

Unity of Thought, Word, and Deed is True Humanness

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Devotion is the basis to attain knowledge of the Supreme Being.

Devotion is the panacea to get rid of the disease of birth and death.

It is devotion that leads one to the knowledge of eternal truth and confers liberation, which is the ultimate goal of life.

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Devotion is the royal road to reach the supreme state of spirituality. Devotion is also the way to get rid of worldly difficulties and sorrows and attain happiness. Removal of sorrows, achieving fullness in happiness and bliss, is liberation, which can be attained through devotion.

The path of devotion

The country of Bharat (India) has been imparting peace and security to the world since ancient times. The traditional prayer in Bharat is that everyone in the world should attain happiness and bliss. May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (*Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu*)!

In this land of spiritual eminence, we now find restlessness, injustice and untruth, which are increasing day by day. What is the reason? Lack of devotion and surrender to God are the main reasons for this. People are struggling all the time only to obtain worldly comforts and pleasures, which are temporary and transient. People do not try to achieve mental peace and *Atmic* bliss, which are eternal.

The price of bliss is love for God

One has to pay a price to acquire anything in this world. If you want to buy a handkerchief from a

shop, you have to pay ten rupees for it. You can't take the handkerchief home without paying the prescribed price.

When you have to pay a price even for an impermanent and transient object, you have naturally to pay the appropriate price for obtaining permanent bliss. What is its price? Its price is pure love, which is sacred, ever new, and divine. This is not worldly love. It always unites, it has no ups and downs; it never waxes and wanes. This love always gives and never takes. Everybody should understand the difference between worldly love and divine love. Worldly loves only takes, never gives; divine love only gives, never takes.

The heart of a devotee

Here is a small example. Once Lord Vishnu asked Narada, which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied, "Earth is the greatest."

Vishnu remarked, "Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater?"

Narada agreed that water was greater.

Vishnu said, "But Sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater than water?"

Narada replied, "You are right, my Lord, Agastya is greater than water."

Vishnu asked again, "But, this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (*akasa*). Now, is this star greater, or the sky?"

Narada replied, "The sky is greater."

The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from King Bali. In the course of taking the gift of

three steps, Vamana assumed the form of *Trivikrama* and covered the entire earth in one step and the sky in the second step. There was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God greater or the sky?"

Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be! God indeed is greater."

"God, who envelops the entire cosmos, dwells in the heart of His devotee (*bhaktha*). So, now, is the devotee greater or God?" asked Vishnu.

Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee is greater than God."

Sankara's three sins

What is sin and what is merit? Once, Adi Sankara went to Varanasi in the course of his tour of the country with his disciples. Standing before the altar of Lord Vishwanath, he said, "I have committed three sins. Oh Lord, tell me the way to atone these sins.

"Oh Lord Vishwanath! My first sin is that in spite of my knowing and also teaching others that God is beyond mind and speech, I have tried to describe you through several hymns that I composed. This betrays lack of conformity between my thoughts and words.

"Next, having been convinced of the scriptural sayings that God pervades and permeates everything in the manifested universe, I have been preaching this truth to one and all. Nevertheless, I have come to Varanasi to have your *darshan*. This shows that my thoughts, words, and deeds are at variance with one another. This is my second sin.

"Thirdly, I have firm belief in the teachings of the scriptures that one and the same *Atma* is immanent in all beings and there is no difference between the individual soul (*jivatma*) and the universal Self (*Paramatma*). While I have been proclaiming this truth in all my discourses, I have now come here to stand before you as if we two are separate and different from each other. This is my third sin.

"Hence, I pray that I may be absolved of all these three sins, of which I am guilty."

Thinking one thing, saying something else and doing what is totally different is not correct. Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked (*Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam; manasyanyath vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam*).

Unity of thought, word, and deed is the underlying principle of true devotion and surrender. If you have staunch faith and love for God and if you dive deep into the depths of pure love, you will realise the nature of Divinity. To facilitate this, God comes on earth in human form, walks among humans, and interacts with them. God is in the form of a human being. (*Daivam manusha rupe na*). Yet, it isn't possible for all to recognise Him.

Unity in diversity

People attain different types of education in this world. There are any number of educated persons who see diversity in unity. But those who see unity in diversity are very few.

We read scriptures and chant *Vedic* mantras without understanding their real significance and inner meaning. We constantly repeat mantras like a tape recorder but do not recognise the meaning implied in them.

Worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for life hereafter. We think that worldly happiness is all that we need. No doubt, worldly education is necessary to live in this world. But we need spiritual education to realise the *Atmic* principle. A person's life is made up of both of these.

On the one hand, you have tendencies like desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy (*kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya*). On the other, you have virtues like truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (*sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa*).

Life is like a football field, where the ball gets kicked in both directions. We should kick the ball into the goal post. Where should the ball go to attain victory? The ball should go between two poles, the worldly education and the spiritual edu-

cation. That is victory. If the ball goes outside these two poles, it is not a goal.

People should have the right perspective of both the path of action (*karma marga*) and the path of righteousness (*dharma marga*).

People say that God is a composite form of Sakthi and Siva (*Ardhanareeswara*). He has both male and female characteristics. In fact, every human being has these characteristics. A person is the combination of matter and energy.

What is matter and what is energy? Human body is matter and the *Atma* inherent in it is energy. Body is the female principle (*Prakriti*) and *Atma* is the male principle (*Siva*). A person is a combination of both. The world itself is a combination of matter and energy. God permeates the entire nature.

