

2. THE SANCTITY OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS

*Present in the smallest of the small,
As also in the largest of the large,
And, shining as the all-pervading Witness,
Is the Immortal Self.
Known as the Atma in the individual,
And as Brahman in the Cosmos,
Atma is Brahman and Brahman is Atma.*

Embodiments of Love!

The five elements of which the entire cosmos is built up, are present also in the human being. These five elements, namely, *pruthvi* (earth), *jala* (water), *agni* (fire), *vayu* (wind), and *akasa* (ether) are cognised by us through the sensations of *sabda* (sound), *sparsha* (touch), *rupa* (sight or the perception of the form), *rasa* (taste) and *gandha* (smell). Krishna addressed Arjuna as Partha since the latter was the very son of Mother Earth. Indeed, every man can be called Partha, being the son of Mother Earth.

The nature of the Elements

The first element earth, can be cognised by all the five sensations of sound, touch, etc. Every one of the five elements of which Nature is constituted, is very powerful. Thus, the earth has the capacity to move very fast in space [around the Sun] and also to rotate rapidly about an axis. It has various qualities and attributes. On its surface, the earth supports numerous objects and entities like mountains, forests, cities, villages, oceans, rivers, and so on. Ignorant people wonder: “When the earth rotates, why do not these objects slide and move?” The answer to this apparent paradox lies in the fact that the earth is not independent but subservient to the latent divine power within. Mountains, cities, forests, and all the rest of them are held firm and secure by that unseen power and not allowed to slide, notwithstanding the rapid rotation of the earth. Trains speed on railway tracks. Imagine the fate of passengers in the train if the tracks also were to move fast like the train! The tracks do not move because they have been secured. All the objects on the surface of the earth, from mountains to the oceans, are firmly anchored by the unseen force of gravity. This gravity is the result of the will of God. The earth thus provides a good example of the subtle aspects of the Master Plan of God.

Since the earth is suffused with divine power, it is nothing but an *anga* or limb, of God. In our body, we have many limbs and organs like the hands, the feet, the nose, the eyes, the ears, etc. Likewise, every individual is a limb of society or community. The different communities are all various limbs of mankind, which is a limb of nature or creation, which in turn is a limb of God. That

is why it is often said that God pervades the entire universe in a subtle form.

The earth is very big but God who is infinite and the subtlest of all, suffuses the entire earth with His divine power. Since the earth has *gunas* (attributes), it is not independent. As long as *gunas* exist, one cannot talk of independence. As the attributes diminish one by one, the subtlety of the entity concerned and its vastness increase. Earth has all the qualities of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. It is therefore finite. Moreover, the attributes together produce a binding effect that makes mobility difficult (one cannot move mountains, for example).

Water is the next among the five elements. It is present everywhere on earth, though its presence (especially as vapour or moisture) is not always visible or directly evident. Compared to the earth, water lacks smell; it therefore has one attribute less, making it both light and mobile — water can flow easily.

The third element is fire. It has two attributes less compared to the earth (taste and smell) and is therefore capable of spreading in all directions, including the vertical. Fire in a subtle aspect, is present in humans and even in water. In humans it is known as *Jataragni* – this is the name for the ‘fire’ of digestion. In water it is known as *badabagni*. Fire is latent in wood and stones also, which is why sparks are produced when wood is rubbed against wood and stone is struck with stone.

Air, the fourth element, has only two attributes, sound and touch. Air is present everywhere, and is most essential for life.

Last in the list of elements is *akasa* or ether, which is truly all-pervasive; it extends far beyond the earth. It has this capacity to spread everywhere because it possesses only one attribute, namely that of sound. Many think that *akasa* means the sky; this is wrong. *Akasa* means ether, and it is present even here (Swami taps the table before Him) and also here (shows the mike). Sound is the sole characteristic of *akasa*, and wherever there is sound there *akasa* exists. It is said:

Akasam gaganam sunyam.

It means that *akasa* is the emptiness of space. Though present everywhere, it cannot be seen.

Reverence for God and Nature

Far beyond all the five elements and completely devoid of any attributes whatsoever, is *Paramatma* (God Almighty). Being totally attributeless, *Paramatma* is more subtle than anything we can imagine; and He exists beyond space and time also. The *Vedas* say:

Sarvatah panipadam Tat sarvatoksi siromukham.

