

1. Purity--the path to Divinity

The Lord of the Universe permeates the entire Cosmos

Remaining invisible in the visible Universe,

The Cosmos Consciousness illumines everything

Like the thread that runs through a necklace of gems.

THE phenomenal world that is perceived by us is called *Vishvam* (the cosmos). This Cosmos is *Kaaryam* (action or effect). Every action is preceded by a cause. This cause is God. Hence, God and the Cosmos are related as Cause and Effect. The relationship is interdependent and inseparable.

Vishvam means that which has emerged from the Divine with many limbs. *Vish + Vam* means that which is pervaded exceptionally. Another meaning for *Vishvam* is *Vaayu* (air). Air is all-pervading. "*Vishnuh Vishvasvaruupah*" (The Cosmos is the embodiment of Vishnu). Vishnu also means all-pervasive.

There is no specific proof for the Divine. Hence, He is called *Aprameya* (Immeasurable). For such an Infinite being Time is the proof and Time is the basis. God is adored as "*Samvathsaraaya Namah.*" "*Samvathsara*" means *Daivasvaruupam* (the form of the Divine). The mere passage of 365 days does not amount to *Samvathsara*. *Samvathsara* refers to one who is the *Kaalaathmah* (Time-Spirit). Spirit means *Brahman* (the Supreme Absolute). The *Brahman* Principle refers to the *Chaithanyam* (consciousness), that is omnipresent. *Brahman* has no specific form. It is present in all human beings as Consciousness.

God is the Consumer of Time itself

For man to recognise the *Brahman*, he has to comprehend the nature of that which transcends Time. Time is consuming the body. God is the Consumer of Time itself. Hence, the *Vedhas* have declared that "*Kaala-Kaalaprapannaanaam, Kaalah kim karishyathi*" (Time is powerless against those who have taken refuge in the Over-Lord of Time).

Man's joys and sorrows, happiness or misery are not dependent on Time. They are based on man's actions. Time has no relations or friends. Time is not subordinate to anyone. All are subject to Time. Hence, if one has to realise the Divine, who is the Lord of Time, one has to carry out His injunctions. God looks with love only at such a person.

In this context, the Geetha has described the traits of the devotee who is dear to the Lord:

Anapekshah shuchir-Dakshah

Udhaaseeno Gathyavyathah

Sarvaarambha parithyaagee

Yo madbhaktah sa me priyah

(That devotee is dear to me who is free from desire, who is pure in body and mind, who is resolute, unconcerned, free from sorrow and has renounced all sense of doership).

True meaning of "desireless" actions

Anapekshah: In this world, man, with his body, senses and mind cannot be free from desires. But how is he to become *Anapeksha* (free from expectation)? When he performs actions, regarding himself, as the doer, the actions become fetters that bind him. All action which are performed with the feeling that they are intended as offerings to please the Divine, do not lead to bondage. They become *Anapeksha* (desireless actions). One has to recognise that it is the Divine principle in all beings which is getting all actions done through human beings as instruments. As long as man regards himself as *karthruthva* (the doer) and *bhokthruthva* (enjoyer) he cannot escape from the consequences of his actions.

When a man regards a certain piece of land as his, the crops grown on it will belong to him. The *Geetha* teaches that when actions are done as offerings to God, they become "desireless" actions. Man has taken birth to perform his duties and not to enjoy power or assert his rights. When one's duty is performed, the right comes of its own accord. Men today fight for their "rights" and forget their duties. Hence discharge of duty comes first. It is through duty that man realises God.

Inner purity is vital for all aspirants

Shuchih: This refers to purity. It is not enough if the body is clean. Inner purity is essential. The latter, in fact, is more essential than the former. For the proper enjoyment of all things, purity of mind is essential. Whatever sacred acts you may do in the external world, if you have no purity of mind and heart, all of them are valueless. The food cooked in an untinned vessel will be spoilt even if all the ingredients are good. Likewise, in the vessel of the heart, the inside must be purified by *Prema* (love). Then, all that one consumes will be wholesome. Hence, purity is vital for all aspirants; without it, all man's actions get tainted. Actions done with an impure heart can only produce undesirable results.

Whatever good results you want to secure in the external world, inner purity is the basis.

