29. Develop spiritual oneness

Religion teaches self-discipline

and promotes one's well being;

It enhances one's spiritual power

and makes one effulgent.

If people live without knowing

Its inner secret

The community and its culture

decline and suffer.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Innumerable waves arise from the vast ocean. The waves appear to differ in form from one another. But these multifarious waves are not different from the ocean. In all the waves, the nature and qualities of the ocean are immanent. Likewise, the innumerable beings which you see in this boundless cosmos appear to be different from one another, but all of them emerged from the same cosmic source whose form is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss).

Religions are not different from each other

When rain pours down from the sky, pure water falls on the earth, mountains, rivers and the sea. But the pure water acquires the colour and taste of the region or spot where it falls. Likewise, prophets and messiahs, coming down in different forms of the world at different times, imparted their message in terms appropriate to the time, the place and the conditions of the people concerned. Religions' cannot be considered different from each other for this reason.

All religions have taught

only what is good for humanity.

Religion should be practised

with this awareness.

If the minds are pure,

how can religion be bad?

It is a mark of ignorance to consider one religion as superior and another as inferior and develop religious differences on this basis. The teachings of all religions are sacred. The basic doctrines are founded on truth. *Atma-tathva* (the truth of the Spirit) is the essence of religions, the message of all the scriptures and the basis of all metaphysics. The primary duty of human beings is to recognise that the paths indicated by different religions may vary but the goal is one.

Love, sacrifice, compassion, morality, integrity and similar qualities are common to all religions. In different ways all religions sought to promote unity in diversity.

Bharatiya philosophy, culture and sacred way of life permeate and shine like an undercurrent in all religions. Bharatiya culture has affirmed the profound Vedic truth *"Eko vasi sarva bhootha*

antaratma" (It is the One Spirit that dwells in all beings). This unity of the Spirit is proclaimed in various contexts in the teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

Although in terms of physical form, human beings appear different, in terms of the Spirit they are all one--this is the truth propagated by Christianity. It has declared that all are the children of one Lord and believing in the Fatherhood of God, all should live in harmony.

"Namaskar" is the message of unity

This basic truth of the spiritual oneness of all creation is emphasised at every stage in Bharatiya culture. *"Ekam Sath-vipraa bahudhaa vadanthi"* (The Reality is One; the wise call it by different names). The Ultimate Reality is One only. Your mental reactions give rise to multiplicity. What you have to offer the Lord is *Ekaatma bhaava* (the sense of spiritual oneness). Bharatiyas are wont to fold the two palms together and offer *Namaskar* (salutation). What is the inner significance of this form of greeting? It is an expression of the unity of the many in the One.

In Islam, the expression *salaam* is used as a form of greeting. "Sa" in this term signifies the combined expression of *Saalokyam, Saaroopyam, Saameepyam and Saayujyam* (Seeing the Divine, having the vision of the form of the Divine, nearing the Divine and merging in the Divine). When these four expressions are combined and merged into one--"La" signifying merger---you have *Salaam* (the merging of the many in the One).

In Christianity, the term *"Esu"* (Jesus) is used to describe Christ. This term also signifies the oneness of Divinity. The inner significance of the term *"Esu"* is the recognition of the One Divine in all beings.

In Jainism also, the same truth was taught by Mahavira. When the senses are allowed to have their way, all kinds of reactions occur. It is only when the senses are brought under unified control that the nature of Divinity can be comprehended. The eyes have the power of sight. The ears can hear. The powers of all the sense organs--seeing, hearing, speaking, etc., are derived from the Divine. It is the Divine that enables the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mind to think and to have various experiences. It is when all these sensory processes are brought under unified control (by the conquest of the senses) that man becomes a conqueror a "Jina"---as termed by the Jains. Because he had conquered his senses the title of victor was conferred on Mahavira.

Love is the life-breath of every being

Even as ornaments are varied but gold is one, religions are varied but their basic spiritual truth is the same. Buddhism also enunciates the same oneness. It declares that in every human being what should emanate is love. For every being, love is the life-breath. When such love animates a person, he will not resort to violence; he will practise *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

Buddha urged that if human life is to be redeemed, men should cultivate love. Thus, if we try to understand the basic truth of every religion, it will be seen that it teaches only Unity. Religious differences poison the mind. No one should give room for religious differences. All are spiritually one.