His hands and feet are everywhere in Creation. Though God is beyond everything, He nevertheless suffuses all the five elements, investing them with appropriate aspects of His divine power. He Himself is without attributes; but He is immanent in all entities with suitable attributes. Thus it is that the *Gita* declares:

Mamaivamso Jivaloke Jivabhutah sanatanah.

(All beings in Creation have originated from Me and are nothing but aspects of Me.) Hence, all the five elements are aspects of God, His Divinity, and His supreme power. It is for this reason that our ancients worshipped the five elements, revering them as aspects of God Almighty. They worshipped the earth as Mother Goddess, the rivers as various goddesses, and the elements as various deities.

The earth has always been worshipped by the ancients of Bharat as Mother Earth, since it is the earth that, in some form or the other, provides food and sustains life. Most gratefully the ancients said: “O Mother Earth, I am able to have food on account of your kindness.” Without the earth, we cannot have grain, and that is why earth was given so much respect and was accorded the position of a mother. However, scientists regard worship of the elements as superstitious behaviour, and those who worship thus to be fools. Those who worship the elements are not fools but those who criticise are. These critics have no idea of the inner significance of such reverence. Modern scientists are concerned only with the material and inanimate aspects of nature, being completely ignorant about the principle of reflection, reaction, and resound. If you strike the table, your hand feels hurt. Why? Because of reaction. You act, and the table reacts! There should be no surprise in this. Reflection, reaction, and resound form the three cardinal principles guiding the functioning of Creation. Man is born of the earth and therefore these principles are built into him also. When you stand before a hill and shout, you get an echo – that is resound.

The Divine Principle is latent in a subtle form in every entity and every being in Creation; however, it is very difficult to cognise. Everything is divine, and no one can assert that this is divine and that is not. Sunlight exists because the Sun exists. In the same way, we have Creation because there is a Creator. Just imagine: If the five elements in the universe have so much power latent within them, how much more powerful the Creator must be! Fire is powerful, the mind is very powerful, and so on. If every component of Creation is endowed with so much power, then is it not evident that the Creator must be infinitely more powerful? But man is not able to see this obvious truth. People are afraid of bombs but not of the individual who makes them. In fact, they generally do not even know who designs and manufactures such deadly weapons. The object instils fear but not the person who created the object. So it is with nature and God. Man is petrified by the powerful forces of nature but has no fear of God.

The Subtlety of God

*Wonderous are the glories of the Lord,
For they sanctify all the three worlds;
Like the sickle, they sever worldly bondage;
They are also noble companions,
And like the temples
Where sages worship.*

It is impossible to describe completely the glory of God. All the praise one can sing would be far from adequate. In fact, it is pointless to try and describe something that is indescribable. Instead, one must, to start with, try to understand the lessons that nature teaches. What a tremendous load the earth carries! Some

people say: “Swami, I do not wish to be a burden to Mother Earth. Please grant me death.” Will the burden of the earth decrease just because you die? Your death will not make any difference to it. The burden carried by the earth will diminish only when you lessen your own burden. What is the true burden you bear? Desires are your burden! If you put a ceiling on desires, you become lighter and come closer to God. That is why Swami often says: Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure. You must therefore sincerely try to decrease the burden of desires. If you do so, you will also cease to be a burden to God. Increase in your burden means more work for God! However, God being subtle, He does not directly carry your burden. Instead, He makes each person to carry their weight in such a manner that the person believes that it is actually God who is carrying! This is the subtlety of God. Though present in the five elements, He makes it appear as if the elements carry on all by themselves.

The *gopikas* (cowherd maids) have sung beautifully about the subtlety of the Lord. They said:

O Krishna! Can we ever know You?!
Subtler than an atom and mightier than the mightiest,
You are the One that sustains all the eighty-four lakh species!
Can we ever know You, O Krishna?!

It is impossible for anyone to fathom the depths of Divinity.

The Deeper Significance of the Elements

Arvind [the student who spoke before Bhagavan’s discourse] prayed to Swami to explain the nature of the five elements.

In this universe there is nothing apart from the five elements, because every entity is composed only of them and them alone. There is no place where the elements are not present; they are all-pervasive. The human body too is one particular combination of the five elements. The almanac is called *panchangam* because it gives information about the heavenly bodies, all of which are made of the five elements. It is therefore important to grasp the meaning and the full significance of the five elements.

