

## Develop Virtues and Contemplate on God

**Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

Prasanthi Nilayam

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All One without virtues is not a human being in the true sense of the term.

Understand that virtuous children are the true wealth of a nation.

(Telugu Poem)

### Students!

The people of Bharat ((India) have been worshipping God by performing sacred practices like lighting lamps, burning incense sticks, making sacred food offerings, etc., before idols of deities in accordance with ancient Indian culture. But, unfortunately, modern boys and girls have forgotten such sacred traditions and are deluded to think that they can derive fulfilment from mundane pursuits. They have lost the power of discrimination and do not know what the priorities of their life are. They are neglecting their duties and taking to wrong paths.

### Sanctify food by offering it to God

People who follow the canons of Indian culture partake of food as *prasadam* (sanctified food) only after offering it to God with chanting of mantras like *Pranaya swaha*, *apanaya swaha*, *vyanaya swaha*, *udanaya swaha* and *samanaya swaha* (hail the five life principles — life breath, downward air, the vital air diffused throughout the body, breath that moves upward through the throat, and digestive air). By partaking of sanctified food in this man-

ner, we develop good thoughts, good feelings, good qualities, and good conduct.

The food we eat should have *patra suddhi*, *paka suddhi*, and *padartha suddhi* (purity of vessel, cooking process, and ingredients). But it is very difficult to know if the food has all three qualities. Therefore, when you offer it to God by chanting the *Brahmarpanam Mantra*, it is sanctified and acquires all these qualities.

*Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir  
Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam  
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam  
Brahma Karma Samadhina.*

Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation.

He is the sacrificial fire as also the sacrificer.

Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.

Before offering to God, it is merely a food item. Once it is offered to God, it becomes free from all impurities and gets transformed into *prasadam*. By eating such sacred food, one will not acquire any mental impurities.

We offer food to God on a clean plantain leaf. But today we have to enquire what type of food is offered and to whom. The human body is the plantain leaf, the heart of man is the sacred vessel and virtues, and sacred feelings and good conduct are like the sacred food items. But to whom are these being offered? These are being offered to demons of

evil qualities, wicked feelings such as anger, hatred, and jealousy. The food that is eaten and left over by these demons of hatred, anger, and jealousy is being offered to God. That is why people today are the victims of restlessness, difficulties, sorrows, and misery.

Get rid of your evil qualities and offer your virtues to God with the prayer: Oh God, You are the resident of my heart and You are the embodiment of love, kindness, and compassion. Here I offer the sweet pudding of my virtues; please accept.

### **Start worshipping God at young age**

Young age is like a delicious fruit. You should offer this sweet and delicious fruit to God. It is not possible to worship God after your retirement in old age, when your body becomes weak, the sense organs lose their power, and the mind becomes feeble. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. Start praying to God right from the early age.

If you do not undertake sacred actions when your physical and mental faculties are strong, then when will you perform them? What can you do when the sense organs have lost all their power?

At the time when the messengers of Yama (god of death) put the noose around your neck and start dragging you away, saying, come, let us go.

At the time when your relations tell your family members to take you out of the house, saying your end has approached.

And at the time when your wife and children start weeping and wailing, How can you chant the Name of Hari at that time?

(Telugu Poem)

Is it possible to do any *sadhana* (spiritual exercise) at that stage? No, no.

It is very essential for you to contemplate on God, think of Him wholeheartedly and re-

deem your life at this young age itself, when your sense organs are quite strong. Why don't you worship God when your physical organs and mental faculties are full of verve and vigour?

Oh man, don't take pride in your beauty, youth, and physical strength.

Very soon, you will become old.

Your hair will turn grey, your skin will develop wrinkles, and your vision will be blurred.

Children will make fun of you, calling you an old monkey.

You are no better than a leather puppet.

Try to understand the mystery behind this puppet show.

(Telugu Song)

How can you think of God when you become a decrepit old man? Offer the fragrant flowers of your mind and heart to God with total faith at a young age, when your body is strong and sense organs are powerful. This is the true *naivedyam* (food offering) that you have to offer to God.

But people today do not make such offerings. When their senses become weak after indulging in all sorts of sensual pleasures, they offer them to God like offering leftover food. As the proverb goes, it is like saying, "I offer to Krishna all the flour that has got blown away by the wind."