Dakshah: This refers to the determination that is needed to accomplish anything. One must have the fortitude and resoluteness to achieve one's purpose, whatever might be the obstacles in the way. To accomplish any sacred task one has to possess this determination. *Daksha* signifies this quality of unwavering determination in the devotee.

Udhaaseenah: One who is unaffected by whatever happens. This means that one should be totally free from selfishness. He must consider the performance of his duties as the sole purpose of his existence. The human body is the result of past actions. Man is bound to the world by his actions. The body is the primary requisite for the performance of *Dharma* (right action). Indifferent to fame or blame, not seeking power or position, one should perform one's duties selflessly. Do not be swayed by any consideration other than your duty. Whether it be in a political organisation or in regard to a personal matter, or in relation to national issues, you should act according to the dictates of your conscience, without any other concern. One can become a courageous leader only if he performs his duties in this spirit. All actions must be done in a spirit of service. Only one who serves is fit to become a leader. The man who seeks a position, can he be pure-hearted? No. Forgetting power and position, concentrating only on one's duties, men should engage themselves in action. This is the true import of *Udhaaseenah*.

Act in the present to get rid of mental anguish

Gathavyathah: *Vyathah* refers to anguish in the mind. Falling a prey to mental anguish, man is totally confused. Man has a tendency to brood over the past. Of what use it is to worry about

what has happened? Nor should one worry about the future which is unknown and uncertain. Bear in mind only the present. This is the way to get rid of mental anguish -- *Gathavyathah*. The present is the product of the past and the parent of the future. When you act properly in the present, the future will take care of itself. Do what is appropriate for the present moment. If there are no expectations, there will be no disappointments.

Sarvaarambha-parithyaagee: This means do not give room for ostentation in any of your undertakings. The world today is immersed in ostentation and egoism. What does it matter whether the world praises you or decries you? For instance, why should a devotee show off his devotion to earn the approbation of others? His devotion must be for pleasing the Lord and not for earning the approval of the world. In the spiritual path, what matters is the inner joy you experience. That is the key to self-satisfaction. *Sarvaarambha parithyaagee* means one who is prepared to relinquish all his possessions and acquisitions including wealth, knowledge and strength.

Thus, it is only the devotee who has these six qualities that is dear to the lord. It is such a devotee whom the Lord loves.

Man is ruined by six enemies lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride and envy. Equally man is redeemed by the six qualities mentioned in the above mentioned Geetha *shloka*.

Without cultivating these qualities, without cherishing such pure feelings, what is the use of immersing one's self in so-called devotion? It is only a hallucination, which cannot lead man to the experience of the Divine.

True devotee is one who practises what he has learnt

If you are true devotees, examine for yourselves how long you have been listening to Svaami's discourses? Years have gone by. To what extent have you gone spiritually? How far have you put into practice Svaami's teachings? What is the use of merely listening? Is it not all a waste? You are listening, but not putting the teachings into practice. Hunger can be appeased only when the cooked food is eaten. Only the devotee who practises what he has learnt is a true devotee.

Your practices are different from precepts. You are leading selfish and self-centred lives. Such a life is led by birds and beasts. Even these exhibit selflessness often. Man alone leads a totally selfish existence. It is a shame to call such persons as devotees. One must strive at least to practise one or two of the teachings. This calls for *Thrikarana shuddhi*-- purity in thought, word and deed. Without such triple purity, man ceases to be human.

Today, human values have given place to demonic tendencies. Animality has become dominant. The Divine has been forgotten. Consequently, all spiritual exercises are filled with ostentation.

What is needed is sincerity. One should not do anything for the sake of earning other's approbation. If one acts with sincerity, he will be duly respected. But if one merely preaches and does not practise, he will be ignored. How can such a person expect to win the grace of the Lord?

Self-interest cannot be totally given up, but there should be a limit to it. Everything in the world, including the body, organs like the eyes and other things are governed by strict adherence to limits. When the limits are exceeded disease sets in and the consequences may be serious.

