

Divinity Imparts Value To Everything

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Truth is the mother, wisdom the father,
righteousness, the brother, compassion
the friend, peace the wife, forbearance
the son.

These six qualities are the true relations of
humanity.

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

It is natural for people to have parents, brothers, sisters, wife, and children. But what is important is to have relations that are spiritual, sacred, true, and eternal.

Who is your true mother? Is it the mother who gave you birth and brought you up? That mother may leave you at any point of time. Your real mother is truth. Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time —past, present, and future (*Trikalabadhyam sathyam*).

Wisdom is your true father (*Pita jnanam*). What is meant by wisdom? Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (*Advaita darshanam jnanam*). That which is one without a second is true wisdom. That is your father.

Right conduct is your brother (*dharmo Bhrata*), compassion is your friend (*daya sakha*), peace is your wife (*santham patni*), and forbearance is your son (*kshama putrah*). These are the true relations of people.

To make divine love flow toward your fellow human beings is the hallmark of supreme devotion.

Life will be sanctified when one conducts oneself with the awareness that one is born to serve society and not to lead a selfish life.

One will attain fulfillment when one dedicates life to the service of humanity, forgetting oneself.

What is the use of being born as a human if one doesn't fill one's heart with unblemished love and serve fellow beings?

What else is to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls?

(Telugu poem)

Make yourself free from non-self

Embodiments of Love!

People undertake many spiritual practices to have the vision of the *Atma*, to be in communion with the *Atma*, and to experience *Atmic* bliss. They follow the nine paths of devotion and think they can have a vision of the *Atma* by following these nine paths. (The nine paths are listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (*sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, padasevanam, vandanam, srchanam, dasyam, sneham, Atmanivedanam*).

But it is a great mistake. You cannot attain Divinity by merely undertaking spiritual practices. These are meant to help you get rid of all that is non-Self. Once you are free from non-Self, the Self will become manifest everywhere.

Fire becomes visible when you blow away the ash that covers it. You don't need to make any special effort to see the sun; you can see it when the clouds that cover it move away.

You are under the delusion that you perform spiritual practices to have a vision of the *Atma*. In fact, they are not meant for the vision of the *Atma*. You perform these practices in order to separate yourself from the non-Self and unite with the Self.

You pray to God, saying:

Oh Lord!

You alone are my father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth.

You are my everything.

*Twameva matacha pita twameva, twameva
bandhuscha sakha twameva,*

*Twameva vidya dravinam twameva, twame-
va sarvam mama devadeva.*

(Sanskrit verse)

What does this prayer do? What type of result do you get out of it? This prayer conveys that you are different from God and that you have a worldly relationship with Him. Such a worldly relationship is the cause of bondage.

Father cannot become son and son cannot become father. Father is father and son is son. Both cannot become one.

Therefore, to address God as your father and mother is a sign of ignorance. "You are I and I am you." This is the best prayer.

"That thou Art (*Thathtwamasi*)." One of the profound statements of the *Vedas*, this statement propounds your oneness with God. When you realise this, you will be free from all relationships that bind you.

Day in and day out, you experience worldly relationships that bind you. Then why should you establish such a relationship even with God?

Only God is present in all. "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sar-*

vatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati)."

When God is present in all, how can you say that He is your father and mother?

You should develop the spirit of oneness (*Ek-atma bhava*). "I am present as the *Atma* in all beings (*Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma*)", says the Lord. The same *Atma* is present in you, Me, and everyone. The *Atma* has no differences of caste and religion. It is not bound by time, space, and circumstances.

All names and forms belong to God

God is one and the same for all nations, for all people, for all religions, for all communities and for all time. It is with reference to this that the *Vedas* declare: "Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti*)."

God is one, but you call Him by many names. Where did these differences arise? You develop these differences and get deluded because you see differences in form. Day by day, you are getting more and more deluded. As long as you have delusion (*bhrama*), you cannot attain God (Brahma). When you get rid of *bhrama*, you become Brahma yourself. "The One willed to become many (*Ekoham bahusyam*)."

God is one and all are one. All are present in God and God is present in all. All names and forms are His.

You offer worship to God, chanting the mantras:

Kesavaya Namaha,

Narayanaya Namaha,

Madhavaya Namaha,

Govindaya Namaha,

Madhusudanaya Namaha.

You chant these various names of God, but you offer worship to the same idol

“I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” Devotees should develop such firm faith.

Today there are so many differences between people. There is so much difference between the thinking of one person and another. Then how can you experience oneness?