In this context, it should be realised that from time to time, prophets, messiahs and *avatars* manifest themselves on earth to proclaim the glow of the human estate and make humanness blossom among mankind.

The advent of Jesus

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, a province of the Roman empire, there were Jews professing Judaism. The Jews believed in one God called Yehovah. They believed that God would send a messiah for the people of Israel. Jerusalem was the sacred city of the Jews and continued to be so even under the Romans.

This was the time when Jesus was born. From his childhood Jesus displayed such sacred qualities as compassion, love and sacrifice. Realising from his early years that the discharge of one's duties was the primary obligation of a human being, Jesus used to help his father in his work as a carpenter. The father passed away in Jesus's twelfth year. For a while he carried on his father's work, but in due course he set out his ministry in the service of the people.

Like the fragrance in the bud of a flower, Jesus's divinity was evident from his boyhood. Three kings from the East came to see him at the time of his birth. One of them, on seeing the child, felt that he would be a lover of God. Another felt that he would be loved by God. The third king felt that he would one day declare his oneness with God. The first one's thought indicated Jesus's role as a "Messenger of God." The second one's thought indicated that he would be the "Son of God." The third person's thought indicated that the child would indicate one day that "I and my Father are one."

Who is a "Messenger of God"? He is the one who comprehends the purpose of his life. The "Son of God" is one who appears as divine to others. "I and my Father are one" signifies the true nature of the individual, his identity with divinity. It is in this manner that Christ progressed in his ministry. He conveyed His message in simple and convincing terms.

Changes in time, place and circumstances bring about changes in religious ideas and institutions. This is evident in the history of all religions and creeds. Such changes can be seen in the history of Christianity and the career of the Catholic Church. One of the notable changes was effected by the Reformation brought about by Martin Luther.

Basic teachings of Jesus Christ

Christ's basic teachings were related to promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice and fellowship among human beings. Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the "chosen" messenger of God.

The growth of Christianity in the Middle Ages culminated as it were in its acquiring the status of a State religion under Emperor Constantine. With the growth of Christianity, schisms also developed in the religion. The growth of schisms often results in a decline in spirituality. As men develop worldly desires, religious faith declines. Men do not realise that the pursuit of physical pleasures is like the pursuit of a mirage to quench one's thirst.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Realise that human happiness is not to be found in sensory objects or experiences. Whatever pleasure is derived from these is transient and momentary Real and enduring bliss is to be derived from within one's self. Body is a thing of *matter--Annamaya.* Life is based on *Prana* (lifebreath*)--Pranamaya.* Mind is *subtle--Manomaya.* In all, man is enveloped in five *sheaths--Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijanamaya* and *Anandamaya kosas.* The first two are gross and the last three are subtle.

Man is a product of his mind. The mind consists of a bundle of thoughts. Thoughts lead to actions. Actions are the source of joys and sorrows experienced in daily life. It follows from this

that if the world today is in bad shape, it is because men's actions are misdirected. All the good and the evil in the world are based on the actions of men. When men's actions are sublime, the world will be great and noble.

Man is a combination of body, mind and *Atma*

When we speak of man, we should consider him as the combination of body, mind and *Atma.* The body is an instrument for performing actions. Mind is the faculty that determines what is right or wrong. The *Atma* is that which is ever pure, unchanging and permanent.

"Man" implies three things: doing, knowing, being. It is when the body, mind and the *Atma* are present in union that a human being can be said to exist. When the body alone acts without regard to the mind and *Atma,* that person is said to be in the state *of Pasuthvam* (animal state). When the mind alone acts in association with the body, without regard to the *Atma,* that condition is described as *Danavatvam* (demonic). When *the Atma* functions according to its true nature, without concern for the body and the mind, that state is described as *Daivatvam* (oneness with the Divine).

The four catagories of men

Hence, man has in him, these four possibilities: animality, humanness, demonic nature and divinity.

