

Love is the Royal Road to Attain Swami's Grace

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How can you realise the *Atmic* Principle without giving up your slothful (*thamasic*) quality? It isn't possible to develop devotion without leaving the passionate (*rajasic*) quality. Cultivation of the pure-serene (*sathwic*) quality is the real means to develop devotion. Listen to this, oh valiant sons of Bharat (India)!
(Telugu poem)

The three qualities of *sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas* (serenity, passion, and sloth)¹ are the basis of the visible world. Every human being has these three qualities. How can one escape from the influence of these three qualities in daily life? One can transcend them only when one develops the wisdom to discriminate which among these qualities is good and which is bad.

Develop the quality of purity-serenity

The quality of *thamas*, which denotes dullness, ignorance, illusion, cruelty, sleep, etc., is the lowest quality. *Sathwa*, on the other hand, is the highest quality because it represents peace, calmness, knowledge, harmony, etc. in humanity. The *rajasic* quality indicates desire, passion, action, agitation, restlessness, etc.

All desires of humanity arise out of the *rajasic* quality. Even desire for God is also a type of *rajasic* quality. One without desire will not desire even liberation. Anger, hatred, jealousy, ego, ostentation, etc. are all *rajasic* qualities. Desire may

¹ Generally, we minimize the amount of Sanskrit in order to make a discourse as easy to read as possible. But the three words *sathwa*, *rajas*, and *thamas* have no suitable one-word translations. Further, in this discourse, Sai Baba discussing these three words extensively, giving various meanings and the effects these qualities have on people. Therefore, we will use the Sanskrit words throughout this discourse.

be of any type, but the basic nature of the desire remains the same.

The *sathwic* quality is the undercurrent of both *rajasic* and *thamasic* qualities, just as the river Saraswati flows as the undercurrent of both the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers. The *sathwic* quality will manifest in you when you shed your *rajasic* and *thamasic* qualities one by one, gradually.

Transcend the qualities of thamas and rajas

The qualities of *thamas* and *rajas* are like stepping stones to the quality of *sathwa*. Only when you transcend these two can you develop the *sathwic* quality.

What does the quality of *thamas* denote? Wayside robber Ratnakara is an example of *thamasic* quality. Without any kindness and compassion, he used to waylay travelers, kill them, and rob them of their money for his selfish ends. Lack of kindness and compassion denotes *thamasic* quality.

Such a wicked person like Ratnakara was transformed into not only one of great penance but also a great poet by the vision, touch, and conversation of seven sages (*sapta rishis*). He dedicated his poetry to the glorification of God.

Who is a real poet? A real poet is one who has realised their true Self and has the knowledge of the three periods of time: past, present, and future. But due to the impact of *Kali* Age (the age we are now in), today, all those who can compose a few rhyming lines are considered poets. But they are not poets in the real sense of the term.

Sages like Valmiki and Vyasa were real poets; they could know the past, present, and future by the power of their penance. Not only that, they even transcended time and had the vision of God.

The main cause of Ratnakara's transformation from a totally *thamasic* individual into a completely *sathwic* one was the good company (*sath-sang*) of the seven sages and the grace of God. In fact, God's grace is most important for one's transformation. Nobody can say when, where, and how God will shower His grace on us. Therefore, a *thamasic* person need not remain a *thamasic* person forever but can directly become a *sathwic* person.

It is not necessary to first be transformed from a *thamasic* to a *rajasic* person and then from a *rajasic* to a *sathwic* person. By the grace of God and the teachings of noble souls, a *thamasic* person can directly become a *sathwic* one, just as Ratnakara became a purely *sathwic* person by the teachings of the seven sages and attaining the grace of God by performing intense penance.

The second quality is *rajas*. Hatred, jealousy, ostentation, ego, anger, etc., are all *rajasic* qualities. Sage Viswamitra exemplified this quality. All his life was beset by the *rajasic* quality, but ultimately, he was transformed into a great sage.

Sage Vasishtha was considered a divine sage (*brahmarshi*), but Viswamitra was considered only a royal sage (*rajarshi*). This was the main cause of Viswamitra jealousy and hatred toward Vasishtha. To what extent did this hatred develop in him? His hatred reached to such an extent that he resolved to put an end to Vasishtha's life.

On a full moon night, Vasishtha was engaged in a conversation with his wife, Arundhati. During the course of their conversation, Arundhati appreciated the brightness of the moon, saying, "Today the moon appears to be without any blemish."

Vasishtha replied, "It is verily true. The moon is shining without any blemish, like the penance of Viswamitra."