There may be differences in form, but there should be unity in the way people think. Brahman pervades the entire world. Scientists say the entire cosmos consists of atoms. Many of them also say it is foolish to attribute a form to God and worship Him.

You should enquire what is the reality. The entire world has a form, and every atom that constitutes it has also a form. “Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (*Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan*).” The atom itself is not without form. Hence, there is nothing in this world that has no form.

All names and forms are manifestations of the Supreme Being, who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness.

He is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute, and non-dual.

He is Truth, Goodness, Beauty (*Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram*).

(Sanskrit verse)

It is God who has assumed all forms. The same truth is declared in the *Purusha Sukta*: “The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (*Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad*).” All forms belong to God. One degenerates to the level of animal when one does not realise this truth.

There is no harmony between thoughts, words, and deeds. This is not humanness. *The proper study of humanity is people*. Have complete unity in your thoughts, words, and actions. Therein lies the true meaning of humanness.

God is present in everything

We say that all forms belong to God, but we also say that God is formless. He is attribute-

less, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (*nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, mirmala swarupinam*).

What is the inner meaning of this? Diversity has value only when it is associated with unity. When you add a zero after 1 it becomes 10. If you go on adding more and more zeros, the value goes on increasing to 100, 1000, 10,000, 1,00,000, etc. How does zero assume value? It assumes value when it is associated with one. Therefore, one is hero, world is zero. The world has value only because of God, who is the hero.

Only divinity imparts value to everything. There can be no world without God. God is the cause, the world is the effect. This creation is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. Why are people unable to realise this divine principle, having attained human birth? There is Divinity in every atom of the universe. This is the truth you have to realise.

If you always identify yourself with your body, mind, and mind-stuff (*chitta*), how can you understand the truth that you are God? The body, mind, *chitta*, intellect, etc. are mere instruments. You are the master, the *Atma*.

The *Atma* is all-pervasive. Brahman and *Atma* are one and the same. Brahman signifies the all-pervasive and ever-expansive divine principle.

The child Prahlada declared this same truth long ago. Prahlada was Hiranyakasipu’s son, Virochana was Prahlada’s son, and emperor Bali, in whose name we are celebrating the Onam festival today, was Virochana’s son.

Emperor Bali was the embodiment of righteousness and sacrifice. He considered the welfare of his subjects as his own welfare. The minister who spoke earlier mentioned in his speech that service to man is service to God. Emperor Bali followed this noble principle.

Once some people went to Buddha and asked, “You have been performing spiritual practices for a long time. Can you tell us something about God?” Buddha remained silent. His silence meant only that there is no scope for arguments and counter arguments in matters relating to God.

In fact, what do you know about God to involve yourself in argumentation? God is present in “yes” and also in “no”. He is present in truth and righteousness and also in untruth and unrighteousness. How can you argue about God, who is present in everything? Therefore, don’t enter into any sort of discussion with regard to God. It is sheer waste of time and utter foolishness.

God is the embodiment of truth, righteousness and nonviolence. That is why the scriptures teach: Speak truth, practise righteousness (*Sathyam vada, dharmam chara*). Truth, righteousness, and nonviolence are the real forms of God.

Some people went to Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked, “Oh master, you are always in communion with God. Have you seen God?”

Laughing heartily, he said, “Yes, I have seen God. In fact, I am seeing you as the very form of God. God is present right in front of my eyes in your form. All are embodiments of God. However, your outlook is different. You consider yourself as human beings. You consider what you see around you as the world. He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality (*Pashyannapicha na pashyati moodho*).

“What you see around you is only God. How can you deny God when you see Him everywhere and all the time? Why can’t people see God? People cry for their wife, husband, power, position, name, and fame. But do they really cry for God? No. If you cry for God just as you cry for other material things, He will immediately manifest before you.”

You have part-time devotion for God, whereas you have full-time devotion for the world. You are prepared to sacrifice anything for worldly things.

The *Vedas* declare, Immortality is attained not through action, progeny, or wealth but only through sacrifice (*Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu*). What do you have to renounce? There is no need for you to renounce your home and hearth. What is required is to get rid of your delusion.

Renunciation does not lie merely in giving up one’s wealth and family and going to the forest.

Real renunciation lies in giving up evil qualities.

This is real renunciation (*thyaga*) and *yoga*.
(Telugu poem)

Drive away evil qualities from your mind. That is real sacrifice. But how many people practise this? You can experience reality only when you put this principle into practice. If someone comes in the way of your sacrifice, whoever they may be, disown them.

Emperor Bali noticed Vamana entering the platform for the performance of a sacrifice (*yajnasala*). He welcomed him, offered him a seat with respect, and said, “Swami, what is your desire that I can fulfil?”