Consider first the ether, which has sound as its only attribute. Although an innumerable variety of sounds are possible, the basic one is the primal sound *AUM*. This sound *Om* is what you must really concentrate on. There are three syllables here – *A* (*akaaram*), *U* (*ukaaram*), and *M* (*makaaram*), which together fuse into *AUM*. The human being is an embodiment of the three constituent symbols of *AUM*. The primal sound *Om* is the very form of *akasa*, and man must resonate with it.

Vayu or wind/air that comes next, sustains life. Without air, life is impossible. The breathing process consists of inhalation and exhalation, symbolised by *SOHAM*. *SO* is associated with inhalation and *HAM* with exhalation. Since we take in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide, *SO* is associated with the life-giving oxygen and *HAM* with the contaminant carbon dioxide. What is the inner meaning of the breathing process? Simply that we have to take in what is good and give up what is bad. This is the lesson that the element air conveys to us 21,600 times a day, through the *SOHAM* principle. The body also takes in food and expels excreta or faeces.

God has blessed us with limbs and organs so that we may accept what is good and reject what is undesirable. However, no one is making any effort to comprehend this basic truth. Even if the principle is understood, it is being treated rather casually and is often ignored. This is not correct; summary rejection of all that is harmful must become a priority.

Consider trees. We seldom appreciate that they are living entities. They not only live but also teach us a noble and important lesson about sacrifice. They take in carbon dioxide (which we reject) and willingly part with oxygen for our benefit. Does man have the intelligence or the sensitivity of the trees? Though born a human, man is inferior to trees in the matter of sacrifice and in returning good for bad. This will not do. Man who has been blessed with so much skill, intelligence, and diverse capabilities, must scrupulously practise sacrifice. He must ever remain pure, firmly rejecting what is bad and accepting only what is good.

After the ether and the air comes fire. It has the capacity to burn anything that comes in its way, without any distinction whatsoever. This characteristic of strict impartiality is the basis of *jnanagni* or the fire of wisdom, which burns away all worldly attachments. No one is making any attempt to understand the various manifestations of fire, including *jataragni*, *praanagni*, and *badabagni*. Latent in man are various treasures but he is totally unaware of them because he lacks the Knowledge of the Self. This *Atmajnana* is True Knowledge, and it is sorely needed today. Man has mastered worldly knowledge, secular knowledge, and material knowledge, but is totally ignorant about the Knowledge

of the Self. With its brilliant blaze, *agni* proclaims the virtues of *Atmajnana*. The scriptures say:

Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya.

From darkness, lead me to Light. *Agni* teaches us that the fire of wisdom will lead us to Light.

The sacred name Rama has the potency to lead us from darkness to Light. The word Rama is made up of three syllables: *Ra*, *Aa*, and *Ma*. *Ra* signifies the fire principle. *Aa* represents the moon, and *Ma* represents the sun. The fire principle *Ra* destroys all evil and sin. The moon principle *Aa* stills passions and brings peace. The sun principle *Ma* confers effulgence when evil is destroyed and peace reigns. Thus, the name Rama compactly embodies the whole of wisdom. It has the power to destroy evil, to bring peace, and to confer effulgence. This is the inner significance of the name given by Vasishtha to the first-born son of Emperor Dasaratha. The fire principle thus has deep meaning.

After fire comes water. It is most sacred and vital for life; there is life giving force in it. That is why water is sprinkled on a person who has swooned. Before eating, you offer the food to God by chanting *Brahmaarpanam*. What happens to the food you eat? Who is present within that extracts vitality from the food you eat and distributes it to the various organs of the body? That deity is Vaishvanara who says, “O man! Realise that I am the force within that attends to digestion and assimilation.” This is the “*Aham Vaishvanara*” *Sloka*.

As for the earth, it helps us in innumerable ways. It is the basis for the bricks we use and it provides the platform for the mansions

that we build. It supports trees and supplies grain. And it gives us a place to rest. There is nothing that it does not give. Despite providing so many bounties, it expects nothing. But man is not learning the lesson.

External pollution is a reflection of internal pollution

It is said that the *Kali* Age provides the easiest path to liberation. However, man is ignoring the golden opportunity offered to him. Man today has become very clever or intelligent (in a purely worldly sense). Secular education has become widespread and schools are to be found in every street corner. A million ways have been discovered for making money. A cunning fellow once inserted an advertisement in papers, announcing that for a payment of just one rupee he would disclose a sure method for eliminating mosquitoes from the house. Lots of people were taken in by the advertisement, and he collected plenty of money. When these people asked him for the promised remedy, he simply said, "Take a stone and crush every mosquito you see, wherever it is!" Is this a meaningful solution to the mosquito problem? Yet, the trickster was able to hoodwink a lot of people. Numerous strategies of this kind have been devised to cheat gullible people and to extract money from them.

