

25 December 2009

I am I, I am Atma

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Christmas Discourse

Prasanthi Nilayam

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*The sun appears serene and peaceful,
The days have become shorter, and
The cool wind is blowing.*

(Telugu poem)

This festive season brings all prosperity to the people filling the granaries of the farmers with the newly-harvested grains in plenty. Not only the farmers, all people in general feel happy and enjoy this season. People attribute their happiness and prosperity to God.

Where is God? God is everywhere. He is omnipresent — in you, above you, below you, and around you. He has no particular name or form. Neither has He birth and death. Only when there is birth will there be death also! Hence, God has no birth, no death! He is present in every living being as *Atma Swarupa* (Embodiment of Divine *Atma*). Man today is unable to realise that *Atma Tattwa* (*Atma Principle*).

Bharat is a sacred land. It has given birth to many noble souls and chaste women.

*This land of Bharat has given birth to many noble women, like
Savitri, who brought her dead husband back to life;
Chandramati, who extinguished wild fire with the power of truth;
Sita, who proved her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed,
Damayanti, who reduced an evil-minded hunter to ashes with the power of her chastity.
This land of piety and nobility attained plenty and prosperity and became the teacher of all the
nations of the world
Because of such women of chastity.*

(Telugu poem)

Sri Rama released Sita from the captivity of the demon Ravana, who confined her in Lanka for ten months. Rama took her into His fold after putting her to the test of fire. The fire god presented her before Rama, saying, “Oh! Rama! Sita is a great woman of chastity. She is so much devoted to her husband that she did not look at the face of even one male in all these ten months.” Sita came out of the fire unscathed, and the fire god himself attested to her chastity. One can imagine how great and noble she was! Can there be a parallel to such women in any country in the world?

The country of Bharat (India) is situated in the middle of the seven seas. Every man and woman in this country has to conduct themselves as *Purushothama* (noble male) and *Pativratha* (chaste woman) respectively. No wonder several Avatars (incarnations) took birth in this sacred land. Great men and women and noble souls may be born in any country. But *Avatars* took birth only in the country of Bharat.

Today, people aspire for everything in the world except God. People leave even their motherland in quest of wealth and money. This is not a positive development, especially for the

Bharatiyas (Indians), for they are expected to rise above the desire for money. God is one who always gives; He never takes. God desires only love from us, nothing else. The country of Bharat is so noble and sacred, but the people of this country are leaving, seeking greener pastures elsewhere. However, those with a pure and unblemished heart are sticking to their native country.

What God expects from His devotee is only a pure and sacred heart.

People ascribe different names and forms to God. In fact, God is only one. He is beyond all names and forms. He takes on a name and form according to the wishes and aspirations of a particular devotee. When you contemplate on the form of Jesus and wish to see Him in that form, He manifests before you as Jesus.

Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). God is present in every human being, nay in every living being. *Daivam Manusha Rupena* (God is in the form of a human being). That is why human values are considered to be so sacred and important. It is not enough to simply have a human body. In keeping with the human form, one should also cultivate the human values of *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), *santhi* (peace), *prema* (love) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

You should not tell a lie under any circumstances. If you adhere to truth, righteousness will follow. Where truth and righteousness go together, there peace will be. Where there is peace, there will be love too. There can be no place for violence when there is love. Unfortunately, today there is violence everywhere due to the absence of love among people. Whomsoever you come across these days, there is unrest and unrest. People perform *japa* (chanting of God's Name) and *tapa* (penance) to obtain peace, but there is no peace anywhere. Wherever you see, only pieces, pieces, and pieces!

One has to develop love in order to get peace. First and foremost, one has to develop love. "Love is God, God is Love." "Truth is God, God is Truth." Truth and Love are the embodiments of Divinity, verily. Though God is one, people ascribe different names like Rama, Krishna, Govinda, and Narayana to God. The different names and forms ascribed to God are the outcome of the imagination of poets and painters. For example, Ravi Varma portrayed God in different forms based upon his imagination. But God cannot be limited to a particular name and form. All names and forms are His, and He transcends them too! God is immanent in all living species including the human beings. The entire creation is the manifestation of Divinity.