Vamana replied, “I don’t want anything else, I just want three steps of land.”

Emperor Bali said, “What is this? Do you need to come all the way just for three steps of land, which anybody else would have given you?”

Vamana said, “I want three steps of land from you only.”

Bali’s preceptor Sukracharya, who was standing behind, cautioned him, “Oh king! He is not an ordinary man. Don’t make the mistake of granting his request.”

Bali replied, “Is there a greater mistake than going back on one’s promise? I already gave him my word. I can disobey even my guru, but I cannot go back on my promise.”

Accordingly, Emperor Bali fulfilled his promise to Vamana. He was the embodiment of truth. He was the one who would never go back on his word. That is why the people of Kerala enshrine his memory in their heart and celebrate the festival of Onam every year.

What do you have to worship? Truth. Nothing other than truth has any value.

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the value of all your education is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the benefit of all your acts of charity and kindness is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the utility of all your positions of power is zero;

Bereft of truth, righteousness, peace, and love, the result of all your good deeds is zero.

Truth, righteousness, peace, and love are the very foundation of human life.

What else is there to be conveyed to this assembly of noble souls!

(Telugu poem)

You should recognise the importance of truth, righteousness, peace and love (*sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema*). These are the true human values. Truth is God. Righteousness is God. It is said, Rama is *dharma* personified (*Ramo vigrahavan dharma*). *Dharma* assumed the form of Rama.

Then where is peace? It is not outside. Outside in the world there are only pieces, but no peace. Peace is the precious pearl and ornament for humanity. You are the embodiment of peace.

Only God is your true friend

Love is God. Live in Love. There is no life without love. Love is the main life-force in

people. But, unfortunately, people make improper use of love.

There is love between wife and husband, mother and children, friends and relatives. In this way, people fragment love. Join all these pieces together and direct your entire love toward God.

(Swami showing His handkerchief) You can see how strong this cloth is because all threads have come together. If the threads are separated, you can break them with your fingers. Therefore, focus all your love on God.

Revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God (*Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava*).

Even friend is God. In fact, your only true friend is God. Among the nine paths of devotion, friendship comes before self-surrender. Once you develop friendship with God, you will have everything. If you want to completely surrender to God, you have to develop friendship with Him first. Developing friendship with God signifies surrendering your three qualities of purity, passion, and sloth (*sathwa, rajas, and thamas*) to Him. That is friendship (*maitree*).

Worldly friends look at your pocket and the position of your father. When there is money in your pocket and your father has a high position, hundreds of friends will come to you, saying hello, hello. If your pocket is empty and your father is retired, everyone will desert you without even saying goodbye.

Can you call them your real friends? No, no. God is your real friend. He is always with you, in you, around you, below you. He will never forsake you.

All your friends and relatives will follow you only till the burial ground. Only the divine Name will never leave you. God is your only saviour in times of distress. He will follow

you wherever you go. Therefore, develop friendship only with God.

Emperor Bali considered God as his friend and surrendered to Him. Many in this world give away land, gold, food, clothes, money, and other worldly possessions in charity. But Emperor Bali's was an act of supreme sacrifice. He offered himself to God. This is the highest form of devotion. He did not give merely three steps of land; he gave away himself.

I offer my family, wealth —everything to you. I surrender before you and offer myself also. Protect me.

(Sanskrit verse)

I offer myself to You. Do whatever You like to do:

Oh Lord! I offer my heart to You, which You have given me.

What else is there for me to worship Your feet with?

Please accept this with my humble salutations.

(Telugu poem)

Bali said, "What else can I offer? If I want to offer You the water from the river Ganga, I realise that Ganga is Your very form. If I want to worship You with flowers, I realise that You are the one who created them. If I want to buy fruits and offer them to You, are they not Your own creation?"

Vedanta teaches the inner meaning of offering flowers and fruits to God. Once Rukmini prayed thus:

One may offer You a leaf or a flower or a fruit or even water,

But, if it is true that You offer Yourself to one with devotion,

Oh Krishna, may You be weighed by this Tulasi leaf!

(Telugu poem)

What does the leaf signify? Does it signify bilva leaf or tulasi leaf? No, your body is the leaf.

What flower you should offer God? Is it jasmine flower or marigold flower? No, no. Offer the flower of your heart. Then what fruit is pleasing to God? Is it banana, guava, or orange? No. These are not the fruits that you should offer. Offer the fruit of your mind. Similarly, God does not expect you to offer Him water from the Ganga or any other river or a well. Offer Him your tears of joy.