The mortal man and the Immortal Divine

Among youth today, there is no regard for the limits to be observed in any sphere. Whether it be eating or sleeping or wandering about, they indulge in excesses in the name of freedom. What is real freedom? It is *Aathma Jnaana* (knowledge of the Spirit), *Aathma Nigraham* (self-control) and *Aatmaanandam* (Bliss of the Spirit) which constitute real freedom. Man is mortal and the Divine is immortal. In the mortal human being, there is the immortal Divine-Spirit. In the field of the heart, there is a *Kalpatharu* (wish-fulfilling tree). The tree is surrounded by bushes and briars. When these are removed, the tree will be visible. This wish-fulfilling tree is within each person, but it is encompassed by the bad qualities in man. When these qualities are eliminated, the celestial tree will be recognised. This is the *saadhana* that each one has to perform. This is not the quest for something new. It is to experience what is yours. The entire cosmos is within you. The Universe is permeated by *Brahman*. One should be lucky to get this experience.

How to experience the *Aathma*?

How is the *Aathma* experienced? It is the consciousness that is experienced in the interval between one *sankalpa* (thought) and another.

This may be illustrated by an example. Once, a man holding a time-piece in his hand and listening to the endless tick-tick of the second-hand, asked the time-piece whether it has any rest at all. The timepiece announced: "You simpleton! I have all the rest I need. It is the interval between one tick and another!" The "rest" is given by the "Rest watch." "Watch" means "look out." Seeing the watch, you have to look at the "rest" indicated by it. This is the way lessons are learnt in their spiritual journey.

When you want to swim across a river, you push the water ahead of you, behind you so that you may move forward. Today, people do not make this effort. They remain stagnant, going through the same experiences all the time. With the result, that they do not comprehend higher ideas.

For instance, there is the example of the ocean. All kinds of rivers flow into the ocean. It absorbs all the waters, but its level hardly rises and all the water that comes in becomes saltish. What happens to the water that rises from the sea as vapour and cloud? It is pure and sweet. The clouds, when they produce thunder, proudly declare that by going up from the sea, they have achieved eminence as well as purity. Moreover, the clouds come down as rain and nourish the crops on earth. Can all the waters of the ocean nourish a farm? No. Only the transformation of the sea-water into vapour and clouds can serve this purpose.

If one wishes to go up spiritually, one has to get away from the low level. Only then, will it be possible for a person to engage himself in service to others.

Unity is supremely important

It is not time that is responsible for all the chaos and violence in the nation and for all the difficulties experienced by the people. Men's thoughts are responsible for all these. These thoughts are filled with selfishness. It is because of these selfish and self-centred people that the nation is suffering from so many troubles.

As long as self-interest prevails there can be no unity. Without unity you cannot experience happiness. Therefore, unity is all important. With the strength derived from unity, you can accomplish anything. The Weakness of the nation is due to growing discord between man and man. Unity is supremely important. This calls for the shedding of selfishness to some extent.

The years are passing endlessly. It is now 1992 years since the birth of Christ. After nearly 2000 years what is it the people have learnt? What ideals are they upholding? People are celebrating the advent of the New year, but what are they doing to improve their conduct? This is what matters. Without it the celebrations are meaningless.

Act according to your conscience

Jesus taught many good lessons. Allah gave many high teachings. Raama and Krishna taught many good lessons. What have people gained from all this? How far have they tried to put this into practice? There are numerous persons who read the Bhagavath Geetha everyday. There are persons propagating the Geetha in every street. Preachers have multiplied but the number of those practising the precepts is dwindling.

People talk about what Svaami has been saying. How many are practising what Svaami says even to the slightest extent? No. What, then, is the use of all this? Whether it is Svaami's teachings or the instructions given by elders, whatever is good you should put into practice. You must act according to whatever your conscience tells is good. This is the way to honour the great ones. Not to practise their teaching is to disrespect them.

Joy is not derived from the mere advent of a New Year. All people want to know whether the New Year will bring better progress and improvement in the general condition. Having regard to time, place and circumstances, some good and bad things may occur. If, however, people desire an improvement in the state of affairs they have to change their attitude. It will be helpful if the time factor is favourable for change. This month, January, is not quite promising. January 1st starts on *Ashtami*, the eighth day after the New Moon. The end of the month January 31th will also be an *Ashtami*. All kinds of difficulties are likely during the month.