Viswamitra, who was hiding in a nearby bush with the intention of killing Vasishtha, heard this conversation. It was an eye-opener for him. He said to himself, "Sage Vasishtha is extolling the greatness of my penance before his wife. Fie on me that I harbour hatred against such a noble person! This is a great mistake. This is due to the evil influence of the *rajasic* quality on me. This quality can make a person commit any heinous act."

Thinking thus, he threw away his sword, ran to Vasishtha, and fell at his feet. As soon as Viswamitra fell at his feet, Vasishtha blessed him without even looking at his face, saying, "Viswamitra! Oh divine sage! Get up!"

Vasishtha, who till then had addressed him only as "royal sage", now called him a divine sage without any hesitation.

Viswamitra was overjoyed and asked Vasishtha, "So far, you were calling me only a royal sage. Why did you now address me as 'divine sage'?"

Vasishtha replied, "Viswamitra! Till now, you were beset with ego. You were born in ego, grew in ego, and led a life full of ego. You never bowed your head before anyone. But today you fell at my feet, shunning all your ego. This is the sign of egolessness. That is why you have now attained the status of a divine sage."

The principle of divine sage (*brahmarshi*) denotes egolessness. A divine sage is one who is totally devoid of ego, attachment, and ostentation.

Howsoever educated, learned, or high ranking person one may be, one should always think, "I am just a puppet in the hands of God. Everything in this world is the play of God. Whatever way He pulls the strings, the puppets dance accordingly." When such feelings develop in a person, they become truly deserving to be called a divine sage.

One who develops ego and attachment, thinking, "I am the doer; this is mine, that is yours," becomes a *rajasic* person. The feelings of I and mine denote ego and attachment. The moment one roots out one's ego and attachment, one rises to the level of a divine sage.

The term sage (*rishi*) does not denote a person of high learning or great penance; it denotes the quality of *sathwa*. The change from the *thamasic* and *rajasic* qualities to the *sathwic* quality denotes saintliness and divinity.

Never leave truth and righteousness

Have love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (*Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neeti*). These are natural qualities of a human being. They impart great value to humanness.

Since people today has forgotten truth (*sathya*) and left righteousness (*dharma*), their value as human beings has declined. Birds and animals follow their natural qualities; it is unfortunate that humanity has devalued itself by not following its natural qualities. Rather, mankind is resorting to qualities that are unnatural to mankind.

The student who spoke earlier talked about one's own *dharma* or duty (*swadharmā*) and someone else's duty or business (*paradharmā*). Your own *dharma* is related to the *Atma*, and someone else's *dharma* to the body. *Paradharmā* leads to the path of worldliness and *swadharmā* to the path of spirituality.

Today people have forgotten their own duty and are following only other people's business. That is why today the value of a person is on the decline, whereas the value of all commodities and even of vegetables like eggplant and even lady's fingers (okra) is on the rise.

What is the main cause of humanity's downfall? The main cause is that people have forgotten truth (*sathya*) and righteousness (*dharma*). Because humanity has forsaken *dharma*, *dharma* has forsaken humanity.

Protect *dharma*, and *dharma* will protect you (*Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*). *Dharma* protects those who protect *dharma*. Those who destroy *dharma* are destroyed by *dharma*.

People should speak truth and follow righteousness. Today, people only talk about *dharma* but don't follow it. What is the value of merely speaking without practice? Standing on the platform, people give long lectures on *dharma*. But they do not practise *dharma* even till such time they get down from the platform. How can *dharma* protect such people?

Many people today only preach and propagate *dharma*, but they themselves never put it into practice. Preaching and propagating is not important; practice is most essential.

Can merely reading the names of delicious dishes in a book fill your stomach? You may read the names of many sweets like *gulab jamun*, *burfi*, *palkova*, etc., but you can experience their sweetness and know their taste only when you put them into your mouth. In the same way, people today

speak about truth and righteousness on the basis of bookish knowledge. Merely speaking about truth and righteousness is not enough; put them into practice in your life.

Ratnakara, who was beset with *thamasic* qualities, did not merely listen to the teachings of the seven sages. He put them into practice by constantly repeating the Lord's Name. By his deep contemplation, he lost his body consciousness. In fact, he gave up his ego and body attachment to such an extent that he had no awareness when an anthill grew over his body.

Pride of education, wealth, family status, and attachment to body are the cause of bondage. The day Ratnakara gave up all these types of attachment, he was transformed into a great sage. Not only that, he even earned the deservedness to write the story of Lord Rama.