God has no desires and aspirations. He is selfless. Everything in the outside world is the reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner being. This is a cloth (showing a handkerchief). Strictly speaking, this is not a cloth; it is a bundle of threads. The threads woven together assumed the form of a cloth. Similarly, the thoughts and desires of a human being make the mind. They, in turn express themselves in the form of speech. The words lead to actions through the sense organs. In the process, man entertains certain bad thoughts and feelings.

Why did God give eyes to a human being? Only to see good. Similarly, the ears are meant to hear good things and the tongue to speak good words. The words you speak must always be sweet and soft and never harsh. Thus, you have to consider every limb and organ in the body given to you by God as sacred and make proper use of it. Such a sacred body has to be dedicated to God and none else. God gives you all that is necessary for your life's journey. You should therefore install God in the altar of your pure and sacred heart.

God is omnipresent. The sky is God and the earth is God. All human beings are embodiments of Divinity. God is immanent in every human being in the form of breath (*Soham*). Man has to

realise this truth. Only when you realise the true nature of God that can you be considered to have acquired *jnana* (wisdom).

Jnana is not mere bookish knowledge. Several educated people have acquired vast knowledge from textbooks, but who is a *jnani* (realised soul) in the real sense? Only the person who has realised, "I am not the body, I am not the mind; I am God verily," is a real *jnani*.

When you say, "this is my body," who are you? To whom are you referring? The expression "my body" connotes that you are separate from the body. When you say, "This is my mind," the mind is separate from you. Similarly, when you say, "This is my *buddhi* (intellect)," it means the *buddhi* is separate from you. In all these expressions, what is that 'my'? That 'my' is 'I'. This 'I' is what was referred to by Jesus Christ as the ego, and it has to be cut. That is the real significance of the cross. You cut the ego.

You are bound by two things: 'I' and 'mine'. That is the human bondage. If you can get released from these two bonds, what remains is 'you' only. Now you are with the body. Suppose you have to leave the body tomorrow. At that time, who are you and where are you? You do not know! The body is like a dress; a robe. Once you get rid of attachment to this dress, your true nature will be apparent.

The same truth has been explained in the phrase, "the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are". That is the true nature of a human being. When someone enquires who you are, you will answer, "I am so and so." You will give your name. In fact, that name is given to you by your parents and not by God at the time of your birth.

Suppose you ask God, "Who are you?" He will reply, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). Every individual should remind themselves, "I am Brahman, I have no other name." If someone asks, "What is your name?" you should reply, "My name is Brahman." If you are constantly aware of your true nature thus, that is *Atma Tattwa*. You do not have to contemplate on anything else.

Whenever you come across a friend or acquaintance, you greet him with a *namaskar*. This implies that you are in fact paying obeisance to the Divinity immanent in the individual. Hence, do not entertain the feeling of 'I', 'I', 'I'. All these physical bodies are like the roles played in a drama. They change. The world itself is a cosmic drama. You must constantly remind yourself that you are playing your role in the cosmic drama and your real nature is that you are an Embodiment of Divine Self (*Atma Swarupa*). You have any doubts in this regard? (Swami enquired turning to the audience ...). If you are entertaining any doubts, you will be confused.

Unfortunately, today one does not know about one's own true nature. How then can one know about God? Hence, first and foremost know thyself! Enquire into yourself, "Who am I? Who am I?" you will realise, "I am I, I am *Atma*", "I am I, I am *Atma*", "I am I, I am *Atma*." If you forget this Divine Self, what remains is 'deep wine'! Hence, you should become divine.

Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. are only references to Divinity in the common parlance. An individual is referred to by several names based upon the relationships at the physical level. One person refers to him saying, "He is my son-in-law." Another says, "He is my son." A third person says, "He is my brother." Thus, one gets into bondage as the relationships increase. From where did this bondage emerge? It is all of your own making.

You marry a girl and say, "She is my wife." But before marriage, who was she? You do not know. After some years when she departs finally, you do not know anything about her. Thus, you do not know who she was before marriage or where she went after her departure. The wife-husband relationship is only in between.

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Hence, do not worry about the past. Past is past and future is uncertain. You do not know, you have no knowledge of, either the past or the future; you are aware of only the present. Hence, live in the present. That is the only reality.

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Hari bhajan bina sukha santhi nahin ...*”)