What else is left with you to offer to God when the power of all your senses is drained out and you have lost your physical and mental strength? Therefore, serve God when the power of your body, mind, and intellect is intact. But if you lose all your strength in pursuit of sensual pleasures in young age, then what service can you render to God?

**Students!**

First of all, understand that this age is divine and sublime. If you don't take to spirituality now, it is not possible to do so in old age.

A child first crawls using their hands and feet. As the child grows up, they start walking on two feet. When they become old, they will walk on three feet, meaning they will need the support of a walking stick.

Serve and worship God when you are walking on two feet; do not postpone it to old age when you are virtually walking on three feet. Just as two feet support the entire body, all the powers of a human being depend on *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness).

Follow *sathya* and *dharma* and contemplate on God, who is the embodiment of *sathya* and *dharma*. In old age, you need the support of one more leg in the form of walking stick. At that age, your body becomes so weak that you will not have the strength to hold even the stick. What can you do at that age? Therefore, make the best use of the young age without wasting even a single moment.

Time is God. Time waste is life waste. Don't waste time.

### **Do not misuse your tongue**

Boys and girls today waste a lot of time. They misuse time by indulging in vain gossip. They do not entertain good feelings and don't speak good words. What sort of words they speak and what type of songs they sing! You do not know how disgusting it is to listen to the words and songs of boys and girls in the outside world.

Only in Prasanthi Nilayam do boys and girls participate in *bhajans* and sing the glory of God, "Rama, Krishna, Govinda", and thus spend their time blissfully. Elsewhere, boys and girls do not know the value of singing the divine Name. They sing meaningless songs like "*Chal chal re naujavan, chod de re mere kan* (Oh young man, march ahead and leave my ears)." Is there any meaning in it?

Some other songs are very funny, like "*Dadada dadada dada dada*". What is this *Dadada*? What a shame to sing such songs! Has the tongue been given to sing such songs? Do you know what the tongue has been given for? It is only to make the divine Name dance on it. We are misusing such a sacred tongue. Chaitanya extolled the greatness of tongue.

Oh tongue, the knower of taste!  
You are very sacred.  
Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner.  
Chant the divine Names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly.  
This is your foremost duty.  
(Sanskrit Verse)

The tongue has many great qualities. It is the knower of taste. It should speak truth in a pleasing manner. It should utter only soft and sweet words. Why should you utter unsacred words with such a sacred tongue? Unfortunately, people today make the tongue unsacred by speaking unsacred words.

It is necessary for students to have control over their tongue. Use your tongue to sing the glory of God, which melts the heart, attracts the mind, and makes one forget oneself. When someone is singing the glories of God, everyone will enjoy the singing and will be swaying their heads to the tune even without their knowledge, be the person an atheist, a theist, or an atheistic-theist.

Once Radha sang:

I don't know where You are and what prevents You from coming here.  
Oh Krishna!  
Why do You separate me from You?  
Don't you have compassion on this servant of Yours?  
(Telugu Song)

When Radha was singing thus, all the women of Repalle were lost in bliss, and even the

vessels of water they were carrying fell down. Radha complained to Krishna:

What is the purpose of my living?  
I have no refuge other than You.  
Oh Krishna, I carry on this burden of  
life only for Your sake.  
My mind becomes restless if I don't  
see Your smiling face.  
At least appear to me in my dreams.  
I cannot live without You even for a  
moment.  
(Telugu Song)

People used to pray to God in those days with such intense craving and yearning. When they sang the Name of Krishna, they felt as though their burdens were removed. Only such intense prayer can move and melt the heart of Krishna.

But today, there is no 'devotion', it is all 'deep ocean'. People say divine, divine, but there is nothing divine about them, it is only deep wine. Sanctify your time by contemplating on God and singing His nectarine Name.

### **Victory lies in unity**

What is the purpose of singing *bhajans*? When people come together and sing the glory of God in one voice, it has tremendous power.

Group singing was started by Guru Nanak, with the main purpose of bringing unity in diversity. Singing in chorus has much more effect than individual singing. You should follow our ancient culture and offer the sacred feelings of your heart to God.

God is the embodiment of love. You can experience Him only through love. You don't require a torchlight, a hurricane lantern, or a petromax lamp to see the shining moon; you can see it with the help of its own light. Likewise, if you want to see the embodiment of love, it is possible to see Him only through love. There is no light brighter than that of love in this world.