The New Year appears to have started on an *Ashtami*, which is considered inauspicious but this should not cause any apprehension among the people. With purity of heart, anything can be accomplished. Even the course of destiny can be changed by human will power.

Only the Divine has a free Will

Some students today talk about free Will. Only the Divine has free Will. Man is endowed with a Will but not a free Will. When the Divine free Will moves, the human Will also operates. There are a myriad leaves in a tree but not a leaf will move in the absence of wind. The leaves have no free Will but they have a Will which can be swayed when a breeze blows. In the tree of life human beings are like leaves. When the Divine Will blows the human Will begins to move.

Thus, there is need for the coming together of Divine Will and the human Will. Then, there will be a blossoming of human nature. Man can never achieve anything by his own efforts. There is something which a man accomplishes without much effort on his part. There are other things which he is unable to accomplish even with his best efforts. What is the reason? It is on account of the play of the Divine Will.

How the Divine operates may be known from two examples from every one's experience. The heart beats and the lungs breathe without any conscious human effort. These are the results of the operation of laws of nature according to the Divine Will. There is Nature on one side and human effort on the other. The two should function in unison. When there is such unity you have purity. That purity leads to divinity. These are not three different things but three stages in the process of a tender fruit achieving ripeness.

Bhaarath's foremost need today is unity. When the nation is in peril all parties should come together. There is no room here for ideological or partisan interests. All should regard themselves as the children of Bhaarath. All should have the nation's interest in their forefront. When this view prevails the nation's welfare is assured.

Help ever, Hurt never

Students! Regard every second as a new year and act on that basis. You need not wait for the passing of twelve months to embark on any enterprise. Transform yourselves every moment. Get rid of the bad old ideas; that will herald the birth of the new year. Take part in service activities to sanctify your lives. Adhere to righteous conduct. Live upto the motto. Help ever, Hurt never. This is the essence of the message of Vyaasa's eighteen puranas.

In rendering service you must have total dedication. For instance when you have to attend on a patient you should not leave the patient for the sake of having Svaami's *dharshan*. Your first duty is to look after the patient. Your devotion will be mere show if you leave the patient in the lurch and go for Svaami's *dharshan*. Duty is God. Work is Worship. Some nurses are behaving in this manner. They imagine that they are filled with devotion but this is not devotion. This is hurt, not help, This is not proper. God will not be pleased with this kind of "devotion." You must be by the side of the patient when he is in pain. This is real service to Svaami. But this does not happen. When delivery cases have to be attended to, instead of looking after them, people come to Svaami. This is not right at all.

In our old hospital some nurses used to behave in this manner. They are not good devotees at all. They are merely putting on the cloak of devotion. Duty comes first. Divine grace will come according to your desserts. Devotion may be there, but duty should be the first concern.

This applies to students also. They have to attend to their duties first. If duties are neglected, any pretence of devotion is merely a show. It is even a form of deception.

See the Divine in every patient

A patient should be regarded as Naaraayana Himself. You may come to Svaami in your free time. I have been saying these things for many years. But how many are acting up to them? Very few. In this manner, they are not only neglecting their duties but also acting against the directive of Svaami.

Hence, you should see the Divine in every patient and render service in the feeling that God is the Indweller in all beings. This will promote your spiritual progress. When you regard yourselves as devotees of Svaami, you have to bring glory to Svaami's name. If you behave in a wrong way, you are betraying Svaami.

God alone is the Master and so follow Him

All the world's problems today are due to selfishness. Individuals are concerned about the welfare of themselves and their families and do not care what happens to the rest of the world. It should be realised that the welfare of the individual is related to the welfare of society, the nation and the world. Students must develop a broad outlook. Selfishness and narrowness of outlook are more prevalent among the educated than among the villagers and tribal folk. The evil practices prevailing in big cities are not to be found even in jungles. Yudhishtira learnt that the educated man who had bad qualities was truly blind. Educated persons should develop discrimination,

humility and a right sense of values. Students should try to enquire into the cause of the world's problems, seek remedies for them and live in unity.

If you carry out the injunctions of the Divine, all will be well with you. Every one is selfish in this world. God alone is selfless. He alone has the authority to confer joy even on selfish persons. He alone is the Master. Follow the Master.

Discourse on 1.1.1993 at Prashanthi Nilayam.