Man has no doubt mastered many ways of accumulating wealth and amassing fortune. Yet, happiness eludes him. Why? Because his conduct is not proper. For good conduct, virtues are most essential. A virtuous person can accomplish anything. A son lacking in virtues and a life without a meaningful goal are of

no value. Without virtues, life ceases to have any meaning. Good conduct should be the real basis for life. However, modern man is totally lacking in character and virtues. No wonder both peace and happiness elude him. Because of man's misconduct and immoral behaviour, there is pollution everywhere – in air, water, land, and food. All the five elements have been severely contaminated, consequent to man's unbecoming behaviour. If man behaves properly, is pollution of the elements conceivable? It is all due to the extensive prevalence of immoral feelings and improper behaviour. The sharp decline of virtues like love, compassion, and forbearance is directly responsible for the widespread pollution that one sees today. In fact, one might even say that the five elements are afraid of man! The five elements as God created them are all pure and sacred. There is nothing wrong with them whatsoever. It is man's misconduct that has caused them all to become polluted. Impurity within gets reflected as pollution without. Here is an example.

The water of river Ganges is pure. However, if you fill a coloured bottle with the water of Ganges, it would appear coloured. If the bottle is red the water would seem red while if the bottle is blue the water too would appear blue. Where does the colour come from? From the water or the bottle? Ganges water is intrinsically pure; the colour is therefore due to the bottle holding the water. The human being is like a bottle. If evil thoughts dominate, the body indulges in bad actions; if good thoughts prevail, the body performs good actions. The body is not responsible for the actions; the thoughts that propel the body are. Bad feelings, bad thoughts and bad company provide the stimulus for bad actions.

You must understand this basic fact.

You should have good thoughts and aim at purity in character. Recognising the five elements as God's gifts, their sanctity must be preserved. They must be made use of in a proper and befitting manner. Why do you sing *bhajans*? Enquire deeply into the meaning of this practice. *Bhajan* singing provides an opportunity to chant the Lord's name in a sweet and pleasant manner. The vibrations associated with the divine Name then suffuse into the atmosphere and cleanse it; the pollution present is wiped out. Thus, the basic purpose of *bhajans* is to convert bad into good.

Students!

As is the flame, so is the smoke.

As is the smoke, so is the cloud.

As is the cloud, so is the rain.

As is the rain, so is the crop.

As is the crop, so is the food.

Therefore, if the food has to be pure, then smoke must be the starting point, i.e., the flame. When trash is burnt, the polluted smoke percolates all the way to food. And when such food is consumed, diseases result. Contaminated food is thus responsible for most of the bad thoughts and actions one sees today. Seawater is salty but when it evaporates, the vapour is free from salt. Subsequently, the vapour becomes a cloud, which too contains pure and sweet water. The rain that comes down brings this pure water to the earth. This is God's Love manifesting as rain, bearing

water as pure as that of Ganges. In a similar manner, *buddhi* (intellect) the blazing sun must distil away all bad feelings. What results would be the vapour of good qualities. When sufficient vapour accumulates, there results the rain of love. The cloud from which the rain comes is truth. Thus, truth is the source of the love drops. The rain of love ultimately gives you the crop of divine Grace. Therefore, all your thoughts and actions must be pure and sacred.

If you constantly chant the name of God, the polluted atmosphere would automatically get purified. The divine vibrations originating from the chant of the divine Name mix with the atmosphere and spread everywhere, indeed throughout the world. A radio programme is broadcast from Delhi but in a fraction of a second you can hear it here. How? Because of the propagation of vibrations. Therefore, good sounds and holy vibrations generated by *bhajan* singing will propagate, purify the atmosphere, and help in the production of good food. In addition, when you breathe purified air, it also helps to keep out bad thoughts.

God's Love is Omnipresent

Embodiments of Love! You should all live in Love. If everyone does so, the whole world would be enveloped in Love. Swami is the living proof of this statement. Swami is ever the embodiment of Love, and there is never any trace of anger whatsoever. At times Swami may appear to “hiss” but even this springs from Swami’s Love! Sometimes, hailstones fall when it rains. The ice pieces may be hard, but they too are made of water. In the same manner,

Swami's reprimands also form a part of the incessant shower of Love. Never forget that even if Swami appears to scold you, it is only a part of His Love and it is for your own good. Swami is nothing but Love from top to toe. It is so always. Follow the principle of Love. Look upon the five elements as being saturated with Love. Always do your duty and perform sacred acts. Your spiritual evolution is your own responsibility.

