Dakshinayana: A time for purification

By Sadhguru

In the yogic culture, the summer solstice which falls in the month of June marks the beginning of Dakshinayana, which means in the Earth’s sky the Sun begins to trace a southward movement in the northern hemisphere of the planet. Similarly, the winter solstice, which falls in the month of December, marks the beginning of Uttarayana or the northern run of the Sun.

The half of the year from the beginning of Uttarayana in December to the beginning of Dakshinayana in June is known as guana pada. The other half of the year from the beginning of Dakshinayana to the beginning of Uttarayana is known as the sadhana pada. In terms of sadhana, Dakshinayana is for purification, Uttarayana is for enlightenment.

The change in the Sun’s relationship with the planet has a significant impact on lives of people, particularly for those who inhabit the region of the earth between eighteen degrees north to forty-eight degrees north latitude, because this part of the earth gets the maximum impact in this shift. A human being cannot escape anything that happens to the planet – I am not talking in environmental terms – because what you call as “myself” is just a piece of this planet, and a more sensitive and far more receptive part of the planet than what is there as earth. So whatever happens to the planet will happen a thousand-fold more within the human system. It is just that it takes some sensitivity and receptivity to experience it and make use of it.

Many people are making use of it in unconscious ways, not knowing what they are doing. Unconsciously, on certain days they behave in a certain way. Every human being, no matter what level of competency he has reached in his life, either a great athlete or an artist or a musician or a politician or an intellectual, whatever he may be, will for some unknown reason seem to function better on certain days and certain times. And for some unknown reason he does not seem to do the same things as well on another day. This is not just about you. The whole dynamics of the planet and the system is working upon you.

In the northern hemisphere of the planet, Uttarayana is the time of fulfillment, Dakshinayana is the time of receptivity. They are also understood as – the first six months from January to June are masculine in nature, and the duration of the southern run is the feminine phase of the Earth. The Earth changing her fabric from being masculine to feminine is very significant for a sadhaka because we are moving into the six months of sadhana phase where receptivity is good.

So Uttarayana and Dakshinayana have a significant impact on how the human system functions. Accordingly, spiritual aspirants shift their activities – when the sun is in the northern run they are one way, when it moves to the southern dimension they are in a different way. During the southern run, what is below the Anahata chakra can be purified very easily. During the northern run, what is above the Anahata can be worked much more easily. If you look at the chakras as two different dimensions, the lower ones, the Manipura, the Svadhisthana, and Muladhara are more concerned in keeping the body stable, rooted. These are the earth qualities. They pull you to the Earth. It is nature. The more you ascribe your energies to these three centres, the more your qualities will become earthly and in the grip of nature.

The upper ones, the Vishuddhi, Agra, and Sahasrar are three centres which are always taking you away. If your energies become dominant in these centres, it is pulling you away from Earth. These centres make you open to another force which we normally refer to as Grace – it is always trying to take you away from Earth. So between the first three and the last three, the first three are pulling you towards the Earth, the last three are pulling you away from the Earth. Anahata is a balance between the two.

The human body, if brought to a certain level of intensity and sensitivity, is a cosmos by itself. Everything that happens in the external sphere, in a subtle way, manifests in the body. It is happening to everybody, it is just that most people do not notice this. But a more organised and purposeful rearrangement of the human mechanism could be done if one becomes conscious of the external movement and aligns that with the movement that is happening within the human system. If you want this body of flesh and bone to imbibe the nature of the cosmic body, understanding and being in tune with this movement of Uttarayana and Dakshinayana is very essential.