He was transformed into a great sage by the vision, touch, and conversation (*darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhashan*) of the seven sages. All his evil qualities were transformed into virtues by his good company (*satsangha*) with these sages.

Similar is the case of Viswamitra. In the beginning, he was a king by name Kaushika, who was the epitome of all *rajasic* qualities. When he renounced his kingdom along with all its comforts and performed intense penance, he became a royal sage (*rajarshi*). By following the teachings of Vasishtha, he ultimately became a divine sage (*brahmarshi*).

Talk to devotees with love

The third quality is the quality of *sathwa*. What does *sathwa* really mean? Peace, forbearance, empathy, adherence to truth, etc., are the qualities of a *sathwic* person. Such a person does not give any room to the six evil qualities of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (*kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya*).

A *sathwic* person can even transform hatred into love. What is the use of performance of penance if one cannot do this?

I want to give you an example to illustrate this point, but you should not think otherwise. Swami has been constantly teaching the principle of love. In every Discourse, He keeps on repeating, love,

love, love ..., but, how many of you follow this teaching and experience love?

If a devotee comes to you and asks a question, do you reply to him with love? A person who gives a reply with love is nowhere to be seen. Nobody speaks with love wherever one may go — in temple, canteen, accommodation, book stall, or hospital. Then, what is the point in listening to Swami's discourses?

Is there at least one person who speaks with love? If a new devotee comes and asks, "When is Swami's *darshan*?" he gets a curt reply, "Go, go, I do not know". Even if you don't know, shouldn't you reply with humility and courtesy? Even educated persons give a blunt reply, saying, "This is not my duty. Go away." Isn't it a matter of duty to give a proper reply? What do you lose if you speak softly and say with love whatever you know?

A number of men and women have been residing in the ashram for the last twenty, thirty, and even forty years. But has even one of them a heart full of love? They undertake various spiritual practices like chanting God's name, penance, and meditation. Why do they sit in meditation? Where has their love gone? They have literally killed love and developed only hatred. When they listen to Swami's discourses, why don't they put them into practice? They reside in the ashram but if you see their deeds, it is all evil. Do they perform any task with earnestness? Do they speak truth anywhere? Do they utter even one word with love? I don't see or hear anything spoken with love and truth.

When somebody comes to you with a query, talk to them with love. Even if somebody asks you unnecessary questions and tries to prolong the conversation, reply to them with love, saying, "Kindly forgive me. Swami does not like too much of talking. Therefore, I don't like to prolong this conversation, since I am following Swami's command." What is wrong in replying in this manner?

I don't find even one person among students, teachers, doctors, nurses, and workers who speak with love. Then what is the use of your listening to Swami's discourses? When there is a heavy rain, doesn't the ground become wet? Having listened to My discourses, should My teachings not be reflected in your conduct?

Everyone tries to occupy the front seat during *darshan*, *bhajan*, and discourses. In the *bhajan* hall, ladies quarrel with each other for a front seat. Where is the need for such ego clashes? Why does it matter where they sit? Shouldn't they be happy and satisfied that they are able to enjoy *namasmarana*?

Fill your heart with love

Fill your heart with compassion and love.

When there is a heavy rain, you can collect as much water as you like if you keep your pot outside with its mouth up and straight. On the other hand, if you keep the pot upside down, you can't collect even one drop of water even if there is a downpour.

Similarly, people listen to Swami's discourses but keep the vessel of their heart upside down. That is why they don't develop even an iota of love in their heart.

Why have all of you come here? What is the use of your living here? Is there no other place for you? What benefit do you derive by coming here? What have you achieved? What are you achieving? What are you experiencing? Are you experiencing bliss?

No, not at all. You are simply wasting your time. Understand this truth and at least from today onward, speak with love to all those who come to you for help.

Many places like the accommodation office, information office, canteen, hospital, and bookstall involve dealing with the public. Some people behave like bulldogs and Alsatian dogs while dealing with public.

I don't find kind-hearted persons anywhere. What is the use of leading such a life? We are spending crores of rupees on hospitals. Why don't you treat the patients with love?

Some doctors do treat the patients with love. When they talk to the patients sweetly and softly, half of their disease is cured. But some others drive the patients away, saying, "Now there is no time." They don't merely say "get out" to the patients but say much more!

Such persons cannot be called doctors and devotees. In fact, they are not human beings at all. If you have really come for Swami, you should develop love. Swami is the embodiment of love from top to toe. I give only love. You receive My love but you do not make use of it.