Uddharedatmanatmanam.

One has to work for one's own upliftment. This should be your approach to understanding spiritual philosophy.

In the *Vedas*, there are many references to the root word *vid*. This root word is common to all forms of learning. The *Vedas* represent a comprehensive consolidation of all Truths, as discerned by the ancient *rishis* and as practised by them. The *Vedas* confer bliss and happiness to those who follow the teachings contained therein. There is not even an iota of anything bad in the *Vedas*. Their teachings, if followed, lead only to good.

God is everywhere, though He may not be directly visible to the eye. God is present even in air, but you cannot see Him there. Syrup is sweet; why? Because it contains sugar. Can you see the sugar in the syrup? No. Just because you cannot see it, can you deny the fact that there is sugar in syrup? To do so would be stupid. How then do you know there is sugar in the syrup? Through experience. Just as sugar is the basis for sweetness of syrup, God is the basis for Love, which is omnipresent. God is

all-pervasive, and His presence is nectarine. If your heart is full of Love, then you will unfailingly experience His nectarine presence and sweetness everywhere. Life will be ever sweet for you and you will always be able to share that sweetness with others.

The child drinks mother's milk and finds it to be sweet. Did the mother add sugar to the milk? No; mother's milk is sweet by nature; that is the way God made it. In the same way, God's Love is sweet and is present everywhere. It is up to you to extract that sweetness and enjoy it, just as a baby sucks milk from its mother and even as bees suck honey from flowers. Do the flowers invite the bees? No, the bees go to the flowers spontaneously. In the same manner, you too should seek noble souls and absorb good things from them.

*Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam,
Nirmohatve niscalatatvam, niscalatatve jivanmuktih.*

*Tyaja durjana samsargam, bhaja sadhusamagamam,
Kuru punyamahoratram.*

Give up bad company and join good company. Do good day in and day out. This is the way to sanctify human life. Although numerous opportunities exist for following the correct path, people miss them all and instead waste their time. People seem to revel in seeking bad company, even if they have to pay for it. Why do you have to go in search of bad thoughts and company? Instead, why don't you receive the good that is offered to you free and at no charge? It is a grave mistake to reject the good

and accept only the bad. Only a fool who is unable to distinguish between the bad and the good would behave in this manner.

Creation is Perfect

Embodiments of Love! You should always dwell in Love. Love has no form. It has no desires. It does not demand interest or give interest. It does not indulge in buying and selling or in any other kind of business transactions. Love stands all by itself as Love, and can be secured with Love alone. Therefore, you who are the embodiments of Love, must see everyone else also as the embodiment of Love. Man is made up of the five elements every one of which is divine in origin. They are all sacred and there is nothing bad in them. If they are polluted today, man alone is responsible for that foul act.

There is a story that illustrates this point. Once, Narada went to have the *darshan* of Lord Vishnu. The Lord smiled and asked, “Narada, where are you coming from?” The sage replied, “Swami, I have neither a home nor a family. I am all the time on the move. I wander over the three worlds, incessantly singing Your praise.” Vishnu said, “Is that so? Very good. Now tell me; have you understood the mystery of My Creation?” Narada replied, “Lord, are You suggesting that I do not? Of course I have understood it.” Vishnu then continued, “Then you must have appreciated that there is nothing bad in My Creation. Have you ever seen anything bad?” Narada thought for a while and replied, “Lord, forgive me but I have seen one thing that is bad.” Vishnu exclaimed, “What! Something bad in My Creation? Impossible! There is absolutely

nothing bad in Creation.” Narada hesitantly said, “Lord, there is one thing that is foul.” Vishnu then demanded, “What is it?” Narada whispered, “It is faecal matter. It is absolutely foul and no one can go near it. Why did You create such a thing?” Vishnu said, “Narada, you are wrong. Go and ask that faecal matter who created it?” Narada resisted and protested that he could not go near that foul matter. But Vishnu was firm and commanded Narada to do as instructed. The Lord’s command cannot be disobeyed, and reluctantly Narada went toward the waste matter. Even as he was approaching, the faeces said, “Stop! Don’t come near me. Stay away.” Narada was utterly surprised and angrily demanded, “What? You foul object asking a sacred one like me to stay away?” The faeces replied, “Yesterday at this hour, I too was sacred. I was good food in the form of tasty dishes worthy of being offered to the Lord. Then I came into contact with a human being and this is what happened to me! Once bad is enough; I do not want your company again!” Evil is thus born of the bad company one keeps. This basic fact is not properly understood and appreciated these days.