The *Bhagavata* describes the stories of Lord Krishna in great detail. The stories of the Lord destroy all sins.

The stories of the Lord are amazing,  
They purify the lives of people in all  
the three worlds,  
They are like the sickles that cut the  
creepers of worldly bondage,  
They are like a good friend who helps  
you in times of need,  
They are like a shelter for the sages  
and seers doing penance in the for-  
est.

(Telugu Poem)

Consider love as your mother, truth as your father, compassion as your sister, and bliss as your brother. When you have such eternal relations, why do you develop unnecessary worldly relationships?

You can see for yourself that there is great strength in unity. Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva were five brothers; they could attain victory only because they were united. Likewise, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna maintained unity under all circumstances. Unity gives victory.

On the other hand, there was no unity between Vali and Sugriva. What was the result? Though Vali was endowed with enormous power, he ultimately met his doom.

Similarly, there was no unity between the three brothers Ravana, Vibhishana, and Kumbhakarna. Due to lack of unity between them, Vibhishana had to leave his brothers. Ultimately, Ravana lost his kingdom and everything due to lack of unity.

We can achieve anything with unity. There are five fingers in the hand. When these five fingers are together, we can perform any task. First and foremost, make efforts to maintain unity.

### Students!

All of you belong to the same Sai Organisation. You are studying in Sai educational institutions. You are growing in Sai's love.

Not only here but wherever you go, manifest this principle of love. Propagate love by your example. The behaviour, discipline, and manners that you have learnt here should follow you like your shadow wherever you go.

You are a good boy or a good man only when you have good behaviour and good manners. You can be called a devotee only when you perform your duty wholeheartedly. Do your duty sincerely. Only then can you become a true devotee.

On the other hand, if you perform worship to idols, neglecting your duty, how can it be called devotion? Duty is God. Work is worship. Students should not become lazy.

First learn your lessons in the class. Use only your spare time in sports and entertainment. Contemplate on God and experience bliss. As food is necessary for the body, so is *bhajan* for the mind.

The body is like a cart, and the mind is the horse that pulls it. You decorate the body with cosmetics and good dress, but you don't give proper food to the mind. What is the use of decorating the cart without feeding the horse? Such a cart is fit only to be placed in a museum. That's all.

Therefore, first and foremost, make the horse strong. That is to say, you have to strengthen the mind. What is meant by strengthening the mind? Develop good thoughts, good feelings, good qualities, and good behaviour.

In the *Mahabharata* war, when Krishna took Arjuna's chariot to the middle of battlefield, Arjuna looked at the army of the Kauravas, turned to Krishna, and said with folded hands:

Oh Krishna, how can I bear the sight of killing my own friends, relatives, and the children of my preceptors?

On thinking about the slaying of so many of my kith and kin, my head is reeling.

Let us go back home without wasting time here.

(Telugu Poem)

Arjuna lost the strength of his mind because he was overcome with the feeling of attachment. He started saying, "Na varu, na varu (my people, my people)." 'Na' actually means 'no'. He said, "Oh Krishna, how can I fight against my own elders, friends, relations, and preceptors?"

Due to his attachment, he became despondent and did not want to fight. Krishna scolded him, saying, "Don't you have any shame? You spoke like a big hero prior to coming here, but after entering the battlefield, you have become a coward. Do you remember what you said to Me when I was going to the Kaurava court on My peace mission?"

Will the narrow-minded Kauravas give up all the differences and make friendship with us?

Can the north and south poles meet together?

Instead of wasting time, why don't You tell them that we are ready for the battle?

Giving a good counsel to the wicked people is like throwing jasmine flowers into fire.

Let us stop all this talk of peace.

(Telugu Poem)

Did you not say all this? You told Me at that time, "Why are You delaying the start of the battle? Let us stop this talk of peace treaty. We are ready for the battle. Now, how is it that your heart is filled with attachment?"

Attachment is the cause of man's downfall. You may have attachment, but only up to a certain limit.

Having come here at young age and lived in such a sacred environment, you should develop good qualities, good thoughts, and good behaviour.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the *bhajan*, "*Govinda Gopala Prabhu Giridhari ...*")

– From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 16 July 1996.