

29. An Attitude, Not A Solstice Direction

Shastry spoke in detail of the importance of the *Uttarayana* Day (when the sun starts northward). The day has an outer and an inner significance, the inner having greater value for aspirants for spiritual progress. I do not attach much value to the outer meaning: the sun taking a northward direction from today—the six months from now on being holier than the six that ended today and therefore, as Shastry said, the *Uttarayana* being better suited for spiritual practices. One's life must be a perpetual spiritual practice, and any day is a good day for starting spiritual practices, whether it falls in the southward or northward movements of sun. One need not wait for the sun to turn north. The months and sun's passage toward the north or south are all related to the subjective world (*prakriti*), so they have only relative value.

Uttarayana is a quality of the *nayana* (the eye); it is matter of attitude, a point of view. It is not an *ayana* (solstice point). When your sight is on Brahman, it is *Uttarayana* (northward); when it is on the objective world, it is *Dakshinayana* (southward). When you have developed excellent quality, every day is *Uttarayana* whatever the almanac may say. When you have a fever, the tongue will be bitter; when you are healthy, you know all tastes. The bitter tongue is the *Dakshinayana*, the sweet tongue is the *Uttarayana*. To associate this with the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn is just a convention.

Avatar comes for the protection of all with good virtues

The astronomical *Uttarayana* comes to you whether you strive for it or not; it is part of the law of nature. But for the real *Uttarayana*, you must make efforts, tremendous efforts. Know that there are only two entities: the substance and the shadow, (or, rather, only One and its appearance, produced by ignorance), the *Atma* and the *An-Atma*, the seer and the seen, the rope and the snake. When this knowledge becomes part of the mental make-up, it liberates you from delusion, and you see Kailas (Siva's mountain abode) at the end of the northward journey. Like Kailas, that stage is all light, all white. The path is straight and hard but the goal is glorious; it is nothing less than Illumination. It is when people forget this goal that the *Avatar* comes to save them.

The *Avatar* comes when there is yet a remnant of good men, yet a trace of righteousness (*dharma*), for what is the use of a doctor when the patient has collapsed? When a large number of good men are afflicted with the fear for the survival of goodness, the Lord incarnates to feed their drooping spirits and revive faith and courage. “*Parithraanaaya Saadhoonaam*” in the *Gita* does not mean the “protection of wise aspirants or ascetics;” it means the “protection of all who have good (*sadhu*) virtues;” Good virtues might be found even in animals and insects and worms. The Lord will guard and guide even such. He comes to promote *dharma*, and virtue is the foundation of *dharma*.

The worldly outlook will deceive you and land you in grief. You do not know which articles will satisfy your inner cravings, and you try to possess whatever attracts your eye. When you crave the thought of the Lord and the company of the Godly, then you are in *Uttarayana*. Bhishma was in that mood. He prayed,

“From this transient world of decay, lead me to the everlasting world of bliss (*Asatho maa sath gamaya*)”;

“Give me the effulgence of Thy grace and illumine my soul with truth (*Thamaso maa*

jyothir gamaya)”;

“Save me from the torture of birth and death, destroy the cravings of the mind, which produce the seeds of birth, and lead me to immortality (*Mruthyor maa amritham gamaya)*”

That prayer and that yearning of Bhishma gave him the vision of Krishna when he passed away. That was the real *Uttarayana* for him.

Use the body well for the purpose given

The individual (*jiva*) and the Divine (*Deva*) are the two rails along which the engine mind (*manas*) is dragging along the coaches of attachment to sense objects. Each coach contains the items of luggage you have, viz. mind, intellect, memory, ego, etc. *Atma* is the driver of the engine. If the coupling with the engine is not well connected, the coaches will be left loose on the line. Faith and trust are the couplings; see that they are fixed tight. They do not fix themselves, remember. You have to use the strength and the intellect awarded to you. Grace will be granted only then. Spend the energy (*sakthi*) with which you are endowed; then pray for divine energy (*RamaSakthi*). Rama (the Lord) will then bless you — if you ask for one, He will grant you a hundred. This is the working body given to you; use it well for the purpose given.

I see many people here who have come in special buses that take them round to many holy places. I shall tell them some words.

When you reach a holy place, entertain only holy thought. On seeing a doctor, you remember your illness; when you see a lawyer, you wish to consult him on some problem of property or personal spite; when you see a temple, you are reminded of the Force that animates the universe. Your travel should be not for amusement but for using discrimination (not *vinodha-prayana* but *viveka-prayana*). Do not use such pilgrim buses for going on picnics; do not seek to purchase vessels and clothes and rarities in the shops of the towns you visit; pay attention more to the need for filling your minds with holy experiences over which you can ruminate after returning to the quiet of your home. When you are in a holy place (*kshetra*), think of the divine dweller of the place (*Kshetrajna*).

Move in the midst of the sacred and sanctifying

Load your bus with thoughts of the Glory of God, not with tinsel and tin cans. Again, do not get involved with the bad traits that may be found in the places to which you go. Seek the company of the good, move in the midst of the sacred and the sanctifying. That is what you came so far for.

The shelves of the hospital are full of all types of medicines — pills, poisons, powders, emulsions, lotions, mixtures, etc. Ask not for the sweetest or the most attractively packed drug but for the drug that you need for the illness from which you suffer. So too, though the holy place has a thousand other attractions; do not run after them. Concentrate on the thing you have come for. The enjoyer (*bhogi*) and the sickly (*rogi*) should be transformed into the contemplative saint (*yogi*); take the drug from the dispensary that will make you that.

Become also fit for the vision of God that you seek in the temples. Go humbly, with love in your heart for all creation; take the heart-flower full of the fragrance of love, the mind-fruit uncontaminated by the pests of greed and egoism; become sweet in word, deed, and thought so that you can dedicate yourself to the service of God’s plan.

A person with faith in God will not be moved by panic, as some people are, at the approaching conjunction of eight planets. I assure you there will be no extra danger to the world as a result of that conjunction. No additional calamity will happen. Why, the unrest that now exists will even become a little less! When the *Avatar* has come, why fear like this? Why dread imaginary dangers?

One more thing: you will have seen the announcement that you should not bring to Me fruits, flowers, etc. Some of you, I know, are sad that I have announced so. But let Me tell you: Come to Me with empty hands; I shall fill your hands with gifts and grace. If your hands are full, what am I to fill them with?

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Any balance of *karma*-consequence will involve some years of imprisonment in the body. The scriptures (*sastras*) advise man to wipe off the balances by four steps: by scotching all sparks from the fire; by getting rid of all signs, symptoms, and causes of fever; by paying off all balance of debt; and by suffering off all consequences of *karma*.

Sathya Sai Baba