

32. See The One In The Many

Embodiments of the Divine Aatma! For all living beings on earth, the earth is the basis of life. The Life Force for the earth is water. Out of water come *sasyam* (food grains). Food grains sustain *Purusha* (man). Speech is the highest expression of man. *Ritham* (the Cosmic order) is based on *Vaak* (the Divine word). *Ritham* is cognised in *Riks* (Vedic hymns). The beauty of *Riks* is found in *Saama* (one of the four Vedas). *Omkaara* (the primal sound *Pranava*) is the essence of Saama.

Human existence arises from the Divine, is sustained by the Divine and finally merges in the Divine. *Omkaara* has three constituents. *Akaara*, *Ukaara* and *Makaara* (the three syllables--A, U, M). *Akaara* represents the vital principle *Praana Thathwa*. *Ukaara* represents the Mind. *Makaara* represents the body. *Omkaara* is thus the unified expression of the *Aatma*, the mind and the Body.

The cosmos emerged from *Akaara*. It is the *Praana* (Life-Force). The Mind principle came from *Ukaara*. The Body emerged from *Makaara*. The *Aatma*, the Mind and the Body, which emanated from the three syllables "A," "U" and "M," permeate the sun, the firmament and the entire universe. *Omkaara* is the essential basis for the entire creation.

The three forms of *Omkaara* principle

The *Omkaara* principle has three forms: *Naadha*, *Bindu* and *Kalaa*. *Naadha* is the sound that comes from the life-breath. This means that *Omkaara* is associated with the sound coming from the life-breath. The five kinds of life breath--*Praana*, *Samaana*, *Udaana* and *Vyaana*--are expressions of the Life-Principle. These five represent the *Pancha Bhutas* (five basic elements).

Bindu is the unified form of the *Aatma*, the Mind and the Body. *Kalaa* is the reflected image of the *Paramaatma* (OmniSelf) through the *Buddhi* (intellect). The triple principle *Naadha*, *Bindu*, *Kalaa*--permeate the entire universe.

What is the purpose served by these three? All three are forms of *Maaya* (deceptive appearances). Even the sounds, "A," "U" and "M," are deluding. *Praana*, Mind and Body are also forms of *Maaya* (delusion). Hence, the ancient sages declared: "*Tasmai namah*." Salutations to the One that transcends all forms. The *yogis* prayed to the One who is beyond *Naadha*, *Bindu* and *Kalaa* (*Naadabindukalaatheetha*).

The cosmos, thus, is made up of *Naadha*, *Bindu* and *Kalaa*. How is man to recognise this fact? The sages declared that *Sathsanga* is essential for this purpose. *Sathsanga* is commonly understood as referring to good company. This is not the proper meaning. *Sath* refers to that which is permanent, pure and unchanging. It is unaffected by time. *Sathsanga* means association with *Sath* in this sense.

Sath refers therefore to the Cosmic Consciousness which is present in all beings. The consciousness present in an individual cannot be called *Sath*. *Sath* applied to that collective Cosmic Consciousness which is present in all beings. *Sathsanga* means the cultivation of association with this Cosmic Consciousness by the individual. Most people consider that coming together with other individuals for the purpose of prayer and other devotional acts is *Sathsanga*. This is not so. *Sathsanga* represents the striving by man to establish union with the all-pervading, omnipotent, Universal Consciousness.

The inner meaning of *Moha*

There is, however, an impediment in the way of achieving this, known as *Moha*. *Moha* does not refer to attachment to wealth, property or children. Man can get rid of *Moha* only when he understands its inner meaning. *Moha* is derived from the words *Maa* meaning "finite," and *Ooha*, meaning, "imagining that which does not exist." *Moha* means, "finite conception of the unreal as real." This is divorced from any concept of divinity. *Moha* is totally related to the *Praakritham* (phenomenal world). It is associated with *Kaama* or desire. *Kaama* signifies transient pleasure based on worldly desires. Lasting happiness can only be got from Divine feelings related to the *Chaitanya* (Cosmic Consciousness). This consciousness itself is based on the transcendental *Sath-chith-ananda*. *Sath* is that which is eternal--the Being that is permanent. *Chith* signifies *Paripoorna Jnaana* (total awareness or knowledge). *Chith* is total awareness of what *Sath* represents. Both these transcend the phenomenal world. But these transcendental entities are present in the phenomenal objects. How are the two to be distinguished from each other? The transcendental element in the phenomenal world must be recognised as reflected images, like the reflections of the sun in a pot of water. The body is like a vessel in which the Divine is present as reflection--like the reflection of the sun, which is permanent, in a vessel which is impermanent. The Divine is present inside and outside everything in the Cosmos. In the body, that may be compared to a vessel, the reflection of the Life principle, or the *Aatma*, can be seen in the mind, which corresponds to water in the vessel. While the body and the mind are finite, the *Aatma* is Infinite.

All the prayers, *japas*, *Yagas* and *Yajnas* performed by men today are confined to the achievement of temporary pleasures and rewards. They are related to a life which is itself impermanent. The mind and the phenomenal world are equally impermanent.

How to recognise unity in diversity?