God does not exist in a foreign land, He is in you.

Sin is not elsewhere. It is wherever a wrong action is committed.

(Telugu poem)

The same principle exists everywhere. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti*). Truth is one, God is one. You can call Him by any name you like —Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Nanak, Allah. The names and forms may be different, but Divinity is the same.

One person may like *jilebi*, another *gulab jamun*, a third *badam kheer*. Names and forms of sweets are different, but the sugar in all of them is the same. Nobody should think that God is different. You are God. God is in you, around you.

Contemplate on God, who is within you with pure devotion. You have forgotten yourself. Your true spiritual endeavour is to look within your own heart. Then you will see your image in the mirror of your heart.

Follow the path of wisdom and devotion

Try to recognise the difference between wisdom and ignorance (*jnana* and *ajnana*). Suppose there are mirrors everywhere in a room, on all four sides. A man enters that room and finds that whichever mirror he looks into, he sees his own

image. He feels satisfied that he is everything. This is wisdom (*jnana*).

When a dog enters that room, it sees many dogs there. Thinking that those other dogs want to attack it, it attacks them. As a result, several of the mirrors break into pieces. Actually the dog fights with itself. When it sees a way to go out, it feels relieved and goes away. This sort of state is lack of wisdom (*ajnana*). *Ajnana* is the cause of one's bondage. One thinks that one is different from the *Atma*. Though a person is the *Atma*, one is deluded to think that one is the body.

People are bound by the chains of bondage. There are two ways to escape from these chains. Either grow big, break the chains, and get free or escape by becoming very small. To say, "I am Siva, I am Siva (*Sivoham, Sivoham*)" and grow very big and break the chains is the path of wisdom (*jnana*). To say, "I am God's servant (*dasoham, dasoham*), you become very small. To become very small and escape is the path of devotion (*bhakthi*) (devotion).

So, there are two paths to freedom, the paths of wisdom and devotion. The path of wisdom is difficult, whereas the path of devotion is easy. Devotion is total love. Have firm faith in your heart and fill your life with love. There is no path better than this.

Difficulties are not permanent

Embodiments of divine love!

Human life we see is full of hardships, difficulties, and all types of sorrows. Without trials and tribulations, one cannot attain an exalted state in life. Both individuals and nations are beset with many problems. Understand that pleasure is an interval between two pains. Difficulties, in fact, are the steps that take us to a higher plane. It is only after we face difficulties that we get the result. Even a realised person attains that state only after undergoing a lot of difficulties.

What is the use of a diamond that is not cut? However pure gold may be, it has to be put into fire and beaten with a hammer to make jewels. Bear all difficulties with a view that these are steps to take you to a higher plane. Only then will you experience peace and happiness. If you keep

on worrying about your difficulties, the difficulties will increase. When difficulties arise, do not treat them as problems.

The Pandavas lived incognito for one year after 12 years of exile in the forest. Krishna felt sympathy with them and always asked about their welfare. It is not that He didn't know how they were leading their life; He knew everything. All this was done to elevate them to a higher spiritual level.

Once, Dharmaraja went for a walk with Krishna after telling his brothers to stay back. It was the custom in those days that the younger brothers obeyed their elder brother. During the walk, Dharmaraja said to Krishna, "Krishna, we are men, and we can put up with all difficulties. But Draupadi is suffering too much; she does not see the sunlight even. I cannot bear it. Kindly give her Your advice."

Krishna said, "There is no need for that." Taking a leaf from a tree, Krishna wrote something on it, folded it, and gave it to Dharmaraja, saying, "When you face insurmountable difficulties, see what is written on this."

What was written on it? Once when the Pandavas faced a grave problem, Dharmaraja opened the leaf and read: "These difficulties aren't permanent."

Develop friendship with God

Spiritual practices like chanting, meditation, sever austerities, and devotional singing, are all subsidiary practices. The basic spiritual practice is love. Love should be the undercurrent of all these. Any one practice is enough if you have love.

There are nine paths of devotion: listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (*sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, Padasevanam, vandanam, archanam, dasyam, sneham, and atmanivedanam*). Friendship comes before self-surrender. So, develop friendship with God. When you are a friend of God, you are one with Him. Then, it becomes easier to reach the next stage of self-surrender.

Try hard to have friendship with God. He is the only real friend. The world is the book, time is the

teacher and God is the true friend. Your worldly friends will stay with you as long as you have power and position. Nobody will talk to you when you lose these. As long as you have money in your pocket, they will say, "Let's go to the hotel, let's see a movie." They will go away as soon as your pocket becomes empty. This is the nature of friendship.

Make God your best friend; do not waver. Only God is your eternal friend. He will never leave you; He will never let you down. You should merge with Him.

All are incarnations of God with different names and forms. Lord Krishna said, "All are sparks of God." Not only humans, even insects and other organisms are sparks of God.

Some people do not believe in God. They are called atheists. They say, "There is no God." But first they say "There is", and then say, "no God". When they say "There is", it connotes the existence of God.

Atheists say, "God is nowhere." If you attach w to no, it becomes "God is now here." This is a simple modification. Both the theists and atheists are the creations of God. So, both are close to God.

Everyone should love God. *God is Love, Love is God. Live in Love.* Whatever you do without love is useless. Contemplate on God with love. Realise that God is in you and you are God.

(At the end of the divine discourse, Swami sang the song, "*Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...*".)

—Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Sruthi, *Kodai-kanal*, on 29 April 1997.