"Brahmanishtaratho devah," says a *Vedic* aphorism. This means that one who is ever immersed in the contemplation of the *Brahmam* (Supreme) is divine. Such a person is ever dedicated to righteousness and integrity and leads a life of purity. Ever seeking to be helpful to others, he showers love on all and does no harm to anyone.

"Sathyanithyaratho marthyah" (One who is always wedded to Truth is a true man). This means that one who adheres to truth and righteous conduct in daily life is alone entitled to be called a man.

The third category is described as *"Madhyapaanoratha daanavah"* (One who is addicted to intoxicating drinks and meat eating and leads a sensuous life is a demonic being). Such a person is intensely selfish and has no feeling or consideration for others. A wicked person, swayed by evil motives and evil actions, is described as a demon.

The fourth category consists of beings who only lead a life devoted to eating, sleeping and sexual indulgence with no awareness of the real meaning of human existence. Such ignorant beings have been described as *Pasubhis-samaanah* (equal to animals). Such persons are immersed in sensual pleasures. The senses should be regarded as instruments for rendering service to others. The foolish idea that all pleasures consist in indulgence of sensual appetites should be given up. Only animals are content to derive all satisfaction from the senses alone. Hence every man should firmly declare, "I am a man and not an animal." Only when he has this double conviction will man cease to be an animal and assert his humanness. Unfortunately today men claim to be human, but are engaged in animal activities.

All religions have emphasised the same truths in their basic teachings, But few people try to understand the inner import of religions. Out of a narrow feeling that one's own religion is superior and other faiths are inferior, members of different religions are developing hatred towards members of other faiths and acting like demons. Such narrow ideas should be given up

totally. All should develop the awareness that though names and forms may be different, the essential truth is one in all religions.

Firmly believe that "Love is God: God is love"

Today all over the world because of these narrow-minded attitudes, conflict, disorder and violence are rampant. To overcome these troubles, there is one simple method. Men must firmly adhere to the idea that "Love is God and God is Love." Live in Love. This is the task before every one. Where love prevails, peace will grow.

To promote love, the first requisite is faith. It is only when you believe that one is your mother that you develop love towards her. If you do not regard her as your mother, you will not have that love for her. Therefore, faith is the starting point.

Where there is Love, there is Peace.

Where there is Peace, there is Truth.

Where there is Truth, there is Bliss.

Where there is Bliss, there is God.

There is constant quest for peace. Everyone is seeking it. But peace is not to be had from the external world. Peace is within you. Only the divinity within you is the basis of peace within. When you turn your vision outward, what you have are only pieces. Try to comprehend your own true nature. When you go on affirming, "I am God, I am God," you realise your divinity, as declared in the Upanishadic saying *"Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi"* (The Knower of the *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* itself).

Eschew hatred; develop love

First of all, strengthen your faith. Without faith all kinds of worship and all spiritual disciplines are of no use; they are a waste of time. To begin with, cultivate love. Everything grows out of love. That love will reveal to you your true self. That love will confer bliss on you. Therefore, eschew hatred; develop love. What matters in the world is not what you eat. How important, for instance, is bread? Is it bread that sustains your life? Not at all. It is God alone who sustains and protects you. How many millionaires are there in the world living in the lap of luxury? But only God's grace can protect them. Without it, all their wealth will be of no avail.

What you should pray for is God's love. With all your scholarship, all your power and pelf, and all your scientific achievements, how far have you succeeded in raising your status as a human being? How far have you preserved your humanness? Without ensuring humanness, man cannot ensure peace or security.

(Bhagavan then referred to the activities of the old students of the Sathya Sai College for Women who are members of the organisation called "Messengers of Sathya Sai." This part of Bhagavan's discourse is published separately in the next chapter).

Discourse in the Poornachandra Auditorium, on 25-12-1991.

Not only in this Kali Yuga but even the earlier yugas, the Kritha, the Thretha and the Dwapara, Namasmarana has been the secret of liberation from bondage. The temple is the place where Namasmarana is natural and automatic and undisturbed. Therefore, going to them is imperative, especially in the Kali age when the air is full of wicked and ungodly thoughts.

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