The Universe is called *prapancha*--a manifestation of the *Pancha Bhutas*--the five basic elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth. As these elements are impermanent and subject to change, all human life is related to impermanent objects and pleasures. How is one to achieve that which is lasting within the framework of the impermanent? This should be done by breaking down the separation between the permanent and the impermanent and recognising the permanent in the impermanent--the One in the many, unity in diversity.

How is one to recognise unity in diversity? We see the manifoldness of bodies, with a multiplicity of names, forms, speech and feelings. But in all of them there are the five elements common to all. But these are gross elements. Besides these, there is the spiritual element, *Chinmaya* (Consciousness). The Vedantins described the body as a doll of clay. Because of its predominant earthy nature, the body by itself is unable to raise itself to a higher level of existence. For this purpose, it needs the power of *Manthra* or *Yantra*. An aeroplane is *Yantra* (a machine) which is able to lift man far above the earth.

Development of Life-principle in man

The predominant earth element in man is constantly pulling him downwards. To lift himself above the mundane level man has to reduce the earthy element in him and increase the other four elements, air, fire, water and ether. The fire element that has to be increased is the *Jnaana-Agni*--the Fire of Wisdom. Similarly, man has to reduce the *Apaana Vaayu* in him and increase the *Samaana Vaayu*. This is the development of the Life-principle in man.

What is the purpose of the Navarathri celebrations? It is to acquire mastery over the forces of Nature and use it for obtaining mental satisfaction. Contentment in the mind is not easily secured. As soon as one desire is satisfied, another crops up. There is no limit to *Kaama* (desires). Even the aspiration for *Moksha* (liberation from mundane existence) is a desire. As long as desires remain, man is bound to the mundane existence.

***Prema* is love of God**

Moksha means the disappearance of *Moha* (attachment). Liberation signifies freedom from fleeting pleasures. What is it that man should aspire for? There is a Divinity that is permanent and unchanging. That is known as *Prema* (Divine Love). This *Prema* is not related to the physical. Men experience this love in its worldly form as affection or attachment. All love in human relationships today is not *Prema* but *Anuraaga* (attachment). It is inherently of a passing nature--interludes in the human journey. All attachment arises at one stage---between mother and son, husband and wife, and so on--and drops away at another stage. As against these transient attachments, the love of God (*Prema*) is something totally different. God is eternal--existing before man's birth and continuing after his death. The Divine is without a beginning or an end. True love means the Love of God. When a man and woman wed, we call it "marriage." But when the *Jivaatma* (the individual Self) unites with the *Paramaatma* (the Omni-Self), it is called merger.

During the Dashara festival, the three Goddesses Dhurga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi--are worshipped according to certain traditional practices. The tenth day of the festival is celebrated as the Day of Victory. The celebration has its roots deep in the ancient history of Bharath. In the *Dwapara Yuga*, when the Pandavas had to spend one year incognito, they hid all their *asthras* (weapons), on the advice of Krishna, in a Jammi tree which is thick in foliage and whose branches are filled with latent fire. Vijayadasami was the day on which they retrieved the weapons from the tree and used them to win victory over the Kauravas.

Earlier, in the *Thretha Yuga*, Sri Rama's coronation, after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka, was performed on Vijayadasami day.

Dhurga represents the prodigious *Prakruthi Shakthi* (power of Nature). As against this power of Nature is the *Paraa Shakthi* (the power of the Spirit). When spiritual power is predominant, the power of Nature is kept under control. When spiritual power is weak, the power of Nature becomes predominant. This is illustrated by the example of smoke and fire. When smoke is predominant, the fire is suppressed. When the fire is blazing, the smoke vanishes. Hence, to enhance the power of the Spirit and limit the power of Nature, man has to cultivate *Vairaagya* (detachment). To the extent the power of Nature is under control, to that extent spiritual power grows.

The need to develop Will power

Ichcha-Shakthi (the potency of Will) arises from thoughts. This *Ichcha-Shakthi* is the source of several other potencies like intellectual power, the discriminating capacity and others. To develop this *Ichcha-Shakthi* (Will power), one has to worship Devi. This calls for the cultivation of *thyaaga* (renunciation or detachment). For instance, if one has a desire for various drinks, he can bring the desires under control by giving up, to begin with, the desire for some of them. Thereby the *Ichcha-Shakthi* (Will power) is developed and in due course it becomes easier to

give up other desires. In Vedantic parlance this is described as *Vairaagya* (renouncing all attachments).

Vairaagya is not abandonment of hearth and home and retiring to a forest. It means developing Godly thoughts and reducing worldly feelings. It is when this balanced development takes place that one acquires *Prakruthi-Shakthi* (control over the power of Nature). When these powers are got, the mental power in a person increases.

Dhurga represents the *Prakruthi-Shakthi* and Lakshmi represents the Thought power--*Sankalpa-Shakthi*. *Vaak-Shakthi*, the power of speech, is represented by Saraswathi. It is to acquire these three powers that the various forms of worship are performed during the Navarathri festival. But prayers alone are not enough. Prayers issue from the lips. They should emanate from the heart. The *Hridaya* (heart) symbolises the *Ksheerasagara* (Ocean of Milk). Lakshmi emerged from the ocean of Milk. When Lakshmi emerges, purity of speech follows. Whatever you speak conforms to truth.

