but the arrogance of *Pandits* (scholars) cannot be easily put down. This is the basic malady of scholars. They study any number of books and are steeped in bookish knowledge. But they do not practise even a fraction of what they know, with the result that only their ego gets inflated. The scholars approached the King and said: "You should not take this illiterate man at his word. He must be asked to furnish the proof for his statement. In the world today, proof is required for anything in any field."

The King thereupon asked the devotee to provide the proof for his statement. The latter asked for one day's interval to furnish the proof. He also stipulated that during that period, no one should question or oppose anything he did or restrain his movements in any way. The King granted him his two requests and announced that no one should interfere with the movement or actions of the devotee in the palace or elsewhere.

The next day, the King was resting in the palace after lunch. The devotee filled a cup with milk and placed it at the threshold of the King's bed-chamber. He then brought a suckling infant near the door and went on beating it, thereby making it cry so loud that the King's nap was disturbed. The King got up in a rage and came out of the door to ascertain who had the temerity to disturb his siesta. As he stepped out, he knocked down the cup of milk. He could not see the milk-cup.

The devotee told the King: "Because the day is brighter and whiter than the milk, you could not see the milk. Oh King, if milk is the whitest object, how is it you could not see it? The whiteness of the milk is less than that of the day. Daylight is whiter than milk. You have to accept this fact." The devotee added: "The stars are present in the sky during day time also. But they cannot be seen because of the powerful light of the day. When night descends, the stars become visible."

Divine is the embodiment of knowledge

The whiteness of day represents *Jnana* (the higher knowledge). The darkness of night represents *Ajnana* (ignorance). Divinity transcends both knowledge and ignorance. Forgetting the Divine, people are immersed in the experience of the things of the world. The Divine can be experienced only through the Divine.

God is described as "*Sat-Chit-Ananda*." *Sat* is truth. *Chit* is *Paripurna Jnana* (supreme knowledge). When *Sat* and *Chit* come together, there is *Ananda*, Divine Bliss. If you separate Truth and Knowledge, you cannot experience Bliss. Truth may be compared to sugar *Chit* (*Jnana*) may be compared to water. As long as sugar remains sugar and water as water, you don't experience anything special. But when the two are brought together you have a syrup, an enjoyable *paanakam* (sweet drink). Likewise, only when *Sat* and *Chit* come together *Ananda* (bliss) is experienced. *Sat* (Truth) can be attained only through Truth. *Chit* (Knowledge) can only be acquired through knowledge. Bliss can be experienced only through bliss. The Divine as the embodiment of knowledge can only be realised

through *Jnana* (the path of Knowledge). What is *Jnana*, the Supreme Knowledge or Wisdom? It is to know your own true self. That is true knowledge. Self-knowledge is Self-realisation. Constant contemplation on the Self is the means of experiencing the direct vision of God. What is the Self?. That is the *Atma*. When you refer to the "I", that is the Self. Who is this "I"? Is it the body? Or is it the mind? Or the *Buddhi* (intellect)? Or the *Atma* (Indwelling spirit)? When you enquire into this question, you realise that the *Atma* alone is "I".

Wherefrom has the *Atma* come? The word *Nara* (man) means *Atma*. It is the *Atma* that permeates the sky and everything else. Hence, the sky and other basic elements were called *naaraas* (*Naaramulu*, in Telugu). The one who is the source of these elements is described as Narayana. The man who is constituted by the five elements is Divine (Narayana). *Atma* means that which is filled with bliss. You cannot secure this bliss from the things of the world. All the pleasures you experience are fleeting.