There was once a man whose only son was one day stung by a scorpion. The boy cried loudly with pain and the anguished father rushed for help to a doctor. He told the doctor, “Sir, my son is stung by a scorpion and is crying pitifully. Please give some pain-relieving medicine.” The doctor gave an ointment and said, “Apply this on the spot where the scorpion stung him.” The man ran back home and asked his son, “Where did the scorpion sting you?” Pointing to a corner of the room, the boy said, “Over there.” The stupid father then applied the ointment to the corner!

This is the foolish manner in which most spiritual aspirants behave today. You have to carefully identify the source or the origin of evil and then take proper remedial action. Do not blame others. The fault lies in you, your gullibility, your susceptibility, and your willingness as well as eagerness to tread the evil path. Therefore concentrate on setting right your feelings, thoughts, and actions, instead of accusing others of spoiling you. Understand the spiritual basis of the five elements and the five life principles (*pancha praanas*). A proper understanding of these alone will guide you to the right path and remove your miseries. The five elements are most precious and sacred, and have to be used as well as experienced reverentially.

Embodiments of Love! There is nothing bad in Creation. If some things appear so, it is due entirely to faulty vision. The latent bad feelings within create the impression that certain things are bad. That is why it is important to develop pure and loving feelings. Always be immersed in the thought of God and constantly chant His Name. Be ever saturated with the divine feeling. If dutifully followed, such practices are guaranteed to remove all the contamination within you. Never indulge in bad actions, never criticise others, blame others, or accuse others. Bad thoughts pollute the air and also infect others; this is the way bad vibrations spread. Hence, scrupulously avoid bad company and bad behaviour. Don't have bad looks; they will lead to harm. Keechaka entertained lustful looks and paid dearly for it; he was crushed by Bhima. Don't ever heed to bad advice. Kaika listened to such words from Manthara, and what happened to her later?

No one ever thinks of Kaika in a pleasant manner. She has gained such notoriety that no girl is ever named Kaika! Bad advice also ruined Duryodhana and Dussasana. They incessantly abused the noble Pandavas, and in the end met their doom. Therefore, never listen to bad things.

Cultivate Equanimity and the Spirit of Sacrifice

Swami wants to give an important advice to students. People may tell you various things that cause pain to you. Forget them and do not repeat them to others. If they caused pain to you, they would do so to others also. Why then repeat? Let us suppose somebody accuses you of something you have not done. You feel hurt. If now you report this to your parents, they too would feel hurt. Therefore, learn to ignore bad and improper remarks by others. Sometimes, one cannot help overhearing what others say, but let it not register. Just let it pass and forget about it. Always avoid bad thoughts, bad looks, bad feelings, and bad actions. Instead, be ever sacred and do only good.

Do you know why God has given you eyes? Is it for feasting them on everything and anything? No! God has given the gift of sight so that you may have His *darshan* and feel blissful seeing His beauty. Eyes are sacred; they must be used only for sacred purposes.

All five elements and indeed the whole of Creation is sacred. You are a part of Creation, which is a limb of God. Therefore, you too are sacred. Everything in Creation is an aspect of the divine.

Develop that feeling and awareness. You will then certainly experience God. Nothing is bad in Creation. Narada thought that faeces was bad. If the faeces remains for ever inside the body, will it be good for the body? Obviously not. That is why God has arranged for its expulsion – it is for your own good. Everything that God does is for good and good only.

Regard everything in Creation as good. Suffering and pain are also good! If you happen to experience pain or suffering, tell yourself: “This is good for me, this is good for me,” Treat praise and criticism the same way, and be calm even if people abuse you. This is the recommended *yoga*, and sacrifice is the recommended path. There is no *yoga* superior to equanimity and there is no path better than sacrifice. This is the best way of achieving purity and sanctity.

Enquire deeply into the meaning of the five elements, and realise that you yourself are made of them. Make every possible effort to venerate and revere the elements in a suitable manner. Your breath must always resonate the chant of God’s Name. Always be singing His Glory.

Bhagavan concluded the discourse by singing the *bhajan*: *Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahi*.

Evening of 15 May 2000.