The concepts of *Sathya* and *Ritha*

There are two concepts: *Sathya* (truth) and *Ritha* (conduct based on unity of thought, word and deed). The triple purity of mind, speech and body is *Ritha*. To adhere to *Ritha* and speak and act accordingly is Truth. What is uttered with this triple purity is alone Truth, not other words. The ancients have declared that adherence to the truth is *Dharma* (Righteousness). There is no higher *Dharma* than *Truth--Sathyaannaasthi paro Dharmah*. Without the firm foundation of Truth, the mansion of *Dharma* cannot stand.

A life built upon *sankalpa* (desires) cannot last. The mansion of desires must be converted into a Mansion of Divine Will (*Ichcha-Bhavanam*). When the *Ichcha-Shakthi* (Will Power) is converted into *Kriya-Shakthi* (power of action), it results in *Jnaana-Shakthi* (the power of Wisdom). It is through this Divine Wisdom that spiritual liberation *Kaivalyam* is secured.

Divine potencies of the three Goddesses

The Navarathri festival should not be observed as a festival for worshipping the consorts of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. These Goddesses symbolise Divine potencies. All these potencies are derived from Vishnu. The entire cosmos is a manifestation of the myriad forms of Vishnu. People must recognise this oneness underlying the different forms. All beings breathe the same air as their life-breath. Likewise all the five basic elements are common to all. These elements are the stuff of Nature. But in the *Para Thatwa* (the Supreme Principle, the Divine), these do not exist. The elements are mortal. The Divine is immortal. To proceed from the mortal to the immortal the easiest means is the cultivation of *Prema* (Divine Love).

The heart is like a sky wherein the clouds in the form of thoughts hide the *Buddhi* (the intellect) and the Mind representing the sun and the moon. *Vairaagya* is the means to get rid of thoughts and the desires arising from them. The Devi Puja performed during Navarathri is intended to get rid of worldly attachments and divert the mind towards God.

There are four different qualities in man: humanness, the animal nature, the demonic nature and the Divine nature. When man follows the dictates of the body, he is a prey to his animal nature. When he is subject to the vagaries of the mind, he becomes demonic. When he is following the *Aatma*, he is manifesting his Divinity. When he is governed by all three--the body, the mind and the *Aatma--he* is human.

The way to enter the spiritual path

When Ravana fell a victim to the promptings of the mind, his demonic nature predominated over his other good qualities as a worshipper of Shiva and a master of many sciences. Whenever a desire arises in the mind, one should exercise the power of discrimination and decide whether it is good or bad. This is the way to enter on the spiritual path.

Each person has to decide for himself in which of these four states he is placed. The *Aatmic* principle is fundamental and everyone should strive to fortify the heart for spiritual ends. This heart is not the physical heart. It is the abode of the Spirit and is located in the spinal column between the ninth and twelfth vertebrae. It shines like lightning in the core of a dark cloud. This is called *Sushumna*.

Sushumna refers to the state in which all the sensory organs are subdued and the mind and desires are under control. It is not the state of deep sleep, as is interpreted by some. The terms used by the Vedantins (spiritual philosophers) should be understood in their deeper sense. This is a difficult exercise. The easier path is to love God with a pure and unwavering mind. Tukaram confessed that he was unacquainted with the techniques of meditation or the rules for performing sacrifices. "Oh Rama! The only method I know to attain you is to love you with a pure heart! Let me have your grace for cherishing this love," he declared.

The Ozone layer above the earth faces great danger owing to atmospheric pollution and intensive afforestation is essential for controlling this pollution and safeguarding the Ozone layer.

Seek the kingdom of the Spirit within

The Navarathri festival was celebrated by kings in olden days for propitiating Nature before embarking on wars of conquest. The Navarathri festival has another significance also. It is intended to secure victory over the *Navagrahas* (nine planets). Saint Thyagaraja, however, declared that if only he has Rama's *Anugraha* (grace), the *Navagrahas* would be utterly powerless.

Men today should not seek the earthly victories sought by the ancient rulers. They should seek the sovereignty of the *Aatmasaamraajyam* (Kingdom of the Spirit) within them. This calls for control over the senses and the eschewing of bad qualities like anger, greed and jealousy. This *sadhana* must begin from now itself when you are young. Do not put it off for your old age.

The students are well behaved while they are here. But they should carry their good conduct wherever they may be. Only then will they serve to reform the world. Just as people of all faiths live in harmony here, you should live in harmony with people of other faiths in whatever country you may live. You will be serving your Motherland well only when you set the example to the world.

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You have Shanthi. The subtle effect of mantras or mystic formulae mentioned in the Vedas cannot be seen or heard by the senses! They have to be experienced in and through the inner consciousness, the Antha Karana.

It is foolish to try to shape the world. Shape yourself as the embodiment of Peace, Love and Reverence. Then you will see all as Love, Compassion and Humility.

Sathya Sai Baba