The three states of consciousness

You can experience bliss only when you have overcome the processes of the mind. When is this possible? It is in the *Sushupti* (deep-sleep) state. *Sushupti* is described as the *Kaaranaswaroopa* (causal form). *Jagrata* (the waking state) is the bodily form. *Swapna* (the dream state) is the *sookshma* (subtle) form. *Sushupti* (deep-sleep state) is the causal form. When the reasons for action and the actual actions are forgotten, the causal body alone exists. These states of consciousness have to be grasped only through enquiry. If you want to control the mind, you have to engage yourself in good deeds. As you go on doing good deeds, you develop good thoughts and feelings. As you think, so you become. When you have good thoughts, you acquire true understanding of the real. The reflections may change, but the object itself does not change. As for instance, the sun's reflections in a moving stream, or a still lake, or a muddy pond may vary, but the sun itself remains the same. Your body is like a vessel. Your mind is the fluid in it. The *Atma* that is reflected in it is an image. The image is clear, unsteady or muddy according to the state of the mind. Most people cannot easily understand these spiritual truths.

God is moving and also unmoving

Vedanta, for instance, has declared: "*Acharam chameva cha*" (The One who is non-moving is also moving). This means that He is both unmoving and the moving object. How is one who is non-moving to be described as moving? And how is one who is moving to be described as unmoving? There is an apparent contradiction in this statement: "God is unmoving; He is also moving." The *Vedanta* has given a beautiful explanation for this. In the dream state, we experience ourselves in all kinds of movements. But the body that is seen in the dream as moving is in fact lying motionless on the bed. The physical body is motionless. The body in the dream is moving. Both the bodies are one and the same. In one state of consciousness it is still and in another it moving.

Vedanta declares that in the physical state, there is movement but in the *Brahmic* (spiritual) state, there is steadiness. Hence, the purpose of *Dhyana* (meditation) is to achieve the *Brahmic* state of steadiness. *Vedanta* has revealed many such profound truths.

For instance, when a person is asked, what is his dwelling place, he may give a particular address in a particular area. But according to *Vedanta*, the true dwelling place of every one is God. Likewise, people may describe themselves in terms of their caste or community. But all these are only worldly attributes, useful for worldly purposes. All the physical distinctions are not

fundamental. The basic reality is the *Atma* in everyone. The *Vedas* have described all as "children of Immortality." People talk about the spirit, but behave in a manner that belies their belief. There should be unity in thought, word and deed. To achieve this triple Unity, one has to understand the truth about the *Atma* (Spirit).

Engage yourselves in godly actions

This *Atma* is Time and Time is God. Therefore, you should not waste time. Fill your time with good actions. There is no greater *sadhana* than this. Sanctify the time given to you by good thoughts and good actions. For this, you need to cultivate the company of the good, which will in due course lead you to liberation. Fill your mind with thoughts of God. Engage yourself in godly actions. This is true *sadhana*.

People claim to spend hours in meditation. But of what use is it if there is no concentration of mind? It is better if you engage yourself in your regular duties or render social service or participate in *bhajans*. By these means try to bring the mind under control. Also, such work will be transformed into worship. Dedicate all your thoughts and actions to God. "*Sarva Karma Bhagavatprityartham*" (All actions are done to please God). Then your acts get purified.

If you want to experience God, you have to do it through your duties and actions. This is not so easy. You have been listening to Me for many years. You take down notes and listen to tape records. Has there been the slightest change in you? Such is your life. Only when some change takes place in you, that alone is the fruit of your *sadhana*. You go on spending your days and nights in the same routine, but are you making any efforts to sublimate your life? Endeavour to lead an ideal life. In the absence of any change for the better in your daily conduct, all your so-called *sadhana* (spiritual practices) will be futile.

God resides in the temple of human body

Jnana is God. *Jnana* is *Atma*. *Prakriti* (Nature) is *Jneyam* (the thing to be known). Man is a combination of *Jnana* (God) and *Jneyam* (Nature). The *Bhagavad Gita* says that the *Kshetra* (the field, namely the body) and the *Kshetrajna* (the knower of the field, namely the *Atma*) together constitute the human personality. Similarly, the scriptures refer to the human body as the temple and the indwelling Spirit as the God installed in that temple. Even a mere intellectual understanding of this fact will make us happy. But we shall be much more happy when we put this understanding into practice in our daily lives. However, it is a pity that we content ourselves with pious resolutions in such matters, without a strong determination to put them into actual practice. Here is a story relevant in this connection.