These flowers and fruits do not grow on a tree; they grow on the tree of your life. Your body is the leaf, heart is the flower, mind is the fruit, and tears of joy is water.

That is why Emperor Bali offered himself to the Lord. No other offering can match the offering made by Bali. If you offer a worldly object, it is transient. But what Bali offered to the Lord was something that would not fade away with time. That is why he attained great name and fame.

Bali was from the lineage of Jaya and Vijaya, who were the guards at the door of Lord Vishnu. Jaya and Vijaya took birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was the son of Hiranyakasipu.

Character is your greatest wealth

Students must know the greatness and nobility of Prahlada. He was the personification of highest character. Once, Prahlada achieved victory over Indra and started ruling over his kingdom, heaven. Having lost his kingdom, Indra was very much distressed. He went to his preceptor and asked him, "Swami, how can I win back my kingdom? Kindly, show me the way."

The preceptor replied, "Prahlada is performing a sacrifice called *Viswajit*. During this time, he will give away in charity whatever one asks from him. Therefore, go to him at an appropriate time and ask him for his character in charity."

Accordingly, Indra assumed the form of a *brahmin* and went to Prahlada. Prahlada wel-

came to him and asked him what he wanted. As advised earlier by his preceptor, Indra asked Prahlada for his character. Prahlada asked the *brahmin* what use was his character to him.

The *brahmin* replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahlada's offer to give whatever anyone asked for in the *Viswajit* sacrifice. "Are you prepared to give or not?" He asked. Prahlada immediately gave what the *brahmin* asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent form emerged from Prahlada. Seeing the form, he asked, "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahlada and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. You gave me away as a gift, so I am leaving you."

Shortly thereafter, another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from Prahlada. Prahlada asked, "Who are you, oh king?" The radiant figure replied, "Prahlada! I am your reputation (*kirti*). When your character left you, I had no place within you. I am the servant of character. When character has left, I have to follow suit."

Prahlada was puzzled. Then out came another beautiful radiant female form. Prahlada respectfully asked her, "Mother! Who are you?" She said, "Prahlada! After character and reputation departed, I, namely, Rajya Lakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you."

Then another effulgent form emerged from Prahlada and asked permission to leave him. When Prahlada asked who he was, the form replied that he was *Dharma*. Prahlada then said no to him, because if *Dharma* left him nothing would remain with him. He held on to *Dharma* and prayed to him not leave. *Dharma* granted Prahlada's prayer and stayed.

When *Dharma* decided to stay with Prahlada, the goddess of royal wealth, his reputation,

and his character also returned, saying that they would stay where there was *Dharma*. Thus, Prahlada proved that *Dharma* was most important for man.

From the story, you can see that where *Dharma* is, there lies all wealth, name, and fame.

Prahlada was endowed with six types of opulence: righteousness, wealth, fame, power, wisdom, and detachment (*dharma, aishwarya, yashas, sakthi, jnana, vairagya*). But when he lost character, he lost all six types of opulence.

What is your true wealth? It is the wealth of wisdom, love, and righteousness.

Prahlada was one of great character and righteousness.

You should understand the importance of character from the spiritual point of view also. You may give up any quality, but not character. Offer yourself only to God and to none else, because God is the embodiment of selflessness.

Never forsake God

God has no expectation from anybody. Everyone in this world loves you with some self-interest, but only God's love is totally free of selfishness and self-interest. Even parents love you because of your physical relationship with them, but God has no such relationship. His relationship is heart to heart and love to love. He has no selfish motive in His love. Therefore, offer your life only to God.

This was the ideal demonstrated by Emperor Bali. Revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God as long as they don't come in the way of your relationship with God.

Kaikeyi was instrumental in stopping the coronation of Rama and sending Him to the forest. Because of Kaikeyi's evil deed Bharata disobeyed her. How can you revere your mother as God when she takes you away from God? Bharata demonstrated that if your moth-

er comes in the way of your association with God, you should forsake her.

Hiranyakasipu tried to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the divine Name “*Om Namō Narayana*” in many ways. Prahlada was ready to forsake even his father but would not stop chanting the Name of the Lord. Similarly, Emperor Bali disobeyed his preceptor and offered himself to the Lord. One should make any sacrifice for the sake of God.

When Maharana commanded Mira to leave the Krishna temple and go away, she had a doubt as to what her *dharma* was —whether to stay with her husband or go away and offer herself to God. Expressing her doubt, she sent a letter to Tulsidas, who was her contemporary, through a messenger. Tulsidas was living on Chitrakuta mountain at that time.

