

4 The real Panchaangam

KASTHURI has just now read from the *Panchaangam* (almanac) for the New Year, Plava, the predictions of the astrologers about rainfall, the condition of the crops, the prices of articles in the markets, the rise and fall in the rates of gold and silver, the prospects of internal and external peace, the occurrence of natural calamities like floods, droughts, earthquakes, etc. But reading all this only increases your worries, your restlessness. Take things as and when they come. Do not try to peep too far into the future with the help of astrologers. They are mostly wrong, and the data you supply them are mostly unreliable.

Take care of the *Panchaangams* (the five-limbed almanacs) within you; that is more vital. The *Panchaangams* within you are the five senses; educate the mind to hold them in check---then you can have peace of mind, whatever the rise in the market rates or the quantity of rain. Do not get panicky over what the almanac says about the combination of many planets, the *Ashtagraha koota*. They exaggerate the consequences; nothing much will happen; the *pralaya* (destruction of the Universe) is more in the frightened mind than in external nature. If you earn the *anugraha* (blessing) of the Lord, no *graha* (planet) or combination of *grahas* can harm you. If you learn how to secure that *anugraha*, you need not worry about the *Panchaangam*.

Today, you are celebrating the arrival of a New Year with a new name, a name that you will use for the twelve coming months. But remember, it is not the year alone that is new once in 365 days. Every day is new, every hour and minute, every second is new. Do not celebrate only the New Year Day in joy; celebrate every second in joy.

Every step towards Godhead is to be cherished

Start from today, not that today is a New Year---there are so many New Years celebrated as such by one or the other community that every day is a new year to some one set of people---but because it is today and the matter brooks no delay, start from today a new chapter in your life, the chapter of *Japam* (recitation of holy name) and *Dhyaanam* (meditation), *Japa-sahitha dhyaanam* (recitation-oriented meditation) or *Dhyaana-sahitha japam* (meditation-oriented recitation). In the *Thretha Yuga*, the Name was *Seethaaraama*; in the *Dwaapara Yuga*, it was *Raadhesyaama*; in this *Kali Yuga*, it is *Sarvanaama*, that is to say, all Names of the Lord; you can select any one that appeals to you.

Life is like a flight of steps towards the Godhead. You have your foot on the first step when you are born; each day is a step that must be climbed; so be steady, watchful and earnest. Do not count the steps ahead or exult over the steps behind. One step at a time and that well climbed, that is enough success to be satisfied with and to give you encouragement for the next one. Do not slide from the step you have got up on. Every step is a victory to be cherished; every day wasted is a defeat to be ashamed of.

Slow and steady---let that be your maxim! Adhere to a regular routine, a time-robie. Just as the doctor prescribes a certain fixed measure or weight of the drug and warns you that anything less is ineffective and anything more is harmful, so too, have some limit for your spiritual exercises. Do not overdo them or do them casually and without care. The doctors tell you also about the hour of the day and the number of times the drug has to be repeated, for, the action of the quantity taken must be reinforced before it becomes weak. So also, you have to repeat the *japam* and *dhyaanam* at regular intervals.

Do not move very fast with the world

Millionaires who always go about in cars and aeroplanes and people of sedentary habits are advised by doctors to take a long walk every morning. The walk is called a 'constitutional', because it helps to build up the constitution. Similarly, to get over the mental ills consequent on too-long brooding over worldly affairs, the *guru* will advise you to have a long spell of *dhyaanam* and *japam*. Do not move so fast with the world; the cure for moving fast is to sit quiet. Do not get entangled in the vain hubbub of the world; the treatment for those who suffer from the after-effects of that is silence and meditation.

You will have observed that when your train is stationary, another train moving along another line gives you the feeling that it is your train that moves. If you watch your coach, fix your attention on your train, you know the truth. Similarly, as long as your attention is turned on "the other" "the outer" your knowledge is based on illusion. Once you divert the attention to yourself, you can discover the truth, viz., though the world moves, you are still.

In the *Panchaangam*, as Kasthuri quoted now, it is also predicted that in the year that is born today, the number of people who deride God and who laugh at Him and hate Him will increase. Let Me ask, how can that happen, for that number has reached the maximum already! The cynical spirit of derision and ridicule is the bane of this Age; but there is no reason for the godly to be down-hearted. At least the coming *Ashtagrahakoota* (conjunction of eight planets) will put some fear into people's minds and they will call on God to save them and they will do various acts to propitiate the Divine Beneficence in order to overcome the maleficence of the planets. Therefore, the prediction might prove incorrect, after all. Be assured that the Lord has come to save the world from calamity. Your duty is to keep calm, to pray for the happiness and prosperity of all. Do not pray for your own exclusive happiness and say, "Let the rest of the world go to pieces." You cannot be happy when the rest of mankind is unhappy. You are an organic part of the human community. Share your prosperity with others; strive to alleviate the sufferings of others. That is your duty.

The New Year is called, *Plava* or Boat. Make it a boat to cross the Sea of *Samsaara* (worldly life). That is My Blessing to you this day.

The ocean drops rose as vapour, joined the congregation called cloud, fell on the earth, flowed along the ravines, and at last reached the ocean. Reach like-wise the ocean you have lost. Start on that journey and travel quick and light.

Sathya Sai Baba