Compassion is the hallmark of a true devotee

Embodiments of Love!

You may not have love in you, yet, I address you as “Embodiments of Love”.

There is no need for you to develop anything else except love. When you develop love, you will acquire enormous power of penance.

What did Sage Vasishtha say to his wife, Arundhati? He praised Viswamitra in his absence and said, “How beautifully the moon is shining, without any blemish. just like the penance of Viswamitra”! Viswamitra’s heart melted on just hearing Sage Vasishtha’s words suffused with love.

When a new devotee comes to the ashram, people working in the ashram departments should welcome them with all cordiality and courtesy, like a good host. Students in the Institute should behave in the same way. When new students join the Institute, they should treat them like their own brothers so that they overcome the feeling of gloominess caused by separation from their parents.

In outside colleges, the newcomers are put to the severe ordeal of ragging, in the process of which some of the newcomers even lose their lives. Those who behave with newcomers in this manner are verily demons. Will they harass a newcomer if he happens to be their brother? Instead of giving the newcomers courage and happiness, senior students create fear and anxiety in them.

This is no education (*vidya*) at all. This is only ignorance (*avidya*). This is not the sign of discrimination (*viveka*) and compassion (*daya*). This is the sign of foolishness and cruelty.

Newcomers should be welcomed with great love. You should offer them a seat by your side. with all love and care. But, unfortunately, this is not happening today. People reserve their seats, saying, “This is my seat.” They don’t allow the newcomers even to sit near them. This is not good.

All should live unitedly. Only then can you understand Swami’s principle of love. Whomever you speak to, speak with love. If you are not able to answer any question, say with humility, “I don’t know. Kindly forgive me.”

But, unfortunately, you chase them away like animals, saying, “Go, go, I don’t know.” This is not at all the correct behaviour.

All are human beings. Therefore, respect and love everybody. Only then will you become deserving of love of God, who is the indweller of all beings.

What sort of worship is this if you worship the inanimate idol of God and cause suffering to living beings, who are the manifest forms of God?

Bullocks do hard work day and night, and you beat them with a whip. But when you see the stone idol of Nandi in a temple, you do circumambulation (*pradakshina*) and offer your obeisance to it. It is the worship of a stone and not the real worship of God. How can such stone-hearted people be called devotees?

At least from today onward, fill your heart with compassion. Everybody says ‘compassion, compassion, compassion’, but where is compassion? There is only fashion but no compassion.

Some people always cause suffering to others. This is not good.

You have been staying in the ashram for a long time. What is an ashram? An ashram is a place where there is no *shrama* (distress or suffering).

Devotees who come here are put to a lot of suffering and they feel, “If Swami gives us an interview, we can be happy at least for some time in the interview room because outside we are being treated like dogs.”

To how many people is it possible for Me to give interview? Can I give interview to all the people who come here? No. That is why I am giving this big interview to all of you together.

Love is the highest sathwic quality

Develop love more and more. From tomorrow onward, talk to everyone with love. Reply to everyone with love. If you know the answer to the question asked, tell it properly. Otherwise, say, “Excuse me, I don’t know.”

I have told you many times: You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

Talk less. Only then can you get rid of animal qualities. How can you behave like a human being if you harbour animal qualities? First and foremost, give up animal qualities.

Love, love, love. Share your love with everyone. That is true *sathwic* quality.

But you are leading a life full of *rajas*, which is a demonic quality. You are a human being. Ask yourself and give the answer also to yourself, “Who am I? I am not an animal or a demon; I am a human, I am a human, I am a human.”

You are neither an animal nor a demon nor a wicked person. You are a human being. Always keep on reminding yourself, “I am a human being, I am a human being.” Only then can you rise to the level of the Divine. When you question yourself in this manner, immediately the answer will come to you from within you only.

People today lack compassion and love. They do not give proper reply to anybody. At least from now onward, give a proper reply. Talk with love to the patients who come to the hospital. Give them the correct medicine after thorough examination.

But, unfortunately, cruelty is on the rise in human beings today. Why? The reason is the impact of modern education, which promotes ego and degenerates people to the level of an animal.

Illiterate villagers behave with great humility and obedience. They seem to be more cultured. Unfortunately, educated people today have lost their culture. They are full of agitation.

Educated people should get rid of their ego and agitation. Devotion is not limited to doing *bhajans* and worship. Real devotion lies in developing love for God. When you develop love, your humanness will be transformed into Divinity. Love is the royal road to attain Swami’s grace.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...*”.)

—From Bhagavan’s discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 3 July 1996.