She asked, “Swami, what am I supposed to do now? Should I give up my husband or God?”

Tulsidas sent a reply, “Wives and husbands keep changing from birth to birth. Only God is with you in all your births. Therefore, you may give up your husband but not God.”

Then she decided to leave her house and sang, “Oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna (*Chalore mana ganga Yamuna teer*).”

Prayag is the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna rivers. There is no need to book a ticket to travel to Prayag. Ganga and Yamuna signify the subtle channels *ida* and *pingala*. The centre of the eyebrows (*bhrumadhya*) is the real Prayag where the three nerve channels *ida*, *pingala*, and *sushumna* meet.

“The waters of Ganga and Yamuna are very cool and pure, which will make one serene and peaceful. Therefore, oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna (*Ganga, Yamuna nirmal pani, sheetal hota sareer. Chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer*). There you find Lord Krishna donning a yellow silk robe, having a crown of peacock feathers and glittering earrings.”

In this way, Mira renounced her house, family, and husband for the sake of God.

Never heed anyone who advises you to go away from God. Even if a fierce calamity befalls you, never leave God. Even if you were to carry a ball of fire in your hand, never leave God. Even if earth becomes sky and sky becomes earth, never leave God. Under all circumstances, keep your faith in God firm. Such unwavering faith is your true protection.

Before going to the battlefield, Abhimanyu offered his salutations to his mother Subhadra and prayed for her blessings. But she tried to dissuade him from going to the battlefield, saying:

The Kaurava army was arrayed in the shape of *Padmavyuha* by Dronacharya,

Who has the power to subdue the pride of the mightiest of enemies at will.

It is not easy to withstand the onslaught of Bhishma.

Moreover, your wife is in the family way.

We do not know whether the time is favourable to us or not.

Your father and uncle Krishna are not here to help you.

Hence, give up your resolve to enter the battlefield.

(Telugu poem)

When his mother tried to stop him thus, Abhimanyu became furious and said,

At a time when I am about to pounce fearlessly on the Kaurava army like a lion and annihilate them with the rain of powerful arrows,

Is it proper on your part to dissuade me from going to the battlefield

Instead of conferring your blessings on me and saying a few words of encouragement?

(Telugu poem)

In this manner, the youth of those days upheld the honour of their family with courage and valour. They were prepared to make any sacrifice to protect the honour of the family.

Abhimanyu prostrated before his mother, seeking her blessings and pleading with her to permit him to go to the battlefield. Subhadra had no choice but to put her hand on his head and bless him thus:

May you be the recipient of the same blessings that mother Gauri conferred on her son Kumara when he went to battle Tarakasura,
The blessings Bhargavi bestowed on her son at the time of slaying of Shambarasura,
The blessings Vinata showered on her son when he set out on the sacred mission of getting his mother freed from servitude,
The blessings mother Kausalya conferred on her son Rama when He went to forest to safeguard Viswamitra's sacrifice.
Above all, may the most powerful and divine blessings of Rama be with you and protect you in the battlefield.

(Telugu poem)

Conferring her profuse blessings on her son for his protection, Subhadra permitted him to go to the battlefield.

One may have all types of blessings and protection, but if one lacks the protection of God, all other protections will be useless. You may have all types of power, but without the power of God, they will be of no use.

As described in the *Ramayana*, no one was more powerful than Hanuman. Similarly, in the *Mahabharata*, Bhima was considered the most powerful. If they were so powerful, you can well imagine the power of God. The power of God can shake the entire earth in a moment or cause deluge in a trice. The same power of God gives light to the entire world through the sun. There can be no power greater than the power of God.

One may have physical prowess and power of intelligence,
But one will come to grief if one lacks divine grace,
Karna was a great warrior, but what was his fate?

Never forget this truth.

(Telugu poem)

Physical power, manpower, and the power of intellect, wealth, and position are not so important. What is most important is the power of righteousness and the power of God.

Whether you do any spiritual practice or not, do contemplate on the *Vedic* maxim "I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*).” Then you become Brahman. "The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Himself (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi*).”

Do not develop meaningless relationship with God. I and you are one. Strive to experience this oneness.

You may do meditation, repetition of His Name, *bhajan*, and rituals, but all these are meant only for your mental satisfaction. The mind is of fickle nature. Therefore, do not try to satisfy your mind; satisfy your conscience. Only then can you have the experience of *Satchidananda*.

Sat is being, *chit* is awareness. The unity of *sat* and *chit* is *ananda* (bliss). Always remember this divine principle and contemplate on it.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the *bhajan*, "*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...*")

—From Bhagavan's Discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 27 August 1996.