Once upon a time all the deer in a forest met together in a conference. They arrived at a consensus that they were superior to the dogs in several respects; they could run faster and jump higher than dogs; they ate *satwic* food unlike the dogs which ate *Rajasic* food. Therefore they passed an unanimous resolution amidst loud cheers that thereafter they should never be afraid of the dogs. They had hardly finished passing the resolution when they heard the loud barking of a dog in the forest. They lost no time in running away for their lives; their resolution was gone with the wind; not a single deer remained at the site of the conference. Similar is the fate of the conferences and resolutions made by the so-called *sadhakas* (spiritual aspirants).

Have your hands in society and heads in forest

Without the courage of firm conviction and strong determination, no purpose is served by routine *sadhanas* undertaken by aspirants who oscillate from moment to moment like the pendulum of a clock. On the contrary, a person who never swerves from his determination even under trying circumstances, is called a *Dheera* (a hero) and such a person wins the grace of the Lord.

We should try to seek fulfilment in our day-to-day life by basing our mundane activities on spiritual values. As I have been telling you off and on, you must have your hands in the society and head in the forest. That is to say, whatever be the activities with which you are preoccupied in society, you must be steadfast in holding on to the spiritual ideal. This alone is the true *sadhana* which will bestow lasting peace on you.

Whatever may be the change in the various *Pratibimba* (reflections) there will be no change whatsoever in the *Bimba* (Original). Remember that you are that changeless original--the *Atma*. All your *sadhanas* should be directed towards establishing yourself in this firm conviction and unwavering faith, culminating in your life's fulfilment.

Bhajan and Japa are one and the same

All your sense organs should be sanctified offering all the actions performed through them as dedication to God. This is true *Bhajan*. "*Bha*" means that which is *Bhavyam* (sacred or holy). What is *Bhavyam*? The *Atma Tatwa* (principle of *Atma*) which is *Divyam* (Self-effulgent). The letter "*Ja*" in the word *Bhajan* connotes *Japa* (chanting the Lord's Name). Thus *Bhajan* and *Japa* are one and the same.

There is a *Japa* (which means constant remembrance of God) that goes on incessantly and automatically within you in the breathing process, whatever be the work in which you are engaged. And that is *So ham*. This is the real *Sadhana*, because it goes on without any conscious effort on your part, in the same manner as the process of breathing, beating of your heart and circulation of blood within you, which take place without any effort by you. These are all natural processes which go on without any volition on your part. In contrast to this there are some activities which also become involuntary or automatic but because of prolonged practice.

For example, the fingers of one who is in the habit of taking snuff, will unconsciously be moving towards his nose. Similarly, because of habit, some people will be engaged unconsciously in *Japa*, with their minds wandering somewhere. This is not real *Japa*. That alone is real *Japa* which goes on in the super-conscious (but not unconscious) state of mind. Do not entertain any doubt about your ability to reach that stage. You can surely attain that state beyond the shadow of doubt, provided you have a strong determination. Unfortunately, you do not evince such a firm determination and tenacity of purpose in respect of spiritual matters, as you do for the sake of mundane things. Man is prepared to put forth any amount of effort to undertake a journey of millions of miles into outer space but he hardly ever endeavours to go even an inch into his own inner Self. What is the use of all your intelligence and all your worldly acquisitions when they cannot give you *Atma Santhi* (the untrammelled peace of the *Atma*). God alone can confer such enduring peace on man.

Therefore, O Embodiments of Divine love! Recognise that the *Samvatsara* (new year) connotes God who bears several appellations relating to Time. Sanctify the new year by engaging yourselves in pure, selfless and ennobling activities. As far as possible, avoid causing harm or

pain to others. As you sow, so you reap. Whenever you feel disturbed by a sense of anger, envy, pride, jealousy and the like, be alert and resort to the contemplation of the Lord.

New Year message to a vast gathering of devotees in Prashaanthi Mandir on 1-1-1991.