

My Reality Is truth, Goodness, Beauty

Prasanthi Nilayam

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I am neither man nor celestial being.
I am neither a brahmin nor a warrior (*kshatriya*)
nor a merchant (*vaishya*) nor a labourer (*sudra*).
I cannot be described as a celibate, a householder,
a recluse, or a monk.
Know Me as the Teacher of Truth. My reality is
truth, goodness, beauty (*sathyam, sivam, sundaram*).

(Sanskrit verse)

Your reality is also truth, goodness, beauty (*sathyam, sivam, sundaram*).

Without truth, there cannot be goodness; without goodness, what does beauty avail? The effect of truth on the mind is goodness; the joy that flows from goodness is the genuine beauty that artists love. The three are really one and indivisible.

Truth is goodness and goodness is beauty. Experience this truth. That will give you the highest bliss.

Let not lesser joys distract you. Don't fritter away your energy, playing the silly game of gaining and losing, gathering and scattering, winning temporary fame, fortune, and felicity. Go straight on the royal road that leads to self-realisation; don't stray into the bylanes of counterfeit bliss.

This doesn't mean that you have to give up your kith and kin and foot it all alone. The community in which you find yourself is the arena where you can win the victory, the gymnasium where you develop the skill to win. The spiritual journey lies through compassion, sympathy, mutual help, and service, and these are fostered by society and are to be used for society.

Love is the strongest antidote for greed

Ravana was the mightiest potentate of his day, as Valmiki describes him. His capital city was an impregnable fortress, filled with rare treasures. He

was the master of the four *Vedas* and six spiritual sciences (*sastras*). Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was, as Vyasa describes him, unsurpassed in the number and strength of his army and armaments, and in diplomatic skill.

Yet, these two have been execrated by young and old for centuries. Why? Because they degenerated from the human to the bestial level, instead of rising from the human to the divine level.

Both had the same flaw: greed. They did not know the secret of contentment. They were afflicted with incessant desire (*kama*). Rama and *kama* cannot coexist. The inner shrine of a person can accommodate only one of them, Rama or *kama*.

If you love another person, you will not covet lordship over them; you will not covet their property; you will have no envy when they prosper, no joy when they suffer. Love is the strongest antidote for greed.

This, therefore, is the fundamental spiritual discipline: give love and receive love.

You might have heard of *bhutabali*, a word that is interpreted as sacrifice in order to satisfy spirits. *Bali* means tax as well. *Bhutabali*, which everyone is enjoined to give, is tax to be paid to the elements (*bhutas*) for this splendid chance of human birth. For all the good words that come your way, all the good deeds by which you benefit, and all the good thoughts that spread peace in your heart and light the road you tread, you have to pay tax.

Sai devotees should have tolerance and compassion

Love persuades you to consider the distress of others, whenever you are overcome by it. You are drawn to those who are equally afflicted by grief.

You become engrossed in the sorrow of others and so forget your own.

Droupadi bewailed her lot before Krishna. She cried, “Krishna! When a mother loses a child who is snatched away from her lap by death, she is drowned in grief. Aswatthama slaughtered my children in cold blood at dead of night while they were sleeping soundly. I have lost all of them. How can I be consoled? How can I get those children back?”

Krishna said, “Sister! You braved the insults that the wicked Kauravas inflicted on you in open court; bear this blow with equal courage. Look at Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas. She has imposed on herself the blindness that her husband is suffering from; she has lost all her one hundred sons! Not one is left.” Krishna consoled her, presenting before her the picture of greater fortitude of another mother.

Consider the agony of others and share their grief. Feel for them more than you feel for your own calamity. This is the sign of a genuine Sai devotee (*bhaktha*). The devotee should have compassion, tolerance, and sympathy; without these, the devotee will be the target of ridicule, and with good reason.

People ask sneeringly, “Where is your God? What does He look like? What does He do?” etc. They sneer because those who have experienced the majesty and glory of God are very few.

God is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, but only those who have had experience of Him can assert so and convince others. You may have a pot full of ambrosia (*amrita*), but unless you place a drop on your tongue, how can you vouchsafe its fragrance and sweetness?

Through you, Sai devotees, transformation has to be brought about in the minds of people. So, your responsibility is very great.

Love can smother the flames of anger

When the Mahabharata war was imminent, it was said in circles that knew the evils of the age that only a thick shower of arrows could smother the flames of hate. Now, it is the other way round: only a thick shower of love can smother and des-

stroy the flames of anger, fear, and anxiety that envelop the world today.

A group of scholars who had come to Me recently asked Me, “Swami! You talk of flames of anxiety and fear; but, surely, You will appreciate the great step forward that humanity has taken by landing on the moon.”

I told them that it was wrong to spend billions of dollars and rubles on such enterprises. They argued that though there might not be any immediate profit from all that capital spent, its potentialities for good were very great.

I said, “It is a question of priorities; first things first. When so many nations on the earth are undernourished, undereducated, under-housed, it is sheer absence of discrimination to spend time, skill, and money on this spectacular competitive adventure. Later, when the earth has been made the home of a happy family of peoples, such enterprises can be planned.”

Observe the discipline laid down by sages

The earth is the natural habitat of humanity. Why should one venture out of the range of the elements of which the body is composed and go places where one has to take water, air, and other essential requisites? When people go to the moon, they do not leave anxiety, fear, and falsehood behind.

The moon that one has to voyage into is the mind, not this inert satellite, with no capacity to illumine itself. The Ramayana mentions that Ravana skillfully prepared a wax head similar to that of Rama and arranged that it be presented before Sita as the severed head of her Lord, so that she might give up all thought of living with Him again and surrender to the wiles of her captor, Ravana. The moon is like that lifeless imitation head of Rama. The real Rama is vibrant, active, somewhere else.

The real moon for people is their mind. When that moon is mastered, Sivam illumines the night, and it is transmuted into *sivarathri* (auspicious night). Or else, it is *shava-rathri* (night of death). As far as people remain unaware of themselves and of their divinity, they are no better than a corpse.

The sages of India laid down various rites, ceremonies, disciplines, modes of behaviour and con-

ventions to help a person cleanse their emotions and confirm their faith. They also laid down the discipline one should observe about food one takes.

Take only simple, pure, clean food — called *sathwic* food by the sages. That is to say, eat only food that will not arouse the impulses and emotions, sharpen the passions, upset the equanimity, and hamper health.

Food offered to God is free from the evil vibrations that harm the individual in subtle ways. Food offered to the hungry and then eaten has also the same beneficial quality. Since food has a subtle impact on the feelings and thoughts, one has to be ever vigilant with regard to the food that that is eaten.

—From Bhagavan's Sivarathri discourse at Prasanthi Nilayam on 6 March 1970.